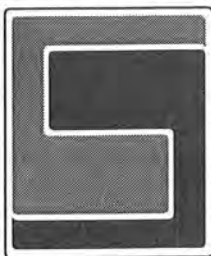


FIGHTING 69TH INFANTRY DIVISION

★★★★ Association, Inc.



VOLUME 52, NO. 3

MAY — JUNE — JULY — AUGUST
1999

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

P.O. BOX 69
CHAMPION, PA 15622-0069
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bulletin

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The End of the Road



THE MAIL BOX

By **Dottie Witzleb**, Editor



*Company E, 273rd Infantry Regiment
P.O. Box 69
Champion, Pennsylvania 15622-0069
Telephone: 724/455-2901*

* * * * *

LeVerne Loveland, 517 Rosewood Terrace, Linden, New Jersey 07036-5832 — Co. G, 271st: I was a recruit first with the original group shipped to Camp Shelby when the 69th Division was reactivated in the Spring of 1943 and went through the basic and advanced training in Company G, 271st Infantry, until my transfer out in May 1944 and eventually I was assigned as a training infantryman to the 90th Division in Normandy. I fought across France, participated in the Bulge and was wounded in Germany. Too many experiences which I wish I could forget, but those memories will unfortunately continue to remain. When I watched the movie "Saving Private Ryan," I found myself ducking down as the shells were bursting. Those memories will never go away.

For years I have received copies of the 69th Division Bulletin and read them completely. My 90th Division never had a publication like the 69th Bulletin. Many of the men and some of the non-coms that I trained with went overseas to Europe with the 69th. But I often wonder what happened to those I trained with who were transferred out as replacements to other units. Probably many of them also still receive copies of the 69th Bulletin and they have read of the 69th 52nd Annual Reunion in Orlando, Florida, November 14th-21st, 1999. If my health holds out, it will be the first one that I hope to attend and I know that some of the original men that I trained with will be there. As I look at our company picture taken July 1943, I see so many familiar faces and often wonder what became of those men. Of course most of us are in our 70's and 80's now, but who can ever forget "Bolte's March to the Sea" Shelby to Biloxi? Or the general on horseback as he reviewed his troops?

So I encourage all of you who were the original trainees in our 69th Division to make every attempt to attend this reunion. I have great respect for the men who went to Europe with the 69th, but I also care about those of us who trained with it and were transferred out to other units. So please try to attend this reunion!

Lloyd W. Redman, 9707 McKnight Avenue, N.E., Albuquerque, New Mexico 87112-4048 — Co. A, 271st: I am a former member of Company A, 271st Infantry March to December 1944. I went to England with the 69th and was transferred to the continent (83rd Div.) just after Christmas '44.

I have purchased a US Geological Survey topographical map of the McLaurin, Mississippi quadrangle that shows most of the garrison area of Camp Shelby. The map was compiled from aerial photos made in 1976 and ground-checked in 1980. This map shows buildings in what I recall as the 65th Division area, but shows only improved streets in what I believe was the 69th garrison area.

I am writing to inquire if you know anyone who might remember the street/avenue numbers of the 1st Battalion, 271st area of Camp Shelby. The curator of the museum at Camp Shelby sent me a copy of a sketch map made in February 1941 that identifies all the street and avenue numbers. I am able to correlate the location of the numbers on the sketch map with the streets shown on the topographical map.

I took basic training at Camp Roberts, California and recently purchased a USGS topographical map that was compiled from aerial photos made in 1947 when all the buildings existing in 1943 were still there. I was able to pinpoint the barracks that I lived in from June to November 1943! I will appreciate any information that anyone can furnish.

Thanks from **Lloyd Redman**, former Sergeant and 60mm Mortar Squad Leader.

William R. Beckman, 1408 Creekside Court, Elgin, Illinois 60123 — Hq., 777th Tank Battalion: Imagine my surprise when I opened Volume 52, No. 2 and found my beloved 777th Tank Battalion Headquarters photo in the centerfold. I also got real excited with the cover photos of the Capture of Leipzig. Unfortunately, I was the only officer not mentioned in the caption of the 777th photo. I was a new member in Headquarters as the former adjutant decided to trade positions with me after my platoon took Leipzig and we were just awaiting the end of the war. **Zeek Rhodes** and I traded jobs, me from B Company, 2nd platoon leader to adjutant and he to my platoon. Anyway, I didn't mind a desk job. I had won the Bronze Star for heroism in Leipzig! Thanks again for the photo in the center. 777 was a lucky number.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Sorry your name wasn't mentioned under the photo. We can only do with what we are given.)

William J. Muldoon, 79 Elizabeth Drive, Bethpage, New York 11714-6434 — Co. E, 272nd: I was very sorry to hear of the passing of **Earl Witzleb**. He will be sorely missed. I am sending this check to be used in some way in memory of him. Keep up the good work.

(Continued on Page 3)

THE MAIL BOX

(Continued from Page 2)

Mackey J. Hunt, widow of **Thomas Hunt**, 503 Eastbourne Place, Memphis, Tennessee 38117 — Co. C, 269th Eng.: My husband, **Tommy Hunt**, passed away in 1994 and I have kept up the dues and Bulletin donation for I like to read it. He was in Company C, 269th Engineers. I notified the proper authority when he died and it was immediately acknowledged in the Bulletin. I will be 80 years old this year and am doing real good. During World War II, I worked at Brookley Air Field Base in Mobile, Alabama in Wings and Surface Repair as a sheet metal worker (*Rosie the Riveter*). I doubt that I'll be able to make anymore of the reunions.

Ted Snyder, 3 Carolyn Court, Syosset, New York 11791-6111 — Co. D, 271st: Thank you so very much for publishing my story about the 99th Division boy killed in the Battle of the Bulge. It was a moving and personal experience for me and you handled it very well. The story incorrectly stated that I was in Company I, 272nd. I was in Company D, 271st. **Curtis Whiteway**, Sergeant, 99th Division, was the key to my locating the Checkerboard. He speaks and writes about his Holocaust Concentration Camp liberation at Muhldorf, Dachau for the U.S. Holocaust Museum in Washington, DC.

Nicholas Hentosh, 5216 Dorchester Road, Charleston, South Carolina 29418-5609 — Co. K, 273rd: I am sending along my dues and my wife's and a little for the bulletin and postage. You folks sure do a good job and you have my full support. It seems that my back and left leg are giving me a fit, plus a couple of other ailments. So that is my reward for living so long and getting older. Do take care and God bless.

John H. Sawyer, 245 Stephenson Branch Road, Bryson City, North Carolina 28713 — Co. I, 271st: I just talked to **James E. Boris** and he gave me your number to join the 69th Infantry Division. I am sending in my donation and would like to have whatever information you have on the division. **Mr. Boris** told me that the 69th Reunion will be in Atlanta, Georgia in the year 2000. I sure hope I can be there. Thanks from an old infantry pal.

Jefferson F. Keith, Jr. 122 Sardis School Road, Union, South Carolina 29379 — Hq. Co., 777th: I was with the 69th as part of the 777th Tank Battalion, Headquarters Company. After we came home from Europe, I reenlisted for a short period. After some shuffling, I ended up with the 2nd Armored Division in Fort Hood, Texas.

Lamar W. Williams, 4365 Ruth Road, Birmingham, Alabama 35213-1609 — 69th MP: I was in the hospital for a while with pneumonia and lung problems but I am doing well now. I've heard from a number of 69th MPs but would like to hear from others. I am the

last officer in the 69th MP Platoon still living. T for all you do to keep the Association alive and bulletins coming.

Arthur S. Moore, 55 High Gate Road, Apt. C-4, Newington, Connecticut 06111-5251 — A new 69er was found recently thanks to the efforts of myself and **Jim Amor** who looked up his whereabouts on his computer. His name is **Lynn Farrar** of California. He too wants some bulletins. All these years he didn't know there was an Association. He called me two weeks ago and we talked for 45 minutes. Lots of questions and answers went back and forth. He was the jeep driver for **Lt. Rieneke**. He too says good things about the lieutenant. About two hours after we hung up I got another call from **Joan Jones** of Mechanicsburg, PA informing me that her husband, **Danny Jones**, had passed away that afternoon. She said he was in great pain and suffering a lot. Just three weeks earlier, I heard from him. He told me he and Joan were in the hospital this past winter. The day he died, he and Joan got my get well card. He told Joan to make sure she called me. He had the Last Rites and died four hours later.

At the Rochester reunion, my wife and I were quartered on the 6th floor. Unknown to me, the **Jones** were on the 4th floor. My wife and I entered the elevator on the 6th floor and it came down and stopped on the 4th floor. The door opened and we entered. Another couple was in the elevator, a tall elderly lady and a short balding guy with horn rimmed glasses. I politely nodded to them but said nothing. I didn't know them. He bent over to look at my 69th name badge and said, "Well, if you don't want to talk to me, I won't talk to you." He was not wearing a name badge. I told him he had me at a disadvantage, I didn't know him. He said, "I'm **Danny Jones**." Well, I felt like dropping through the elevator. I had talked with him on every fire mission we had at Shelby and every fire mission during combat. Anyway, we spent most of our time in Rochester reminiscing.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: See Art's story "Church Call," about **Lt. Rieneke**, elsewhere in this bulletin.)

Lauretta Walker, widow of **James H. Walker** — 1500 Filmore Street, Metropolis, Illinois 62960-2605: I am sorry to have to send this letter to you as so many others before me have had to do, but I lost my husband, **James H. Walker**, Company A, 272nd, on March 21st, 1998. He enjoyed the bulletins so much and would read for hours and when there were stories about places in Europe, especially Germany, he would say, "Oh yeah, I remember . . ." then he'd relate an event that happened there. His association with the 69th Division was one of the highlights of his years. Therefore, I am sending in a donation for postage, etc., as I am sure he would want me to do that.

My daughter, son-in-law and I would love to attend the reunion in Orlando, but short of our winning the lottery, I fear that will not be possible.

New Men Relocated Since Our Last Bulletin

Harry F. Mumma — Cannon Co., 273rd Infantry
1917 Monte Largo Drive N.E.
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87112

Walter Citron — Company A, 271st Infantry
5780 Susan Drive E.
Indianapolis, Indiana 46250

John H. Sawyer — Company I, 271st Infantry
245 Stephenson Branch Road
Bryson City, North Carolina 28713

Robert Adsit — Company H, 271st Infantry
5174 Ridgetop Drive
Waterford, Michigan 48327

W.D. Wix — Company B, 271st Infantry
P.O. Box 142
Kenefic, Oklahoma 74748-0142

William T. Jackson — Company A, 273rd Infantry
122 Ridgewood Place
Marion, Virginia 24354

Philip Zuck — Company D, 271st Infantry
12 Sutton Drive
Boynton Beach, Florida 33426-6061

Harold R. Brummel — Company G, 273rd Infantry
1232 N.E. Magnolia
Lee's Summit, Missouri 64086-5839

Dale E. Nielsen — Battery B, 881st Field Artillery
100 West Tokay Street
Lodi, California 95240-3807

Daryl Mitchell — Company B, 272nd Infantry
P.O. Box 136
Nixa, Missouri 65714

Seymour Sheryll — Company L, 273rd Infantry
7390 Potomac Falls Lane
Boynton Beach, Florida 33437-6304

Tom C. Cogbill — Cannon Co., 271st Infantry
HC 73, Box 127
Star City, Arizona 71667-9304

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.

Attention Members of Co. M, 272nd Infantry

I am writing to you as the son of **Dale W. Echtenkamp**, who served as a machine gunner and member of M Company, 272nd Infantry Regiment of the 69th Infantry Division during 1944-1945. My dad passed away in December 1996. I regret that I was unable to learn more about his service experience prior to his death.

As your records show, **Dale** served in the European Theatre. I believe he started his service in Europe in February 1944. At the time, his platoon leader was **Raymond Waldorf**, who may be living in the Tampa, Florida, area. Among other acquaintances were **Dewey Crofoot**, who may be living in Phoenix, and **Richard Parsons**, originally from Mount Joy, Pennsylvania.

I would appreciate it if someone could furnish me with a list of names of those individuals from M Company who I may be able to contact to learn more of my father's experiences in Europe.

Thanks for your help in uncovering this part of my father's past.

Sincerely,

Jay S. Echtenkamp
3450 Zircon Lane North
Plymouth, Minnesota 55447
Telephone: (612) 476-6694

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Let's help him out fellows. All and any M Company members, please write to him.)

HAVE YOU PAID YOUR DUES!

NEW DUES YEAR FOR 1999-2000

August 1, 1999 to July 31, 2000

Regular Membership \$10.00

Ladies' Auxiliary \$ 5.00

Bulletin Donation Up To You

*Keep the Bulletin Coming.
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Send Your Dues To:

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Do not send dues to the Editor.

World War II Encore

Consider the Renewed Interest in World War II

Submitted by: **Irvin M. Hunsberger**
Companies A and D, 271st Infantry Regiment
Steiner Road, HC1, Box 1800
Tafton, Pennsylvania 18464

FROM THE WAYNE PIKE CONNECTIONS

MAY 1999

By Charles F. Saladino

As we slid toward the Oscar race, two hard-core World War II epics were being touted as potential winners. Forget escapist fare with its pseudo violence, volcano eruptions, asteroid crashes, et cetera. It was these two movies, "Saving Private Ryan" and "The Thin Red Line," that were being talked about, and their violence seems anything but fake. They are both gripping and graphic, reawakening our violence-benumbed hearts to outrage and grief, reminding us of the cost of war, any war, even the so-called "last good one."



Limbs are severed, innards tumble onto the ground in surreal counterpoint to the beauty of the countryside. World War II is breaking out anew in other places as well. Anchorman, Tom Brokaw's book about the World War II vets, "The Greatest Generation," has been at the top of the best-seller lists. Probably a million copies have been sold. Clearly, there are fashions in nostalgia as in anything else. But why this fashion now? The obvious answer is the easy one: Because we want and need heroes, and we have to go back over fifty years to find them, certainly that many of them - millions of near-kids who fought on faraway battlefields defending democracy. Today, the younger generation wishes to pay its final respects.

Steven Spielberg's "Saving Private Ryan," like Tom Brokaw's book, is full of such sentiment, almost a wistful, apologetic adulation tendered by men who themselves never went to war; a guilt-laced generational gut ache left over from Vietnam. It's no accident that all this World War II stuff comes now, amid the midlife reckoning of the baby boomers; when the first of them to reach the White House, the first president to be impeached in over fifty years, was a man like so many of his peers back when - friends and foes alike sidestepped the draft when it was his turn. It comes, too, at a time when the world seems an overly complicated, intractable and muddy place. Rwanda, Somalia, Kosovo, Iraq - you name it, it's muddy. What to do? How to help? Whose problem is it anyway? Yes, today feels more like 1936, when we wanted to think that Hitler was Europe's problem, and December 7, 1941 when Pearl Harbor made our moral virtue easy to find.

"Yesterday, December 7, 1941, a date which will live in infamy."

This isn't even the Cold War, with its clear polarity to comfort our World War II heroes. There was clarity in that, however threatening, however much it caused us to sometimes compromise our own standards by propping up this or that dictator, or even helping to overthrow democratically-elected governments, not to mention the excesses of McCarthyism at home and the Quagmire that became Vietnam all in the name of anti-communism. All of these things can get overlooked or pushed aside in our desire to have things simple, clean, like in the movies, like on TV - good guys, bad guys, black and white, men with guns, men bonded in a noble cause.

"Some Private in the 101st lost three brothers, and he's got a ticket home."

In fairness to the two movies, they are not full-tilt, gung-ho war movies. They are World War II refracted through the memory of Vietnam. "The Thin Red Line" certainly is, and more powerful and more complex for it. You leave the theatre after these movies grateful for the sacrifices these men made, but also mindful of the stupefying loss of life, the boredom and terror of war.

"Have you ever had anyone die in your arms?"

And that's a gift whenever and wherever it comes.

Attention All Members of the I&R Platoon, 272nd Battle Axe Regiment

Wallace J. Moulis

Headquarters, 272nd Infantry

6565 Snowbell Lane

Falls Church, Virginia 22042

I have obtained 30 caps with a distinctive "I&R" logo. Please write to me at the address above for your cap at no cost to you.

Also, I would like to obtain a Fighting 69th Division shoulder patch, the one with the red and blue insignia on it. If anyone has this information, I would appreciate hearing from you.

Wallace J. Moulis

Col. USA Retired

Your "ole" (and I do mean old),
ex-platoon leader

E-Mail Addresses

ATTENTION MEMBERS: If you have an e-mail address and would like us to publish it, please send it in and we will compile a listing. This will be a great way for members of the 69th to communicate. We know that lots of you do, so let's get them in. Please include your unit with the note.

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

I am pleased to state that the Treasury appears to be moving forward in good order with no exceptional news to report. Dues checks have been coming in at a normal rate, perhaps a little better than usual. However, at the time I write this, those of you who forgot to respond to the first Dues Notice have received your 2nd reminder, so please take heed.

I am sure that some of you wonder why it takes so long for your dues check to be processed. The reason is that the dues checks arrive in gigantic spurts. For instance, this year the first dues notice was sent out during the first week of December. About a week before Christmas, the checks started to come in and very soon reached a peak rate of 200 per day! That means that within a short period of time I had about two months worth of work piled up waiting to be done! Since that first dues notice went out, I have processed about 1600 checks, and that includes sending out membership cards, recording changes of address, miscellaneous correspondence, answering questions, etc. So if your checking account statement indicates we have not yet cashed your check, please be patient — I may be working on a thousand checks bearing earlier dates.

It seems to me that the second Bulletin of the year just arrived about two weeks ago and already I have received several reservations for the reunion — and the reunion does not come until November this year! That's the way the reunion is to many members: as soon as they know where it is going to be held, they sign up, because they do not want to miss it. This year's reunion should really be a good one: in addition to the reunion, you can spend another week seeing Disney World and all the other attractions in the

Orlando area. I expect that we are going to have very good attendance.

I close with the usual reminder about sending in dues: Regular Dues \$10.00, Auxiliary \$5.00, and any donations to our Postage/Bulletin Fund will be appreciated. Make checks payable to the 69th Infantry Division Association, Inc.

Bill Robertson Interred at Arlington Cemetery

Submitted by **William R. Matlach**

In the last Bulletin you read that **William D. Robertson** (Headquarters, 1st Battalion, 273rd) had passed away and a memorial service was held in his honor in Culver City, California. However, the article did not mention that his remains had been cremated and it was intended to have the ashes interred at Arlington Cemetery in Washington, DC, pending receipt of necessary authorization.

Arlington completed the arrangements and the interment took place on April 12th, 1999. **Bill Robertson's** three sons, Bruce, Douglas, and Richard, flew in from California bringing the cinerary urn, and the ceremony was attended by a number of 69th veterans and their ladies.

The group initially gathered at the administration building and then proceeded by convoy to the starting point of the ceremony where a large military contingent waited, including a complete caisson with seven white horses, a squad of pall bearers, a full military band, and an honor guard platoon. After placement of the urn on the caisson, the entire entourage marched to the location of the columbarium, followed by the veterans' convoy.

At a sheltered area just outside the columbarium, an army chaplain conducted a memorial service which concluded with rifle volleys, taps, and folding of the flag for presentation to the three sons. The group then entered the columbarium and proceeded to the location of the recess reserved for **Bill Robertson**. The chaplain again addressed the group briefly and Bruce Robertson placed the urn into its recess. In all, the event was quite elaborate and memorable.

After completion of the ceremony, **Bill Beswick** and **Bill Snidow** led us to the location of the recess assigned to **Ray Olson** (A-272) who was interred in the same columbarium in 1996. From the columbarium the 69th group then drove a short distance to visit the 69th Division "Spirit of the Elbe" plaque and, also nearby, the grave of **General Charles Bolte**.

If any of you have the occasion to visit Arlington Cemetery in the future, it might be worthwhile to stop at the points of interest described above which are directly related to the history of the 69th Division.

(NOTE: See photos on the following page.)



Pall bearers carry Robertson urn to caisson.



Placing of urn on caisson.



Ceremony at columbarium prior to emplacing urn.



Columbarium recess of Ray Olson (A-272).



69ers attending: Igor Belousovitch, Bill Snidow, Scott Gresham, Fred Avery, Jim Boris, Bing Poon, Bert Eckert, Bill Matlach, Bill Beswick, Archie Brooke.



Jim Boris at General Bolte's Grave

**1999 69th
Infantry Division
52nd Annual Reunion
November 14th-21st, 1999
ORLANDO, FLORIDA
WYNDHAM ORLANDO RESORT
8001 International Drive**

Ken A. Sawyer, Reunion Chairman
Company D, 273rd Infantry
2311 Skywind Circle
Melbourne, Florida 32935-1460
Telephone: 407/254-7175

The time has come for you to make your plans to attend the next annual reunion. Look in this bulletin for registration forms for the hotel and for the reunion. November may seem a long way off, but this bulletin is the last one you will receive before then.

Did the hotel name raise any eyebrows? In the fall issue I said the reunion would be at the Marriott Orlando. Then in March the Marriott announced that the hotel would be taken over by Wyndham as of April 1st. That was several weeks after the deadline for submission of material for the spring issue. Dottie Witzleb had to do a little scrambling to change my submissions to correspond to the new name. But there was no chance for an explanation. Everything but the name remains the same.

Look at the reunion registration form for the tours, dinners, etc. Refer to the previous bulletin for additional descriptions. A word more about the Orlando tour is needed. One of the stops is at the Tiffany museum in Winter Park. The museum can only handle one bus at a time. This complicates scheduling and probably limits the number of buses we can use. We will probably be all right, but, if this tour appeals to you strongly, be sure to get your reservation in early in case a cut-off is necessary.

The committee recognizes that some of the division board members will wish to visit the space center on Thursday. Consideration is being given to providing a separate van or small bus to accommodate those members. Those members would return by 4:00 p.m. for their meeting. I request that interested board members submit their registrations early to facilitate arrangements.

You have probably read about the fierce competition among our major attractions. This may be working to our advantage, but, of course, there will be a little price increase. Expect to pay in the mid forties instead of the low forties. Or just skip them. After all, many of us aren't thrilled at the idea of being hurled through space.

You can spend more time in the hospitality room at this reunion. We plan to have it open in the morning for coffee and pastries. The hard stuff won't be available until after lunch.

BRING YOUR MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS. We would like to try something NEW. The hotel will have a piano in the room. We must have some pianists; would any of you like to share your talent with us? (Free drinks, of course). We will have copies of sing-along music - words only. Those who play the guitar, the accordion or whatever are also sought. If otherwise willing, would you need an instrument provided? We aren't trying to curtail the spinning of war yarns, but maybe some of our mates would welcome a little diversion.

The Friday picnic is another innovation we are trying. The price is moderate, but the menu is not extensive. There will be sub-type sandwiches and chips along with iced tea and lemonade. We will have island music to entertain us. Hawaiian attire would be in style, weather permitting. A word of caution, those with youthful appetites may find the food inadequate as a substitute for dinner.

There are reasonably priced restaurants in the vicinity. In addition, the hotel is offering a 15% discount on food services purchased in the hotel restaurants and snack bars. Your 69er name tag will be the best proof of your entitlement to the discount.

The ladies will very likely be interested in the BELZ Factory Outlet (over 200 stores) and Designer Outlets (45 stores) on International Drive. The outlets can be reached by the trolley (I Ride) for 25 cents.

We will have promotional material and schedules for some of the major area attractions in the registration room. The hotel's concierge desk is a good source for more material and professional assistance.

I have attempted to update you on our plans for the reunion in Orlando. The reunion registration form provides a good summary of events. If you have misplaced the last bulletin, come early enough to get further details.

Look for the map of the area on a nearby page. The following directions are offered to further assist you if traveling by car:

FROM ORLANDO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

When leaving the airport you will see the "Bee Line Expressway" exit on the right hand side. Take the expressway (State Road 528) heading west. Once on the expressway you will pass two toll booths (\$.75 and \$.50). After the second toll booth take the International Drive exit. The Wyndham Orlando Resort is located three miles ahead on the right hand side at the corner of Sandlake Road and International Drive.

(Continued on Page 9)

52nd ANNUAL 69th DIVISION REUNION
(Continued from Page 8)

FROM FLORIDA TURNPIKE

Exit from the turnpike at I-4. Head west on I-4 and follow the next instruction below.

FROM I-4 - HEADING WEST

Take exit 29A (Sandlake Road exit). Turn left at Sandlake Road. Go approximately two blocks. The Wyndham will be on your right as you cross International Drive.

FROM I-4 HEADING EAST

Take exit 29 (Sandlake Road exit). Turn right on Sandlake Road. Go approximately two blocks. The Wyndham will be on your right as you cross International Drive.

IF FLYING IN, you can take taxi or shuttle to the hotel. The taxi will cost about \$27 and will hold five persons. The shuttle is currently charging \$12 per person each way. Both conveyances can be found at the baggage retrieval level. Reservations are not required prior to arrival.

Remember the cut-off date for hotel reservations is **October 26th, 1999**. That is less than three weeks before the start of the reunion. Better yet, make your reservations now. You can cancel if it becomes necessary.

Celebrating 60 Years

Submitted by their daughter, **Connie Brough**



Connie Brough with parents, Mae and Worley Smith at the 1998 Houston Reunion. Worley was a member of Company K, 271st Infantry. They are familiar faces at the reunions. On July 12th, 1999, they celebrated their 60th Wedding Anniversary. 69th Division friends interested in congratulating Mae and Worley may write to them at:

Mae and Worley Smith
7213 South Shore Drive
Bear Lake, Michigan 49614

Message from the President



James E. Boris

6800 Henry Avenue
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19128
Telephone: 215/483-2064

On April 12th we attended the placement of the Ashes of former **Lt. William Robertson** in the depository in Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia. The remains of Lt. Robertson were brought from California by his three sons. It was very gratifying to see so many members of the 69th Association in attendance to show their respect for our former comrade.

The ceremony was very impressive with a large military band, firing squad, and a horse-drawn caisson, which took the remains to the burial sight.

Thank you to all members who attended and may our comrade rest in peace.

A Book Review - "G.I."

Submitted by: **Jim Kidd**

Company F, 271st Infantry

222 Al-Fan Court, Winchester, Kentucky 40391

"**G.I.**" by Lee Kennett is a book that should interest anybody who served in World War II.

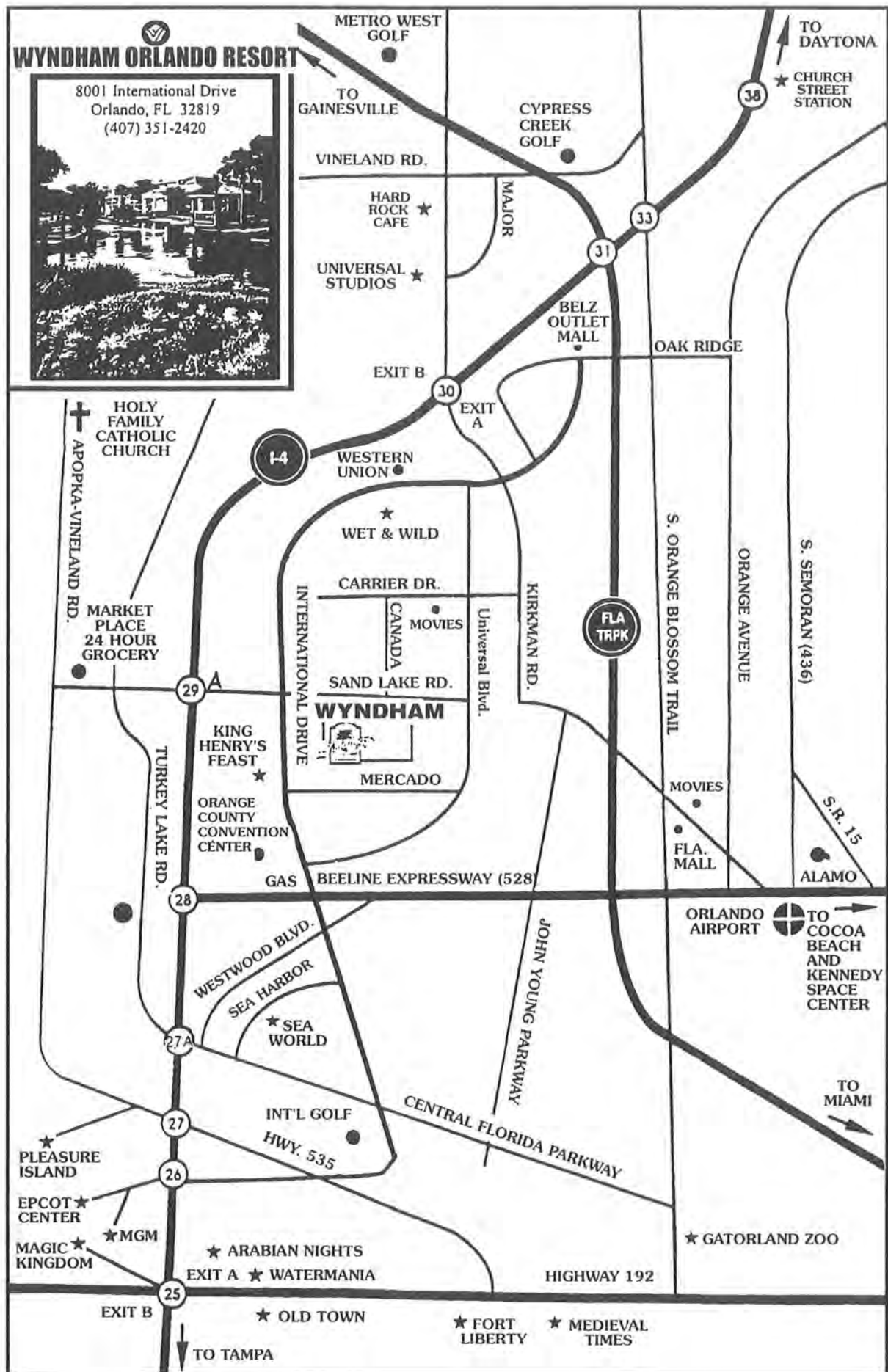
I ran across this book in the library and found it to be fascinating. It is **our** history. The book's subtitle is "**The American Soldier in World War II.**"

It enlightened me on how the Selective Service system (draft) worked. For example the draft early on started using psychiatrists to determine how fit men were for service. At first that failed because most of the doctors were from the Northeast, and they did not understand soldiers from other parts of the country, especially the South and the Eastern Mountain area.

Europeans were accustomed to precision marching, such as the German goose step and the British high-swinging arms. A Czech villager said to an American officer as they watched U.S. troops marching by, "They walk like free men."

Every 69th veteran will enjoy reading this book.

Orlando Area Map



Joe Morrison writes . . .

*Cannon Company, 271st Infantry Regiment
1221 Evergreen Avenue S.
Clearwater, Florida 33756-4286*

Some time ago you gave me the information needed to become a member of the association. I received my very own bulletin recently and also some back copies which I enjoyed very much. I wish to thank you for sending them to me. After reading them I forwarded them to an old foxhole buddy I have come into contact with after fifty-five years. I mailed dues for myself and my buddy to the treasurer in hopes that he also would be added to the organization's mailing list.

His name is **Tom C. Cogbill**, HC73, Box 127, Star City, Arizona 71667-9305. Both of us entered the service at the beginning of the 69th Division and stayed together in the 271st Regiment until war's end when it broke up. We were in Cannon Company.

I sure do hope I can make the Orlando reunion but my wife is in poor health and it's difficult for me to leave her but if possible, I will be there to meet everyone attending. I know some day in the not too distant future we will have the biggest reunion of them all on the other side. Thanks for keeping the association alive.



Tom Cogbill and Joe Morrison

In Memory of the Little Soldier

By Joe Morrison

He was always smiling and laughing and endeavoring to make the situation better than it was. A little boyish looking guy of Italian descent and full of mischief, loved by everyone and his genuine personality expressed love and respect of his fellowman. He was always on the spot when a helping hand was needed and never shirked a duty. I knew him well enough to know he would lay down his own life gladly to save a fellow soldier and he would be the first to volunteer to give his life for his country. He was all American.

He enjoyed getting a joke on others but when the table turned and the joke was on him, he would bubble over with laughter.

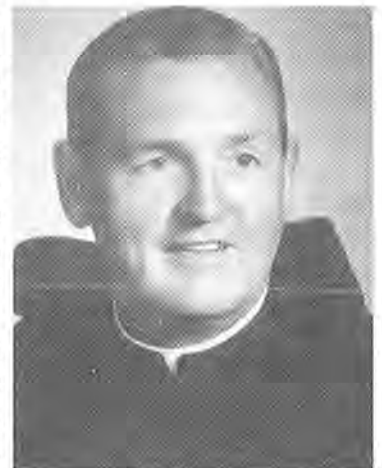
I remember one night as we were passing through Camp Kilmer enroute to combat, it was past time for the lights to be out and the noise level had grown rampant. Our C.O. called out, "At ease in there, and get them lights out." This little soldier screamed out, "You tell 'em wheel, you've got the spokes." The C.O. entered the barracks; the building grew suddenly noiseless and his deep voice asked, "Who said it? Is he man enough to step forward or shall I punish you all?" This big little fellow came forward and said, "It was I sir," then gave his name and rank. The C.O. did an about face, turned the lights out and said, "Good night men." I must add it was a quiet night and all got a much needed night's rest.

Not long after entering combat, we unknowingly came upon a nest of 88's. A barrage moved in and this little soldier took a hit. There was little cover to be had but some brave soldier dragged him in front of the rear wheels of a 6x6. Then the second barrage came in and one made a near direct hit on this little brave one and it was all over for him. What a chilling experience that was. But we all knew it was our duty to carry on and that's the only way **P.F.C. Melvin Curtaccio** of Cannon Company, 271st Infantry, would have had it. Like four hundred and two others from the Fighting 69th Division, he had laid down his life for his fellow man and country.

Former 69th Chaplain Frank Calkins Dies

Fr. Frank M. Calkins, a seminary instructor, mission preacher, and parish priest, died January 11, 1999 at Addolorata Villa in Wheeling, Illinois. He was 92 years old and had been a Servite priest for 68 years.

From 1942 to 1946 he was a Chaplain in the United States Army, serving in New Guinea.



John O'Connor remembers him as one of the chaplains at Camp Shelby who was transferred out to the Pacific Theater and thought that some of the other members would also remember him.

Submitted by: **John J. O'Connor**

Headquarters, 880th Field Artillery

9321 Jefferson Avenue, Brookfield, Illinois 60513-1209

69th INFANTRY DIVISION ASSOCIATION 1999
52nd ANNUAL REUNION
461st AAA BN. - 661st T.D. BN. - 777th TANK BN.
Wyndham Orlando Resort
ORLANDO, FLORIDA
NOVEMBER 14th thru NOVEMBER 21st, 1999

SEND THIS RESERVATION FORM TO:

ATTENTION: RESERVATIONS

WYNDHAM ORLANDO RESORT

8001 INTERNATIONAL DRIVE, ORLANDO, FLORIDA 32819

Telephone: 407/351-2420 or 1-800-421-8001 Fax: 407/352-8759

HOUSING: Please reserve one of the following:

\$77.00 + Single _____ \$77.00 + Double - 2 persons _____ \$87.00 + Triple - 3 persons _____

\$97.00 + Quadruple - 4 persons _____ ALL ROOMS ADD 11% TAX

Print full names of ALL persons sharing room: _____

NOTE: Special accommodations required: (if available)

HANDICAPPED _____ KING SIZE BED _____ 2 DOUBLE BEDS _____ NON-SMOKING _____

I / We plan to arrive (day) _____, November _____, 1999. (Check in after 4:00 p.m.)

I / We plan to depart (day) _____, November _____, 1999. (Check out before 11:00 a.m.)

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

If possible, I/We wish to be quartered near other guests from the same Unit (Specify) _____

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 WYNDHAM ORLANDO RESORT, or

Major Credit Card and Date of Expiration. The following Credit Cards are accepted:

American Express, Master Card, Visa Card, Diner's Club, Carte Blanche and Discover.

Credit Card Name _____ Number _____ Expires _____

I, (your signature) _____ authorize the WYNDHAM ORLANDO RESORT to
make charges on my credit card. Date: _____

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.

Reservations must be received not later than **October 26, 1999**. After this date the group's blocked rooms will be released for
immediate resale. Reservations requested after this date will be on a space available basis at the group rate. Group rates can only
be offered for the dates of the reunion. If a particular type of room is unavailable, the next most suitable room will be assigned.
No particular room, room type, or location can be guaranteed. Deposit returnable on 48 hour cancellation notice prior to your
arrival date.

69th INFANTRY DIVISION ASSOCIATION 1999

52nd ANNUAL REUNION

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

WYNDHAM ORLANDO RESORT - ORLANDO, FLORIDA

NOVEMBER 14th thru NOVEMBER 21st, 1999

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 Orlando, Florida during the week of November 14th thru 21st, 1999 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 , 9:00 a.m. to Noon and 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. (Check the Bulletin Board for Changes)			
Sunday, November 14th — Early Arrivals on your own.			
Monday, November 15th — Check Bulletin Board and Hospitality Room.			
Tuesday, November 16th — KING HENRY'S FEAST - 6:00 to 10:00 p.m.	\$ 35.00	_____	\$ _____
Wednesday, November 17th — ORLANDO TOUR	\$ 25.00	_____	\$ _____
9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Lunch on your own.			
ARABIAN NIGHTS DINNER - 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.	\$ 35.00	_____	\$ _____
Thursday, November 18th — KENNEDY SPACE CENTER	\$ 30.00	_____	\$ _____
8:45 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Lunch on your own.			
GOLF TOURNAMENT — 9:00 a.m. Check Bulletin Board for details.	\$ 28.00	_____	\$ _____
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING — 4:00 p.m. Check Bulletin Board			
EARLY BIRD DINNER , Cash Bar-6:00 p.m., Dinner 7:00 p.m.	\$ 30.00	_____	\$ _____
Selections: New York Strip____, Chicken Breast Oscar____, Tortellini Primavera____			
Friday, November 19th — CYPRESS GARDENS	\$ 32.00	_____	\$ _____
8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Lunch on your own.			
PICNIC IN PAVILION — 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.	\$ 10.00	_____	\$ _____
PX BEER PARTY — 8:30 p.m. to 12:00 Midnight	\$ 5.00	_____	\$ _____
Saturday, November 20th — COFFEE AND DANISH - 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.			
GENERAL MEMBERSHIP and LADIES AUXILIARY MEETING. 9:00 a.m. to Noon			
BANQUET — Cash Bar 6:00 to 7:00 p.m.			
Selections: Prime Rib____, Chicken Wellington____, Vegetarian Strudel____			
MEMORIAL SERVICE — 7:00 to 7:30 p.m.			
DINNER DANCE - 8:30 p.m. to 12:00 Midnight	\$ 30.00	_____	\$ _____
Sunday, November 21st - Farewell Breakfast - 7:30-10:30 a.m.	\$ 12.00	_____	\$ _____
Replacement Cost for Lost or Broken Permanent Badges	\$ 4.00	_____	\$ _____
SUPPORT YOUR HOSPITALITY ROOM: DONATIONS PLEASE!!!			\$ _____
DUES — New Dues Year - August 1, 1999 to July 31, 2000		Reunion Sub-Total	\$ _____
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.

Company A, 1st Bn., 2nd Platoon, 273rd Infantry

Submitted by: **John Durst**

1832 Alta Street, Redlands, California 92374-1718



*Pfc. John B. Durst
at Ordnance Technical School
in Hiedenheim, Germany*



S. Sgt. Roy Irvin, Guide



Jerome Ghedotti



*City Hall in Leipzig after being hit by artillery.
German snipers were all over the building. According to
Ed Lucci, 200 SS men were inside.*



Bill McDermott and John Durst



*1st Lieutenant
Russell J.
Haberman,
our C.O.
since Wurzen.*

The Advance Patrol

Written by: **Robert L. Muckel**

Company I, 273rd Regiment, 3rd Platoon, 1st Squad

655 S. Chiques Road

Manheim, Pennsylvania 17545

We had just crossed the Rhine River in Germany. Our first squad of the Third Platoon of Company I, 273rd. Infantry Regiment, composed of twelve men is being sent out ahead of our troops to try and make contact with the retreating Germans. We carried a small "walkie-talkie," a two-way radio to keep in touch with our Company. After walking along a hard road through a thick forest of tall fir trees for about two hours, we tried to call our Company on the radio but received no response. Evidently, we were too far ahead and out of range. Up ahead of us were wooded hills and the road made a sharp right turn. We kept on walking. Suddenly we heard the sound of German machine-guns - Brrrrr At burrr At ... The bullets are smacking into the road all around us. The German gunners must have hidden in the woods in front of us.

Corporal Earl Riley, our assistant Squad Leader, gave an order, "Quick, down over the bank and into the woods on our right." We ran down the bank, into the woods and kept on running until we no longer heard the sound of firing machine guns. Out of breath, we finally stopped and took a little rest then walked to the edge of the woods, and came out on the same road we had just left but a lot further ahead.

On our front in the near distance was a small village. There were no civilians in sight. We talked over the situation and decided to approach the place and look it over. The doors on most of the buildings which we checked were locked. The village consisted of a main street lined with homes on both sides and a large town square on the right hand side.

I stood in the middle of the square wondering what to do next. I was thinking, "One of these homes must have a wine cellar. Now the Burgermeister, (the mayor) I know, would have a nice one." But which house is his? As I stood there thinking, a young boy suddenly appeared as if out of nowhere, and came walking down the street. I called out to him, "Come here." As he came closer I looked him over. He was about 10 to 12 years old with black hair. He wore high black leather shoes, black woolen shorts and a short sleeved white shirt. I thought to myself, "This boy must be a member of the Hitler youth. Most of the boys his age were." When he stopped in front of me, I asked him in German who the Burgermeister was. He answered in perfect English, "My father is the Burgermeister. Do you wish to speak to him?" Well, standing there with my jaws hanging down to the ground, I said yes. The boy said, "Wait here and I will bring him to you." I watched him go up the street and disappear into one of the large homes on the square.

Several minutes later, he came walking down the street with his father who was about the biggest German I had ever seen. That fellow must have been close to seven feet tall with shoulders that looked to be about three feet wide. He had on knee high shiny black leather boots, coal black riding breeches and a long sleeved white shirt. He stopped about five feet in front of me. I kept my rifle pointed at him. As I looked up at him, I felt like Jack and the Beanstalk when he looked up at this giant. He also spoke perfect English. He said, "I am the Burgermeister. What can I do for you?" I answered, "Take me to your house. I want to check it for weapons." He said, "Very well, follow me." I did, keeping a close watch on him and the boy.

As we entered his home, I was surprised by the beautiful interior. The walls were all covered with a wood paneling. I believe it was walnut. For a moment I had forgotten about this big German in front of me, when suddenly I heard a metallic click. It sounded like the safety of a gun being disengaged. I quickly swung my head around and snapped off the safety of my M1 rifle. In the quietness of the room, it made a real loud sound. My rifle was pointed at the middle of his back and about five feet away.

Along the one wall of the room he was facing was a bookcase which stretched from the floor to the ceiling. He had one of the small glass doors to a shelf hanging open. When he heard the loud noise of my gun's safety, he quickly threw both hands up in the air. In his right hand he held a pistol, in his left hand he held a clip full of bullets. With my finger still on the trigger, I pressed my rifle into his back and grabbed the pistol and clip from his hands. The pistol was a small black automatic, a twenty-five caliber Walther. I put him, his son and his wife in a clothes closet and put a chair against the door. I then looked around the room for an entrance to the cellar. I finally found the door. It was concealed behind a wall panel.

Finding a light switch I turned on the light and went down the stairs. I looked around the basement for any dangerous weapons. Then I saw the shelves loaded with bottles. I picked a bunch of them up in my arms and ran up the cellar steps and outside onto the street. I then called to the other guys in our squad, "Hey, look what I found." They came running over and went down into the cellar and each grabbed an armful and came back up. We stood there for a minute or so talking. We thought it best to get off the street.

Right across from us was a big, three story building with an attic window from which we could see the whole village square plus both the entrance and exit of the main street. Climbing up the three flights of stairs to the attic, we first posted a guard at the attic window to keep watch for any enemy activity, then the rest of us sat and stood around just making ourselves comfortable. We inspected the loot we had carried from the

(Continued on Page 16)

THE ADVANCE PATROL

(Continued from Page 15)

cellar. There was some nice stuff there - white Rhine wine, German schnapps - we removed the corks and started drinking.

Eventually, I fell asleep. It was late at night and real dark outside with no moonlight to aid in visibility of the outside street area. We were all awakened by the noise of hobnailed boots hitting the cobblestone street just below our room. We heard a voice counting cadence in German, "Left, right, left, right, left." There must have been hundreds of them. They seemed to be marching in perfect order. What could we do? There were only 12 of us. We thought it best to keep out of sight and be very quiet. I thought about the mayor and his wife and son across the street. Were they still locked up in the clothes closet, or had the big fellow broken his way out by now? And would he come running out on the street and tell the marching German troops about us being upstairs in the attic across the street?

There must be some other German civilians in some of the homes behind those locked doors. Maybe one of them would come out and give away our hiding place. We stood there nervously waiting to see what might happen. At any moment we expected to hear and see machine gun bullets come ripping through the floor boards and walls of our room. We waited and waited, but still heard nothing but marching feet. We could not understand why no one told of our presence there. Maybe the townspeople were tired of war. Then again, maybe they were afraid of getting hit by one of the many bullets that would be fired by both sides. Whatever the case was, we were darned lucky. At last the sound of marching feet faded away in the distance.

There was no doubt in our minds that these German soldiers were the same ones that had fired on us earlier in the day when we were walking along the road. That big German mayor was about thirty-five years old and the clothes he had on - those black leather boots, black breeches and long sleeved white shirt - I didn't find out until years later that this was the dress uniform of Hitler's SS corps. They were the worst Nazi fanatics in the German military. The only reason he did not give us away I think, was because he was worried about the safety of his wife and son who were there with him. If his wife and son were miles away in a safe place, he would probably have been down there leading his comrades and shooting at us.

Finally, the light of morning came and we were looking out the attic window. Off in the distance could be seen a long line of troops coming in our direction. "My God," we thought, "not more Germans. How much longer is our luck going to last?"

As they came closer we recognized them as our own Company I of the 273rd Regiment. What a relief. The first thing they did was holler out, "Where the hell were you guys?"

The Cigarette

We were advancing through a big ravine in the forest, when shells began exploding nearby. Someone shouted, "Take cover." I was walking on the side of the ravine about halfway down from the top. I stopped under a big tree with thick branches on it, thinking that it may give me some protection from shrapnel. The area around the tree was covered with a thick layer of dead tree leaves. I thought to myself that if there were any Germans lurking around there, I would make a good target for them sitting there in the open like I was. So I stretched out on the ground and covered my whole body with tree leaves, all except for a small area for my eyes to peek through. It was warm and comfortable under the pile of leaves. I closed my eyes to take a little catnap and fell sound asleep.

When I woke up, everything was quiet. I looked around for my buddies. There was no one else around. What should I do? I just couldn't sit there in the middle of nowhere doing nothing. I decided that the only thing I could do was to get up and walk in the same general direction we had been going when the shelling started. Maybe I would get lucky and catch up with my company. I walked slowly along the side of the ravine observing every tree and bush around me. Looking for any signs of movement, I expected to see a German pop up at any second. I continued walking - how far and how long, I can't remember. The darkness of night was coming on. I decided to leave the ravine. I turned to my left and climbed to the top checking out the area.

Sitting in the woods about a hundred feet in front of me was a small, one story frame building. It was raised up off the ground about two feet, and rested on log piers. At the front door was a set of wooden steps leading up to it. There was a light inside but I couldn't see anything as the window blinds were down. I thought it might be a forest keeper's hut. I stood there and watched the place for about twenty minutes. No sound came from the building. Well, I couldn't just stand there all night long so I walked over to the steps moving slowly, trying not to make any noise. I went up the steps and slowly turned the door handle opening it just a crack, then swung it completely open. I rushed inside with my finger on the trigger of my rifle, ready for whatever may have awaited me. The only furniture in the one room hut was a small desk and chair at the far wall facing the front door.

Behind the desk sitting on a chair was a portly, middle aged German officer. He was bare headed with his arms lying on the desk. His gray, high peaked cap with its black visor lay on the desk beside him. I looked around for his weapon - I didn't see any. He may have taken it off and put it in a drawer. He sat there quietly looking at me. I thought to myself, "I must have walked into the whole damned German army. Now I

(Continued on Page 17)

THE CIGARETTE

(Continued from Page 16)

am in real trouble. The question is, who is going to end up as whose prisoner?" I stood there wondering what to do about the situation. Heck, I couldn't stand there forever. Still keeping my eyes on the German, I shut the door behind me, then walked over to a corner of the room so I could keep an eye on both him and the front door.

The officer sat there quietly not saying a word or moving. Both of his hands were clasped together lying on the desk. Suddenly he broke the silence. Looking up at me he said, "Would you have an extra cigarette I could have?" I thought, who knows how this thing may turn out. If I do take him prisoner, what would I do with him? Heck, I didn't even know where I was or what I was going to do. I had no idea where my company was or if I was surrounded by Germans or not. Heck, I may even end up as his prisoner. Maybe by giving him a cigarette, there was a chance of softening up his attitude towards me. At a time like this, one has a tendency to grasp at straws.

I approached the desk in front of him, holding my rifle pointed at his chest. I took out a cigarette and matches and threw them down on the desk. He put the cigarette in his mouth, lit it up, took a deep drag, leaned back in his chair, blew the smoke up in the air and said, "This war is over for me." I stood there trying to comprehend the meaning of his words, when I suddenly heard voices and footsteps outside the front door. I jumped behind the officer with my rifle pointed at the door, thinking to myself that this was it. The door opened and in stepped a soldier, an American soldier. One of our men. He walked up to the officer and said, "O.K. Major, we are ready for you." I just stood there speechless. What a relief that was. The officer had been their prisoner all along, just sitting there waiting for them to come back for him. This explained the absence of a personal weapon such as a pistol, which all officers wore.

Why didn't he tell me this. Maybe he thought I was sent back to guard him until they returned. Oh well, live and learn.

The following article appeared in the Louisville Courier-Journal on July 4th, 1997.

Can't Desecrate the Flag

Written by **James R. Kidd**

Company F, 271st Infantry

222 Al-Fan Court

Winchester, Kentucky 40391

"Nobody can desecrate the U.S. flag. It has already been so consecrated by those who served in the U.S. military services that no one can put it to shame."

— **James R. Kidd, Winchester, Ky. 40391**

* * * * *

Several weeks ago, I received a letter addressed to me personally, as a veteran, from 6th District Rep. Scotty Baesler. In it he touted his efforts to move for passage a proposed amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which would make unlawful any desecration of the United States flag.

My first reaction was: What a waste of taxpayers' money to send an individual letter on this one subject to every veteran in this district, which is what I supposed he had done. There must be many thousands of veterans in the 6th District from World War I up through the Persian Gulf War.

Then, my next thought was: Nobody can desecrate the U.S. flag. It has already been so consecrated by those who served in the U.S. military services that no one can put it to shame. Some of us fought the enemy and survived; some had their blood spilled on foreign soil and survived. Others made the supreme sacrifice with their deaths in battle.

Abraham Lincoln said it best in November, 1863 in his address at the Gettysburg battlefield cemetery: "... we cannot dedicate — we cannot consecrate — we cannot hallow — this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract . . ."

I hope the U.S. Senate has enough sense to stop this proposed amendment.

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

FIGHTING 69th BULLETIN, P.O. Box 69, Champion, Pennsylvania 15622-0069

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

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

DO NOT SEND DUES TO THE BULLETIN OR BOB!!

DUES GO TO OUR TREASURER, WILLIAM MATLACH.

69th Infantry Division Year 2000 55th Anniversary Tour

William R. Beswick
Company B, 661st Tank Destroyers
P.O. Box 576
West Point, Virginia 23181-0576
E-Mail: BandJBes@aol.com

To all 69'ers:

We are going to try to make this exciting and interesting for everyone - for those people that have never been there before and for those who have.

The trip will cover most of the interesting areas that you thought you would never return from and were continually threatened with losing your life. Then we will follow up with some beautiful areas that I am sure will be exciting for everyone.

Come on!!!! and accompany each other for a journey of REMEMBRANCE, more especially for the LEIPZIG and TORGAU areas. We will also visit your MEMORIALS in TORGAU and STREHLA, Germany.

We will attend church in EISENACH, Germany on EASTER SUNDAY. I understand it is a beautiful church.

MINIMUM PAYING PASSENGERS	1999 PRICES PER PERSON
150-159	\$2216
140-149	\$2241
130-139	\$2255
120-129	\$2268
110-119	\$2308
100-109	\$2348

Single room supplement \$423 per person

Triple room reduction \$22 per person

Do not STOP here. There will be optional days in Italy for a few dollars more. We should do it while we can. It will be slightly more than in 1995 for the additional days, but the more people, the less the cost. Rates are subject to change, and are never guaranteed until actually paid in full.

We have arranged this initial part of the tour for the people who do not want to be away from home too long. A second portion is for those people who want to see and do it all, including several more days in Italy. You will never regret spending an additional \$1100, maybe a few more dollars, but not much. I believe the entire tour, including the time in Italy will be about twenty-one or twenty-two days. I must add here that the tour was divided into two portions, in case some people may feel that \$3300 or \$3400 may be too much money. Air fare is additional, but a special group rate will be available. Cancellation insurance is encouraged. In fact, I encourage it.

Please give me your thoughts. The added portion will be well worth it. We will go regardless of the choice. COME ON!!!! LET'S GO and enjoy ourselves.

We have had people ask if we were going to various locations that we and they had been to before. Therefore we will visit some of those sights plus places that none of us have been to before. AGAIN, let's go and enjoy.

I hope this is enough information to get you interested. All services covered by this proposed itinerary are subject to the terms and conditions specified by the suppliers. For further information and a brochure, please write:

American Express

1150 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036
or call them at 1-800-288-8796

or write

William R. Beswick

P.O. Box 576, West Point, Virginia 23181-0576
or call 1-804-843-2696
E-Mail: BandJBes@aol.com.

2000 TOUR SCHEDULE

Tuesday April 15th: Depart U.S.A.

Wednesday April 19th: Arrive Brussels and transfer to hotel, remainder of day at your leisure, to rest up after the overnight flight and to visit the Town Square.

Thursday April 20th: To Aachen. Areas and sights to be visited today are Margraten and Henri-Chappelle Cemeteries with Memorial Services to HONOR our friends. Also visit Reischeld, Meischeld, Geischeld, Bulligen, Krinkelt Church, Hollerath and especially the Dragon Teeth at Reischeld.

Friday April 21st: To Koblenz. Area sights to be visited today are Bad Ems, Fort Ehrenbretstein and sightseeing.

Saturday April 22nd: To Kassel. Remagen Bridge Museum, Rhine River walk, refreshments, Hercules Monument and area.

Sunday April 23rd: To Leipzig. Area sights to be visited today are Eisenach, where East Germany started. We will attend Easter Services in one of the oldest and I understand one of the most beautiful churches. Travel through some of the 69th battlefields of Gotha, Erfurt, Weimar, maybe visit Buchenwald, Weissenfels and Lutzen. Lutzen was the Battalion CP for the 661st Tank Destroyer Battalion, immediately after the war ended.

Monday April 24th: Leipzig. Area sights to be visited today, we will motor to Colditz, the site of the famous Colditz Castle Prison. Some of our troops were stationed here, (maybe you were one of them). Return to Leipzig and visit the old Railway Station that we had to take, Monument of Nations, St. Thomas' Church. A short tour of the city, may bring memories back to you.

Tuesday April 25th: Depart for Torgau. No later than 8:00 a.m., visit Eilenburg for about an hour.

(Continued on Page 19)

69th YEAR 2000 55th ANNIVERSARY TOUR

(Continued from Page 18)

Depart Eilenburg no later than 9:30 a.m. We must arrive in TORGAU by 10:30 a.m. to be received by Bergermeister (Mayor) Gerstenberg. Depart for the 69th MEMORIAL on the East bank of the ELBE RIVER for MEMORIAL SERVICES at 12:00 Noon. Return to town for lunch. Depart Torgau for STREHLA MEMORIAL PARK at 2:00 p.m. for JOINT MEMORIAL SERVICES at 3:15 p.m. Visit around Strehla for gifts, return to lodging.

This evening is the 55th Anniversary Dinner
(Tickets required)

Wednesday April 26th: Torgau. Today we will have a walking tour of Torgau with three or four English speaking guides. (We know them, they are very knowledgeable and friendly). Visit Hartenfels Castle, Castle Church, Castle Museum, with many artifacts of bygone days. See our 69th Banner and the American Flag displayed in the Museum. They were presented to the present Mayor (GERSTENBERG) during East Germany's communist period in April 1985. Visit St. Mary's Church across the street. It was constructed in the year 725.

Break for lunch, there's lots of places.

1:30 or 2:00 p.m., we will board the busses for a visit to a stud (horse) farm to visit the site of the banquet room where General Rhinehart and the Soviet officers had their first official meeting and banquet. Visit the horses in their stalls on a short walk, a beautiful place. Board the busses for the short trip back to town, shopping and your lodging.

Thursday, April 27th: To Munich. Area sights to be visited are Dachua Concentration Camp and city tour.

Friday April 28th: To St. Moritz. Visit Garmische and sightseeing. Afternoon free for walking tour, shopping and visit the local museum.

Saturday April 29th: To Zermatt. (Via Glacier Express, a fabulous trip) Visit Zermatt and get some rest.

Sunday April 30th: Zermatt. Buffet breakfast at hotel. Rail excursion to the Gornergrat, it's fabulous. It's also a full day. Overnight in Zermatt.

Monday May 1st: Zermatt to Boven, Italy. Buffet breakfast at hotel before departure. Rail travel from Zermatt to Tasch to rejoin your motor coach. Depart Tasch and drive to Boven on Lake Maggiore. Further south in Milan, on April 28th of 1945, Benito Mussolini was shot and killed after he was caught by Italian Partisans as he was attempting to flee Italy.

Overnight stay in Boven.

Tuesday May 2nd: Depart Boven to Milan and depart for home. Full breakfast before departing hotel.

I Remember Bed-Check-Charlie

George F. Hunter

Company K, 272nd Infantry

724 E. Stroop Road, Kettering, Ohio 45429-3228

December 1943, I went overseas with the 313th Sta. Hospital as a bugler. I was sent out on detached service several times. Since they didn't need a bugler, I was sent to Tidsworth outside of Salisbury, then back to my company in Barnstaple. Then in June of 1944, I was sent to Dartmouth, where we fed invasion troops. About every half hour they would come through and eat stew, peaches and coffee, then back down to their boats on the Dart River. It was really a beautiful place, that's where the British Naval College is. The night of the invasion, I'll never forget all the planes flying overhead during the night while we were trying to sleep. We started tearing down tents around Plymouth and Torquay. Tents, stoves, tissues, cigarettes were all buried. Then I went back to my outfit in Barnstaple.

In November of 1944 I was sent back to Salisbury for six weeks of infantry training. I joined the 69th before or after I crossed the channel. I remember being in a covered boxcar, and the train stopped at a intersection of a small town. So a bunch of us jumped off and ran up the street to a small cafe. We started drinking something that was clear and tasted good. After awhile the train blew its whistle, and we ran back to the train. I remember sitting in the doorway with my feet dangling out, and some kids were running back and forth begging for some "cow gummie." Then my lights went out, I just went crazy. I know it took half of the guys to hold me down. When we got to France it was dark, but there was a bright moon. We unloaded. I had lost my horseshoe which had my half tent and pegs. I started wandering around town trying to find Co. K. It must have been an M.P. who led me to a barn. I was up in the hay mound. From there we went into the woods. Since I had lost my tent and pegs, I had to double up with someone else. Each night they'd say, "Well who's he going to sleep with tonight." Three in a pup tent is pretty crowded. But it wasn't long before we began sleeping in houses. I took it easy on the kimmel after this.

We rode tanks into Leipzig. Another moonlit night. We had foxholes by the railroad station. I must have fallen asleep, when a German patrol came into town. **Fulcher**, who was a few foxholes over from me, woke me up. He said "you could of gotten your throat cut."

From there we went to Waldorf. I remember a food shortage there. Also when **Harry Capano**, our B.A.R. man and I were on guard duty, we were standing under a bent up old shed. They had a tractor in it. Somebody threw a rock on the roof. It crashed right on top of us. Luckily we weren't hurt. From there we went to Bremmerhaven. Schnapps and 9% German beer. But no kimmel. Lots of good schnapps and parties.

I came home January 1946. My leader was **Harold Stoddard**, who lives in Four Oaks, North Carolina. I called him recently. He is really a nice person.

Another Way the Veteran's Budget has been Cut

Submitted by: **Gaylord W. Thomas**
Headquarters, 777th Tank Battalion
423 Doty Street
Waupun, Wisconsin 53963-2124

This article, apparented, appeared in a local newspaper which was unidentified.

Program set aside for vet headstone or marker very limited, at best

By **Mark H. Grams, CVSO**
Dodge County Veterans Service Officer

I would like to make everyone aware of a program available to veterans. Or should I say the stipulations of a program. The program is administered by the Federal Government and has to do with a headstone or marker for a veteran.

A headstone or marker will be furnished upon application for the UNMARKED grave of any deceased veteran who was discharged under conditions other than dishonorable. The applicant must certify that the grave is unmarked and a government headstone or marker is preferred to a privately purchased headstone or marker. This restriction also applies to companion markers.

Companion markers identify two or more descendants buried, or to be buried, in the same or adjoining graves. A grave is considered marked if a monument displays the descendant's name and dates of birth and/or death, **EVEN THOUGH THE VETERAN'S MILITARY DATA IS NOT SHOWN.**

A government provided headstone or marker may not be used as a foot stone or to supplement a private monument or to be affixed to an existing inscribed monument.

If anyone would like to confirm this policy, the toll-free number to the Memorial Service Program in Washington, DC is 1-800-697-6947.

I do not agree with this policy and have contacted my federal legislator. I suggest that anyone who feels all veterans should get a government marker should do the same.

I hope this clears up any misconceptions on this program. I know what you will see if you go to any local cemetery, but that does not change the policy.

My suggestion is if you want a government marker, do not purchase a private one. You can get a flat marble or granite marker, an upright marble or granite marker or a flat bronze marker or niche from the government. The spouse may have her information put on the marker also.

Another suggestion - if you have purchased or desire to purchase a private monument, have the veteran's military information engraved by the monument company.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: From the information we received, it seems that this bill was enacted on April 13, 1999 in the House of Representatives. It states that it "applies with respect to applications for Government headstones or markers received by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for individuals dying on or after November 1, 1990.)"

Legislature Approves Additional Funds for Camp Shelby Museum

Additional \$2 million assures active personnel, veterans and their families of a first class repository for military history.

The 1999 Legislature approved an additional \$2 million bond authorization to complete the original building design of Mississippi's only Armed Forces Museum, and to establish state-of-the-art exhibits inside the building. When the contract was let last year to construct the new building, it was necessary to delete a storage room, a centerpiece medal of honor room in the open courtyard and landscaping and parking projects from the original building design in order to stay within the \$2.5 million previously authorized by the Legislature.

Going a step further, the lawmakers approved an appropriation to the Military Department's fiscal 2000 budget to take care of routine administrative expenses and to hire a full time curator and supporting personnel to operate, maintain and continuously improve the museum. During the past nine years the current museum had been operated with one part-time curator.

Emphasis on Educating Future Generations

The Armed Forces Museum Foundation Board of Directors will be working with the Military Department and full time personnel to promote the museum as a foremost tourist attraction and as a means of educating Mississippi school children and future generations about the history of all branches of military service.

Veterans, family members and friends are urged to join the Armed Forces Museum to help develop and continue to develop a museum of which all Americans can be proud.

For further information about the museum or to make a donation, write to:

Armed Forces Museum Foundation, Inc.
Building #350
Camp Shelby, Mississippi 39407-5500

369th Medical Battalion Member Writes . . .

William F. Bowman

Headquarters, 369th Medical Battalion

605 Wilder Drive

Charlottesville, Virginia 22901-3916

This picture was taken at a German Army Barracks in Weissenfels, Germany in July 1944. I carried this picture in my wallet ever since.

The tall one is me and the short one is **Engelbert Anderau**. We were both members of the 369th Medical Battalion.

He was a mechanic in the motor pool and I was in Headquarters. Andy died on December 29th, 1998 in Houston, Texas. He was a great pal.

I enjoy reading the bulletin, but seldom see material about the 369th Medical Battalion.

See you at the next reunion!

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Bill, if you want to see material on the 369th Medical Battalion, then you and your buddies better get on the stick and send it in. Remember, all material in the bulletin is submitted by our members. We are not selective. We print what we receive. We will be waiting to hear from you fellows. Get your material in.)



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Church Call, Our Religious Duty

Submitted by **Arthur S. Moore**

Battery C, 881st Field Artillery

55 Highgate Road, #C-4

Newington, Connecticut 06111-5251

This story is about **Lieutenant Rieneke** and it is a true story. It wasn't the only time he enforced church call. He was a strong Catholic and believed in divine help - and who needs more help than a soldier in wartime. I cannot tell you where this church was or what village it was in. I never knew where we were except somewhere in Germany. This is not the only time he took us to church but it is the one I remember the best. The story is as follows.

* * * * *

There is always a military chaplain on call or on duty for every GI who needs spiritual guidance or to get things off his chest that may be bothering him. Those GI's who attended mass in civilian life were usually the ones who went to church at the base chapel on Sundays. And of course there were those who, away from Mom and Dad, opted to sleep late instead of going to church on Sundays. Yes, I was one of those too but didn't make it a habit. Rainy Sundays I usually stayed in bed late. Whenever I spent Saturday night in the city I usually tried to find a Catholic church to attend. We had only one Catholic officer in our battery, a **Lt. Rieneke**, a very fair and serious, no nonsense officer. I've seen many a cot and sleeper dumped over on the floor a half hour before Church Call and the unhappy sleeper better be on the truck when it pulled out. Cussing and griping was expected when the lieutenant was out of earshot but the "victim" was always on the truck when the time came.

The following story took place in one of the border towns in Germany. The Germans had retreated several miles past the town and the town was virtually in "no man's land," an area given up or abandoned by the Germans and soon to be captured by the Americans. Most of the small border towns had one church which meant one religion, Catholic. The churches were identified by their steeple and surrounded by homes and farms sometimes two miles away. The border towns were not very wealthy or prosperous and now usually visited by women, children and old men. Being a Forward Observer, (FO), our **Lt. Rieneke** had observed this town and called it free of German activity and snipers. He secured a Protestant driver and went around to each gun crew and other units and usually picked up 18 to 20 Catholic GI's and when the truck was full, he would direct the driver to go in the town and head for the steeple. The reason why he selected a Protestant driver was to release a Catholic driver to attend mass. In about ten minutes we were in front of the church. No matter how many churches we visited during our combat days the lieutenant always instructed us as to how to act upon our entry into the

church. We always carried our carbines on one shoulder with the barrel up. We were told to reverse the procedure, barrels down, stock up. And don't forget to take off your helmet upon entry. And above all, be as quiet as possible.

He was always the last one in the church making sure his "sheep" went in the church and were not out exploring the countryside. We always tried to be as quiet and orderly as possible but with all the iron we were carrying, sometimes it was impossible to be quiet. Two GI's held the entrance door open and with the scuffling of feet and bumping into one another, caused many of the parishioners to turn around to see what the commotion was. They looked at us with eyes as large as half dollars and probably expected to be shot. We entered our pews noisily and many dropped their helmets to the stone floor causing more noise. The priest turned from the altar to survey what was going on. **Lt. Rieneke** was the last one in a pew. He genuflected and saluted the priest. The priest nodded his acceptance of us and in heavy accented English, asked if there was anyone who wished to serve as altar boys. All eyes looked at the lieutenant. The lieutenant nodded his acceptance and two guys got up and approached the altar. The priest turned back to the altar and mass continued. Toward the end of mass there was a hymn that was to be sung. It was one that we used to sing in our English or Latin masses. Both German and English voices started to sing the hymn. The priest held up his arms to hush the parishioners. Then, with his finger to his lips he looked at the German parishioners and went "shhhhhh." Then to us GI's he raised his right arm and began directing the hymn like a music director urging us on. When we were through, he brought his finger to his lips once more and went "shhhh" to us. Then he raised his arm to the German parishioners and began to direct the hymn in German. When they were finished he made motion to applause and we clapped one another. Apparently the German parishioners approved, they smiled and nodded their heads. I forgot to mention that at communion time many of us GI's took communion. Several weeks ago our chaplain gave us all or who wanted it, General Absolution. He said that would cover most everything except some highly mortal sin and to "use our own judgement." I noticed the priest breaking in two several of the Hosts to make them go around. He wasn't expecting company.

We left the church as we came in, noisily with the shuffling of feet. The priest came out by the entrance door and he and **Lt. Rieneke** talked a short while. He held his helmet in his left hand and whenever a GI came by them he would hold out the helmet and remind the soldier that it was better to give than to receive. When the last GI passed by, the helmet was stuffed full of German marks that were still good for trading. When we were ready to depart, our lieutenant and the priest shook hands and our lieutenant gave him a salute. The old priest returned the gesture with a blessing.

First Lieutenant John J. Rieneke passed away during the winter of 1998.



Dottie Witzleb

THE AUXILIARY'S PAGE

by - **Dottie Witzleb**
Ladies Auxiliary Editor
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 5417 Halifax Lane
 Minneapolis, MN 55424
 Telephone: (Send to Dottie)

A Message from your Auxiliary President, Rosemarie Mazza

Dear Ladies of the Auxiliary:

Our reunion in Orlando is drawing close and I urge everyone to make their reservations early. The Committee is working hard to make this year's reunion a success. Let's not disappoint them. There are so many activities and attractions available in the Orlando area, that you cannot help but have a great time.

Many thanks to **Alice Walthoff** for her detailed instructions for knitting lap robes and slippers which appeared in the last issue of the bulletin. As you all are aware, these items bring happiness and comfort to our hospitalized veterans. So let's all get busy with our knitting so we have plenty of items to present to our veterans.

I am looking forward to seeing all of you at the reunion in Orlando, Florida. November is the perfect time of year to be in Florida. Make your reservations now. If you can't come for some reason, you can always cancel.

- In Memoriam -

"LADIES' TAPS"

CHRISTINE BRAGG

wife of **Ralph Bragg**

Battery B, 661st Tank Destroyers

JOAN DALRYMPLE

wife of **Elijah E. Dalrymple**

Company C, 273rd Infantry Regiment

CORKY HALPENNY

wife of **Leonard Halpenny**

HS, 269th Engineers

ROSEMARY McKEIL

wife of **John McKeil**

Company D, 272nd Infantry Regiment

SUSAN ROCCO

wife of **Gilbert Rocco**

Battery B, 881st Field Artillery Battalion

MARJORIE TAYLOR

wife of **William R. Taylor**

Company E, 271st Infantry Regiment

DELORES SMITH

wife of **Ralph E. Smith**

Division Headquarters

Son Seeks Father's Military Background

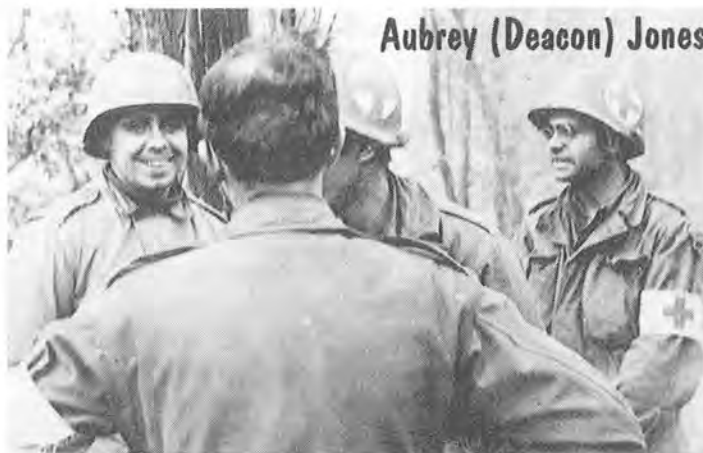
Submitted by: **Karl F. Jones**
son of Aubrey (Deacon) Jones

3104 Concord Drive, Mesquite, Texas 75150
 Telephone: 972-686-0826 • E-mail: kjmj@swbell.net

Dear Members of the 69th Division,

My name is **Karl Jones**, son of **Aubrey (Deacon) Jones**. My wife Marilyn and I attended the reunion in Houston last August. I would like to express our gratitude for all the friendly greetings and sincere attempts to help us in our attempt to make contact with some of my Dad's buddies from the 69th. It's easy to see why the 69th was such a successful unit in the war. The spirit of camaraderie is clearly evident even after 50+ years!

From the information in the memorabilia we found after my father's death in 1989, it is apparent that he



Caption read: "88" had just landed not far away, near Weisenfels, Germany. Deacon Jones far right.

served with the medical unit attached to the 2nd Battalion of 271st Regiment. From what I remember (far too little I fear), he joined the unit in England prior to going into action in Germany. I can still hear him telling the story of how men were selected as replacements for the units depleted in the Battle of the Bulge. I am interested in contacting anyone who remembers Aubrey Jones and also interested in locating a copy of a unit history map of the unit's actions in Europe.

Please send any information you have to me at the above address. We will be happy to share copies of other photos with anyone interested. I thank you in advance.



2nd Battalion Medical on an Me 109. **Charles Henderson** said the picture was taken shortly after passing through the Siegfried line near Larcha. The group includes **Sanford Graham, Chuck Henderson, John Zjack** (not sure of spelling), **William Morgan, John Sankavitch, Joe Leone, Aubrey Jones, "Red" John Moore, Joe Grandeere, Wayne Paddock, Lt. O'Leary, Jesse L. Thomas and Petrillo Menjarez** (not sure of spelling).

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 **Fighting 69th Division Bulletin**, P.O. Box 69, Champion, Pennsylvania 15622-0069 or 183 Pineslope Road, Acme, Pennsylvania 15610-9606, as early as possible. Then follow through with a write-up immediately after the event(s).

California Western Chapter

John S. Tounger, President
One Pine Hills Court
Oakland, California 94611-1530
Telephone: 510/531-8011 • Fax: 510/531-3623



Vice President Al Gwynne presented Theresa Pierce with a desk pen set and Past President Bob Pierce with a burl wood clock for their extra hard work in creating the California Western Chapter and their continuing work negotiating with the hotels on future meetings. The burl California redwood clock was made by Al Gwynne.

Photo right: The 1999 California Chapter Officers, left to right:

John Pereira Chaplain
John Tounger President
Harold Faulkner.. Board of Directors
Lee Wilson Treasurer
Al Gwynne Vice President
Walter Harpain Secretary
Stan Hawk Board of Directors



Seventh Annual Round-Up

Reno, Nevada, "The Biggest Little City in the World" was the California Western Chapter's Seventh Annual Round-Up site held April 25-29, 1999.

The Tuesday tour to Carson City and Virginia City was enjoyed by 41 participants. These historic cities provided interesting museums and shops as well as casinos to visit on the tour.

The Chapter's business meeting was held in the hospitality room on Wednesday afternoon. Secretary **Walt Harpain** read the 1998 Long Beach/Queen Mary meeting minutes. The Treasurer's Report was given by our Treasurer, **Lee Wilson**. Membership Chairperson **Donna Philpott** reported that the current roster has 71 members plus spouse/significant others and 10 associate members and that 116 registration packages were sent out. Site selections for future meetings were discussed under New Business. The year 2000 Round-Up is to be held in the Santa Barbara area, 2001 in Napa Valley Wine Country, and Laughlin Nevada was suggested for 2002. Elections were held and the new officers are:

President Al Gwynne
Vice President Walt Harpain
Secretary Harold Faulkner
Treasurer Lee Wilson
Board of Directors Thomas Gallagher
(Eldon Atwood and Stan Hawk remain as Board Members as their terms have not yet been completed.)

(Continued on Page 26)

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

(Continued from Page 25)

The Memorial Service and Banquet were held in the same hotel as our other meeting events, the Sands Regency. **Bob** and **Theresa Pierce** were honored for their work on behalf of our Chapter and presented with custom made gifts, a burl wood clock for **Bob** and a wood desk pen set with a clock for **Theresa**.

The 74 attendees came from Alabama, California, Florida, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania.

The California Western Chapter has no dues. It is supported by the generous contributions of members. We wish to thank all who contributed, especially those who mailed contributions but were unable to attend. These donations are used for mailings, badges and hospitality room expenses.

Those who attended this year's Round-Up were:

Barbara Bakarar Dallas, Pennsylvania
James and Nancy Bann Walnut Creek, CA
Jim and Mary Battin Monterey Park, CA
David and Edith Cohen Canoga Park, CA
Bill and Lynn Danahy Papillion, Nebraska
Domenic Dezio Detroit, Michigan
Sanford Firsichbaum Livingston, New Jersey
Harold and Nancy Faulkner Walnut Creek, CA
(and 2 Guests)

Val Frauenhofer Batavia, New York
Will and Barbara Frazee Centerville, Ohio
Bob Gardener Encino, CA
Ed Gildner Desert Hot Springs, CA
Al and Bobbie Gwynne Novato, CA
Bob and Maxine Haag Indianapolis, Indiana
Walt and Shirley Harpain Fresno, CA
Stan and Lois Hawk Lemoore, CA
Thomas Hoffman Englewood, Florida
Richard Hopkins, Jr. Roseville, CA
Sylvan Katz and Jeanne Berger ... Santa Monica, CA
Ray Lehman and Eva Benson Cedar Rapids, Iowa
Dick and Judy Levy Encino, CA
Homer and Pat Lind Grass Valley, CA
William and Grace Matthews Pittford, New York
John Mason Berkeley, CA
Paul Murdoch and guest Anaheim, CA
John and Mary Pereira Roseville, CA
Del and Donna Philpott Sunnyvale, CA
(and 5 Guests)

Bob and Theresa Pierce San Jose, CA
Sanford Posey Birmingham, Alabama
Earl and Matilde Ramsey Sylmar, CA
Bob and Jean Ross Wilbraham, Massachusetts
Bill Ruebsamen Murrieta, CA
Erwin and Carmen Sanborn ... Laconia, New Hampshire
(and 2 Guests)

Richard and Claire Sodorff Sanpoint, Idaho
Jim and Dottie Stacy Escondido, CA
Dave and Jeanne Theobald Sacramento, CA
John and Dena Tounger Oakland, CA
Lee Wilson and Jan Kremenz Stockton, CA

Mid-West Group

Fran and Zita Enright, News Reporters

7304 West Georgia Avenue

Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53220

1999 SPRING MEETING

The Mid-West Group met at the Clock Tower Resort in Rockford, Illinois on May 13th, 14th and 15th, 1999. Sixteen people were present and we spent Thursday afternoon in the Hospitality Room followed by dinner at a nearby restaurant.

Only four people played golf on Friday, the same number as last year. The rest of us visited the Japanese Gardens in the morning and the Tinker Cottage Museum after lunch. Dinner that evening was at the resort followed by a performance at the resort theater.



Clock Tower Resort, ready for Golf: Gene Mischke, Fred Butenhoff, Curt Peterson and Gaylord Thomas.

Those who attended were:

John Barrette Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin
Headquarters, 271st Infantry
Fred Butenhoff Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Company E, 272nd Infantry
Nancy Eisenreich Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Fran and Zita Enright Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Battery A, 881st Field Artillery
Thora Miller Peru, Illinois
Eugene and Marilyn Mischke... Spring Valley, Illinois
Company B, 273rd Infantry
Curt and Evelyn Peterson Madison, Wisconsin
569th Signal Company

(Continued on Page 27)

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

(Continued from Page 26)

Gene and Ethel Pierron Belgium, Wisconsin
661st Tank Destroyers

Francis and Lila Mae Spangler .. Richland Center,
Company E, 272nd Infantry Wisconsin

Gaylord and Ruth Thomas Waupun, Wisconsin
777th Tank Battalion



Hospitality Room: Francis Spangler / Gaylord Thomas.



Ruth Thomas and Curt Peterson

269th Engineers

Frank Nemeth, News Reporter

66 Gaping Rock Road

Levittown, Pennsylvania 19057-3410

This is the last company roster to be put in the Bulletin. The following are the men of Company C roster at the present time:

Seymour Abrams

Michael Ambrosio

John J. Audino

Wayne L. Level

Howard H. Ogles

Joseph R. O'Neil

Edward Blair
Leonard Dazey
Cyril J. DeChant
James Harvey
I.J. Kamer
A.D. Kino
Ralph M. Kraft

Joe M. Sears
Clyde D. Shiley
Johnny W. Spriggs
C.C. Thompson
Ray Weekly
Allen Whitehead
Leon Yablon

If anyone has any knowledge of someone not on the roster, please send their name and address to me and I'll try to locate them.

Now is a real good time to go through your old photos so we can put them in the Bulletin.

It was good to see that we found another 269er, **Gardner Hitchcock**, who was in Company B. I'm just waiting to hear from him and find out what took so long!

Don't forget the next Reunion in Orlando, Florida in November. See ya there!

Your "Ole" Buddy,
Frank

Annual Winter Pass

"Howitzer" Al Kormas, News Reporter

Headquarters, 879th Field Artillery

12500 Edgewater Drive, Apt. 503

Lakewood, Ohio 44107-1673

For the third year, we have come together to enjoy 4 days with each other. This year's get-together was hosted by **Bob and Vivian Kurtzman** and **Bob and Jean Shaffer**. In March of this year we met in Walnut Creek, Ohio, right in the heart of beautiful Amish country. Our barracks was the gorgeous Carlisle Inn built by craftsmen and really first class. At that time of year, prices are sharply reduced, and after a long winter, a relief for our cabin fever. Unfortunately, bad weather and flu kept a few from being with us, but three new attendees filled the gap. We certainly missed the ones who couldn't make it. Our thoughts and concerns were with them and we are looking forward to seeing them in the year 2000.

The Carlisle had a grand hospitality room well befitting the sumptuous continental breakfast, and many goodies were taken back to the room fridge. At the two previous "passes" we had a program arranged, but this year we just took it easy and time passed quickly. One day most of the ladies stayed in the hospitality area and seven of us went with **Bob Kurtzman** in his van to a flea market and farm animal auction combined. Now, that was something different - the odorous animal farmyard aroma was not exactly exhilarating, but certainly different. Farmers and Amish farmers bringing in cattle and hogs. The trip was highlighted by a half grown calf who broke loose and with a worker hanging onto its tail, ran right out into

(Continued on Page 28)

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

(Continued from Page 27)

the crowd and through the flea market, scattering people right and left and finally cornering itself after knocking down several tables of merchandise.

On the return trip back to the barracks in the van, lo and behold we had a rear flat tire. What a revolting development. These new modern vehicles, much unlike our army vehicles, make it a serious project just to change a tire. We pulled off the road and Bob, being prepared for an emergency, got out the manual, donned coveralls and proceeded to jack up the vehicle and change the tire. This was no easy job. Whoever designed this must have been a former German soldier who was now getting even with the American army. Most of us there had a real aching "GI back" and thank goodness **Bob** and **Cec Cottle** completed the change.

The following day, we all went over to Lehman's Hardware. This is a very unique place that caters to the Amish style of living - wood burning stoves costing as much as \$2,000, and all appliances running on propane and kerosene, including washing machines. As you know, the Amish don't believe in electrical power and they do everything the hard way. One could

spend hours here. There is no other place like it in the country. They ship merchandise all over the world. We were told that the more expensive wood burning stoves were back ordered for at least 6 months. They put out a beautiful catalog.

Chow in the Amish area was grand and enjoyed by all. Too bad our army cooks never took their training here. I remember in training being asked if I wanted to be an army cook and they told me that a two week course would be sufficient to cook for a battery or company.

In the evening we all had brought snacks and assorted goodies. Before we knew it the time had passed and we were saying goodbye. We were all glad that we had done it again and are looking forward to 2000, God willing.

Those in attendance were: **Bob** and **Vivian Kurtzman**, **Bob** and **Jean Shaffer**, **Rico** and **Anne D'Angelo**, **Al** and **Marge Kormas**, **Cec** and **Alene Cottle**, **Harold Weppner** and friend, **Ray Szkudlarek**, **Harold Weaver**, and our cameraman, **Tom Yelcich**. We were fortunate to have a few from Rico's battery stop by for chow. They were **Lewis** and **Fern Pugh** and **Lowell** and **Marjorie McFarlin**. The **Lushbaughs** and **Ellsworths** had to cancel.

461st AAA, AW Battalion Hq. and Medical Detachment

Mac and Madge Morris, News Reporters

630 North Oakland Street, Arlington, Virginia, Telephone: 703/527-2796



Fifteen members and families of the 461st met in Cumberland, Maryland on May 23rd and 24th, 1999. We had a catered lunch on Saturday at **Cecil and Irma Twigg's** and a delicious brunch at Rocky Gap on Sunday. Hopefully, we will all be at Salem in October for our Reunion.

Others attending were:
Wally and Betty Ullery
Joe Bryson
Charlie Griffin
Linda and Ben Truitt
Isabel and Ralph Yingling
Mac and Madge Morris
Paul, Karen and Sarah Wedl

Remembering "Our Precious Junk"

Submitted by: **Arthur S. Moore**
Battery C, 881st Field Artillery
55 High Gate Road, Apt. C-4
Newington, Connecticut 06111-5251

From The New York Times Magazine, May 24, 1942

In the old days, it was just a pile of junk but when the war broke out, it was a vital supply source for the guns and shells of victory.

It used to be before the war broke out, "Any rags, any bones, any bottles today? It was the same old story in the same old way." But when the war broke out, it was a very different story. For the first time in our history as an industrial nation, we were asked to organize our habits of throwing things away. The junkman's cry had taken on a new briskness. The salvage committees and salvage wardens talked about "Salvage for Victory" and urged us to "Rout out that dormant scrap," "Clean house and sock Hitler." War had made junk king and behind the squeak and rattle of the junk cart sounded the rumble of the artillery.

Junk was king for the stark and simple reason that we needed it in war industry. The 60,000 planes, 45,000 tanks, 20,000 anti-aircraft guns, 80,000,000 tons of ship making parts that we were building that year would be made in part out of the famous raw material beds of this country; in part they must come from our least known national treasure - the great American junk pile.

Half the steel for those armaments came from the rusty tangle of the junk yard, 20 per cent of the aluminum would be scrap. Waste paper was needed to line cartridge shells and make ammunition boxes. Auto graveyards were sacked for their metal treasure, ghost towns and ghost enterprises gave up their long silent machinery.

To the housewife, all this, like the rags and the broken toys that went out in the wastebasket, had been indiscriminately junk. To the people who had built businesses by handling it on its way to new uses, it was more politely called "waste material." To the planners whose job it was to find and allocate the sinews of war it was important "secondary materials" and "a vital part of our country's capital."

Strictly speaking, there were as many kinds of junk as there were manufactured articles. For the practical purposes of remanufacture, they were divided into six great groups - waste paper, scrap rubber, scrap iron and steel, other scrap metals, woolen rags, cotton rags. Also to those groups should be added animal wastes such as fat which made soap and bones which made fertilizer. These groups were represented by trade associations and representatives by trade associations, and representatives of their handlers sat on a committee to advise Washington.

Within these categories laid such treasures as leaky hot-water bottles and packages of old love letters, unused railway track and worn out socks, rubber gloves with a torn finger and broken plows. They came from five great sources grouped by the Bureau of Industrial Conservation for purposes of salvage organizations as the homes, shops and garages; the farms; the industrial plants; the towns and cities; the Army, the Navy, and the Federal Government. The job of routing them out varied with the source and the type of product.

What became of all this? The housewife's great product, waste paper, was needed to the extent of 6,000,000 tons. A third of the material needed for the new paper used in defense was old paper.

Cotton rags were needed for wiping machine tools, boat engines and big guns. Some cotton went into certain types of paper, some into the roofing that kept the rain out of temporary barracks. Scrap wool went into rugs, and since new wool was being saved for uniforms, the old wool was reworked for certain types of civilian clothing. Scrap rubber in the household went back for reworking and was one of the items especially needed. A third of the rubber used in armament was scrap rubber. Every Army raincoat needed three-quarters of a pound of rubber scrap, a bomber tire used up to thirty pounds.

Buddies, after 55 Years

Submitted by: **John Post**
Service, 880th Field Artillery
6850 Kenowa Avenue S.W.
Grandville, Michigan 49418-2135

Just a line to let you know that as a result of the bulletin, my wife and I, on our return trip from Florida, met with **Clyde Sudderth** and his wife in Montezuma, North Carolina. It had been 55 years or more since we had last seen each other, so you can imagine what a thrill it was. Again, thanks so much. It was really appreciated.



Clyde Sudderth, left and John Post, right.



Fighting 69th Infantry Division Association 4th Annual Reunion
August 24th - 26th, 1951
Hotel Hollenden, Cleveland, Ohio
Were you there or if you recognize anyone?

"Deuces Wild"

The History of an Infantry Battalion!

Written by Lt. J. F. Higgins, 1945

Communications Officer

Headquarters, 2nd Battalion, 271st Infantry

Submitted by: Raymond C. Norris

Company F, 271st Infantry

642 Law Street, Aberdeen, Maryland 21001

As long as there have been armies there have been historians. You know what a historian is - that's one of those birds who police up after something has happened, who gather up facts and figures like the dinner dishes or yesterday's cigarette butts to preserve them for posterity. This too is a history, the story to date of an Infantry Battalion, or to be more specific, a collection of facts and anecdotes in the annals of the Second Battalion, 271st Infantry, and that, soldier is your outfit.

The title of the story might well be "Remember?", since in years to come, when all this is a part of the past, we'll all be most likely prefacing our remarks and fond recollections of people, places and events with that word. Yes, we'll remember our outfit as long as we live. Funny thing about the army, so much happens in so short a time, but I'll wager these are some of the things we'll keep alive in the chest of memories.

Camp Shelby, Mississippi. See what I mean? Already your mind is running full with recollections. We were activated there. That's the same as saying someone was born, a necessary basis for any future happenings. We lived and trained there, amid the woods, the chiggers, the summer heat, the winter cold, the dust and mud of good old DeSoto National Forest, till to some of us it seemed that all the world was Mississippi and that the capitol of the world was Hattiesburg. The 69th will never leave Shelby! Remember? Reminds you of the guy who kept saying to the end: "They can't do this to me!" We left Shelby, or did we? We left a lot of time there, but you can surely recall many pleasant associations Shelby gave us in return! Remember? They had trains there which ran to New Orleans. Oh Brother!

If you're interested in dates, as who isn't, it was on 31 October 1944 at 1550 that we crawled out from under 60 pounds of equipment and sank down in a Pullman chair for a last look at Camp Shelby. We found out later that the battalion was complimented for the precision and order with which we boarded the train. No strain, no pain. Could be that no one wanted to be left behind. Yes, I guess that's it. But where were we going? The Pullman porter knew, but he wouldn't tell. This was a new experience and brought forth an unprecedented flow of Latrine Rumors (Or do they call them latrines on a train?) How many of us knew at the time that we were doing the "Jersey Bounce?" Some of us suspected it when the train began to ride as though it no longer had square wheels.

Camp Kilmer, New Jersey! Only 20 speedy railroad miles from New York! Who will ever forget Kilmer? Shakedown inspections, cargo nets, Abandon Ship drill, the physical exam where they felt to see if you were warm, and then put the seal of approval on you, the equivalent of a ticket for a boat ride. But those passes to New York! That 5:00 a.m. train you poured yourself into just to keep things straight with the MPs, Times Square, The Village, the Music Hall ... Take a last look, soldier, make that last date, pour down that last scotch and soda ... It may be a long time!

Then another train ride, but this time a short one. In fact there was so little time that it was hardly worthwhile to unravel yourself from the mountain of G.I. equipment and they were lining you up to get off. Next a ferry ride, but without the familiar accordion player or dented civilian fenders. Up the harbour, zigzag against the currents until even the New Yorkers aboard couldn't tell whether we were heading for Canarsie or Staten Island. And then Pier 44, where that idiotic band played "Somebody Else is Taking My Place," and the Red Cross passed out coffee and sinkers to all those who were still able to stand up. That's where the boys who had the hot tip on the "Queen Mary" paid off their bets and climbed, or struggled, aboard the M. S. "John Ericsson."

The official record reads that we 'embarked for overseas service, left port for sea at 0600, 15 Nov. 1944.' But the 69th will never leave Shelby. What a trip! No one got seasick. Those signs outside the cafeterias which read: "Eat it here, park it outside!" were propaganda. That's where we learned the difference between port and starboard, and were amazed to find how quickly a K.P. became a galley boy. Remember how we conducted training for those hardy souls who were still able to sit up? Remember the ship's inspection each day? There were so many people in the inspecting party it was hard to tell where today's inspection ended and tomorrow's began! "Don't stay on deck, they're cleaning it! Don't stay below, they're inspecting it! Stay out of the Crew's Quarters, it's Off Limits! Oh hell, just jump overboard!" But the Thanksgiving Dinner was good! And so on for twelve restful days.

At 1430, 26 November 1944 we found out that Southampton was something else besides a fashionable resort on Long Island. Merrie Olde Englands! They have two seasons in England, Winter and August. We missed August. We pushed each other in through the narrow doors of the railroad coaches and were whisked at a cool 20 mph to Winchester, the ancient capitol of England; Winchester, where King Alfred looks down on the narrow streets; where the Guildhall stands in solemn silence, amazed perhaps at the uniform and manner of these new arrivals from

(Continued on Page 33)

DEUCES WILD

(Continued from Page 32)

another shore. And Winchester Barracks! After we cleaned up and got the chill of a hundred years out of the place it turned out to be quite livable. In fact who can deny that it was almost a furlough? Am I kidding? But there was London, and Alf & Alf, the pubs, Picadilly and 20° passes. Life wasn't so rough in the ETO. Christmas and New Year's passed with us trying hard to get used to driving on the wrong side of the road, having parties for those pink-cheeked English kids and almost becoming quite British in our speech and ability to consume bitters and tea. But Time marches on, and so did we!

When the "SS Llangiby Castle" pulled out of Southampton at 1530, 20 Jan. 1944, there were many who were already speaking of overseas stripes and rotational furloughs, but this was only the beginning. Who will forget the sensation we got when the nose of that LCI plopped itself down on the dark, foreboding shore of France? Or that endless walk through the remains of Le Havre to those deluxe railroad cars, the famed 40 and 8s? Or that trip across the frozen French countryside, where we learned why our fathers and uncles had spoken of French boxcars as a bad memory. Things hadn't changed a bit since they rode them, except that the cars had become more mellow with age. We tried keeping warm by setting each other's clothes on fire, but the supply sergeants frowned on the scheme. Thence by motor to Longuerue, France where we were billeted in what the Jerries had left of some old French chateau. (A chateau, that's a draft with a roof on it.) The Heinies had bombed out all the fireplaces and torn out the wiring, but we were doing fine burning up the furniture until ... oh well, you remember what happened! At this point many began to wonder if the 69th ever left Shelby! Also we began to wonder where all the mademoiselles were the old man used to speak of in unguarded moments. Most of the ones we saw weren't bad, except that the plow straps had left welts on their necks, and the muscles in their legs made their hose baggy. Normandy, land of song and legend, apple cider and a historic beach head. It was pretty though, wasn't it?

Again from the official record: This battalion left Buchy at 1300 by rail on 1 Feb., 1945 enroute to a marshaling area. It turned out to be Liesse-Gizy, or Lizzie-Gizy as it became affectionately known. That's where we had the big tents and where the mud was so deep that you took three steps before your shoes moved. The trip was again pleasant, in air-conditioned 40 and 8s, but this time we had learned how to be comfortable. Straw on the floor, squad heaters, 10 and 1 rations and everything! It made you feel almost human. After another week of yard-birding, the time came when we must again sally forth. By this time we were seasoned travelers though, so the trip by train wasn't so bad. The temperature couldn't have been more than 10

below, and people have been known to live through lower temperatures. It was no problem at all as the 60 car "Streamliner" gee-hawed at a dazzling speed up into Belgium. Here we boarded trucks for an unknown destination, and spent a comfortable few hours in a driving rain, nudging each other at intervals just for the satisfaction of knowing that the guy alongside was still alive too. No one with the possible exception of SHAEF cared very much. At this point a very weak voice was heard to say: "Do you think the 69th will ...?" A shot rang out, and again there was silence. Next morning when some of the hardier souls had thawed out enough to sit up and talk, it was learned that we had de-trained at Pepinster, Belgium, and that the trucks had dumped us at Bruyere, near Waimes. After a few days here, it seems the bigwigs finally decided we'd had enough touring, and decided it was time we go to work. Well, wasn't it? Lay that pistol down, babe!

From here on, any account of the activity of the "Deuces Wild" battalion must, of necessity, be in a more serious vein than that which precedes it on these pages. There is nothing light or gay about the tasks which we have been committed to perform, and which the battalion has, in every instance, performed with distinction.

Except for occasional moments of levity, when the pressure is off, there are few times when combat is anything but grim and trying. To treat it lightly or off-handedly would be to minimize the efforts of those of us who can still remember it, and desecrate the memory of those who have paid with their lives for part of our accomplishments.

On 11 Feb., 1945 the battalion left Belgium and moved into positions occupied by elements of another division one-half mile south of Hellenthal, Germany, inside the first belt of pillboxes of the infamous Siegfried Line. After many months of training and work in the States, we were finally at the point where we might employ that which we had been taught, in helping to smash and obliterate all traces and influences of the people and creeds which had visited the war upon us. We were ready to hurl our skills, our weapons and ourselves at the enemy.

After several days of planning and reconnaissance, and patrol activity aimed at feeling out the enemy, at 0600 on 27 Feb., 1945 this battalion launched its first attack against the towns of Dickersheid, Honnigen and Bushem which lay in our sector, and in coordination with other elements of the regiment and division. At 0730 the next morning the mission was completed. The three towns had been taken after bitter fighting, the battalion was now battle-tested and proved worthy of joining the ranks of other American outfits hammering at the "sacred soil" of Hitler's Germany.

On 6 March, our next encounter brought us further into the Siegfried defenses, into the town of Reiferscheid. We entered prepared for a fight and ready to

(Continued on Page 34)

DEUCES WILD

(Continued from Page 33)

contest each piece of land, but about this time things were happening on both our flanks in the more open terrain better suited to attack, since large-scale attacks were in progress by the bulk of our First and Third Armies, who were close to effecting a junction just short of the Rhine. The overall picture was not healthy for the Krauts, with the result that they were fast deciding that the best direction for them to travel was East. This meant only slight resistance, little more than delaying action in our sector, and we soon found ourselves able to advance to Blankenheim with only mines to bar the way. Arriving there on 8 March we learned that for the present we were pinched out and must await further developments before being recommitted.

Blankenheim was said to have been Von Runstedt's headquarters during the Battle of the Bulge, and accordingly had been dealt heavy blows by our Air Corps. Our stay there gave the men a chance for needed rest, reorganization and servicing of equipment, and was brightened somewhat by the fact that some of our exploring non-coms were able to find and liberate a goodly supply of wine. A few lucky individuals were able to get passes to Paris.

Our next movement was at an appropriate time and to an area which had been figuring large in the conduct of the war. We left Blankenheim on the morning of 23 March 1945, and moved by motor to Sinzig, which had in better times been a resort town on the Rhine, but which was now the scene of more activity than any sector since the St. Lo. breakthrough. Streams of men and equipment were pouring through to cross the river in the area of Remagen, where we saw the remains of the Ludendorf bridge which had done so much in the war. One of the highlights of our five day stay was the opportunity for the men to take sulphur baths. Egad, what luxury!

From this point on, our movements were far and fast, as were those of all outfits in the area. On 28 March we crossed the Rhine on the longest tactical pontoon bridge in the world and proceeded to the small town of Welchneudorf, where for two days we patrolled roads and combed woods for isolated pockets of resistance. Remember the faces of those alien slave-laborers we liberated? Many tales they were able to tell, stories which only deepened your resolution that the Nazis must pay!

Who will forget Easter, 1945? On Saturday we moved out in convoy just as the rain started. We drove all night in the cold downpour arriving at Daubringen, where we pulled up wet and tired early Easter morning. About the place, our only pleasant memories were that the toilets really worked, and there were Easter Church Services.

The next evening we moved out and headed further east, once more in a heavy rain. After an uncomfortable trip, we arrived at Fritzlar, where, if you remember, our billets were through the courtesy of the Luftwaffe, since we moved into what had been their barracks only a few days before. That would have been a good deal, were it not for the fact that it was decided to move the 9th AF in to operate from the airfield. And who were we to hold up the Air War? Accordingly we again climbed aboard the valiant jeeps and took off for Hadamar, by which time we were beginning to wonder what sleep felt like. Things were getting rough in the ETO.

The next morning we were on the road again, and this time we had an opportunity to see just how devastating had been the work of our Air Corps. Remember the feeling you got on entering Kassel, or rather what was left of Kassel? Guess we were agreed that Germany was a good place for it to happen. What a mess!

Three days later on 8 April at 0600 the battalion moved out in the attack, by truck to Witzenhausen, across the Weser River under artillery fire, and into Allshausen where the battalion CP was set up at 2000. Company G took Neunrode and F and E companies secured two small towns in their sector. Again the Krauts pulled out, so that next morning we were able to advance almost uninterrupted to the large town of Heiligenstadt, where we set up defensive positions on the outskirts at 1900. No rest for the weary!

The next evening we were on the road again, and after a long motor jaunt arrived at Obermehler at 0230, taking off again after a very short stop at 1050. More driving, until there loomed up before us the town of Beichlingen, where sharp fighting was in progress. What a treat it was to see those planes work over a few points of resistance. And also what a treat it was to set up the CP in a huge castle, after clearing the place of a bit of fanatical resistance and capturing in the process a three-star general who had changed to civilian clothes. It's a good thing the castle wasn't as ruffled as his dignity! Up to this point our advance had been held up by only sporadic resistance. How many were wondering where the Krauts would make a determined stand? We soon found out.

From Beichlingen at 0730, on 12 April the battalion moved out in motor convoy, spearheaded by the Combat Patrol and trucks carrying riflemen. Orders were to continue a determined advance until resistance was encountered of magnitude sufficient to halt the column. Such resistance was not long in being met. Entering the outskirts of Weissenfels, a fire fight developed of considerable intensity. A hasty reconnaissance was all the battalion commander needed to show him that here at last was the fight we'd been expecting. Immediately G company and E company were committed, supported by the mortars and machine guns of H Company. By 2030, after heavy fighting, only the west part of the

(Continued on Page 35)

DEUCES WILD

(Continued from Page 34)

town had been cleared, and in the determination of their resistance, the Germans blew up all the bridges across the river which ran through the town, as well as most of the town's utilities, isolating themselves on the East bank of the river.

By morning F company had come up on line, so that the entire battalion was poised to strike across the river. Assault boats were rushed up and the three companies crossed at various spots under fire from soldiers and civilians alike. Resistance in the town was fanatical. At the strategic moment the aid of medium and light tanks was secured, and the work of clearing the remainder of the town got underway. No one has to retell the story to make it a vivid memory. Smashing ahead in a manner which astounded the veteran tankers, the doughs kept plugging till the only Krauts left were dead ones, and approximately 1500 PWs were taken. It was a magnificent job, and one which distinguished our battalion for its aggressiveness and fighting spirit.

The next morning the battalion was given the mission of clearing up a strong point at Kreisan. E company moved to the attack and by 1900 had completed their mission, over-running and capturing 32 dual-purpose 88s and amassing the healthy total of 500 PWs. Another fine job.

On 15 April the battalion departed from Weissenfels and made its way to Rotha, arriving at 1830. Orders were received for a night attack on Zwenkau, the next known strong point, but were later changed to a dawn attack. At 0500 the battalion again moved into the attack. F company attacked from the west and E company from the south, clearing the town of Pulgar. G company then passed through E and secured Zwenkau. In the advance E company took 12 6" guns east of Zwenkau.

On 17 April the attack was further pursued with G company hitting Eythra and bagging 300 PWs. The battalion then moved to Zwenkau and G company was ordered to withdraw from Eythra, which was accomplished by 1800. Having regrouped the battalion, night attacks were launched against Gaucha and Zobigker by E and F companies. The towns were secured without casualties by 0600. These actions were the bulk of the defenses of the city of Leipzig, and when they were consummated, the rest of the city fell, with only slight resistance, to other elements of the division.

With Leipzig gone, it was easy to move around to the northeast of the city, which we did on 19 April to the town of Taucha. The next morning we moved into defensive positions west of the besieged town of Eilenberg, to contain the town from the east and the flanks.

Five days later, a small town in our Division sector became famous when one of our regiments accomplished what had been eagerly sought after for many months. Patrols from the 273rd Infantry contacted the Russians at Torgau, effecting a junction of the two most powerful armies in history. Our own regiment had been trying to make contact for several days, and who can deny that there was some professional jealousy when it fell the fortunate lot of our neighbor regiment to accomplish the deed? The Fighting 69th had become one of the major topics of conversation and publicity at home, as did another Fighting 69th in the last war. We are proud of the patch we wear.

May 8, 1945 . . . VE day. Simultaneously in the capitols of the three major powers the announcement was made. The mad dream of Adolf Hitler has vanished into a tragic and costly memory, a classic blight on the ordained precept of Man's living at peace with his neighbor.

The European phase of the war has ended. Of the vast amount of men, material and events which brought it to an end much will be written. Historians for generations will be digesting and expounding the magnitude of the operations.

Wherever we are sent from here, whatever may be our role in future operations against the enemies of our nation, of this we are certain. There is no battalion in any regiment, in any division more closely knit, more coordinated in its plans, more aggressive in its actions, or possessed of greater individual or collective courage and fighting spirit than the Second Battalion, 271st Infantry, of which we are proud and privileged to be a part.

If our by-word is "Deuces Wild," it's because we fit in anywhere. And this we shall do, no matter what our future orders. Good luck, soldier!

On the Lighter Side of the War

Submitted by: **Lt. Col. Norman F. Essick**, USA Ret.
then Sergeant, Company M, 271st Infantry
907 Country Club Drive, P.O. Box 395
Lexington, North Carolina 27293-0395

Lt. Col. F. A. Davidson, CO, 3rd Battalion, 271st Infantry, addressing his officers and NCOs the morning after a night exercise designed to test the battalion's intelligence security training, particularly safeguarding identification of its units:

"I observed a unit moving along a trail in almost total darkness and I called out, 'Hey, what unit is that?' From the darkness came the reply, 'Go to hell you SOB.' I knew immediately that the unit was M-Company!"

Negro Soldiers Attached to 273rd

Submitted by **Ray Pugliese**

Company A, 273rd Infantry

31 Chestnut Street

Steelton, Pennsylvania 17113-2518

I look forward to receiving the bulletin and reading it completely from cover to cover.

Amazingly, on page 48 of Volume 52, No. 2, you had an article regarding **Anthony Plasic** who is a friend of mine. We were drafted together, both of us being from Steelton, Pennsylvania.

I thought I would write and advise of the number of Negro soldiers attached to the 273rd Infantry. Maybe this will clarify or confuse the ongoing controversy.

These statistics were taken from one page of my diary showing the strength of the 273rd Regiment. I didn't date the schedule when I wrote it, but it was copied from a large board I maintained in Personnel Dept. in the Spring of 1945.

This board listed each company in the regiment and showed *Required Complement* for each company and *Actual Complement*. This record was used by **Captain Hooper** to assign replacements to units that needed to be brought up to strength.

The 273rd Infantry Regiment had 131 colored soldiers in the early spring of 1945 and they were assigned to Company G and Company L.

The breakdown is as follows:

White Officers 158

Warrant Officers .. 14

Enlisted Men 3256

Negroes 131 (64 attached to Co. G, 67 Co. L)

Total Complement of the 273rd Infantry was 3559 around the spring of 1945.

273rd Infantry Regiment Strength March/April 1945

273rd	1st Bat.	2nd Bat.	3rd Bat.
HQ. ... 92	HQ. ... 128	HQ. ... 140	HQ. ... 122
SV ... 102	A 196	E 212	I 197
AT 168	B 209	F 204	K 193
CN ... 142	C 178	G 198	L 187
MED.. 68	D 175	H 164	M 181

We Need Cover Photos!

Hey fellows, we need cover photos! Please send us any good quality photos that you have for consideration for the cover. Don't worry, we will return them to you unharmed. It doesn't matter if they are small. If they are of good quality, we can enlarge them. Thanks.

John Melton writes . . .

2nd Battalion, Medic, 271st Infantry

4 Pelham Street • Selma, Alabama 36701

I am a first time writer. I joined the 69th in May 1943 and continued with the 69th to Torgau on the Elbe River, where we made contact with the Russians. The date was May 24th, 1945, as well as I remember.

I am enclosing a picture of the bridge we crossed the Rhine River on. At the time it was the longest tactical bridge in the world.



"Drop them cans in the coffee gentle, Joe. We got a chicken stewin' in the bottom."

Battery B, 881st Field Artillery

Submitted by: **George Custis**, (Deceased)

The following are stories written by members of the different sections of Battery B during the war.

LIFE IN COMBAT WITH THE FIRST SECTION

By Pfc. Robert Pittser

12 February 1945, found the first section, then known as the second section, getting their first taste of combat under the capable leadership of **S/Sgt. Jean Kohl**, our chief-of-section. Our first position was located in the Ardennes Forest about 2000 yards from the Siegfried Line, which was the front line, at that time. Directly in front of us was the 273rd Inf. Regt., the other part of our combat team.

The members of our section at that time were **S/Sgt. Jean Kohl**, chief-of-section; **Cpl. Robert Koshinsky**, Gunner; **Pfc. Bruce Walker**, No. 1; **Pfc. Joe Ventimiglia**, No. 2; **Pfc. Wilmont Forry**, No. 3; **Pfc. Roy Ducote**, No. 4; **Pvt. Robert H. McMurray**, No. 5; **Pvt. Omer Adkins**, No. 6; **Pvt. Clyde Cruse**, No. 7; **Pvt. Robert J. Pittser**, telephone operator and excess baggage; and **T/5 Arthur Wright**, our most capable driver.

All men were present at the gun when we "registered in" on our first mission, and **Pfc. Walker** had the honor of firing the first round into Germany. After we had registered on a base point, our first target was enemy mortars and it didn't take us long to quiet them. During our stay there, we fired on all types of targets such as machine guns, nebelwerfers, tanks, pill boxes, bivouac areas, and almost anything that moved.

We really had two battles to fight here. One was for possession of the Siegfried Line, and the other with "Ole Man Winter," and it really was rough going at this time. We had mud, rain, snow, and bitter cold weather to contend with. All this made our mission just that much harder to accomplish. Every one of our members will long remember the "road detail," that plagued us at this position.

We all thought that we would starve and freeze to death here, but didn't know which would come first, but after a few days we settled down and it wasn't so bad. Miraculously enough, we didn't freeze and we had plenty to eat. One thing that did prevail throughout all kinds of weather was the carrying of ammunition on our backs from howitzer to howitzer. That was the most unsatisfactory ammo dump we ever had. At this place we could have qualified for the engineers, the fifth section, wire section or even K.P. as we got first hand training in each of these "branches" of the service. We all made mistakes and the first section made their share of them, such as firing the wrong ammo, powder lot number, powder charge, and sometimes we didn't fire at all when we should have. Considering that the

section did more firing than the other sections, we didn't have too bad of a record when we left there.

After we left Belgium, and pushed into Germany, our first change in personnel occurred around March 15, 1945. We lost **Pvt. Adkins** to the maintenance section and very soon after that he became **T/4 Adkins**. This took place at the bivouac area near Schmidtheim and we got **Hank Sarnicki** as a replacement. It was in this position that we got our first taste of German venison, and we also enjoyed our first "home talent" revue, staged by **George Kahn**. Two boys from the section, **Clyde Cruse** and **Bob McMurray** took part in it.

Leaving Schmidtheim we found ourselves, on the 27th day of March in a town near Koblenz and again we were due for some more changes in our personnel. **Cpl. Koshinsky** was transferred to the second section and **Pfc. Forry** made our new gunner-corporal. **Pvt. Benjamin Lewis** joined our ranks as a replacement for **Koshinsky**. It was here that we had our first wine party and captured our first prisoner of war, who came in with his wife to give himself up.

So after that we had a hectic night and it took place south of Kassel. We went into position just before dark on the evening of 6th April, and as "A" battery was already there, the firing had begun. We rushed our howitzer into a firing position and started firing. Soon it began to rain. The ground was already soaked with water and it sank deeper and deeper with every round fired. Finally the gun had sunk so deep into the mud that it was impossible to shift the trails. The half section that was manning the gun had to get the other half that was sleeping out of bed. We worked all night building a platform and getting the gun on it so that we could fire. After doing all that work, we didn't fire a round.

On 12 April, the battery was split up for an anti-tank defense position. The second and fourth section were taken to a nearby village and they set up the guns along the road, while the other two guns stayed in position on the hill. The next day, Friday the 13th, was a day that few of us will forget. We received the news that President Roosevelt had died. We also lost **S/Sgt. Kohl** to "C" battery and **Sgt. John Nelson**, from the fourth section became our chief-of-section. It was here that we officially became the first section. Up to this time we had been the second section. Along about this time we lost **Sarnicki** to the fourth section, our camouflage net over the truck caught fire and burned. That is one of our unsolved mysteries and I suppose it will always remain so.

The 19th of April, found us firing on Leipzig, and it was the first time that we had ever received the command, "Battery 21 rounds" Before we had chance to fire it, however, the order was changed to "Battery 15 rounds." We did fire several 10 round missions in this position. It was pretty cold and windy here in

(Continued on Page 38)

BATTERY B, 881st FIELD ARTILLERY HISTORY (Continued from Page 37)

Lieberwolkwitz, but we managed to keep warm riding bicycles and drinking wine.

After this battle we went to Greten near Grimma, and it was while at this position that our combat team mates, the 273rd Inf. Regt., met the Russians at Torgau and made world history. It was while here, also, that we received the news of the surrender of Germany, and again it was here that two of our section members received their Pfc. ratings. They were **McMurray** and **Pittser**.

THE WIRE SECTION

By Pfc. Ray Derr

In this story I'll try to bring you a few of the incidents that happened to the wire section, while in combat.

The story begins with the first day in combat, 12 Feb. 1945 and ends with the last day, 8 May 1945, a day we will all remember as a red letter day, for it was then that VE-day was declared.

Our first position, as we all called it, was "Dugout City." We tried to use the wire that the previous battery had laid, but it didn't work so well. We had to lay a whole wire net the next day. After the wire was laid we had to reroof our dugout because the rain and snow came through it too freely. The whole section helped on this project including **Cpl. Wood**, the chief-of-section at that time.

Our boy, "**Pop**" **Owens** had to be watched very closely for fear that he didn't get lost. Soon after we pulled into this position, he was sent back to our previous stop to get some articles that were left. He reached the old position all right, but on the way back he got lost. He finally returned to the battery a couple of days later.

While in this position at Murrigen, Belgium, we were converted into an engineer outfit. The road that passed by our position got so muddy that it became impossible for any kind of vehicle. Even half-tracks got bogged down in the goo. We helped to build a corduroy road of logs so that vehicles could use the road.

During the time we were in this position four of those rugged wire men were up on "the line" with the F.O. parties at various times. **Hobbs** was forward first then I relieved him when the parties were changed. Our party was in turn relieved when the new crew came up ten days later. In the crew were **Weltman**, **Hobbs** and **Slimmer**. The reason for three wire men that time was the impending attack on Gesvheid and Reicheid. It was planned that they would lay wire right behind the doughboys as they moved up. These boys really did a good job, but two of them never got the credit that their fine work deserved.

After the capture of these two towns we were to lay wire in our new position at Ramscheid, Germany before the battery got there. After we had it all laid, orders came down from Headquarters that we would not use that position after all. We would go instead to Hellanthal, Germany to reinforce the 28th Division that was making an attack in that sector. We had to immediately pick up all the newly-laid wire because of the wire shortage.

We were in our new position for only two days. We built "dug-in" log huts, and after all our hard work in building them we were only able to use them one night. At the time I was up on "the line" so I missed all of this hard work.

I recall one incident when **Clay**, **Critchfield** and **Dettmer** had to dig the switchboard in. The ground was fairly good spading for about two feet and then they hit almost solid rock. After they hit the rock, **Ritter** and **Trimble** were called in to help them. After several hours of hard work, they decided that the hole was deep enough, so they placed the switchboard in the hole and gathered overhead coverage to put over the hole.

Another incident I remember happened near Cologne. **Cpl. Hobbs** was with the FO party at the time. The battery was firing across the Rhine River. After four days, the FO party was being relieved. While **Hobbs** was loading the equipment on the jeep preparatory to leaving, a mortar shell landed right by him and shrapnel hit him in the arm. He was evacuated to a General Hospital and he was dropped from the roster of the battery. **T/5 Ritter** was made wire corporal and chief-of-section.

The battery supplied a forward observation party to the Ninth Armored Division when they were spearheading the First Army's great drive through Germany. **Middlerton** was with the FO as a wire man. He had just been transferred to this battery shortly before the attack started.

During the attack on Liepzig he was forward with the FO once again. Their jeep was put out of action when shrapnel from a Panzerfaust shell punctured a tire. The party was captured by the enemy. They were taken as prisoners into the great Napoleon Monument in Liepzig where they were held until the surrender of the stone structure twenty-four hours later. The fall of this monument ended the resistance of Germany's fifth largest city.

The above is just a few of the many incidents that the wire section took part in. There are many, many others too numerous to mention, but these will serve to bring back memories to:

Cpl. "Boss" Hobbs	Pfc. "Ray" Derr
Cpl. "Bob" Ritter	Pfc. "Speedy" Detmer
T/5 "Larry" Trimble	Pfc. "Charge" Middleton
T/5 "Pop" Owens	Pfc. "Two Nine" Slimmer
T/5 "Frank Buck" Critchfield	Pfc. "Cordell Hull" Clay
Pfc. "Fats" Weltman	Cpl. "Woody" Woods

(Continued on Page 39)

BATTERY B, 881st FIELD ARTILLERY HISTORY (Continued from Page 38)

THE INSTRUMENT SECTION

By S/Sgt. Joseph W. Freda

It might be more in order to refer to our little group of instrument men as sections rather than section, for the moment we reached the climactic point in our military careers when our cannoneers fired that first "round for pay," the practical phases of combat required that we travel different roads.

It is a known fact that our genial Instrument Corporal, **Georgie Custis** had moved into a forward observation position with the R.O.'s party before our firing battery had even reached the first gun position in the E.T.O. What his experiences and general reactions were must naturally be chronicled by himself, but concerning the remainder of us, some few facts may now be told.

At the time of our taking position close to Boundary Road, the Instrument Section consisted of the aforementioned **Georgie**, **Cpls. Kriegsman** and **Stoddard**, **T/5 Hughes**, now **T/5 Hill**, and your narrator, **S/Sgt. Freda**.

Stoddard, recorder supreme, was a steady standby to our battery executive in keeping the records of the numerous fire missions that were given us during our trying first days of combat.

Kriegsman, **Hill** and your reporter were called upon to perform a duty that was quite foreign to all our previous training. Yes, believe it or not, our first chore in the E.T.O. was assisting in the construction of a corduroy road to overcome the muddy path we had inherited from the previous occupants of our position.

During our stay in this position number one, which lasted for twenty-one days, **Cpl. Kriegsman** made a trip up front with the forward observer's party and the Chief of Detail spent three days up front as a member of the Battery Commander's Liaison party. This party consisted of the Radio Sergeant and the Wire Corporal as well as the above mentioned two. The party spent some active moments in a forward observer's post at Miescheid, Germany for two consecutive nights as elements of our infantry team mates made an effort to capture Pillbox 17, which culminated successfully on the last day of our stay up front.

From the time we left our first gun position, however, the major duties of this small section was to act as an advance party in organizing battery position. The nature of these duties was to assist the Battery Commander in picking our positions for the guns; a motor park, and living quarters for the men. It was at this point in our progress across Germany that **Cpl. Kriegsman** really came into his own. His knowledge of the language of our enemy was an extremely valuable asset in acquiring some of the comforts we were able to enjoy during our lightning dash to our ultimate destination, Leipzig.

During the course of our forward journey the section acquired a new member, **T/3 Buckles**, who had previously been assigned to the fifth section. Although his knowledge of Survey and Instrument work was very limited, he proved to be a very capable member of the forward elements of our battery in preparing those numerous positions that were occupied.

At the same time **Cpl. Kahn**, who had been rated very highly as a machine-gun corporal took a flier at manning a forward post as a member of the R.O.'s party in the vicinity of Sechtem, Germany and was unfortunately wounded during his tour of duty, although happily, not too seriously. He was evacuated to a base hospital and after a rapid recovery, he rejoined the battery and the Instrument Section at Altenhain. At this point **T/5 Hill** was transferred to the Radio Section.

Unsung throughout our active campaign was steady unswerving **T/5 Lucian K. Hughes**, who drove the advance party vehicle where ever he was directed to, without hesitation or fear. This was no mean feat in view of the circumstances which on many occasions found the B.C. party moving up even with or ahead of our advanced elements of infantry with little or no knowledge of what danger might lie ahead.

Throughout the entire campaign all things had been going well with our small, but highly active group when we were overtaken with the most unfortunate incident of our entire combat career. While awaiting the signal to take off on one of our reconnaissance trips from Hede-Mundin, **Cpl. Stoddard** was accidentally shot as he and other members of the party were examining a captured German pistol. His injury necessitated his evacuation and as yet he had not rejoined us, although we would so very much have welcomed him back to the fold. In his absence his duties were ably performed by **Cpl. Custis** who handled the recorder's chair until the last few days before VE Day. The transfer into the battery of **Pvt. James Boris**, who was our present recorder ended the changes in the Instrument Section and brought us to the present situation as occupying troops of the large synthetic gas plant of the I.G. Farbenindustrie located in Leuna, Germany. And here we awaited our next orders from the High Command.

To the readers of this rather un-professional biography of the Baker Battery Instrument Section, its members extend their heartiest greetings.

S/Sgt. J. W. Freda
T/3 Ralph C. Buckles
Cpl. Leo Kriegsman
Cpl. George N. Custis
Cpl. George Kahn
T/5 Lucian Hughes
Pvt. James Boris
Cpl. Richard N. Stoddard (In absentia)

(Continued on Page 40)

BATTERY B, 881st FIELD ARTILLERY HISTORY (Continued from Page 39)

THE RADIO SECTION

By S/Sgt. E. V. Boucher

On arriving in England, the radio section consisted of the following men: T/5 Frazier, T/5 Starkey, T/5 Matys, and last but not least T/5 Struewing. A more closely knit group of men could not be found in the battery, due to the most part, the numerous beer calls that we enjoyed together in the States.

Each man knew his job and there was no need to remind any of them what they had to do. Boucher was the Battery commander's operator, Frazier, the Executive's, Starkey the RO's, Matys the FO's, while Struewing operated for the detail truck. This set-up continued through England, France, Belgium and into Germany where we lost Starkey to the instrument section and received Pfc. Hill in his place.

We had many good breaks as well as bad, but as all good men do, we took them in stride and went on to correct the mistakes that we had made. Picking them out at random, one particularly bad break was the time when we had to keep a 24-hour guard on the radio with only three operators available, out in the open in freezing cold weather.

Another incident occurred when Starkey was crawling on his stomach with the set strapped on his back, and enemy shells and mortars were dropping like rain all around him. He called for an emergency fire on the enemy, and the operator at the other end told him to authenticate the message. Boucher was so mad that he ran clear to Headquarters Battery to find out who was responsible for that when the party obviously was in trouble up on 'the line.' Nothing could be done about the situation, however, as the man who was responsible outranked him by seven grades. Boucher did express his opinion of a person who would do such a thing in a very loud voice to no one in particular, but for the benefit of all concerned, and after that day no one ever asked Baker Battery to authenticate a message.

We had to sit in the rain, snow, mud and freezing cold to operate, but always came up with a grin when our time was over and we were relieved. Some of the good breaks occurred when the wire section put in all the wire needed for communication and then the radio section was able to close down their station and take it easy, which by the way, was quite often. There were days like that to compensate for the hard ones we had.

Of all the time we spent in combat, we lost only one radio due to enemy action, but we saved the operator. True, Starkey did have his antenna shot right off of his set, but he managed to bring the set back in one piece and in working condition, a feat that deserves the recognition, as anyone knows the story of his dash across the plain in front of Geisheid will tell you. He remarked that the radio was so heavy that it kept him running, or he would have fallen. I wonder just how many people he thought he fooled with that. The radio

we lost was in the battle for Leipzig. The chief of the radio section was the one concerned in that, so there was nothing said about it.

I don't know where I could have gotten hold of a better radio crew than I had in these combat missions. Some day, I hope the radio section can get together once more and have a beer call as we used to, the best of luck to everyone.

THE OUTPOST

By Bruce Walker

On Friday, 11 May 1945, the first section of the firing battery was sent to take over the road block on the road between Merseberg and Weissenfels. We had our quarters in a house along the road and we had merely to step out of the front door and we were on duty.

Not a dozen people passed before dark that day and we looked forward to an easy forty-eight hours. That first night we played the phonograph and the accordion, made a little coffee and had a good night's sleep.

Saturday dawned clear and promised to be uncommonly warm for May. By that time we had instructions to pick everybody without AMG passes. Riding in for chow we passed the advance party which we'd soon know as the damndest array of homosapiens yet encountered.

Before eight o'clock we were back at the out-post to find probably 20 people being held by the guards. They were loaded up on the truck and hauled to the CP. After the usual wait, they were interrogated and the "prisoners" were hauled to the MG headquarters. There we found out that they had no pass blanks and they instructed us to turn back those with improper passes picking up only those men of military age who were suspicious or were discharged after 1 January of this year.

This time when we arrived back at the out-post, we were amazed at what we saw. The road resembled Cheyenne's Main St. on Frontier Day. There were wagons lined up along the road, at least three score bicycles were leaning up against the house and trees, and untold numbers of men, women and children resting and milling around. As none of them held AMG passes, the boys held them up. Every European nationality was represented, and everyone had his own story. But in an hour we cleared it out and the place seemed deserted.

Then for two days we settled down to asking for passes and explaining in G.I. German that the Deutsche passes were "kaput." We steeled our souls to bawling women and kids and learned to control ourselves and not shoot some irate Herr. "Vo-hin comen zee" and "Vo-hin Gay-en zee," and a few other phrases formed our vocabulary. A few pretty girls and prostitutes added a little color, but it was all nothing but a big pain in the neck.

Two days later we were relieved by the second section and we went back to the battery to enjoy a life of ease (?).

(Continued on Page 41)

BATTERY B, 881st FIELD ARTILLERY HISTORY (Continued from Page 40)

THE RHINE CROSSING

By Danny Dowling

On March 28, 1945 we left the little town of Sechtem, Germany with the knowledge that we were to cross the Rhine. As the vehicles moved out, each driver was given an overlay by **Capt. Barry** and at the first stop we all gathered around the driver eagerly to see where we were going. The overlay didn't tell us much.

In a few minutes we were in Bonn, the first large German city that most of us had seen. It was battered all right, but it looked good after seeing Reischheid and Hellenthal. There was another good point; the absence of odorous manure piles.

As we left Bonn, we caught our first glimpse of the Rhine on our left. It didn't look as broad as we had expected it to. We followed the river to Bad Godesburg, a city with many hospitals. American artillery had purposely spared it, but later German artillery had battered the city from across the Rhine.

Here we turned left and fell into the line of vehicles waiting to cross the river. A number of vehicles from an engineer battalion edged into our convoy. The Rhine was not nearly as wide as we had expected but it was wide enough. There were AA guns set up at each end of the bridge. Up the river we could see another pontoon bridge carrying west-bound vehicles. Lining the banks were boats and barges of every description. As we left the bridge we made a column right and followed the river.

A few days before, 'Stars & Stripes' had published a picture of the Remagen bridge and we were all looking for it. We didn't have long to wait. We passed directly under the towers on the east end of the bridge. The approaches to it had been heavily bombed and the bridge looked beat up, too. The Ludendorf Bridge had collapsed several days before and it was now lying in the water.

Most of the towns along the Rhine were badly battered, but the Rhine Valley itself was beautiful. The steep hillsides rising up from the valley were covered with vineyards. All along the river, green grass flourished and peach trees were beginning to bloom.

As we left the bridgehead area, we passed through town after town in which white flags were flying from all the windows. In one of these towns the engineers pulled out of our column when we made a right turn. The kitchen truck continued to follow the engineers and we had a few bad hours worrying about them and chow.

A little later, a large city appeared on the far bank of the Rhine. We soon discovered that it was Koblenz. At the junction of the Moselle and the Rhine rivers

stood a large statue of Kaiser Wilhelm. Our artillery had unseated the Kaiser and both he and his horse were dangling from the east side of the pedestal.

Here we turned from the river and climbed the hill on which the Fortress Ehrenbreitstein stands. Our infantry had captured it the previous day. At the top of the hill was the little town of Arnheim, where we stopped for the night. The kitchen finally caught up with us and we ate chow. For once we did not put our guns into position.

THE TRIALS OF A MAIL CLERK

By Danny Dowling

When we were in England, **Sampson** had the idea that his job as mail clerk was getting a little rough, but he hadn't seen anything yet. That is where it started, though.

Censorship regulations brought new headaches and on the many mailless days he was hounded incessantly. England was also the first place where he had to confront the air-mail stamp and money-order problem.

While there, he built a small O.D. mailbox guaranteed to be waterproof. To this day it hasn't leaked a drop except when it rains, but as I said, his troubles were only beginning.

When we moved into combat, the tribulations really began. We started to lose personnel, but their mail still came in and **Sammy** beat his brains out deciding which letters to hold and which to forward. Then the packages started to come in. They always came after dark and he would trudge through the snowy, muddy Ardennes and pack in bag after bag of mail.

While in Hellenthal, he received two mail clerk calls **after** we had CSMO.

One of his hardest battles came at Schmidtheim, when he was informed by **Lt. Bell** that he would have to obtain a smaller mailbox, but **Sammy** wouldn't give up his pride and joy just like that. After some fast talking he managed to retain the waterproof mailbox in which he had neatly camouflaged his extra cigarettes with V-mail forms.

After we were well inside Germany, the men began picking up mausers and bayonets which they wished to send home. Finally, after half of the battery had been at his throat for nearly a month, the opportunity came to ship the guns out and when he had delivered the last one to message center, he felt greatly relieved.

But as always another problem popped up. Again the men wanted air-mail stamps. Now, if you just look at him crosswise he'll ask you how many you want.

They say it is a lot rougher on mail clerks in the CBI than the ETO.

(These memoirs will be continued in a future issue of the bulletin.)

A Couple of Tales from Charley Martens

Battery C, 724th Field Artillery Battalion

"155 Howitzers"

1250 Norma Drive

Buffalo, Wyoming 82834

I joined C Battery, 724th Field Artillery Battalion, 69th Division at Camp Shelby in March 1944. I had been an artilleryman with the 15th Coast Artillery Battalion in Hawaii next to Pearl Harbor on a pair of 16" Coast Guns, the largest guns the U.S. had. I applied for Air Cadets there and was sent back to Keesler Field, Mississippi. After being there for only a couple of weeks, I was sent to the 69th at Camp Shelby as they closed cadet training at the time to all but combat Air Force crewmen or new recruits.

Last August, I was a First-Timer at the reunion in Houston, Texas. I hope and expect to be at the reunion in Orlando, Florida in November 1999. I have sent in a few stories and photos for publication in the Bulletin.



Charley Martens top center, Christmas day, 1945 in Reims, France.

Krinkelt, Belgium

February, 1945

Our first gun position was at the edge of KRINKELT, BELGIUM where we relieved the 372nd F.A. Battalion of the 99th Division on February 12th. About February 27th, 12 of us were sent up ahead to prepare a new gun position in the Ardennes Forest. The engineers had dug some rough holes for gun pits and dugouts with a bulldozer and we had to finish them, sand bag and log them over. The sky was completely overcast with a very low ceiling. In the afternoon we heard a dog fight start up above the clouds; we couldn't see anything but could hear planes zooming around and machine guns rattling. We all stood silently watching the clouds in the direction from which the sounds were coming when all of a sudden a burning plane came through the clouds crashing to the ground. A few seconds later a man on a parachute came through the clouds on fire from his feet on up. A few seconds more and the shroud lines of the chute burned through and the parachute collapsed and the pilot plummeted to the ground about 3/4 to a mile away from us. Our first thoughts were for some of us to go there to see if we could help the poor guy. **Lt. Campbell** didn't think we should. He said we didn't know where the Germans were, and where we were we had a good defensive position with 12 men to defend it. He didn't think it would be wise to split up and expose some of us out in the open with woods all around. He also said he thought that if that pilot hadn't died from the flames the fall would have killed him and we couldn't help him anyway. I think we all agreed with him. I also said he probably was not an American as all our planes by that time had self-sealing gas tanks and our fighter planes almost always flew two or more together and we could hear two planes fly off together.

After a little while of watching the smoke column in the distance we went back to work. I never did get over feeling sorry for that pilot, whether he was a German or American. At times like that I always thought of the boy's or man's mother.

Just before that at our gun position at Krinkelt, we had a scary thing happen. During one fire mission, when we fired, our gun went into recoil and stayed there. When an ordnance man came to check it out he said the barrel of the gun was defective and had expanded, preventing it from returning to firing position. He said it couldn't be repaired in the field and they would have to send us up a new gun. He told us we were lucky it hadn't blown up completely, as it could have killed some or all of us. I heard of that happening to a gun in Ft. Sill, Oklahoma and a number of men were killed and wounded.

I remember at Krinkelt we had an older man in our gun crew whose name was **Gottlieb**, if I remember right. I think he was in his middle thirties and at that

(Continued on Page 43)

TALES FROM CHARLEY MARTENS

(Continued from Page 42)

time we considered that old. In civilian life he was the leader of an all girl orchestra and not what anyone would think of as an outdoors man. I felt sorry for him; a gun crew was no place for him. Several times he fell down in the knee-deep mud in back of the gun and we would have to go over and help him up. After awhile someone else higher up must have felt like me and he was transferred to "Soldier Shows." He could really play a clarinet and we missed that entertainment when he left.

That makes me think, too, of what they used to say about the army. I was an office clerk in civilian life but I wanted to be a truck driver in the army so they made me a cook!

A Couple of Days at Kitzen

A little southwest of Leipzig we were moving up to a new gun position when we came upon some tanks with infantry riding on them parked alongside the road at a road intersection. My first thought was "I think we are some place medium artillery shouldn't be." We stopped right next to a tank and a skinny little infantryman about my size said, "Where in the hell are you guys going?" I said, "We don't know." He said "I don't know either, but you are going to be sorry," and he was right.

After our officers talked with the tank and infantry officers at the front of the little column and radioed to our headquarters we turned left and went on ahead of the tanks and infantrymen. I didn't like the situation at all; I always felt quite comfortable knowing I had tanks and infantry between me and the enemy. We went on and set up our guns next to the little farm village of Kitzen. "A" Battery set up in a position more in an open field off several hundred yards to our right.

When Lt. Psaltis, our forward observer with 3rd Battalion, 271st Infantry radioed Col. Gooch that they were going to attack Kitzen, the colonel told him we were already setting up gun positions at Kitzen. We didn't have any friendly troops in front of us or on our right flank. Just a little while after we got there air bursts from a 36 gun "88" anti-aircraft battery started bursting over "A" Battery's position and they sustained a number of wounded. We started counter battery fire and the Germans stopped shooting.

The next morning the Germans started firing again and because of their more exposed position, "A" battery took the brunt of the fire and suffered many more casualties.

The shrapnel from one shell did cut our guns phone wire and when we got another fire mission Sgt. Struck had me go stand between us and the gun next to ours and relay the fire orders to him until a man from the wire section repaired the wire.

Another time while they were shelling "A" battery so bad, I was watching the air bursts from my foxhole.



Taken in Rampitz near Bad Durenberg. Charley Martens on the left, Saverio Noto with the flag, Al Eckhardt of Sandusky, Ohio on the right and Gil Albro of Nebraska in the back.

One of the shells, instead of exploding over "A" Battery, came loudly swishing in and hit the ground about 30 yards in front of me, kicked up dirt and sod and bounced toward me. I really pulled a fast turtle act and pulled my head down into the foxhole and waited for the explosion that didn't come. After awhile I peeked out and saw the dud "88" shell laying there about 20 feet from my foxhole. I told Sgt. Struck about it and he phoned it into headquarters. A little while later Col. Gooch came out there with an aide. They were trying to line up the marks in the sod where it had bounced to see the direction from which it came. I told them I could point out where the guns were because I could see their gun flashes when they fired. About that time the colonel picked up the nose of the shell. I immediately made a beeline behind our tractor. All I could think of was the many, many times I had been told to never touch a dud shell, that it could go off with any kind of movement. If he wanted to blow his head off that was his business, but I wanted to keep mine intact. We left that position with the shell still there.

Another incident that took place at Kitzen I didn't hear about till a short time ago while talking to Al Eckhardt from Sandusky, Ohio. Al told me as soon as we had the guns set up he headed for the farm right close to our gun to look for eggs as most of us G.I.'s were prone to do. He did this without taking his carbine along. He told me he came out of the barn, with an egg in each hand just as two German soldiers came out of the farmhouse. They had no guns either. He said they looked at one another, and he ran one way and they ran the other!

I believe these were the same two German soldiers that the wire or motor section captured. That night one of my buddies and I were taken from the gun and

(Continued on Page 44)

TALES FROM CHARLEY MARTENS

(Continued from Page 43)

put on guard duty on a house just inside the village that headquarters personnel was staying in. He was put on the front door and me in the garden in the back of the house. All of a sudden, from the dark across the street, I heard a guard yelling "Halt! Halt! Halt!" and then a barrage of gun fire broke out. Not knowing if we were being attacked by a German patrol or an infantry counter attack, I slipped into the shadows of the fruit trees and bushes of the garden. I didn't feel too good about a few artillerymen with little carbines taking on trained German infantrymen with "burp" guns and hand grenades. The gunfire stopped as abruptly as it had begun. Then I heard the G.I.'s yelling.

What had happened, I heard later, was that one of the two prisoners had tried to escape in the dark and was killed. Then they brought the other one, a younger boy, I believe, and showed him the dead man. I heard them tell him if he tried to escape the same thing would happen to him; I don't know if he understood English, but I bet he got the message! I've often thought about the dead guy. All he had to do was wait about 3 more weeks as a prisoner and the war would have been over and he could have gone back home and maybe be living yet today.

We were only at Kitzen a couple days. Not all our gun positions were as eventful as that one.

The War Remembered

This is a story that Charley wrote for his local newspaper in 1995, the 50th Anniversary of the end of WWII.

Central Germany, March, 1945: When our artillery battery would move up to a new gun position in unmarked territory "route markers" would be sent ahead and dropped off at road intersections to direct the rest of the outfit as to which way to go.

One time in Germany, I was dropped off at a road junction with not another person in sight. While standing there feeling awfully alone waiting for my outfit to come down the road, I saw some movement out of the corner of my eye. I about jumped out of my boots when I saw it was 6 German soldiers walking towards me. I felt better when I saw that they all had their hands in the air. I motioned for them to stand down by the road in the direction from which my outfit would come so I could keep my eye and my gun on them. I motioned to them they could put their arms down.

While waiting there for my outfit to come I thought, "These guys not only have me outnumbered, but they are all bigger than me, too. I hope they don't change their minds!" I only weighed about 115 lbs. at that time.

Finally my outfit came along with each vehicle spaced about 100 yards apart in case of air or artillery attack. As each gun or truck approached, the Germans

would raise their hands again and as it passed they would lower them again. I think that was the start of the "wave" that we now see at our football games, etc.

I got some smart wise-cracks from some of my buddies as they went by. Like, "Hey Martens, where'd you get your new buddies," or "Hey Martens, you want a pinochle deck?"

When the last vehicle in the column would come along it would pick up the "route markers." So when the weapons carrier stopped for me, I jumped on and we left the bewildered German soldiers standing there. We had to get on to our new gun position in case the tanks and infantry needed our artillery support. We didn't have time to mess with prisoners.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: In the next issue of the Bulletin, we will publish an account of Charley Martens return to Germany in 1977 and 1998.)



Charley today. One of the reasons he moved to Wyoming.

Attention 69ers DO NOT SEND IN PHOTOCOPIES OF PHOTOS!!

Members continue to send in photocopies of photos. We absolutely cannot use photocopies of photographs. We must have the originals. Don't worry, we will return your photographs to you. We know how much they mean to you. The quality of the photos, especially from 50 years ago, is poor as it is. Also, we have members sending in computer scans. These are passable, but we still prefer the originals. Unless you have a high end computer, these scans are not of good quality and reproduce poorly. *Thank you from the Editorial Staff*

A GI's Tale

PART II

Submitted by: "**Howitzer**" **Al Kormas**
Headquarters, 879th Field Artillery
12500 Edgewater Drive, Apt. 503
Lakewood, Ohio 44107-1673

Welcome to Brock Barracks, Reading, England. As dawn arose, men were stirring anxious to see Merry Old England. There was no activity from the Orderly Room and no kitchen going, so my good buddy **Bigfoot Parker** said, let's go see the town, and away we went down to High Street. Bigfoot had been to England before with the Bloody Bucket 28th in Wales prior to being an air cadet which closed for him like so many like him. I was a real tourist and he was showing me around. At 0900 Barclays Bank opened up and we exchanged our \$20 each into the coins of the realm. At 10:00 all of the pubs were opening up. We went into one and it was going strong already. There was an old bitty banging on the piano and she started singing, "Roll Me Over Yank." It has 10 choice verses and naturally my face reddened. We got back to the barracks at 1800, just ahead of the last two out. They made an example of them and we just missed it.

The food here was prepared jointly for the 879th and 880th Field Artilleries. The kitchen was not up to the standards as at Shelby. The chow was ... ugh! Powdered milk with ample undissolved clumps. This was the army's first experiment with dehydrated food. Dried carrots and potatoes and powdered eggs. It tasted like cardboard and the portions were skimpy. Orange marmalade with no sugar and no color, sprouts and cabbage boiled to a pulp daily and one slice of bread. We were also introduced to the Limey canned bully beef. It smelled like a horse's you know what. Thank goodness for the corner fish and chips stores with the greasy deli cone wrapped in an old newspaper. I think this is what kept us alive.

We drove our pilots to Newberry which was 20 miles away. They ate at this big ATC base. Wow, how they ate. There were no servers. They just helped themselves to beef, pork, lots of bread and even ice cream. Naturally, with our dress and with knives sticking out of our GI boots, they just backed away from us. I parked right in front of the entrance where there were large "No Parking" signs. We ignored them. A few times on our trips there, me and my buddies went in and ate our fill. They all stared at us - especially pulling up in my jeep with the 50 caliber machine gun mounted on the front of it, and loaded of course. I guess we were a real topic of conversation for them. This messhall served thousands of meals daily and on leaving, we took a loaf of bread, jars of marmalade and a quantity of meat for our buddies. We never stood in line. We just walked right up to the front and they all stepped aside.

In touring this base, I got some old cargo parachutes made of bright yellow nylon. I gave a few to my lady friend Pat's mom who turned them into prized under-clothing. Also a few cargo pads. They were made of nice, soft felt which we cut to fit into our lousy fart sacks. Word got around to our First Sergeant, **Ed Stark**. He came to me and said, "I want a couple of those too." No more words were necessary. Mission accomplished.

I remember one night I escorted a British WAC back to her barracks. I guess I took too long saying good night and my buddies left me. I got lost in the fog and walked aimlessly until finally, a bobby found me. He told me I was way off course but he would walk me back. I bought him some smokes and candy. My pals were not too worried. When I got back to camp they were all sleeping. They were a good bunch of buddies. God bless the whole mischief making, rule bending bunch of them.

I became acquainted with a beautiful blonde named Pat Hutchinson who lived on Edale Road with her mom. Her mom was a grand lady whose husband and two sons were away. Many an evening I had tea there. One night after I picked up Pat at the bullet making plant that she worked at, we went to an out of the way pub called the Joy Bird. It had a wonderful atmosphere with sing-alongs and people playing darts.

I was on KP Christmas day and my pal **Filthy Gray** had gotten a hold of some bottled ale. We hid it the entire day and were well oiled by noon. I had a run in that day with my old nemesis, **Fowler**. I accused him of burning the chocolate pudding and choice words followed. Anyway, with a surplus of holiday food, I tossed a large cooked turkey, packages of tea and fruit into a duffel bag and in the evening, headed over to Pat's house. Her mom cried and invited the neighbors over. Everyone had a great time. There was a small boy holding either an orange or a banana. I was surprised when he asked his mom what it was. They apparently had not had fruit in years. I could never understand how they lived on such skimpy rations. And as cold as it was there, they had no heat. I often thought, "Could our soft Americans live like this?" I doubted it. Still they had no thought of surrendering.

One day a buddy of mine named **Dave Oberst** asked Pat and me to join him and a service girl that he knew at a restaurant called the White Swan. It was a posh restaurant and we had to make reservations. We went up a winding staircase where there was a gold rope with a maitre d' in tails to our table in a very large and beautifully decorated room. Our dates wore their finest clothing. Thank goodness we ate at the mess hall before we went in there. The rations were nil. The menu had one meal - baked beans on toast, scones and tea. They took our order and it came out on a large, fancy cart. Needless to say, we gave our portions to the girls.

(Continued on Page 46)

A GI's TALE

(Continued from Page 45)

I kept in touch with Pat even after the war ended and I returned home. She finally married an English lad and I think of her at times. I often wonder if she is still alive. She was a grand gal.

Two brothers from home who were friends of mine and were merchant marines, found me while I was stationed in England and spent a couple of days with me. On leaving they said, "Al, the hell with this life you lead. We'll take our chances on the high seas." **Dave Oberst** took over a day's KP for me while my friends were there. He was such a great buddy. I sure owed him more than a few.

Shortly before leaving England **Bigfoot Parker** and I were put on KP together. This was a foolish mistake. We had a great mess sergeant named **Payne**, and I guess we drove him almost to a Section 8. This was a large mess hall big enough for two battalions. He always separated us but before long, we would be together again. We took long and frequent breaks, hiding in latrines, in other barracks, anywhere we could. He would find us and march us back to the mess hall. He was the nicest and fairest mess sergeant we had, but it got to the point where he would get so angry with us, the veins would pop out in his head. One day **Bigfoot** found us a spot at the far end of the camp in closed Nissen huts. We were relaxing on rolled up mattresses. I told him we had better get back but he just said, hey - they can't fire us. Well in walks **Payne**. I thought he was going to kill us. He was so angry that he couldn't even speak. He just drooled and no words ensued, like he was about to have a stroke. Finally, he just threw his hands up and left. We sauntered back and behaved for the rest of our detail. The upshot of this was that it was entered in the duty roster that **Kormas** and **Parker** should never be assigned to KP together again. That **Parker** could talk me into any escapade.

Leaving England was a sad detail, as we all had acquired a great like for our allies, the girls, the pubs and even the dart games. It closed a chapter in our lives forever. I recall on Christmas Eve at Pat's house many of the battery were invited to the local ATS, Auxiliary Territorial Service, which was like our WACS. The party got a little too "happy." Some of the guys went out to the power board and turned off the lights at 2400 and shall we say, were never invited there again.

One night after 6 weeks in England, we pulled out on a moment's notice after midnight. The town woke up and said prayers for us - I guess it was another group of Yanks gone. We went down to Weymouth past a lot of barbed wire enclosures, etc. and into a tent area on the shore. The tents were torn and the wind was howling through them. There were two large GI pots boiling away full of C-rations to which we just

helped ourselves. This went on for a few days. Have you ever experienced the power of canned beans in a GI pot? Let me enlighten you. They get boiling hot and explode sending burning beans into us and walls and everywhere, and they hurt.

Finally we boarded an LST bound for France. The sailors told us it would take about 24 hours. Well, a heavy storm was in the channel and it took about 3 days. We went up the Seine past Le Havre and on to Rouen. We were put on trucks and there were little kids in rags saying, "Hey, Joe, cigarettes for papa, candy for me; and my sister, she is a virgin."

We ended up in LaBelle, France where we saw our first pees-em-wah. This was a round, steel enclosure covering one from shoulder to ankle where the French relieved themselves. The aroma was something to behold but the natives didn't seem to mind. On the open road we passed 3 farm girls by the side of the road doing a latrine call. This was new to us, but we soon became acclimated to the habits of these people. Of course, we couldn't resist yelling out some choice GI words. The Yank is quick to learn and improvise, but he is still a Yank at heart.

We ended up at a small chateau. It was freezing as it had no heat. We were told we would leave the area by noon. There was half frozen chow outside. Well, **Bigfoot**, **Filthy** and myself saw this young lad. He was offering us hard cider. Wow, this was great. **Bigfoot** knew some French and found out that he lived about a half a mile down the road. The lad told us his father would sell some of this cider to us. We hopped over his spiked iron fence and made the connection, trading some goods for the cider. We had a few drinks there and we each got 3 or 4 bottles to go. We slid our goodies under the fence and when we were halfway back, there stood **Sergeant Stark**, **Captain Thomas** and **Lieutenant Maher**. They confiscated our goodies and told us there would be serious consequences. Well, another crazy deal by **Bigfoot**. Anyway, at morning chow a soldier comes over to us and says, "You better make yourselves scarce for a while. They drank that stuff last night and it was plain apple juice!"

One day myself, **Juggy Powers** and a few other guys were in my jeep on our way to Belgium. We stopped for the normal latrine call in a town called Charleroi. Anyway, a grand old lady came out of her house with a few bottles of wine which she gave to **Juggy**, the wrong person to be handed wine. **Juggy's** girlfriend was from a town back home called Charleroi just below Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. What a coincidence.

We were headed to relieve the 99th Division. It was cold and dark and we were wet of course, and chilled to the bone dealing with the mud, sleet and snow. We realized this was it and were thankful for, and knew this was where all of our tough training would come in. We instinctively got closer to each other in many ways.

(Continued on Page 47)

A GI's TALE

(Continued from Page 46)

Finally, we started seeing artillery flashes ahead and hearing the guns. There were low clouds and it was raining. We pulled into an assembly area. Here is where we saw our first dead from both sides. We moved up to the position of the 99th recon unit. They were real combat veterans, filthy dirty, with a far away look in their eyes. They were eager to get out of there and upon leaving, told us that many of us would soon be dead. Mom, where are you? Were we scared, oh yes. Remember, most of us were only in our late teens.

As we brought up the battery, the 99th pulled back to lick their wounds and gather replacements. Most of the battery men were in pillboxes, and for the first time, the lieutenant was in purple heart corners, in view of enemy fire. We heard our first rockets or "screaming meemies," and it was slow going in the mud. This lieutenant took off and so did I and I lost my helmet. An hour or two later, I discovered that my knees were wet. I had peed my pants and did not know it at the time!

Our battery was located in pillboxes. We were fed twice a day. For breakfast, you could have all the pancakes you could eat, and supper was always after dark. The Germans always shelled the area at the usual chow time and did not deviate from this. One night a few of us went over to the mess truck and climbed in to get some chow. We made a little noise and the cook's pillbox door opened. He yelled at us to get out of there. The silence was broken by the loading of a bullet into the chamber of a carbine and the door closed quickly. The next day the sergeant told us that we had better stay away from the mess truck. We had sufficient warning already from the cook, believe me.

We finally got our first rest at Schmidtheim for a few days after 17 days on the Siegfried Line. There was no water for lunch chow, so **Sergeant Stark** told me to take a trailer full of water cans and get back with it immediately. So who did I take with me - Parker, of course. We got back way after lunch with no water for coffee, but we had lots of wine and both of us were in a happy mood, shall I say. **Captain Thomas** said, "Line up the men and let them have the wine."

Not many meals were missed during this time. The mess personnel did a great job, plus we had our C, K and D bars. In the barns and attics in the small farm area there was lots of food to be found - hens, eggs and potatoes. I recall my first boiled chicken feast in a farm yard. Some cleaned the hens, others defeathered during a rainy, foggy and chilly day. A peculiar aroma arose. Whoever put on this extravagant feast forgot to clean the guts out of the chickens.

We finally moved out getting near the Rhine and the weather turned quite agreeable. We were coming down the AAR valley and it was gorgeous. We were in a defense position of the Rhine bridge that had been

put up by another division's combat engineers. It was the longest tactical bridge in the world. The water was really moving swiftly, but it held up. On crossing, there were a few engineers playing craps on a blanket.

We followed the river valley and noticed the high terraced vineyards on our left. We stopped in Valendar for the night and my gang bedded down in a house. **Oberst**, who loved cherry pie, found all the ingredients he needed and baked a very large pie. A few shells passed right over us into the river, and we headed for the basement. But not **Oberst**, vowing nothing would stop him. The pie was lip smacking good and we finished it. To this day, I pass on cherry pie because it reminds me of **Oberst**. He got into mischief back in England and was demoted to personal aide to **Major Johnson (Squirrely Johnson)**. The major's 3/4 truck held lots of candy, smokes and fine cognac to which **Oberst** helped himself for us.

The next day a mess sergeant was killed by a low flying German plane and **Captain Koblentz**, a well liked forward observer was also killed, with his upper torso being blown away. We all felt that his enlisted helper scratched himself to get a Purple Heart and a Bronze Star. Those who knew him felt this was true. Also, a mild mannered lieutenant who was sent up as an observer was killed on the way.

We were going through Germany at a fast pace, working in tandem with the 9th Armored Division. They would race up, find resistance, go around it and leave us to clean up the situation. The "Stars and Stripes" on occasion would headline how they advanced many miles daily, but there was little mention of us. I was witness to our leaders arguing with the leaders of the 9th over who had rights to a particular good road. As usual, they got it.

One day that was fairly quiet, I was driving my jeep through the woods with **Bigfoot** and **Shorty Harman** along. All at once we came upon a POW camp. There were a couple of hundred men cutting wood for the German army. They told us the Germans had just evacuated. These POWs were all Greeks. I told my buddies not to tell them of my heritage, but they quickly did and then they did not want us to leave.

One night we were in a beautiful castle-like chateau and we filled our vehicles with vintage libations. Early in the morning, we decided on a fishing expedition. Juggy had fishing line and hooks in his pack and I dug worms in the manure pile. We fashioned a couple of poles and I caught a few fish about a foot long. The guys gave Juggy the business because he didn't catch any fish and I found myself being propelled into the icy water chest high and he was beating me on my tin helmet, cussing a blue streak. There was no finer buddy than Juggy - the more he liked you, the more he abused you.

We stopped one night at large farm establishment. There were many workers there that we had just freed.

(Continued on Page 48)

A GI's TALE

(Continued from Page 47)

We found a distillery that made gin and all got a little high, shall I say. I will never forget Filthy Gray playing a game of cards with 3 of these men. They were all very serious. The freed workers asked if they could slaughter a cow for a feast. **Sergeant Stark** shot the one they wanted and they immediately hoisted it up by a chain and drained the blood for their traditional blood soup. That night many of us piled into the large hay mow and buried ourselves. It felt like we were going to heaven. The next morning **Sergeant Stark** rudely awoke us yelling that he had a pitchfork and would start probing if we didn't get up. Of course, this produced the desired result.

We moved on to Kassel where one of the men did find a large amount of cognac and distributed it. We had a grand time. C Battery, 880th, found a German soldier's band school and donned uniforms and instruments. They had quite a few drinks under their belts and proceed to march up and down the streets playing music, or so they thought.

There was no firing that night. The C.P. was upstairs and the lights were flickering. **Daniels**, who took care of the generator said, "I have to go out and fill the tank." Bigfoot needed to go out on a latrine call and said he would do it. This was a fatal mistake - in the dark he took the wrong GI can and poured oil in it. The next morning Daniels had to take it apart, clean and reassemble it. Oh, the fortunes of war.

On a mission somewhere with an officer, we came around a hill and found a gun factory built into the side of the hill. There were hundreds of women prisoners doing the work. There were a few GI vehicles there and they informed us that the German soldiers had just taken off. This was a night that I will always remember. All those women who had been there for a few years and just liberated - use your GI mind as to the kind of night we had. The next morning when we went back, we found out quickly that it was off limits and the MPs were in command.

We arrived in Eilenberg which was our last big battle. Fanatical Nazis caused many casualties to us in our final moments. Our men pulled back and were ordered to level the town. The firing went on with all available artillery for several days and we erased the town off the map. My buddies and I were in a large farmhouse that had a big kitchen in the basement. Firing was going on non-stop late into the evening. Juggy and I made a large pot of what we called "hunter's stew," which consisted on potatoes, carrots, onions, a small ham and someone added a few jars of bottled cherries and fruit. At about 2400 we ate our fill. It smelled great and the aroma wafted up to the C.P. A voice called out, "Any left?" Juggy took a large portion up to them and the officers loved it.

Then it came - on May 8th, 1945, the war was over - it just did not sink in, as too much had happened in the last four years and all over the globe, no one seemed to believe it. It just seemed too simple to say it was over, and by a few signings? It took a few days to realize it and at that moment, we were out of alcoholic beverages. We searched a few homes for a few bottles of wine. We listened to the radio which broadcast information about all of the great celebrations going on all over the world and so many of us GIs who should have been celebrating, were trapped out in the middle of no man's land.

We moved into Bad Lauchstadt and stayed at a beautiful boys school. The weather was great and we had no duties to speak of, other than patrolling a few villages by jeep. If you were on this patrol at night, you were handed a clipboard with names of buddies to be picked up at various places, a great taxi service. I guess one would say they were spreading democracy. Let's be honest about it - the women were starved for male companionship. The Yanks easily could adapt to new situations. I remember an outdoor park setting with outdoor beer gardens. At night you were warned to walk on the path or you might step on a buddy.

One day we were told we could go to the zoo in Leipzig and spend the day. Naturally, the whole battery went. Filthy and I went off on our own and came upon a small but grand opera house that was half blown. We smelled food. We followed our noses to a large kitchen in the basement and a few Germans were making big pots of potato soup. It was the best potato soup we had ever eaten and we each devoured two big bowls. We passed out cigarettes to them in gratitude. We were walking across the stage and Filthy needed a latrine call. There was none available so he used the stage for such purposes. There was no toilet paper handy so the great curtain also served it's purpose. I'll never forget that.

We were in Buchenwald and I discovered a hometown buddy there who was with the Sixth Armored Division. With the war starting to break up, various units were transferring out to other units and home. Moments like this were more heartbreaking to us than when we left home to go to war. Civilians do not know how close we had become to each other. Even married men who were heading home were teary eyed and hugging their buddies. No closeness can ever equal this. We had become so used to army life, it seemed that it was to go on forever.

Now came the probable invasion of Japan and all were thinking many of us would be on our way there. If they had not surrendered, the war would have lasted another year or two and thousands of us and them would have been killed.

For many of us, this was the greatest 3 years of our lives. And yes, I think of many of my comrades quite often. Hand me my old O.D. hanky.

Company I 272nd Infantry

Submitted by: William D. Devitt
(Deceased)

Photo Right

Platoon Leaders and Exec Officers

This picture was taken in the summer of 1945 in the town of Krossen am Elster, Germany (subsequently East Germany) shortly before the 69th Division deployed to the American Zone of Occupation.

1st Lt. Donald B Scobie (3rd Plt.)
2nd Lt. James Powell (1st Plt.)
1st Lt. Kenneth D. Hull (Ex. Of.)
1st Lt. Ray L. Coppock (2nd Plt.)
2nd Lt. Stanley Young (Wpns. Plt.)



1st Platoon, Company I, 272nd Infantry

Center Front: T/Sgt. Andrew L. Rebick, Platoon Sergeant

1st Row: S/Sgt Dennie Haltiwanger (Plt. Gde), S/Sgt. Leonard A. Lushbaugh (Sd Ldr), Pfc. William Koppen, Pfc Harlon Mark, Pfc B.J. Smith, Pfc Everett Kirk, Pfc Jim McElrath, Pfc Marco Jardin (later Sgt)

2nd Row: S/Sgt Robert Knight (Sd Ldr), Pfc William Devitt, Pfc John LaTourette, Pfc Oliver McDonald, Pfc Rocco Santoli, Pfc Dewey Hardin, Pfc Andrew Blishak, Sgt Robert Cline (later S/Sgt and Sd Ldr of 3rd Sd)

3rd Row: S/Sgt Christopher Matise (Sd Ldr), Pfc Spencer Earth, Pfc Lowell Grosskopf, Pfc Charles McGinnis, Pfc Eugene Wilson, Pfc Louis D'Orazio, Pfc Jack Martin, Pfc Herbert Moss.

Taken in late December 1944, Camp Lobscombe Corners, near Salisbury, England

D-Day and the horrible waste of war

Submitted by: **Howitzer Al Kormas**

Written by *Ernie Pyle*

(EDITOR'S NOTE: This is one of the late Ernie Pyle's most famous World War II columns. It was originally published in June 1944.)

I took a walk along the historic coast of Normandy in the country of France. It was a lovely day for strolling along the seashore. Men were sleeping on the sand, some of them sleeping forever. Men were floating in the water, but they didn't know they were in the water, for they were dead.

The water was full of squishy little jellyfish about the size of your hand. Millions of them. In the center each of them had a green design exactly like a four-leaf clover. The good-luck emblem. Sure. Hell, yes.

I walked for a mile and a half along the water's edge of our many-miled invasion beach. You wanted to walk slowly, for the detail on that beach was infinite.

The wreckage was vast and startling. The awful waste and destruction of war, even aside from the loss of human life, has always been one of its outstanding features to those who are in it. Anything and everything is expendable. And we did expend on our beachhead in Normandy during those first few hours.

For a mile out from the beach there were scores of tanks and trucks and boats that you could no longer see, for they were at the bottom of the water - swamped by over loading, or hit by shells, or sunk by mines. Most of their crews were lost.

You could see trucks tipped half over and swamped. You could see partly sunken barges, and the angeled up corners of jeeps, and small landing craft half submerged. And at low tide you could still see those vicious six-pronged iron snares that helped snag and wreck them.

On the beach itself, high and dry were all kinds of wrecked vehicles. There were tanks that had only just made the beach before being knocked out. There were big derricks on caterpillar treads that didn't quite make it. There were half-tracks carrying office equipment that had been made into a shambles by a single shell hit, their interiors still holding their useless equipage of smashed typewriters, telephones, office files.

There were LCTs turned completely upside down, lying on their backs, and how they got that way I don't know. There were boats stacked on top of each other, their sides caved in, their suspension doors knocked off.

In this shoreline museum of carnage there was abandoned rolls of barbed wire and smashed bulldozers and big stacks of thrown-away lifebelts and piles of shells still waiting to be moved.

On the beach lay snarled rolls of telephone wire and big rolls of steel matting and stacks of broken rifles.

On the beach lay, expended, sufficient, men and mechanism for a small war. They were gone forever now. And yet we could afford it.

We could afford it because we were on, we had our toehold, and behind us there were such enormous replacements for this wreckage on the beach that you could hardly conceive of their sum total. Men and equipment were flowing from England in such a gigantic stream that it made the waste on the beachhead seem like nothing at all, really nothing at all.

A few hundred yards back on the beach is a high bluff. Up there we had a tent hospital and a barbed-wire enclosure for prisoners of war. From up there you could see far up and down the beach, in spectacular crow's-nest view, and far out to sea.

And standing out there on the water beyond all this wreckage was the greatest armada man has ever seen. You simply could not believe the gigantic collection of ships that lay out there waiting to unload.

Looking from the bluff, it lay thick and clear to the far horizon of the sea and on beyond, and it spread out to the sides and was miles wide. Its utter enormity would move the hardest man.

As I stood up there, I noticed a group of freshly taken German prisoners nearby. They had not been put in the prison cage. They were just standing there, a couple of doughboys leisurely guarding them with tommy guns.

The prisoners too, were looking out to sea - the same bit of sea that for months and years had been so safely empty before their gaze. Now they stood staring almost as if in a trance.

They didn't say a word to each other. They didn't need to. The expression on their faces was something forever unforgettable. In it was the final horrified acceptance of their doom.

If only all Germany could have had the rich experience of standing on the bluff and looking out across the water and seeing what their compatriots saw.

- *Ernie Pyle died April 18, 1945*

Attention Ladies WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER FROM THE WAR??

Ladies, if you can think of anything that occurred during war times that might be of interest to other women of the Ladies Auxiliary, please write us and we will include it in the Ladies Auxiliary pages. Please send them to:

Dottie Witzleb

P.O. Box 69

Champion, Pennsylvania 15622-0069

A Continuation of the memoirs of John Durst

Company A, 273rd Infantry
1832 Alta Street
Redlands, California 92374-1718

(EDITOR'S NOTE: In Vol. 51, No. 2, January-April 1998, we published memoirs of John Durst. He sent us further memoirs written in 1958 of which below are some excerpts we think you will find interesting.)

Crossing on the Queen Elizabeth

After a ten day leave for the Christmas holidays at home, I reported to the Air Force base on Long Beach where a D.C.-3 was waiting to fly us across country to Washington, D.C., where we had to take a train to New Jersey because of bad weather in the East.

Going overseas on the Queen Elizabeth you could buy a carton of candy but the line was so long I didn't get one. Besides its English crew, the Queen Elizabeth carried 15,000 soldiers - enough men for an entire division. The ship had a long, smooth roll and no one got seasick. This was in January.

It was so crowded that there were only enough bunks for half of the men to sleep in at a time. Therefore every other night we had to sleep on the promenade deck. This was quite an unpleasant thing because there was a trough of sea water close to the rail which often spilled over when the ship rolled, making sleeping on the bare floor difficult with the constant danger of getting wet. This deck soon became a giant gambling casino with poker and dice games in full swing along the entire deck on both sides of the ship. We would play poker and craps long into the night. I heard that in the officers' games, thousands of dollars exchanged hands.

A submarine was detected following our ship, but we finally outran it because the Queen Elizabeth was the fastest ship afloat at the time. The sides of the promenade deck that were open to the sea were boarded up with plywood so that no lights from the deck could be seen by the submarines. The officers and women soldiers, Wacs and Nurses, occupied the "first class" area of the ship which of course had its own dining room with table cloths and silverware, while we enlisted men ate in the "grand ballroom" and dined from mess kits. Incidentally, it is no joke about the English's inability to make a good cup of coffee, it tasted like muddy water! This was the time I most envied the officers' rank and privilege.

Givet Replacement Depot

As a soldier in the U.S. army, it wasn't hard to recognize the fact that our weapons were inferior to the Germans. Our tanks, mortars, and even our rifles were not accurate. Their MG's were faster with snap out barrels. We had no heavy tanks. Our tank guns were also useless, bouncing off their tanks. Our shoes and

gloves were no good either against the cold weather and snow.

At the Repo Depot at Givet, they should have fired enemy guns over our heads so that we would be able to recognize the sound of incoming and could get out of the way in time. We stood behind their guns. We had worn out rifles in training at Camp Roberts that were no good for learning. The lieutenant found rust in my rifle, though I had spent all night cleaning it! My arm went to sleep at inspection. I couldn't lift rifles for inspection arms due to my heavy back pack. The lieutenant said, "Exercise it!" The lieutenant chewed us out at mess and yelled at us during chow throughout the first week to scare us men - he was obnoxious.

My company lived in a railroad shed with a very bad roof, the snow came right through. I got frost bitten toes for the first time and could hardly walk on our training marches through the town. Frost bitten toes may not look bad, but they sure are painful and hard to walk on. The shed had two coal stoves which we huddled around to try to get warm. At night I would cross over to another company that had better quarters, a better building, and read their magazine collection.

We zeroed-in our rifles, then they took them away from us. Later at 69th Division, tent city, we were given others, but we never had another chance to zero in our M1 rifles.

The Meisheid Explosion

We lost 61 men in an explosion in a Meisheid house before trying to take one pillbox. My platoon was on the bottom floor of the house and a platoon from "B" Company was living upstairs. The explosion killed the men downstairs instantly, and some of the men upstairs were screaming 'get us out of here.' Unfortunately the fire made it impossible for anyone to reach them. Although the fire lit up the sky for miles around, the Germans, for some unexplained reason, did not send over any artillery or mortar fire onto the area. A bucket brigade line was formed from a well nearby in an effort to put out the fire and even Major Salladin joined in.

When the Platoon Guide staggered into our platoon area with the news, we were stunned. At first I couldn't understand what had happened. We later figured out what happened. When Lt. Edward Lucci returned from a final briefing at Battalion Headquarters and stuck his head in the room and said "O.K., let's go" the men started picking up their equipment in a corner of the room. They had piled their packs on top of the flame-throwers and satchel charges which had two fuses, one set for 15 seconds and the other for thirty seconds, in case the first didn't happen to go off. Apparently, some of the equipment got caught on one of the rings which are pulled to set off the 15 second fuses, because it must have taken just about that much time to allow the two men to get out of the door. The next day Major Salladin announced that he would personally lead a patrol in another attempt to take the

(Continued on Page 52)

MEMOIRS OF JOHN DURST

(Continued on Page 51)

same pillbox and asked for volunteers to go on this mission. However, before this could be done, the orders came for the big attack by the entire First Army in support of the Ninth Army's crossing of the Rhine River.

My buddy in my log hut was killed in this explosion. He was from North Carolina or Virginia, and I had just had a long talk with him before he went, about his three small children, two of which were twins. We found a picture of them in his effects the next day. Our platoon sergeant was put up for a "battlefield commission" for Lieutenant, but it came back as an offer to go to O.C.S. (Officers Candidate School) in Paris, which he turned down. I might have been made a sergeant but promotions were frozen then and two sergeants were brought in from the Quartermaster Corps.

A few days before our attempt to take pillboxes, a self-propelled, 75mm gun, which is an artillery cannon mounted on a halftrack, advanced up to within 500 yards of the main pillbox and fired several shells at it, but we saw them bounce right off the concrete bunker. The self-propelled gun was forced to turn around and withdraw and one or two men were wounded by enemy fire. Our artillery fired smoke shells around the area so that they could be evacuated without being seen by the Germans.

Ironically when our attack enabled us to take Kamburg, we by-passed these pillboxes and the Germans inside surrendered. Apparently, it wasn't necessary to take them after all.

On April 1st, the U.S. 1st and 9th armies effected a junction at Lippstadt, 75 miles east of Weitzel. Model attacked at Hann on the north and Seiger on the south, trying to break out but to no avail.

The town of Kassel was seen from a hill overlooking the city. It was just one big pile of rubble, hardly a building left undamaged. Rumor had it that G.I.s who spoke German were buying up city lots in the downtown district for practically nothing in the knowledge that someday these lots would be rebuilt and would therefore increase immeasurably in value.

One night, English bombers came over and it was thought that the bombers were going on to Berlin, thus 20,000 people were killed in one night. The whole city was completely pulverized. The only walls left standing were the ones hit by incendiary bombs. This could be told by the black smoke marks left over the window. The other buildings, hit by high explosive bombs were just a big pile of bricks. Even the streets were covered with bricks. Only one main road had been cleared through town for traffic to get through.

Wreckers in Kassel: The men would walk back and forth on them while in motion. The wreckers would pull disabled tanks. One time, a wrecker tried to go up a hill, but it slipped back and then turned around. The Germans laughed.

Kamburg

While walking through the main street, a sniper opened fire with a burp gun (Smeizer Machine Pistol) on the scouts at the head of the column, wounding two of them. Calling "medic, medic," we passed the word down the line and soon one came running up the street. After some shooting, the sniper was taken care of somehow and no further enemy resistance was encountered. The town was completely deserted, the towns people had apparently been evacuated from the entire area of the Siegfried Line. Walking through the town everyone took the opportunity to try out the guns by firing both forward and to the side, some of the men almost got hit by their own comrades.

At the other side of town, we took cover from German artillery fire which started shelling the town. One shell hit the top of a building right in back of me, while I was lying in a shell hole. From this spot, we watched "B" Company take a small village to the northeast of Kamburg, it was just like watching a movie.

Taking Leipzig

One afternoon while walking up a street with a column on each side walk, we were halted at a crossing when the scouts spotted a German machine gunner in a small park up ahead on the left. They called for a BAR, so Jackson and I ran up to see what we could do. At the corner, Jackson saw a German soldier down a side street and asked me to loan him my Garrand rifle for a more accurate shot. While he killed that German, I took his BAR up the street on the left of the park and saw the machine gunner, nonchalantly walking through the park with his back to me and carrying his light machine gun on his right shoulder. I quickly raised the BAR, took aim and pulled the trigger, but the gun didn't fire. I either jammed it or forgot to release the safety catch in the excitement. I couldn't have missed because he was only about 40 yards away. I ran back to Jackson to get my rifle, and try again, but when I returned the German soldier was gone. A German civilian stuck his head out of a window to tell me he had left and I told him to get in the cellar as I expected artillery or mortar fire at any time, but more came during our march through Leipzig. When we circled around the park, we passed that machine gunner and a civilian who had been shot by the Americans coming up the next street. A German girl was crying hysterically, she was apparently the girlfriend of the dead civilian. The machine gunner was lying in the gutter in a pool of blood. It would have been better if I had shot him, although I wouldn't have felt right about shooting him in the back.

Coming to a square further on, where a tank was parked, we entered an apartment house for a couple of hours of rest. Leipzig city hall surrendered. The lieutenant wanted us to kill prisoners.

(Continued on Page 53)

MEMOIRS OF JOHN DURST

(Continued on Page 52)

We've been traveling at a terrific pace for at least three weeks and I haven't even had time to write home. We stopped at a town on the Kassel-Berlin super-highway and Patton's tanks came in that morning. Later that afternoon we crossed a river, secured a bridgehead and took a town and captured 45 prisoners. The 3rd Platoon was shelled by mortars, too.

I got a Luger and a good pair of binoculars when we captured a lot of officers in a 'big city' we cleared. I also managed to get a good couple of folding cameras, but not Leicas, which I still hoped to get. I could have sent home rifles, helmets, flags, etc., but our APO was full and wouldn't take packages. I also had a fancy Air Corps dagger with a silver case and ivory handle which I got while guarding an Air Field. The field was full of wrecked planes, strafed and one new ME 109.

'A' Company has been recommended for a Presidential Citation by the Colonel, so I hear, for the cleaning job of the city of Leipzig. My Pfc. grade finally came through. A while back we had a lot of canned fish, from a German warehouse, also champagne and other wines.

We were attempting to take Fort Erhenbreitrsheim when snipers ahead fired at us. Finally a German speaking Sergeant got them to surrender. I didn't see the Fort for some reason.

Aircraft were suppose to come in with their landing gear down. One pilot apparently forgot, and was blasted out of the sky by anti-aircraft guns. We captured Goering's Mercedes Benz limousine with leopard skin upholstery, but had to bury it in a field, because so many big shots wanted it. The major finally was caught driving it one night, a General demanded it.

At Guninva Concentration camp DP's were sent back East. We searched the camp for arms. A dead DP laid on a table in a room full of people for several days.

I remember Dolores, a 13-15 year old girl who lived across the street in Guninva. She was a sensitive and beautiful girl who was raped so many times by Russian soldiers when they took over the area in 100 mile drawback of our army as per the Yalta agreement, that she committed suicide by taking poison. We visited Russian Headquarters across the Mulde River and we all shot our guns at telephone poles (glass) elements.

Wurzen

Someone, possibly Russian soldiers, set fire to a parked German ammunition train in the station to see the fireworks. At the time I was sitting against a wall along the road with some Russian soldiers singing Russian songs when all hell broke loose, flying chunks of shrapnel whizzing around. Then a German civilian, a young man about twenty years old, grabbed a sentry's M1 rifle out of his hand and shot himself in the mouth, a quick and certain way to die considering the terrific concussion of an M1 rifle.

While stopping a day in a small town in the Rhineland area, we gathered around a jeep to listen to its radio blaring out the music of the American band of the A.E.F. led by Glenn Miller until he was lost over the channel. I told the sergeant that we'd have to take Berlin. He got upset about it and said we wouldn't.

We were going through Ulm which was Field Marshal Rommel's home town. It was summer and we were on trucks. The smell of bodies buried under rubble was very pungent in our nostrils.

We brought a major into the Company C.P. at Wurtzen on May 26th. He was on patrol and we picked him up in a jeep. The following week we left Wurtzen after sending back about a thousand German P.W.'s, which surrendered to us and a couple thousand liberated P.W.'s of all nationalities which the Germans had turned loose when they fled from the Red Army. From Wurtzen we came to Grimma which is south and on the other side (west) of the Mulda River. Now the Reds were on the east side and we are on the west. At first we went over in a rowboat, visited the Red garrison, drank Vodka and tried out each other's weapons. They had machine guns similar to the German's "Burp" gun, which sounded the same and fired just as fast. Luckily, a couple guys in the platoon speak Russian and a couple speak Polish and two spoke German too, so we had a gay old time!

We were in Grimma, Germany. One night we went to a musical and variety show put on by German artists. The music was furnished by the "Leipzig chamber orchestra" which was very fine. One of the singers was an American tenor who had come here before the war to study and was interned. Afterward we went to a movie at the local theatre starring Dick Powell, Mary Martin, and F. Tone. We came in too late to find out the name. They had a movie every other day. I had also seen one U.S.O. show which was pretty good. The movies hadn't been too good, with "Laura" and "My Reputation" being the best so far. I still hadn't seen "Saratoga Trunk." By the way, some of the boys were getting 3 to 7 day passes to Belgium, France and the U.K. I hoped I'd get one someday.

I returned to New York from Bremen on a victory ship. One man got sick, then it seemed that everybody got sick. We did very badly on our return even though it was in the summer! The boat rocked badly, I swore I would never get on a boat again. I had it so bad, that it seemed like a fast elevator that you couldn't get off of!

I was on K.P. duty on the victory ship one day, and we were cleaning chicken halves, the Mess Sgt. showed us a black round, small spot inside of the body, and said, "You must be sure to remove this or it will spoil the chicken." We couldn't find it again, and I never heard of it since.

When we got to New York we were given one day's leave to tour the city as we had before leaving. We saw 'Anna and the King of Siam' with Rex Harrison and Irene Dunne at Radio City Music Hall.

Stan Knedlik writes . . .

*K Company, Battle Patrol, 272nd Infantry
4945 Barat Circle
Anchorage, Alaska 99508*

(EDITOR'S NOTE: This is an excerpt from a letter sent in by Frank Taraburelli that Stanley had written to him.)

After leaving Company K, 272nd Infantry, in late May or early June 1945, I was shipped via Marburg to Antwerp, expecting to return to the USA for probably a 30 day leave, then on to the Pacific Theater. But with the bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and Japan's surrender, many troop transfers were reversed. Instead of returning to the U.S.A., we were told that USFA (United States Force Austria) had priority on our services and Air Force personnel with high service points had the highest priority for transportation back to the states. I hold the world's record for "40 and 8" box car travel. So I packed my bed roll and personal effects for another 40 and 8 train trip back into Central Europe, then by truck into Salzburg, Austria for assignment to Company L of the 242nd Infantry Regiment, 42nd Infantry Division, or the Rainbow Division, as it was called. For several months, Company L was at the ski resort village in Krimmel, Austria. Later in early 1946, our regiment was transferred to Vienna where I remained until July 1946, after which I returned to the U.S.A. and separation from active duty at Fort Sheridan, Illinois.

I am "Retired Army," having stayed in the Active Army Reserve whereby I earned 24+ years of Active Duty credit, including the 40 months of World War II service. I had earned the grade of Major when I was reassigned to the Inactive Reserves in the late 1960's. I also received a document in the 1950's assigning me to the grade of Colonel. I have never regretted my active reserve status.



Stan and Laurene Knedlik

To Our Departing Men

Submitted by: **George Haddad**
Company E, 272nd Infantry

30180 Cheviot Hills Drive, Franklin, MI 48025-1552

In the early part of 1942 and shortly after Pearl Harbor with the war going into high gear, a professor at my school, Akron University, wrote a piece in the school newspaper which was not only quite apropos to the time but, to me, is still appropriate today. Professor Wood took pen in hand and brought forth the chilling realities of the day with a patriotic fervor which unfortunately, too many today would not understand.

NOT FOR A GENERATION have I been more deeply moved than when last week I heard that eighty-five of our young men must leave our campus for service with the armed forces of the nation.

I watch them as they go hither and yon upon the campus, trim in form, and firm in step, many of whom I know and love; good boys, gentlemen of the finest stock, sons of well beloved friends, handsome to look upon, on the very threshold of careers long anticipated.

This is a moving spectacle, but it is only one feature of a vast picture of nations grappling with each other in a world contest over a principle viz: shall democracy grovel at the feet of a modern Cain whose sword is dripping with the innocent blood of helpless women and children?

I look again and thank God that my own beloved country has men, such men as these to take their places on the long line where wavers the cause which if lost, takes all that is worthwhile out of human life. For what is a man unless he be free in thought, free in life and free to work out his own destiny? What is a nation if it must cringe at the foot of another?

Ask France, ask Poland, the most terrible object ever exhibited before the eyes of God and man, ask Greece and Belgium, twin races in woe. Ask the millions, victims of atrocities never before dreamed of, whose lives have been and will be needlessly made poor and lean and harsh because of the cruelty of a gang of murderous autocrats.

Ask those saints whose voices from under the altar are crying "How long O Lord, holy and true dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth." Ask, I say these suffering multitudes whether in the light of this history of the past years it can be possible that the authors of all this woe should go unpunished.

I see in the long, quick, steady tread of our young stalwarts the answer, and I bow my head in gratitude that my beloved country is represented by and will be vindicated by these our loved ones, the very best of our generation, and reverently pray to God that every drop of blood, every sigh, every lonesome hour lived, every heartache, every prayer offered at nightfall, whether by them or for them, will be consecrated because known and heard by Him who careth for and rememberth his own and of whom is written "Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne; mercy and truth shall go before thy face."

A Cellar Full of Krauts

Written by: **C. J. Millner**
Company C, 272nd Infantry
1523 Vance Avenue
Coraopolis, Pennsylvania 15108

Dateline: 5 April 1945 Landwehrhagen

The battle for Landwehrhagen had progressed to possession of the small town by Company C, 272nd Infantry. While sporadic rifle fire continued, the counter-attack by the Krauts from the north end of town hadn't started yet.

As an infantry replacement to the 69th from a Quartermaster outfit that had been overseas since September 1943, I found myself wondering whether I was hitting anything with my M-1. After all, there had been no occasion to zero in the weapon as they tossed it my way in France. I therefore started taking pot shots at window panes, both near and far. Missing many of them I was reassigned to hereafter let the tracers tell me about my marksmanship. Besides, by this time a dogface comes to the understanding: lay down the lead and keep laying it down until you're on top of them, so accuracy wasn't that important.

While absorbed in my pot shooting, I barely notice an old, wrinkled, moustached farmer approaching me from my left. "Bitte kommen sie mit mir" (Please come with me). At that point, I had visions of single handedly capturing a cellar full of Krauts that had simply sent this farmer as a safety measure.

Not quite. I walked a short piece with the farmer who took me to the back of his house. There in the barnyard area stood his horse. A miserable creature, ripped with shrapnel from one of our tank rounds during the attack. The barn was still smouldering.

I didn't have to understand German as the farmer pleaded with me to put his horse out of its misery. So with that M-1 that couldn't hit the side of a barn, I placed the muzzle between the horse's eyes and pulled the trigger. I wound up with no glory for capturing 50 Krauts and the U.S. Army gives no medals for shooting horses.

Who Was Over First and Who was Second

Written by: **C. J. Millner**

In Vol. 51, No.3, a challenge is laid down at the end of the "Ninety-Niners were First Across the Remagen Bridge" story, that went "until we hear differently we claim to be the first American troops across . . ."

Here is something to think about. In Geoffrey Perrot's excellent book, "There's a war to be Won" one reads: "As Allied armies advanced into Germany, many (POWs) were packed aboard stinking freight cars and sent to Poland. Cramped and dirty freight

cars, jammed with men suffering from dysentery, turned into rolling pestholes. When the Russian Army advanced, the prisoners were shifted westward, this time on foot.

Our own Vol. 51, No. 3 article on page 21 attests to the fact that a Yank was picked up around Torgau that "had been one of those captured when Von Rundstedt broke through the 106th Infantry division in December."

Historically, going back to the Ardennes breakthrough, about 7,000 POWs were captured from the 106th alone. Even the 99th Division which was cited in the article, shows 1,394 officers and men missing in action with 90% of these occurring in the first four days between the 16th and 19th of December. This was two full months before Rind and Mac made their Rhine crossing courtesy of a Kraut ambulance driver. Are we to understand that not one of those POWs were shipped to a POW camp across that bridge before Rind and Mac?

History has it documented that Sgt. A. A. Drabik, a butcher from Holland, Ohio, led a platoon through a barrage of artillery fire at 4:00 p.m. on 7 March 1945, and was the first to cross that Ludendorf Railroad Bridge. Let us not dishonor that record by technicalities, whether made in jest or not.

E. Lucky Loiacono writes

Company C, 272nd Infantry Regiment
2588 Golfers Ridge Road
Annapolis, Maryland 21401-6911

I was in Company C, 272nd Regiment for 3 months. I was transferred to the 54th Armored Infantry Battalion of the 10th Armored Division in July of 1944 along with other 69th infantrymen. I went overseas with them and was wounded. We defended Bastogne before the 101st Air Borne Division got there.

After being wounded, I was flown to England where 69th guys unloaded the plane. The Aid Man in charge was named **Lewis** who was also the Aid Man in the company I was in in the 69th Infantry Division.

My platoon Sergeant in Company C, 272nd, was named **Packard**. He put me on K.P. after my first bivouac trip. I have never forgotten that S.O.B. and was glad I was transferred!

Notice: Bulletin Material MUST BE SENT TO HEADQUARTERS!

Do not send material to the printer or other officers of the Bulletin. It may delay your material being printed in the bulletin. All material must be submitted to Headquarters before being considered for print. Thank You.

Veterans Did Their Duty

Written by: **Yvonne Kent**
Middleburg Heights

Kent was in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1943 and with the American Red Cross in the field in England from 1943-1945.

World War II veterans are an endangered species. Unlike the spotted owl, they cannot be saved. Monday was Veterans Day. Was anyone in your family in that war?

If this was 1941, eight of 10 of the young men in high school then would be drafted. None of them wanted to go to war, but almost all felt "we've got to do something about this one" when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. Germany and Japan planned to rule the world, taking away our freedom. Hitler boasted the Third Reich would last for 1,000 years saying, "The vanquished shall disappear from the face of the Earth."

Millions of young men were sent away from home for years. Not everyone was in combat. They were driving trucks, repairing the "flying fortresses," on K.P. (kitchen police), playing saxophones in an Air Force band (like the man I married) or going on leave to chase girls. But they also served.

War correspondent Ernie Pyle wrote of those in combat "they went from one battleground to another until it was all over, leaving some behind on every beach . . ." The only thing they wanted to do was to go home, but they didn't make it. Ernie didn't make it either.

In 1945, Germany launched its V-2 rocket, a silent missile going 3,600 mph and exploding with an ear-splitting wail. There were 24,000 casualties in London from those rockets. I was in London and heard a V-2 rocket. It was a noise straight from hell.

The battles in North Africa, Europe and Italy were over in 1945, but after three or more years overseas, many servicemen were not going home. They were sent to the Pacific to make a landing on Japan. Talk to men who were being trained for that landing and they will tell you that they had no expectation of surviving it. Japanese servicemen considered being taken prisoner to be the ultimate disgrace, while dying for the emperor was to be their ticket to heaven.

Our servicemen just wanted to get the job done and come home, which they did, saying, "I hope my kids never have to go through anything like that."

Our World War II veterans are getting on in years now. Ask them what they did in the war. They'll be surprised. And they will be pleased.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: We received this article from several of our members, however, no one identified the newspaper that it was published in.)

Just a Common Soldier

He was getting old and paunchy and his hair was falling fast;

And he sat around the Legion, telling stories of the past
Of a war that he had fought in and the deeds that he had done,

In his exploits with his buddies, they were heroes everyone.

And tho' sometimes to his neighbors, his tales became a joke,

All his Legion buddies listened, for they knew of whereof he spoke.

But we'll hear his tales no longer, for old Bill has passed away;

And the world's a little poorer, for a soldier died today.
He'll not be mourned by many, just his children and his wife,

For he lived an ordinary and quiet, uneventful life,
He held a job and raised a family, quietly going his own way.

And the world won't note his passing, though a soldier died today.

When politicians leave this earth, their bodies lie in state,

And thousands note their passing and proclaim that they were great.

Newspapers tell their life stories, from the time that they were young,

But the passing of a simple soldier goes unnoticed and unsung.

Is the greatest contribution to the welfare of our land,
A person who breaks promises and cons his fellow man;

Or the ordinary fellow who in times of war and strife,
Goes off to serve his country and offers up his life?

It's so easy to forget them, for it was so long ago,
That the "Old Bills" of our country went to battle, but we know,

It was not the politicians with their compromises and ploys,

Who won for us the freedom that our country now enjoys.

He was just a "Common Soldier" and his ranks are growing thin,

But his presence should remind us, we may need his like again.

For when Countries are in conflict, then we find the soldiers part,

Is to clean up all the troubles that others often start.

If we cannot give him honor, while he's here to hear the praise,

Then at least, let's give him homage, at the ending of his days.

Perhaps a simple notice in the paper that would say,
"Our country is in mourning, cause a soldier passed away."

Sent in by Howitzer Al Kormas

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 **Bulletin Headquarters, Box 69, Champion, Pennsylvania 15622-0069 or 183 Pineslope Road, 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.

1999

SEPTEMBER 22nd to 25th, 1999

**69th CAVALRY RECON 47th ANNUAL REUNION
BILOXI, MISSISSIPPI**

Imperial Palace Hotel and Casino

Reservations: 1-800-436-3000. Ask for agent RED and be sure and tell them you are with the 69th Recon.

Thursday, September 23rd: Guided Biloxi Historical Tour. Guided tour of Jefferson Davis home and museum. Shrimping trip and sightseeing tour of Ocean Springs.

Friday, September 24th: Tour of Camp Shelby and Museum.

Saturday, September 25th: On our own. Lots of things to see and do in the Biloxi area. Banquet Saturday evening.

Committee:

Bobbie Fox

P.O. Box 7370

Silver Spring, Maryland 20907-7370

Harold Gardner

2929 Mason Avenue

Independence, Missouri 64052-2962

Telephone: 816/254-4816

E-Mail: RCNTROOP@aol.com

* * * * *

SEPTEMBER 30th, 1999

Deadline for news material and pictures for:

Bulletin Volume 53, Number 1

September, October, November, December 1999

Bulletin expected mailing date is late November or early December.

* * * * *

OCTOBER 8th, 9th and 10th, 1999

461st AAA AW BATTALION

HEADQUARTERS & MEDICAL DETACHMENT

SALEM, VIRGINIA

Quality Inn

Committee:

Mac and Madge Morris

630 North Oakland Street

Arlington, Virginia 22203

Telephone: 703/527-2796

OCTOBER 20th thru 24th, 1999

661st TANK DESTROYER BATTALION

HAMPTON INN YORK

York, Pennsylvania

1550 Mount Zion Road, York, PA 17402

Telephone: 717/840-1500

Adjacent to York Galleria Mall with nearly 100 stores.

Other points of interest planned.

Committee:

William R. Beswick

P.O. Box 576

West Point, Virginia 23181-0576

* * * * *

NOVEMBER 14th thru 21st, 1999

BATTERY C, 724th FIELD ARTILLERY

WYNDHAM ORLANDO RESORT

Orlando, Florida

*In Conjunction with the 69th Division
Association 52nd Annual Reunion*

For Further Information Contact:

Coy Horton

1705A Highview Street

Burlington, North Carolina 27215-5652

Telephone: 336/227-7785

* * * * *

NOVEMBER 14th thru 21st, 1999

HEADQUARTERS BATTERY

880th FIELD ARTILLERY

WYNDHAM ORLANDO RESORT

Orlando, Florida

*In Conjunction with the 69th Division
Association 52nd Annual Reunion*

For Further Information Contact:

John J. O'Connor

9321 Jefferson Avenue

Brookfield, Illinois 60513

Telephone: 708/387-7809

* * * * *

JANUARY 31st, 2000

Deadline for news material and pictures for:

Bulletin Volume 53, Number 2

January, February, March, April 2000

Bulletin expected mailing date is late April or early May.

(Continued on Page 58)

November 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 1999
69th INFANTRY DIVISION ASSOCIATION
52nd ANNUAL REUNION
Orlando, Florida

WYNDHAM ORLANDO RESORT

8001 International Drive, Orlando, Florida

RATES: \$77.00 PLUS TAX

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KING HENRY'S FEAST - ARABIAN NIGHTS DINNER
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
GENERAL MEMBERSHIP AND AUXILIARY MEETING
MEMORIAL SERVICE - BANQUET DINNER DANCE - GOLF - SHOWS
SHOPPING AND MORE - SUNDAY GOING HOME BREAKFAST

OUR TOURS WILL INCLUDE:

Kennedy Space Center, Orlando City Tour, A Trip to Cypress Gardens
and Much, Much, More!

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Ken A. Sawyer, Company D, 273rd Infantry Regiment

2311 Skywind Circle

Melbourne, Florida 32935-1460

Telephone: 407/254-7175

Make your reservations today!

There's not much time left. Remember, if you have to, you can cancel later.

See Page 12 and 13 of this bulletin to register.

We were here in 1984 and it was one of the best reunions ever!

Come join us in Florida at the best time of the year possible.

DEADLINE FOR MATERIAL FOR
BULLETIN VOL. 53, NO. 1 - SEPT., OCT., NOV., DEC.
SEPTEMBER 30th, 1999 - *Get Your Material In On Time!*

Fellows, write up those remembrances from World War II and send them in. Someone else will recall the same thing and write to you and write to us, etc., etc. It's a great way to set off a chain reaction of correspondence. And ladies, we haven't heard much from you lately. Get your stories and news in also. The war affected you as well.

We are putting out a request for good cover photos. General photos of war scenes are always very good. We don't like to put too much emphasis on one person, so look in your attics and see what you can find. Who knows, maybe it will end up on the front of the bulletin. Thanks.



“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.

Leo Longman

10 Eaton Road
Framingham, Massachusetts
Medic - 271st

Jack F. King

Columbia, Georgia
Unit Unknown

Eugene Tabacchi

200 Rex Avenue
Wintersville, Ohio
B - 881st F.A.

William D. Robertson

5102 Copperfield Lane
Culver City, California
H1 - 273rd

William R. Varoom

P.O. Box 6165
Bridgewater, New Jersey
I - 272nd

Joe Vioral

617 Dorseyville Road
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
A - 269th Engineers

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409 Oak Grove Road
Norfolk, Virginia
Unit Unknown

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Fort Worth, Texas
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Willsboro, New York
L - 271st

Paul L. Gazdik

806 Margaretta Street
Turtle Creek, Pennsylvania
A - 880th F.A.

Ralph Savino

Northampton Nursing Home
Northampton, Massachusetts
G - 273rd

Howard R. Williams

Big Run, West Virginia
A - 273rd (Not on Roster)

John Novin

8330 Blackberry Road
Ft. Myers, Florida
H3 - 271st

Louis Cohen

411 Warwick Street
St. Paul, Minnesota
AT - 271st

Edward Gubanic

2607 Olympia Street
McKeesport, Pennsylvania
H1 - 273rd

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P.O. Box 872
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C - 271st

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New Berlin, Wisconsin
A - 777th T.B.

Wilbur Boyle

6 Glen-Berne Drive
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P.O. Box 43
Banquet, Texas
AT - 273rd

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B - 272nd

John R. Corporon

643 Lenjar Drive
Manchester, Missouri
H - 272nd

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Grand Junction, Colorado
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Patchogue, New York
B - 269th Engineers



the 69th

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K.P. - How well we remember!

Camp Shelby, Mississippi

Photo from the archives of our Past Editor, Clarence Marshall

Anyone who can identify anyone in this photo, please write and let us know.

BULLETIN STAFF

Dottie Witzleb

Editor

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and Material***

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***Send Address Changes,
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and Deaths to Bob***

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