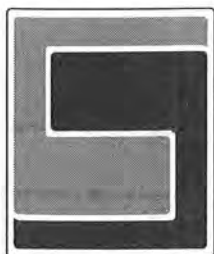


FIGHTING 69TH INFANTRY DIVISION

★★★★ *Association, Inc.*



VOLUME 54, NO. 3

MAY — JUNE — JULY — AUGUST
2001

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

P.O. BOX 69
CHAMPION, PA 15622-0069
724/455-2901

bulletin

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Crossing the Rhine



THE MAIL BOX

By Dottie Witzleb, Editor



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

Stanley Eskin, 855 Ronda Mendoza, Laguna Woods, California 92653-5933 — Co. A, 269th Engineers: It's always interesting to read other guys and gals tales of when they were part of the war. I really liked the one written by **Esther Caine Towers** relating to her marriage to "Okie" when he was with H&S Co., 269th Engineer Battalion which appeared in the last bulletin.

From time to time, I would be sent to H&S Co. from "A" Co. to do paperwork, etc. and I can relate to one particular date shown, February 25th, where he tells of one soldier who was blown to pieces by a regal mine.

I had written several years ago about this since I had just spoken to the buddy of this particular sergeant who, against his advice, had undertaken the idea of deactivating this regal mine which could be booby trapped in 13 different places. Shortly after this sad incident happened, I was called to the kitchen and told that there were a bunch of grenades stuck between the oven and the wall. Since I was from a line company and supposed to know all about these things, they asked me to get rid of them.

After looking at about 15 of these small grenades and seeing that they were inactive, I thought to make a big deal out of all of this and so I had everyone clear the building so that I could be alone with them. I then took my sweet time and slowly took them one by one and put them into a sack. When I was finished, they were so grateful that they made me a wonderful meal which I really appreciated at the time.

It was with a note of sadness that I read of **Joe Montelone's** death. He was my squad leader when I was part of Company A, 269th Engineers. He was this short, kind of chubby guy who gave 110% of himself to be the best squad leader possible.

I can remember one night when he called me in and handed me all of these items which a barber uses - clippers, scissors, combs, etc., and told me that I was now the company barber.

I was just this scrawny little kid who was given all of these "choice" jobs and so this just became another one of many.

Well, he volunteered himself to be the first to get a haircut and so I proceeded to give him a haircut. I really did try to do a good job, but when I was finished

and he looked in the mirror, he took all of the barber items away from me and told me to get lost, that I was no longer the company barber.

He was a very nice person and I would like to send my very best to his family. I didn't see him after I left the outfit, but I did read about him from time to time in our bulletin.

Ralph Winston, 4475 Sherwood Forest Drive, Delray Beach, Florida 33445 — Co. G, 273rd: I joined the 69th in May of 1943, after a 3 day train ride from Long Island to Camp Shelby. I'll never forget the sight of **General Bolte** on his horse greeting all of us. I spent about one year training with the BBB's even maneuvering through the woods to Biloxi, Mississippi.

After a year around May of 1944, I was shipped overseas and ended up as a replacement in the 60th Infantry Regiment, 9th Infantry Division. This all happened in time for me to get my baptism of fire in the hedgerow country. I continued on through Belgium and then into Germany, where on October 6th, 1944, I was wounded in the Battle of the Hertzgen Forest, a dark and bloody place where 5 infantry divisions took huge casualties. I spent 5 months in hospitals in England, then I was sent to a Western Pennsylvania military hospital to convalesce and get my strength back. After 6 months there, I was sent to the 35th Infantry Division. I was advised that my Purple Heart medal worth 5 points had given me a total of 85 points. I was told to go to Fort Knox for my discharge papers and was discharged on November 30, 1945. That was the end of my 2-1/2 years in the service.

The 69th Bulletin is an outstanding publication and I enjoy reading it from cover to cover.

James K. Damron, son of **Major James C. Damron**, 2126 Baywood Drive, Biloxi, Mississippi 39532 — Div. AG: I still have my dad's picture right in front of my desk with his 69th patch worn proudly on his Ike jacket. He always spoke warmly of the Division, even of the times in Mississippi. I live in Biloxi and just before he died, we went up to Shelby for a look. Thanks for keeping the 69th alive.

Lynn D. Farrar, 955 Diablo Drive, Lafayette, California 94549-4607 — Btry. C, 881st F.A.: The Bulletin means a lot to me because it keeps me in touch with the greatest group of friends I have, those who were willing to serve their country. It breaks my heart every time I read "Taps" or see in the paper where another veteran has gone to his reward. And I can only empathize with the widows and their families. I have heard that 1500 WWII vets are dying every day.

I had the pleasure of being able to attend one of the West Coast meetings in Santa Barbara last June and look forward to this year's meeting in Santa Rosa, California. My wife and I plan to move to the Seattle area this May, so I hope there is a Northwest Group with whom I can get together.

(Continued on Page 3)

THE MAIL BOX

(Continued from Page 2)

Bruno A. Campese, 3703 2nd Avenue, Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania 15010-3401 — Anti-Tank, 272nd: This is just a brief note to let all 69ers know of the passing of a dear friend and comrade, **Roy E. Bush**. **Roy** was a member of the 272nd Regiment, Anti-Tank Company during WWII, but he loved the 69th Infantry Division. **Roy** did as much as any person could do to make our reunions a success. He would write and call at his own expense to make sure that as many comrades as he could reach were kept informed as to the where, when and how of the reunions. He passed away on March 5th, 2001 after a brief hospital stay. He will be sorely missed. So long dear friend.

Also, I am saddened to report that on April 29th, 2001 another dear friend and a member of the Anti-Tank Company, **Harold Kaska**, passed away in his sleep from a heart attack.

Esther Towers, wife of **O.H. (Okie) Towers, Jr.**, 101 Linwood Drive, Hueytown, Alabama 35023 — H&S, 269th Engineers: I was very pleased that my article, "Memories of A World War II Bride," came out just like I wrote it. When my life quieted down and I had time to think, I realized the things we have lived were history. Writing is my hobby, so the information gathered up over the years has become important to our family. Your little notice for women to write WWII experiences was just the nudge I needed to write something I intended to write 'some time.'

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Glad you were pleased with the article, Esther. No editing was necessary. You did an excellent job. See the second half of Esther's writings elsewhere in this issue of the bulletin.)

MOVING

Please print your new address below:

Name: _____

Address: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Please send this form
and your old address label to:

PAUL SHADLE
1504 Greensburg Road
New Kensington, PA 15068

Please allow six weeks advance notice.

A Note from Dottie, Your Bulletin Editor

The reunion is fast approaching and I hope you have your reservations in, as I feel it will be another successful one. If you do not have your reservations made, now is the time to do so before it is too late. I will attend this year unless something drastic comes up.

I am going to ride the rapids on the Snake and Salmon River this summer. This is something I have always wanted to do and the opportunity has come up, and I am going. I am sure I will return in one piece. I will let you know about it in the next bulletin.

Please keep your stories and letters coming for the bulletin as we can only keep doing it if we receive the material. I hope I have been doing a good job for **Earl** and **Clarence** as I know this was their job and they both really enjoyed doing it. I am enjoying doing it, but I need your letters, notes, and pictures to make it a success.

Paul Shadle will be taking over the job as our Membership Chairman. I feel **Paul** and I can really work well together. **Paul** and **Earl** were friends long before I came into the picture. **Paul** lives close to the printers in New Kensington, Pennsylvania. Many thanks to **Robert Kurtzman** for the fine job he has done in the past several years.

See you all at Reunion 2001 in Fort Mitchell, Kentucky September 9th to the 16th!

Visit Us
On
The
Web
at



www.69th-infantry-division.com
or contact

annejoelip@earthlink.net

Visit often to keep up with what's going on!

If you are not on the internet, visit your library
and ask for help in searching the site.

If you need any help, contact **Joe Lipsius** at

E-Mail: annejoelip@earthlink.net

6314 Deerings Hollow
Norcross, Georgia 30092-1800
Telephone: 770/416-7725

A Note from your New Membership Chairman, Paul Shadle

Paul Shadle, *Company E, 271st Infantry*
1504 Greensburg Road
New Kensington, PA 15068
Telephone: 724/335-9980

As of the upcoming reunion in Kentucky, I will be taking over the position of Membership Chairman. This transition will take time and effort on the part of both myself and **Bob Kurtzman**, so we ask for your patience in this matter. This position carries a large amount of responsibility, keeping track of all current members and new members to be added to the roster, along with, unfortunately, members that we are losing to Taps.

Please send me your address changes, telephone number changes, e-mail addresses, etc., as soon as they become effective so that you do not miss out on your issues of the bulletin. Your cooperation in this matter will make the transition much smoother.

Along with the entire membership, I wish to thank **Bob Kurtzman** for the excellent job he has done over the years and I hope that I can live up to his standards as your new Membership Chairman. I will certainly do my very best.

Robert A. Wilson, Author of "A Partial History of Co. A, 271st"

In Bulletin Volume 53, No. 2 - January, February, March, April 2000 - Pages 43 thru 48, we published an article entitled "*Co. A, 271st Regiment - A Partial History - Author Unknown*," which was submitted by **Ray Kehn**.

Since that time **Robert A. Wilson**, has written to us to let us know that he was the unknown writer. **Robert** stated that he had written to us immediately after it appeared in the bulletin, but for some reason, we never received any of his correspondence. We sincerely apologize for this, and still do not understand what happened.

Robert would like to inform everyone that he is currently working on a full-scale book based on those memories complete with many photos, and he would welcome hearing from any members of Company A. Please contact him at the address below:

Robert A. Wilson
P.O. Box 1018
St. Michaels, Maryland 21663
Telephone: 410/745-2531
E-Mail: crabcake@intercom.net

Gene Hundhausen Writes...

Headquarters, 272nd Infantry Regiment
Lt. Col. Ret. A.U.S. (2nd Lt. 1945)
P.O. Box 87284, San Diego, California 92138

I appreciated the fine article about Dr. **Robert Ross** a few issues back, who founded the Medical School in the Dominican Republic in 1979. **Robert** was part of Regimental Headquarters 272nd Regiment, and he was part of my little gang that got lost for three days. One of my duties was to escort P.O.W.'s. to the rear when they were turned into our HQ for processing. About 200 P.O.W.'s were marched by my men on this one occasion, only we couldn't find the rear!

Little did I know that one day young Robert Ross would emerge as such a successful doctor. Anyone who can put up \$35 million dollars of his own money to get his proposal for an American School to be adopted, can't be too bad. I wish him well!

One of my dearest friends in the Army was Staff Sgt. **Joseph Woodward**. **Joe** and I were in M Company, 263rd Regiment, 66th Infantry Division. I was also in "M" Company as an enlisted man, however, I was sent to Fort Benning, Georgia and graduated as a 2nd Lieutenant. **Joe's** outfit crossed the English Channel on Christmas 1944 and 2 Regiments were sent to the bottom by German Submarines. I've always wondered if **Joe** was lucky or unlucky.

If anyone out there in our outfit knows how I can find **Joe's** fate, (or fortune) please let me hear from you.



Cartoon Submitted by: **Howitzer Al Kormas**
Headquarters, 879th Field Artillery Battalion
12500 Edgewater Dr., #503, Cleveland, Ohio 44107-1673

Message from the President



Harold E. Ruck

622 Melville Avenue

Chattanooga, Tennessee 37412-2645

Telephone: 423/698-3918

Our reunion committee has arranged some great tours and prepared an outstanding program for our Northern Kentucky meeting in September 2001. Our last meeting in Kentucky, back in 1988, was very successful with one of the largest attendance rosters of any of our meetings. The site is centrally located for our membership and should make it convenient for you to attend. Make plans now to see your World War II buddies at the Drawbridge Hotel.

I don't know how many of you have computers, but I do know that those of you with children and grandchildren have access to one. You could be in for a real treat. **Joe Lipsius**, one of our members, has developed a web site containing information about our 69th Infantry Division. I invite you to have your son, daughter, or grandchildren to access this information by logging on to our web site address:

www.69th-infantry-division.com

You will be surprised by what you see. Your children and grandchildren will enjoy reading the history of our 69th Division in WWII, and find out what dad or granddad did during the BIG ONE.

**54th Annual Reunion
Ft. Mitchell, Kentucky
September 9th to 16th, 2001**

***"First Reunion
of the 21st Century"***

Hope you can make it to this one.

New Men Relocated Since Our Last Bulletin

John C. Montgomery — H1, 272nd Infantry
1393 Eastmill Road, Goodwater, Alabama 35072

Neil D. Johnson — H2, 272nd Infantry
Middlesex Road, Columbus, Ohio 43220

Henry J. Sak — H1, 273rd Infantry
820 South E., Apt. 108, Oxnard, California 93030

Leroy E. Fessler — Company G, 273rd Infantry
1296 Freedom Lane, Daytona Beach, Florida 32119

Edward L. Smaldone, Sr. — Company G, 273rd Infantry
508 White Springs Road
Geneva, New York 14465-3026

Robert W. Edwards — A.S.P., 273rd Infantry
6014 Crab Orchard, San Antonio, Texas 78240

Armando W. Rogans — Company F, 271st Infantry
34 Shore Boulevard, Slate Hill, New York 10973

John Leberitz — Company I, 271st Infantry
501 Lifton Boulevard, Mansfield, Ohio 44907-2315

Morgan Crandall — A.T. Company, 272nd Infantry
25 Summit Street, Warrensburg, New York 12855

William A. Campbell — Headquarters, 273rd Infantry
2080 Regency Run Court, #2, Cincinnati, Ohio 45240

Sidney A. Seidenberg — Unit Unknown
79 Lakeshore Drive, Rockway, New Jersey 07866

Camp Shelby Armed Forces Museum Still Seeking Photos

As many of you are already aware, a WWII museum is maintained at Camp Shelby, Mississippi, with a 69th Infantry Division section. It contains photographs of the Division's activities and is in need of many more. All subjects are needed, e.g., pictures of activities and individuals at Camp Shelby, pictures of hutments, scenes from staging area movement, trains, Camp Kilmer, ship crossings, England, France, Belgium and Germany.

The museum does not necessarily need originals. A quality copy from a printer or photo shop is acceptable but an original, of course, would add quality to the display.

Accompanying items on separate paper should be the name and address of donor, and as much information as possible of the following: where taken, unit involved, names of individuals.

Send to: Camp Shelby Museum

Chad Daniel, Director

69th Infantry Division Section

Building 350 (until Oct. 1, 2001)

Building 850 (after Oct. 1, 2001)

Camp Shelby, Mississippi 34907-5500

69ers Meet Former Russian Soldiers in LA

Submitted by: **Dick Levy**

Headquarters Company, 2nd Bn., 271st Infantry
5316 Lindley Avenue, Encino, California 91316-2902

The Association of Russian Veterans of World War II who emigrated from the Former USSR, were part of a parade that took place on May 9th, 2001 in West Hollywood, Los Angeles, California.

I became aware of this association when caricatures of these Russian emigrants appeared in the L.A. Times on April 30th. I called the artist who invited me to the parade when he heard I had been with the 69th Division when elements of our division had met the Russians at the Elbe River.

At this time, I started looking at old 69th Division Bulletins which I have been saving since 1995. In Volume 48, #2, 1995, I found an article on page 12 written by **Harry Sokol** of Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 271st Infantry, Anti-Tank Platoon, with pictures of **Harry** and the Russians that he had met at the Elbe River. It appears that **Harry Sokol** lives a mile from me and when I contacted him, he was definitely interested in meeting with the Russians.

On May 9th, **Harry, David Cohen** of Headquarters 2, 271st, and I went down to the parade area in West L.A. We met the artist who set up a meeting with the Russians and we spoke with them until the parade started. When the parade started, we tagged after the crowd to the park where the parade ended. There were more than 600 veterans in the parade, all of whom live in the L.A. area. It was an interesting day and we have been invited back to meet with the Russians again, some of who were at the Elbe.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Dick sent me a video tape of an interview that took place between Conan Nolan of NBC News and Harry Sokol. Dick Levy had a lengthy interview with Nolan, but it is not included on the tape. Sorry folks, the photos were not identified.)



Our three 69th veterans with whom we presume from the caricature to be **Vladimir A Barkon**. Vladimir was a Red Army Guard junior lieutenant. He was 17 when he crossed the burning Volga into the calamity of the battle of Stalingrad on September 29, 1942. One month later after a grenade explosion, he was carried to safety by a female medic. He went on to fight in the Battle of Kursk in the summer of '43 against the SS' Totenkopf Division. In 1945, he met up with the U.S. 1st Army at the Elbe River, where vodka and whiskey flowed. "Then brass decided we were having too much fun," and sent his unit to liberate Prague. In 1991, he followed his daughter to L.A. "We are thankful to the American people for embracing us."



69th Infantry Division Association

54th Annual Reunion

"First Reunion in the 21st Century"

FT. MITCHELL, KENTUCKY

September 9th thru September 16th, 2001

DRAWBRIDGE INN

2477 Royal Drive, I-75 and Buttermilk Pike
Fort Mitchell, Kentucky

Reunion Committee Chairpersons:

Bob and Theresa Pierce

Company I, 273rd Infantry

144 Nashua Court

San Jose, California 95139-1236

Telephone: 408/226-8040

Committee Chairmen:

Ed and Louise Hill Registration

Erwin and Carmen Sanborn Hospitality

Robert Crowe Seating Assignment

Bob and Jean Ross Souvenir Sales

Melvin and Joan Schulz Tours/Entertainment

Committee Members:

Joe and Peggy Shields

Norman Steffen

Gerard and Carol Frechette

Robert Hogan

Jack Houston

Gerard Gillenback

Stanley Crouch

* * * * *

THE DRAWBRIDGE INN

The hotel is a very large property at Exit 186 at I-75 and Buttermilk Pike, and it is very accessible for travelers. They have over 500 rooms with most in their main complex, which is two-story with elevators. Their ballroom and meeting rooms are separate, but attached to the hotel with access from both inside or outside. Decore of the hotel is Old English sprawled over a large area surrounded with abundant free parking. There are two Olympic-sized swimming pools in the main complex, one inside and one outside. Room rates single or double are \$72.

Across the parking lot is a 100-room two-story motel (no elevators) called the Garrison, that has its own outdoor pool and is next to the tennis courts. Because the Garrison is not attached to the main complex, their room rate is \$65 single or double.

The Drawbridge has three restaurants, two are inside the building and one is adjacent with a very large Old English Gatehouse Taverne (with Drawbridge) that has class and excellent foods. Members of the 69th Division will be given a 10% discount in all three restaurants. Chauncers Restaurant inside the Inn is open 24 hours a day and also serves beer, wine, and liquor.

Free airport shuttle bus service is furnished for hotel guests. Also, city bus service stops at the hotel lobby every 45 minutes. The bus goes to Covington, Covington Landing and Floating Entertainment, Riverboat Cruise Docks; and, downtown Cincinnati with numerous stops. Cost for seniors is currently 50¢ one way.

For you beer enthusiasts, the Oldenberg Brewery and American Museum of Brewing History is within walking distance of the hotel. They have museum tours, a beer garden, and restaurant. The Brewery is ancient, and reminds me of a medieval castle.

FT. MITCHELL, KENTUCKY

Where is Fort Mitchell? It's the neighboring village next to Covington. According to both the Cincinnati Official Visitors Guide and the Northern Kentucky Convention Services, both cities are within the Greater Cincinnati Metropolitan Area; and, the "Southern" side of Cincinnati. The Drawbridge Inn is only five (5) miles from downtown. Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport, which is also in Kentucky, is (7) seven miles.

Cincinnati, Ohio and Covington, Kentucky are on the Ohio River. Although the Mason-Dixon Line and the River separate the communities, they live in perfect harmony and exploit the attributes of both locations in their pursuits. The beauty and climate of the Ohio River Valley in September is incomparable. The soft breeze from the river furnishes natural air conditioning and the moisture from the river provides miles of deep green vegetation.

COVINGTON COMMUNITY

The contrast between Cincinnati and Covington is notable; Cincinnati is a modern cosmopolitan city, while Covington is casual with both old world charm and southern hospitality. Both cities have a rich ethnic background, notably of German and Italian heritage.

Covington's centerpiece is its historic Mainstrasse Village, five square blocks of a restored 19th Century German neighborhood, even with cobblestone walks. The Village offers old world service, quality merchandise, and fine dining. The Village abounds with arts, crafts and gift shops. Further, there is a German Streudel House, Gasthauses, saloons, bars, Irish and English pubs, a Wine Bar, delis and an ice haus (ice cream), plus Rosie's Tavern and Tracy's Big Bar Cafe.

The Village has a 100-foot tall Glockenspiel Chimes Bell Tower made in German Gothic structure, that plays a 43-Bell Carillon hourly. Music and animated figures depict a lively enactment of the folklore, "The Pied Piper of Hamelin." Located in the center of the village is the Goose Girl Fountain cast in solid bronze. The German Grimm's fairy tale entitled the Goose Girl was the inspiration of the theme to represent the culture of the area.

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UPCOMING 54th ANNUAL REUNION

(Continued from Page 7)

For those interested in Old World structures, there is the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption. This is a French Gothic replica of Notre Dame in Paris, featuring 80 stained glass windows, including the world's largest stained glass window.

The real nightlife is Covington Landing, a floating entertainment complex on the Ohio River. The restaurant and entertainment center offers a spectacular view of Cincinnati's skylines.

I saved the best for last. "OOM, PAH, PAH" strike up the band for the Klosterman Family Oktoberfest scheduled for Friday, September 7th thru Sunday, September 9th, 2001. The first beer keg ceremony starts at 5:00 p.m. on Friday. The German/Bavarian Festival includes German and American food; outstanding entertainment; over 100 arts and crafts booths; and carnival rides. Plan to come to the Reunion a couple of days early, and enjoy a great German tradition on September 7th thru 9th.

GREATER CINCINNATI

Cosmopolitan Cincinnati is a beautiful city on the banks of the Ohio River in the heart of America. As expected, the main attractions within the city are devoted to the arts, museums, entertainment and sports. These are but a sample of what's available.

SCHEDULED TOURS & EVENTS

A tour of Covington and Newport, Kentucky; and, Cincinnati, Ohio. Bus pick-up is at the hotel. The guided tour begins at the Northern Kentucky Convention and Visitors Bureau with a short 13-minute film showing highlights of the tri-cities. The tour will make at least two stops for photo shots and observation.

The Tour starts with a narrated drive through Mainstrasse Village to enjoy the historically strong German heritage. Then to Riverside Drive Historic District with 13 blocks of Riverboat Captains Homes; and Civil War Antebellum Homes with carriage houses, beautiful gardens and life size bronze statues. Tour continues to Riverboat Row, then to the 1 million gallon aquarium before crossing the Ohio River.

In Cincinnati you drive through Eden Park to Mt. Adams, the San Francisco of Cincinnati. Major highlights of downtown will be covered; such as, Fountain Square, Proctor & Gamble Corporation Headquarters, the President Taft Museum, Mural of Cincinnati, the Museum Center at the Historic Union Terminal plus much more.

We return to Mainstrasse Village for shopping and lunch on your own before the return bus ride to the Drawbridge Hotel.

FOREST VIEW GARDENS

Cincinnati's Broadway Music Showplace. A world famous Bavarian style Restaurant where it's always Oktoberfest. Enjoy authentic food and outstanding

entertainment performed by young musicians and singers from Opera Departments and Music Schools, primarily UC's College Conservatory of Music. These rising opera singers serve dual roles of entertaining customers and serving meals. Most artists are graduate students awaiting professional auditions.

Entertainment are excerpts from hit Broadway shows; a new show is performed every month, Fiddler on the Roof is scheduled for September. Numerous Forest View Garden singers have achieved musical acclaim in opera companies around the world. Remember to indicate your lunch meal choice on the registration form.

BB RIVERBOAT DINNER AND DANCE CRUISE

The Belle of Cincinnati side-wheel Riverboat is a beautiful doubledeck classic reminiscent of Mark Twain's Days. My sources swear that their Dinner Buffet is the best on the River.

Passenger loading starts at 6:00 p.m. and the boat departs at 7:00 p.m. There is a great dance band to entertain, cruise returns at 10:00 p.m.

The area reserved for our group has a capacity of just over 200, so get your reservation in early to insure a chair with the group.

ARGOSY RIVERBOAT CASINO

This tour is an adult group sales package restricted to patrons at least 21 years of age. The group sales package price is about half the individual price; however, there are restrictions regarding reservations. Indiana State Law prohibits anyone under the age of 21 from entering the Casino or any venue where alcohol is served. The Argosy Pavilion where the gourmet buffet will be served from 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., is a 200,000 sq. ft., three-level building with speciality restaurants, lounges, and live entertainment.

The Argosy gambling ship is one of the largest gambling riverboats in the world with three decks, each bigger than a football field. There are 108 gaming tables and over 2000 slot machines, plus lounges and entertainment. The boat starts boarding at 1:00 p.m. and departs at 1:30 p.m. The gambling cruise lasts two hours on the Ohio River; enjoy gambling, the entertainment, or just the pleasure of the cruise.

"ARGOSY RESTRICTIONS"

- a. The registration cut-off date is August 18, 2001.
- b. An age verification form must be completed and submitted with the registration form for every person taking the tour.
- c. Final payment to Argosy must be prepaid in full at least a week in advance; and, must be accompanied by a complete manifest of attendees and a copy of the age verification form for each person.
- d. Conditions of the group package contract mandates that reservations received by the Treasurer after

(Continued on Page 9)

UPCOMING 54th ANNUAL REUNION

(Continued from Page 8)

- the cut-off date cannot be accepted. Further, there cannot be any Argosy tour walk-in registrations at the Reunion.
- e. Absolutely **no** cameras or videos are allowed in the Casino.
- f. The group will remain on the busses until an Argosy sales representative comes on the bus where you will be checked off the manifest and individually provided with tickets to proceed to the Pavilion for lunch. Photo ID may be required to verify age. This procedure will take some extra time and patience; however, it will provide an organized process to preclude a mad rush to the buffet. The buffet seats 400 people with open seating, so everyone will be accommodated before the boat sails.

69th Infantry Division Assn. ARGOSY CASINO & PASSPORT BUFFET

Thursday, September 13, 2001

Name _____

Address _____

City & State _____

Date of Birth _____

(DAY, MONTH, YR.)

— AGE VERIFICATION FORM —

69th Infantry Division Assn. ARGOSY CASINO & PASSPORT BUFFET

Thursday, September 13, 2001

Name _____

Address _____

City & State _____

Date of Birth _____

(DAY, MONTH, YR.)

— AGE VERIFICATION FORM —

U.S. AIR FORCE MUSEUM

The United States Air Force Museum is located at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base six miles from Dayton, Ohio. It was established in 1923 and has grown into the largest and oldest Aviation Museum in the world. The Museum covers over 10 acres of exhibits with nearly 60,000 aerospace vehicles and artifacts, 8,405,000 documents and 418,476 historic images and photographs. Over 1.2 million people visit the Museum annually.

It's more than an Air Force Museum - there are graphic displays, equipment, and videos in each of the four galleries that cover WWI, WWII, Korea, and Vietnam. Many displays use life-like State of the Art mannequins with realistic poses. Following summarizes the galleries:

Early Years Gallery

The history of flight from the development of the Wright Brothers Aircraft, the 1909 Wright Flyer to the early 40's Curtis P-40. There are over 40 aircraft in addition to displays of the Mexican Punitive Expedition; World War I; R&D in the 1930's, and the United States Preparation for World War II. Videos feature "the forces of flight," "World War I," and "the 0-38 Recovery in Alaska."

Air Power Gallery

This gallery concentrates on the World War II period. History displays cover World War II European and Pacific Theaters of Operation, the birth of the United States Air Force, and examples of pursuit aircraft and bombers continuing through the earliest U.S. jet aircraft. There are over 60 aircraft in this gallery. Video features include "tribute to Glenn Miller," "how the Atomic Bomb works," and B-25B Tokyo Raiders."

Korean War/Vietnam Conflict Gallery

This gallery covers the history of flight beginning with the Korean War of the early 50's through the Vietnam era of the 1960's and 1970's. This gallery is dominated by the massive Convair B-36J.

Space Gallery

These gallery exhibits present the development of large and powerful rocket engines and boosters that first lifted America's aircraft into orbit and eventually the moon. Featured are the Apollo 15 Command Module, McDonnell Gemini spacecraft, Mercury spacecraft, and the Martin X24B. The video is "Man in Space."

The largest and newest indoor display area is a "Modern Flight Hanger" with over 70 aircraft from the 1940's through the 1990's. Highlights include the F-117, XB-70, SR-71, F-15, and latest prototype jet, the YF-22. Videos include "Air and Sea Rescue in Vietnam" and "Project Turnkey: the construction of Tuy Hoa Airbase."

Presidential and R&D Hangers

About a mile from the Museum, located inside the military compound, is a twin hanger facility open to the public that houses over 30 aircraft. These hangers provide indoor protection for the Museums Presidential Aircraft and experimental planes.

The Presidential Hanger is home to nine Presidential aircraft: Franklin D. Roosevelt's C-54 "Sacred Cow," the first official Presidential aircraft; Harry Truman's personal plane nicknamed the "Independence"; Dwight D. Eisenhower's Lockheed

(Continued on Page 10)

UPCOMING 54th ANNUAL REUNION

(Continued from Page 9)

VC-121E christened "Columbine III," by Mrs. Eisenhower; "Airforce One" a VC137C. This Presidential aircraft served every American President from John F. Kennedy to William J. Clinton. Known as SAM 26000, the Boeing 707, carried President Kennedy's body back from Dallas to Washington, D.C. and was the place where President Johnson was sworn into office.

Other Presidential aircraft on display: Beechcraft VC-6A "King Air" used by the Johnson family; a North American T-39A "Sabreliner" used by President Johnson; a Lockheed VC-140B "Jet Star" used by Presidents Nixon, Ford, Carter, and Reagan; and, a Bell UH-13J "Sioux" helicopter and a L-26 Aero Commander, both used by Eisenhower for short trips.

Air Force Museum Tour Info

Busses will pick up at 8:30 a.m. for a 60-mile ride to the Museum, arriving about 9:45 a.m. A typical tour is 2 to 2-1/2 hours without visiting the I-Max theater which is not scheduled in this itinerary. Lunch is on your own in the museum cafeteria that has a capacity of 400 people.

Since the President Aircraft Hanger is located within the military compound, special passes are required. The bus drivers will obtain special bus passes for our group. Busses will pick up the group at 2:00 p.m. for the short ride to the Presidential Aircraft hanger. Please watch the time! Busses are expected to depart NLT at 3:30 p.m. which should give enough time for a walk-through of the large Presidential aircraft and a walk-by of the smaller planes. Aircraft are equipped and furnished exactly like they were when in use by the President.

FOOD SERVICE

The Reunion Theme this year is obviously German since we are in a predominated German heritage location. For the Early Bird we have planned a German/American buffet, entertainment will be a German band in Bavarian costumes.

The Banquet Dinner is something different this year, instead of no choice, or Beef/Chicken choice, there will be a dual combination dinner. Dinner will be both a Filet Mignon Steak and Chicken Breast covered with Lobster and Crabmeat.

I felt slighted last year with the small Farewell Breakfast Plate, so this year I dictated a good Southern-style Breakfast Buffet into the contract: fresh fruit, juice, scrambled eggs, bacon and sausage, hash browns, biscuits and gravy, Danish and coffee, tea, decaf. Enjoy!

GOLF OUTING

Golf will be on Thursday, September 13th. The cost will be \$32.00 per golfer. Please include the price of golf in the money sent in with your reservation with a note stating what the monies are for. Thank you.

James E. Boris

1st Platoon, Company I, 272nd Infantry Regiment

Submitted By: **Bonnie G. Bullard**

1769 Pleasant Hill Road

Iuka, Mississippi 38852-6305

My husband, **Herman A. Bullard**, trained with the 1st Platoon, Company I, 272nd Infantry, 69th Division at Camp Shelby, Mississippi from May to October 1943 and was sent from there to Ft. Meade, Maryland.

He was granted a seven day emergency furlough due to illness at home. During this time, his outfit was shipped overseas and was involved in D-Day.

Herman sailed from Camp Patrick Henry, Virginia November 11th, 1943 and traveled through North Africa, Sicily and on to Naples, Italy. He was sent to the front lines and joined his unit, Company E, 135th Infantry, 2nd Battalion, 34th Division as a replacement near Mt. Frocchio. They tried to cross the Rapido River near Cassino, Italy but the fighting was so fierce and so many were killed and wounded that a 3 hour peace treaty was called. Each side went across the river and picked up their dead and wounded then resumed fighting, a first in history.

Herman was wounded February 8th, 1944 near Montecassino Abbey.

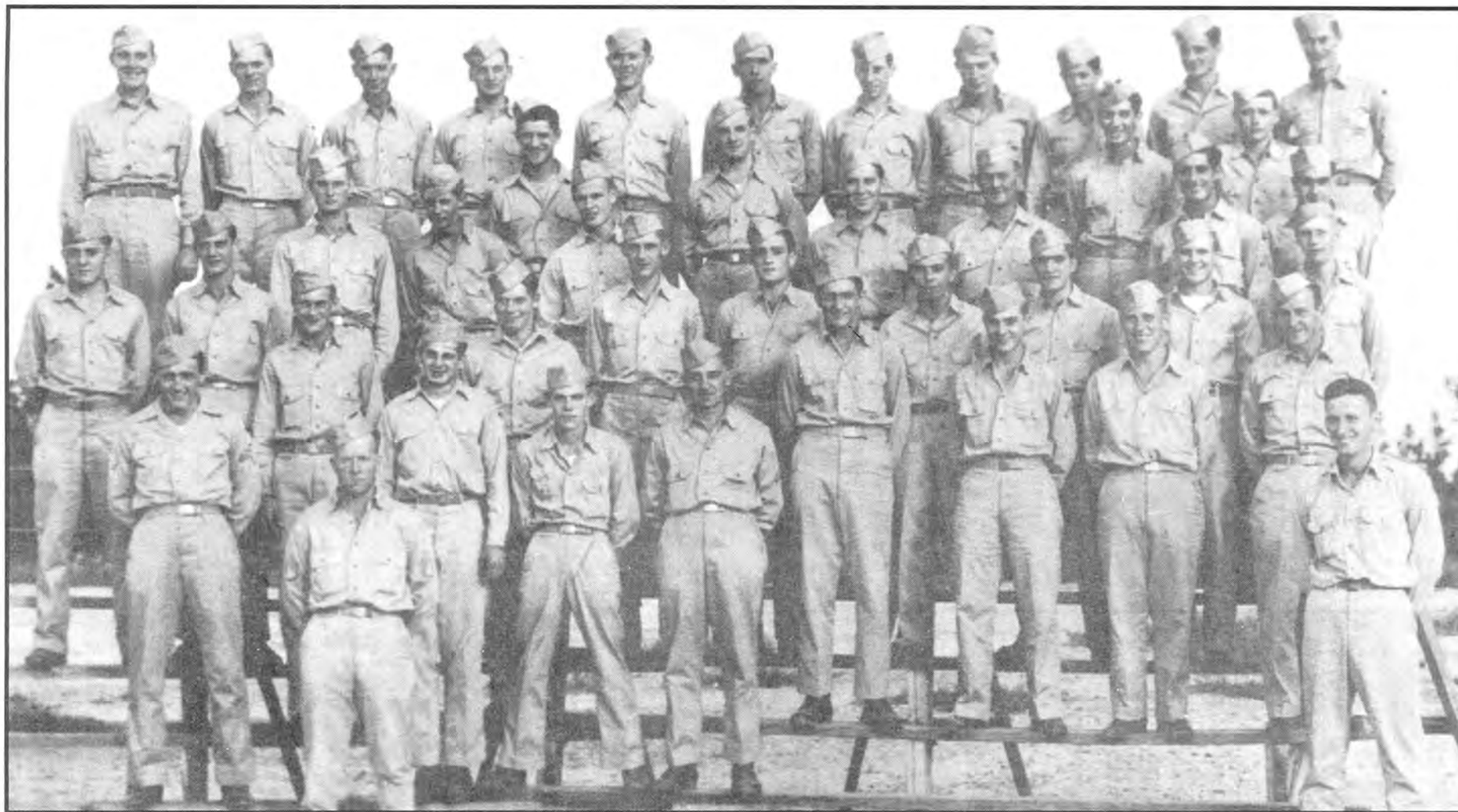
In your Fighting 69th Infantry Division Bulletin Vol. 47, number 1 of September, October, November, December 1993 issue, you printed a picture of 1st Platoon, Company I, 272nd Infantry 69th Division on page 65. This was sent in by **Bill Vroom** and you didn't print the names because they were illegible. All the men autographed Herman's copy of the picture and we included it in a scrapbook we started after he came home. He wrote a letter every day and I kept them. When he read the letters he could remember everything that happened that day in training. We kept it up to date. I did sketches throughout and had saved pictures and articles from Life and Look magazines that we included. Some of the pages began to crumble with age so I had a copy made for each of our three sons. Some things were in color.

Herman never attended any of the reunions because he didn't recognize any of the names until **Bill Vroom**. We corresponded with several of the boys and learned many were killed or wounded. We enjoyed a visit from **Lauren** and **Emma Lyons** in 1975. I have never heard anything of **Lt. Lisovic**, **Sgt. Hamilton** or **Andy Rebick**.

I have thoroughly enjoyed reading the bulletins even if I don't know the ones in it.

Herman did not suffer and was able to stay up until he passed away October 8th, 2000 from severe heart problems.

(See photo on the following page)



1st Platoon, Company I, 272 Infantry — Camp Shelby, October 1943

Back row: K.O. Lynch (VA), George Grimm (Baltimore, MD), Herman A. Bullard (Iuka, MS), Herman Taylor (Dundas, VA), Bill Vroom (NJ), Andrew Scarloto (Philadelphia, PA), Russell Gunsollus (PA), Arthur Mongold (PA), Joe Caiazzo (New Castle, PA), Paul R. Berkebile (Annville, PA), Charles A. Andrews, Jr. (TN)

2nd row: Stephen Patrick Costa (Brooklyn, NY), Louis Magagna (NY), Natale Crupi (PA), Charlie Presley (AL)

3rd row: W.C. Cain (Basin, WV), William M. Holmes (NJ), Edward T. Jones (NJ), Albert L. Wartzenuft (PA), Harry Yoakum (TX), Charlie DePalma (Eliz, NJ), Floyd Hughes (Lackey, KY)

4th row: George J. Galinac (PA), Edward Copes (Philadelphia, PA), James T. Boyd (Kentucky), Stanley J. Lurie (NY), Gabriel De Sanctes, Larry Vivola, Jr. (Brooklyn NY), Donald Kerr (PA), Hansell C. Burnette (GA)

5th row: Lauren Lyons (Pittsburgh, PA), Robert E. Knight (PA), Anthony Squillace (Brooklyn NY), R.M. Rath (PA), Argyle Linger (WV), Andrew Rebick

6th row: Andrew Smetanick, Julius Dominici, (Raritan ? (NJ) , Stanley Gedro (Ohio), Becto. Front: S/Sgt. Hamilton, Lt. Lisovic, (Raritan, NJ)

Treasurer's Message



William R. and Jane Matlach

William R. Matlach, Treasurer

Company E, 273rd Infantry

Post Office Box 474

West Islip, New York 11795-0474

Telephone: **631/669-8077** (Note new area code)

Many years ago, the Fiscal Year of the Association used to run from August 1 of a year through to July 31 of the following year. At that time most of us had small children and we found that the best time for holding our annual reunion was the third weekend of August. There was little collection of dues done through the mail and most of the dues was collected from the reunion attendees along with reunion fees right at the reunion. Thus, to avoid any question or unnecessary effort the new Fiscal Year started on August 1st and everyone who attended the Reunion owed dues for the new Fiscal Year! In addition, at the Reunion the Treasurer could present his annual report dated as of the end of the previous month.

However, as the years passed conditions changed, and we found ourselves collecting dues through the mail to solicit those who did not attend the Reunion and collecting advance Reunion Reservations through the mail because Reunion attendance was too large to permit processing all reservations upon arrival. This produced awkward statements in the Treasurer's Report because as of July 31 (end of Fiscal Year) the Treasury always included large assets representing Advance Reservations (money to be expended at the Reunion) which, on the surface, made it appear as if a huge profit had been achieved, which was not true. Since our children no longer affect the timing of the Reunion, and the Association collects dues year round, there is no longer any advantage to the Fiscal Year starting on August 1 and some years ago we made the Fiscal Year the same as the Calendar Year, which has eliminated the items of unbalanced assets in the annual Treasurer's Report. However, for convenience

the Dues Collection Year has continued to start on August 1, the Reunion occurring up to three months thereafter.

A few years ago I made it a practice to sum up the efficiency of my dues collection after completion of a Dues Year. For instance, the last year I evaluated was August 1, 1997 thru July 31, 1998 and found that I had collected dues from 2495 members out of a total mailing list of 4747, for success rate of 52.6%. That was about the best rate we had ever achieved. I have performed that calculation again and have found that for the 1998-99 Dues Year we achieved 52.3% for a mailing list of 4564, and for 1999-2000 we achieved 51.8% for a mailing list of 4402. The success rate appears to be dropping slowly along with the size of the membership, although the change is so small that it may not have any real significance. It may possibly be due to the fact that we now have a larger number of widows on our mailing list in proportion to the total number of members, and we do not solicit dues from the widows. (We do accept voluntary payments.) – Or perhaps it is just due to some of our members becoming more forgetful in their old age (?) and missing payments more often.

If the latter is the case, perhaps you should sit down now and mail in your dues, before the thought leaves your mind. The dues are still the same today as they have been for the last 10 years or more: 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.

HAVE YOU PAID YOUR DUES!

**Hope You Paid Your 2000-2001 Dues,
and if not, you better mail it in
because the New Dues Year is Upon Us!**

NEW DUES YEAR FOR 2001-2002

August 1, 2001 to July 31, 2002

Regular Membership \$10.00

Ladies' Auxiliary \$ 5.00

Bulletin Donation Up To You

***Keep the Bulletin Coming.
Send Your Dues in Today!***

Send Your Dues To:

WILLIAM R. MATLACH, TREASURER

Post Office Box 474

West Islip, New York 11795-0474

Telephone: 631/669-8077

Do not send dues to Dottie Witzleb.

George D. Burrows writes...

Company B, 271st Infantry Regiment

1538 Pine Ridge Drive

Roxboro, North Carolina 27573-4160

Surprise! Surprise! How amazing that sometimes the greatest of surprises come from sources and places that you are prone to forget, like right around close to home.

The article below appeared in the "Durham Herald Sun" newspaper of Thursday May 24th, 2001 in the so-called Hometown section with a column by Ed Hodges, local columnist, on a Durham family that has direct ties to our proud Fighting 69th Infantry Division. Of the two members, **Alvin** and **Calvin** were/are members of our association and I have learned from **Bill Matlach** that both were members of Co. D, 273rd. **Calvin** died in January 1994. **Alvin** is still kicking but is having problems, like us all. His address is **Alvin Bryant**, 2707 Richwood Drive, Durham, North Carolina 27705.

I am going to Durham in the next few days to hunt him up, visit for a while and see if I can be of service, and perhaps bring him up to speed on happenings of the last few years.

The text of the article just about blew me out of the water. We all know the story of the Fighting Sullivans, Private Ryan, but 7 sons of this family, all serving overseas at once is mind boggling. The bulletin surely needs to let all our members hear this story.

See you in Kentucky. God's love and peace be always near you.

* * * * *

Of 9 Sons, 7 Fought in World War II

The Herald-Sun

Durham, North Carolina

Written by: Ed Hodges

Alvin Bryant probably has never given it a minute's thought, but it turns out that he's a pretty good historian.

Unofficial, of course, but still thorough enough when called on to recount the doings of his family.

And even **Alvin Bryant** would agree that they are often fantastic; some of them you could hardly believe.

Consider this: On the birth of her ninth son, years back, his mother, Mrs. P.L. Bryant, was good-naturedly called "the mother of a baseball team."

Maybe this miracle has happened in other times, other places, but if so, ordinary historians have been slow recording it.

Now the part that astonishes ordinary historians: Seven of those sons fought in World War II. And miracle of miracles, only one was injured.

Of course Mrs. Bryant was proud of her sons and their records in World War II. Seven of them returned to Durham for a home.

There were Willie and Posey and Julian, and for most folks that might have been enough. But that was not even enough for a decent basketball team, even after you throw in Johnny. And he was the most athletic in the family. Still there were Alverta and George, never omitted in any good history. After that there were Alvin and Calvin and Thomas, often thought head and shoulders of any such group.

O.K., enough is enough, and sure enough nine brothers do make a baseball team.

But tragedy often strikes, even among the most remarkable of families, and little Thomas Bryant died when he was only 6 years old.

Still, with World War II raging, seven of the brothers marched off to foreign soil to fight the enemy. As far as any family historian knows, there is no military record of seven brothers called up for war-time military duty in the U.S.

There is yet that other fact to consider in this remarkable Bryant family. Only one was injured.

Of course, **Alvin** delights in his role as family historian. Details, for instance:

Lt. Alverta Bryant and Pvt. First Class William G. Bryant fought together in the famous 30th Division, slugging it out in Europe.

Alvin and **Calvin**, twins, fought together in the Fighting 69th Division, making the Germans miserable.

All got Bronze Stars, and one received the Purple Heart for his wounds in combat.

Still looking for unbelievable bits of history?

The Bryants were the first and probably the only "seven brothers" to fight on foreign soil at the same time.

Alvin would always terminate all accolades with, "Let's not forget our father, who taught us right and wrong, and when everything went wrong, he always said, 'Boys, go get in there and fight.' He was right, too."

Mrs. Bryant had something of an "old-fashioned" role and loved it. All of the boys agreed, "She watched us like a hawk and said a mother's place was in the home."

Such is the obligation of a historian.

www.military.com

Submitted By: **E.P. Haynie, Jr.**

Company B, 273rd Infantry Regiment

2850 Haynies' Drive, Huntington, West Virginia 25704

I would suggest to the readers who have a computer and are on the internet, that you may enjoy clicking on www.military.com.

You can join a list of men who have registered to their unit, such as "1st Battalion, 273rd Infantry Regiment." You may be able to contact old buddies, etc. You will see a list of men who have previously registered and may e-mail them.

**69th INFANTRY DIVISION ASSOCIATION 2001
54th ANNUAL REUNION
461st AAA BN. - 661st T.D. BN. - 777th TANK BN.
Drawbridge Inn, Fort Mitchell, Kentucky
SEPTEMBER 9th thru SEPTEMBER 16th, 2001**

SEND THIS RESERVATION FORM TO:

ATTENTION: RESERVATIONS

DRAWBRIDGE INN

2477 ROYAL DRIVE, FORT MITCHELL, KENTUCKY 41047-3599

Telephone: 606/341-2800 or 1/800-354-9793 • Fax: 606/341-5644

HOUSING: Please reserve one of the following:

MAIN BUILDING

\$72.00 + Single _____ \$72.00 + Double _____ \$72.00 + Triple _____ \$89.00 + Quad _____

GARISON BUILDING

\$65.00 + Single _____ \$65.00 + Double _____ \$65.00 + Triple _____ \$65.00 + Quad _____

ALL ROOMS ADD 10.24% TAX

Print full names of ALL persons sharing room: _____

NOTE: Special accommodations required: (if available)

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

I / We plan to arrive (day) _____, September _____, 2001. (Check in after 3:00 p.m.)

I / We plan to depart (day) _____, September _____, 2001. (Check out before 12:00 Noon)

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: _____ E-Mail Address: _____

IN ORDER TO CONFIRM RESERVATIONS, One of the following *MUST* accompany this form:

Check or Money Order (One Night's Lodging) payable to the DRAWBRIDGE INN, 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 DRAWBRIDGE INN 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 **August 9, 2001**. 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 will be honored for five (5) days prior to and after the reunion, based upon availability at the time of the original reservation. 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

54th ANNUAL REUNION

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

DRAWBRIDGE INN, FORT MITCHELL, KENTUCKY

SEPTEMBER 9th thru SEPTEMBER 16th, 2001

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

P.O. Box 474, West Islip, New York 11795-0474 • Telephone: 631/669-8077

I/we will attend the 69th Infantry Division Association Reunion in Mitchell, Kentucky during the week of September 9th thru September 16th, 2001 and will attend the following activities:

Name: _____ First Timer ☐ Second Timer ☐ Old Timer ☐

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

City / State / Zip: _____

Telephone / Area Code: _____ E-Mail Address: _____

Unit: _____ Wife's Name: _____

Guests: _____

Daily Events ALL PRICED EVENTS REQUIRE A TICKET			
	Per Person	Number Persons	Amount
Registration: Monday thru Friday , 9:00 a.m. to Noon and 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.			
Saturday, 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.			
Sunday, September 9th — Early Arrivals on your own.			
Monday, September 10th — Check Bulletin Board and Hospitality Room			
Tuesday, September 11th — TRI-CITY TOUR , 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.			
Lunch on your own at Mainstrasse Village	\$ 15.00		\$
Wednesday, September 12th — FOREST VIEW GARDEN , 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.			
German food and live Broadway musical entertainment; lunch included			
Lunch Choices: Pork Schnitzel _____ Chicken Rosemary _____ Broiled Scrod _____	\$ 26.00		\$
BELLE OF CINCINNATI RIVERBOAT DINNER AND DANCE CRUISE			
6:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.	\$ 38.00		\$
Thursday, September 13th			
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING — 8:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.			
ARGOSY RIVERBOAT CASINO, Gourmet Lunch and Gambling			
11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Lunch included	\$ 20.00		\$
EARLY BIRD BUFFET , Cash Bar 6:00 p.m., Dinner 7:00-9:00 p.m., Tickets Required	\$ 32.00		\$
Friday, September 14th — U.S. AIR FORCE MUSEUM, Wright-Patterson			
8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. - Lunch on your own at Museum Cafeteria	\$ 16.00		\$
PX BEER PARTY — 8:30 p.m. to 12:00 Midnight, Tickets Required	\$ 5.00		\$
Saturday, September 15th — 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 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.			
MEMORIAL SERVICE — 7:00 to 7:30 p.m.			
DINNER DANCE - 8:00 p.m. to 12:00 Midnight, Tickets Required			
Menu: Fillet Mignon and Chicken Breast	\$ 30.00		\$
Sunday, September 16th - Farewell Breakfast - 7:30-9:30 a.m. Tickets Required	\$ 12.00		\$
Replacement Cost for Lost or Broken Permanent Badges	\$ 4.00		\$
SUPPORT YOUR HOSPITALITY ROOM: DONATIONS PLEASE!!!			\$
DUES — New Dues Year - August 1, 2001 to July 31, 2002		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.

Daughter of William "Bill" Campbell, member of the 269th Combat Engineers and link to the birth of our 69th Association, contacts us at our website

Submitted By: **Joe Lipsius**
6314 Deerings Hollow
Norcross, Georgia 30092-1800
Telephone: 770/416-7725
E-Mail: annejoelip@earthlink.net

As was my custom as webmaster of our website, in December 2000, I was checking out new entries on our Guest Book when a name jumped in view that went back more than 50 years and may have played an important part in the formation and development of The Fighting 69th Infantry Division Association.

Before my eyes was the entry of **Kula Campbell Moore** describing her deceased father, **William L. "Bill" Campbell**, as a "proud member of Company B, 29th Engineer Battalion." **Kula** explained, "my father often told us children of meeting the Russians at the Elbe River. He was proud to have been a member of the Fighting 69th Infantry." He passed away on November 16th, 1999.

I immediately recognized **Bill Campbell's** name as my neighbor for 13 years only a short block away and a member of **Company B, 269th Combat Engineer Battalion** (not 29th Engineer Battalion). **Bill** and his brother **Costa** ran Liberty Soda Company on Pryor Street in Atlanta, Georgia, across from Fulton County Courthouse.

Beginning in 1948 or 1949, Liberty Soda became the monthly meeting place in Atlanta for local 69ers, with **Bill** supplying free coffee to the visitors. While my mind is hazy on how it began and for how long, it was

for quite a period. I recall we may have had as many as 15 attend at times.

Clifford Ewing, 769th Ordnance Company and the fourth Association President, was an attendee. Atlanta was the scene of a reunion in 1950 or 1951. I believe the gatherings at Liberty Soda may have played a part in **Cliff's** interest and the reunion. Besides **Bill** and **Cliff**, others I recall were **Larry Braddock**, Co. M, 271st Infantry, **Coleman Gibbs**, Service Co., 272nd Infantry and **Lea Richards** and **William Barber**, both deceased. There were others but their names escape me.

I feel sure **Cliff Ewing's** interest in The Fighting 69th Infantry Division Association was kindled in meetings held at Liberty Soda while drinking **Bill Campbell's** great coffee. This led to his communicating with the "Yankees" who were running things, his presidency, and the only Atlanta reunion until August 27-September 3, 2000. Unrecognized, **Bill Campbell** played a part in our Association's formative years.

Kula Campbell Moore was glad to have found the 69th on the internet. She sent me a large batch of pictures, most without names, places or dates. I am enclosing several identifying **William L. "Bill" Campbell**.

If you are in any of these photos, please send details to:

Ms. Kula Campbell Moore
250 Habersham Way
Athens, Georgia 30606



Bill Campbell seated on left next to "teacher." A name and date, Sergeant Richard F. Thompson, 3/10/44 appears on the back of the photo. Other names illegible.



Bill is kneeling on left with women.



Bill is kneeling second from left, smoking a pipe.



*Photo Above:
Bill Campbell is fourth from left.*

*Photo Left:
Bill is on the right kneeling
in the front row of three.*

**Possible members of
the 269th Combat Engineers**



Dottie Witzleb



Wally Richardson, Vice President
2717 Glendora Avenue
Orlando, FL 32812

THE AUXILIARY'S PAGE

by - **Dottie Witzleb**
Ladies Auxiliary Editor
P.O. Box 69
Champion, Pennsylvania 15622-0069

or
183 Pineslope Road
Acme, Pennsylvania 15610-9606
Home Telephone: 724/455-2901



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Edith Zaffern, Sunshine Lady
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Southfield, MI 48034-2011
Telephone: **248**/357-4611
Note: new area code

Ursula Goebel, Chaplain
5417 Halifax Lane
Minneapolis, MN 55424
Telephone: 612/927-5319

A Message from your Auxiliary President, Gloria Czyzyk

Dear Ladies of the Auxiliary and Friends,

Springtime is my favorite time of year. All of nature is refreshingly new again. It had been very dry here, but once the rain came, it didn't want to stop. At this time the weather is perfect. The sun is shining and the temperatures are cool and comfortable. It is delightfully pleasurable.

Many thanks to **Esther Caine Towers** for the narration of her life during the war years. I am looking forward to reading the continuation. I finished high school at the same time the war ended. I met Stanley after the war was over. At that time, he was discharged from the Army. He had been wounded in the forest in Germany on the way to Leipzig. His wounds took a year to heal. I didn't have the worries that other young women had.

I am sure many more ladies can write interesting accounts of their lives, which occurred during and after the war years. They had gone through their own ordeals just as the men did. Please, let us hear from you.

Our reunion this year will be in Fort Mitchell, Kentucky from September 9th through September 16th. I'm sure most of the booties, bibs and lap robes are practically completed. The size of the lap robe is 45x36. A \$500.00 check will be presented to the local VA Hospital representative to be used for personal items to be given to the veterans in the hospital. Also remember to bring a small gift (no more than \$5.00) to be exchanged at the Saturday morning Auxiliary meeting.

This year is an election year and I would appreciate nominations and would be very happy to hear from ladies who have an interest in holding an office in our fine organization. It is a two-year term. You can reach me by snail mail, phone or e-mail. I will also post a note at the reunion for an Officers Meeting.

I am looking forward to seeing everyone in September. May you have a safe journey. Peace be with you.

Yours sincerely,
Gloria Czyzyk

WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER FROM THE WAR??

If you are interested in writing a story and sending it in, please do so. Mail it to: **Dottie Witzleb**, P.O. Box 69, Champion, Pennsylvania 15622-0069. We'd love to hear from you!

Memories of an Unusual Friendship

By: **Esther Caine Towers**
Wife of **T5 O. H. Towers Jr. (Okie)**
H & S, 269th Engineers

101 Linwood Drive, Hueytown, Alabama 35023

EDITOR'S NOTE: The last issue of the bulletin contained a story by Esther describing their wartime life.

* * * * *

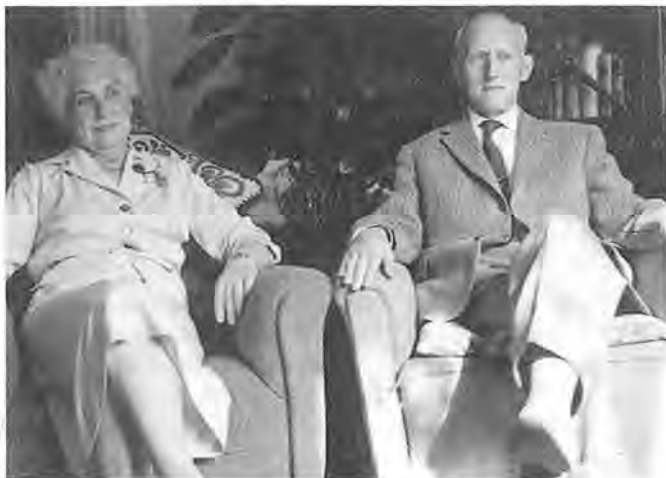
World War II had ended, but Okie did not get home for four months. He was missing his family. Our son, Jan was very small when he last saw him, and Ronald was six months old when he came home.

While waiting to come home, his company was stationed in Bremen. The last five weeks before coming home they were near a neighborhood. One day he was talking to the guard at the gate. A pretty little four-year old girl appeared and was watching him, her name was Elke. He had an orange in his hand and gave it to her. "I had never seen an orange," she later told us. Her grandmother, "Mama Nachtigal" came running out and quickly carried her home.

She was living with her grandparents at the time. The next day she showed up again. Okie gave her chocolate candy and tried to assure her grandmother he wouldn't harm her.

Papa Nachtigal had been gassed in WWI and never fully regained his health. Their son was killed in WWII. About 2 weeks later Edith, Elke's mother, showed up. Her husband was a Prisoner of the Russians at that time. She could speak some English so she helped Okie communicate with her parents and Elke. They invited him for refreshments at a little table on the back patio. He saw that one side of their house was caved in and curtained off.

Some German workmen were working the neighborhood. Okie asked the foreman if he could repair it. He agreed to do the job for tobacco and wine. Since Okie did not smoke or drink, his Army issued tobacco and wine were in a box in his truck. The foreman gladly exchanged it for repairing the home.



Elke's grandparents: Mama and Papa Nachtigal



Edith and Elke. This is the little girl he met in Germany with her mother.

He introduced the family to peanut butter, which was invented in Alabama by George Washington Carver. They thought it was building material. He spread it on some bread and they liked it. He paid Edith to wash his laundry before he came home. When he told them goodbye, Mama Nachtigal hugged him and cried. This was the beginning of a life long friendship with this German family.

After Okie came home in November 1945, we sent packages of necessities he knew were not available to them at that time, including silk stockings and little girl's shoes. We would receive letters of thanks and pictures of the family and updates on the family. There were letters from the grandparents always signed as "Mama and Papa Nachtigal" and letters from Edith who wrote understandable English. There was a letter written by Elke as an assignment while learning English in school.

Four years ago I tucked the letter in with a copy of the "Memories of our friendship" I had written. I cried all day when I read it, Elke wrote from Canada, "I never dreamed that someday I would be working and speaking with my children in English."

When Edith's husband returned they were divorced. A few years after the war ended there was a letter with pictures that Edith was marrying Ernst Wittenhagen. Several years later a son was born named Bernd. Later another son named Frank. When our daughters Gail and Nancy were born we sent announcements and pictures. Periodically as the family grew and changed, we sent pictures. For years, we sent and received gifts at Christmas. They made sure ours arrived at just the right time, but their Christmas was a different time from ours. Our gifts to them were probably late every year. Gradually we stopped trying to send gifts at Christmas, but at least once a year we sent Christmas cards with notes and letters on the happenings of our families. When the

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MEMORIES OF AN UNUSUAL FRIENDSHIP

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Wittenhagens traveled, they would send picture post cards of their travels and we did the same. When 'Mama and Papa Nachtigal' died they informed us and we did the same when our parents died.

When Elke married Wolfgang we received a wedding picture. Later came news that she had gone to Canada and decided to stay. When her marriage to Wolfgang ended, she married Marco Solinas and had a daughter and son.

In 1976 Okie and I decided to go to Europe with an AAA tour. Included in this tour was a week in Munich. They moved to Munich when Ernst got a government job there. Okie called the Wittenhagens and let them know when we would be there. They came to our hotel where I met them for the first time and Ernst met us for the first time. We learned that Ernst and I had been doing most of the communicating, all in English. He had been a prisoner of war for nine years and learned English in the meantime. It was an unforgettable visit. We saw their home, Munich, and the surrounding area with Edith, Ernst and Bernd. It was much better than the regular tour guided sights.

We invited the Wittenhagens to visit us in Alabama. In 1978 they flew to Birmingham from New York. We drove them to Huntsville to see the space museum and they were familiar with Von Braun. On our way back we stopped in Cullman, originally a German settlement. They saw the intricate miniature replicas of European cathedrals and landmarks at the Ava Maria Grotto. A monk who lived there at one time made them from little scraps and pieces of rocks, colored glass and anything that made it look like the original building. They would name the cathedrals without reading for they knew how the originals looked. From there we visited Ronald and Brenda (our son and his family) and had supper in their home. Christy and Jeff were very young at that time.

One night we had a party at our home for them. Friends and family came to greet them, but our visitors



The Wittenhagen's visit to our home in 1978: Esther, Okie, Edith and Ernst.

had some difficulty trying to understand the Southern version of the English language.

The next day we left on a tour of the Deep South. The first night was spent in Panama City Beach. It was April and they saw thousands of teenagers on spring break. The second night was in Mobile where we saw the Belingrath Gardens. Ernst remembered helping to load cargo on ships bound for Mobile when he was a young man. The third night we stayed at a beach near Biloxi, Mississippi, and from there we went down the coast to New Orleans. Ernst had heard about New Orleans and was very interested in the sights there. We took a trip on a riverboat and they met a group of German tourists. We spent a night there, then headed back for home. They saw the homes, the land, how the pecan and magnolia trees grow here. My magnolia trees were in bloom; the south is very beautiful in the spring. They loved it.

All the time they were with us we were having much fun with the language. They were constantly checking their little "clever book" as Edith called it. We didn't speak German so it was up to them to figure it out. They did quite well with the communication and we all had fun with it. This was another very memorable week in our lives.

In 1979 Edith and Ernst met us in The Hague, Holland while we were visiting Okie's cousins, Margaret and Mel Rue. We all went to see the Keukenhof Gardens. The flowers were at their best. It was daffodil and tulip time, and the gardens and surrounding fields of tulips in different colors spread out like a huge, velvet, multi-colored quilt. Again we had a delightful time together. Oo-ing and ah-ing all up and down the paths.

In 1980 Okie and I made a tour of California and extended our trip into Canada. We contacted Elke and she made a reservation for us near where she lived in Vancouver. We met her two children, Concetta and Ramon. Concetta was taking German lessons and Ramon was taking Italian, but the family communicated in English. Elke showed us around Vancouver and had us in her home. Edith and Ernst had planned to meet us there, but Ernst had heart surgery around that time and could not make the trip.

In 1995 Okie and I were in Vancouver again as part of a tour. We notified Elke and made arrangements to meet her at our hotel. Her children had become handsome young adults. We all had dinner together in a nice restaurant overlooking the water. It was a pleasant and memorable day for both of us and the highlight of our tour.

During our visit Elke said that when she was little, her grandparents and Mother would let her eat first. When she had finished they would eat. "I thought that was customary" she said, but I learned later they were making sure I didn't go hungry.

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Elke and Okie on our last visit to Vancouver, 1995



Vancouver, Canada - 1995: Concetta, Okie, Esther, Elke and Ramon.

Edith had cancer and was ill for several years. In June 1999, a letter arrived from Munich. The envelope edged in black, Edith had died. Ernest wrote a letter later assuring us that he wanted to continue our correspondence. This Christmas his letter stated that he was considering moving to an assisted living home - he was lonely, in poor health and missed Edith and her cooking.

It is 2001 now and we will probably not be able to visit each other again because of health reasons. The three families sent Christmas cards this year with the usual letters enclosed as we have done for 55 years. Our unusual friendship will continue as long as we live.

Recalling Some Great Guys

Submitted by: **Stephen J. Rojcewicz**
881st Field Artillery Battalion
135 Endicott Street
Worcester, Massachusetts 01610-1944

Our service battery had a newspaper in Europe, as indeed did most other outfits. Because of the paper shortage, it consisted of four pages which were attached to an outdoor bulletin board. We had an edition three times a month and its purpose was to help morale. **Fred Carlson** did the typing and provided hand-drawn headlines and artwork. **Pfc. George Whaley** from Georgia, was assigned at Division Headquarters and furnished me with international news and pictures. He also gave us the name "*Service Silhouette*." My happy task was to relate local news from around the battery. My most popular feature was a whole page story of some battery mate, especially non-coms. This I tried to do with a bit of satire and gentle needling. The guys seemed to love these little digs.

There was never any difficulty to find words. There was so much talent and mannerisms that writing was easy. For example:

Our own **Pfc. Goff** from Baltimore could do this: A pistol, M1, and carbine were "field stripped" and placed in a pile. **Goff** was brought in, blind-folded and he quickly assembled the three pieces. **Corporal Boyd**, a Native American from Oklahoma, was the only one we knew who could shoot the army pistol with accuracy.

Once we built a corduroy road and **Colonel Brooks** personally commended us. Maybe when our men were discharged and had families their children did great work with lincoln logs.

Fred Carlson is retired from farming in his native Nebraska. We have exchanged Christmas greetings since 1946. At one time (maybe yet) people in Nebraska lived an average of two years longer than those in the other states.

And oh yes, Thanks, **Hyman**, if you are still with us. You were nice enough to relieve me on Christmas Day 1944 so that I could leave my guard post and attend church services.

**DEADLINE FOR MATERIAL FOR NEXT BULLETIN IS
SEPTEMBER 30th, 2001 • Volume 55, Number 1
September, October, November, December 2001
Get Your Material In On Time!**

Ground Broken for National World War II Memorial on Veteran's Day 2000

Submitted by: **Michael Kutzmonich**

Company H, 271st Infantry Regiment

R.R. 2, Wapwallopen, Pennsylvania 18660-9672

More than 12,000 people, mostly WWII veterans and their families, traveled to Washington, D.C. on Veterans Day to attend the long-awaited groundbreaking ceremony for the National World War II Memorial at the memorial's Rainbow Pool site on the National Mall.

The groundbreaking symbolizes a major milestone in the struggle to create the memorial. Conceived in 1987, the memorial took six years to be authorized by Congress in 1993 and was the subject of 19 public hearings over the past five years. Both the National Capital Planning Commission and the Commission of Fine Arts approved the Memorial's design earlier this year.

To date the Veterans of Foreign war has contributed more than \$5 million of the \$7.5 million pledged by the organization.

The ceremony, broadcast live across the nation, was attended by key contributors to the memorial campaign, including President Bill Clinton, National Chairman of the Memorial Campaign Senator Bob Dole and Actor Tom Hanks, who aided in public awareness of the project.

President Clinton addressed the crowd, saying, "With this memorial we secure the memory of 16 million Americans, men and women who took up arms in

the greatest struggle humanity has ever known. We hallow the ground for more than 400,000 who never came home. We acknowledge a debt than can never be repaid." He directly addressed the members of the World War II generation, saying, "We are the children of your sacrifice and we thank you forever."

In his address, Senator Dole thanked his fellow WWII veterans for their service, and said, "For some, inevitably, this memorial will be a place to mourn. For millions of others, it will be a place to learn, to reflect, and to draw inspiration for whatever tests confront generations yet unborn."

Also participating in the ceremony were Fred Smith, national co-chair of the fundraising campaign; Haydn Williams, chairman of American Battle Monument Commission's memorial committee; Luther Smith, a member of the memorial Architect-Engineer Evaluation Board and former Tuskegee Airman; Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D-OH), who introduced the legislation to authorize the Memorial; WWII veteran members of Congress; Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen and Acting Secretary of Veterans Affairs Hershel Gober; and veteran and homefront representatives of the WWII generation.

Military bands set the tone for the day's activities as they played Glenn Miller tunes and World War II era music. Following the groundbreaking, which was undertaken by 54 participants with shovels, a moment of silence was observed and a lone Marine played Taps in honor of our nation's fallen heroes.

Two large movie screens highlighted the sights and sounds of the war years and children adorned in red, white and blue carrying American flags walked among the crowd singing God Bless America.

The finale to the patriotic and nostalgic event was the release of an American Bald Eagle above the

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Artist's rendering of The National World War II Memorial

GROUND BROKEN FOR NATIONAL WWII MEMORIAL ON VETERANS DAY 2000

(Continued from Page 22)

crowd, a symbolic reminder of our nation's freedom preserved by earlier heroes. Following selection of a general contractor, construction is expected to begin on the 7.4-acre memorial in March 2001.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: We know we were a little late with this, but we wanted to have all the facts before publishing this information in the bulletin. Much has come to pass in regards to the memorial, including hearings to stop the construction of this memorial on the Mall in Washington, DC. Read on.)

Monumental Ruling World War II Memorial plans can go forward, judge rules

By The Associated Press

A federal judge ruled Thursday against opponents of a World War II Memorial, rejecting their request to postpone construction on the National Mall.

With the ruling, all three branches of government now have moved to support the memorial or to let it proceed. Legislation passed by Congress and signed by President Bush last week placed planning for the memorial outside the normal regulatory process, an effort to end lawsuits and other delays.

Opponents charged that the new law is unconstitutional because it bypasses the review process in the courts.

U.S. District Judge Henry Kennedy disagreed, saying that while he wasn't making a "definitive ruling" on the law, it appeared constitutional and lawmakers hadn't overstepped their authority.

"It seems to be Congress' intent to remove this court's jurisdiction," he said.

The National Coalition to Save Our Mall, which opposes the memorial's design and its placement between the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial, filed a lawsuit in October.

On Monday, the group requested a temporary restraining order to prevent the government from signing construction contracts to build the memorial.

But Kennedy declined, saying the coalition was unlikely to prevail in its lawsuit and would not be harmed if construction planning proceeded.

"No ground will be tilled, no tree roots will be pruned and no actual construction will begin until after the Fourth of July festivities on the Mall," he said.

Only hours after the ruling, the American Battle Monuments Commission announced that a \$56 million contract had been awarded to two companies to start construction work on the memorial this summer. The firms have worked on other Mall landmarks including the Jefferson and Roosevelt memorials.

Still pending before Kennedy is the coalition's original lawsuit to block the memorial and a government motion to discuss that case.

Judy Scott Feldman, one of the coalition's leaders, said it would appeal if Kennedy rules against it again.

"We all agree with the concept (of a memorial), but it's now time for people to look at what's actually being proposed and to seriously see that we have a huge mistake and a huge desecration on the Mall about to occur," she said after the decision.

The memorial's design calls for a circle of granite pillars representing the states and two four-story arches to signify victory in Europe and Asia. Critics, including some veterans, have said the planned memorial would clutter the Mall, block the sweeping views and interfere with mass gatherings.

Many veterans groups support the memorial, however, including the American Legion, the nation's largest veterans organization.

Construction should be completed in early 2004, according to the commission.

* * * * *

Memorial Receives National Support

The memorial enjoys overwhelming support from the American people. More than 450 veterans organizations representing 11 million veterans, hundreds of thousands of individual Americans, hundreds of corporations and foundations, dozens of civic, fraternal and professional organizations, and 48 state legislatures have joined the effort to say thank you to America's WWII generation.

* * * * *

The Facts - Correcting the Critics

Unfortunately, much of what is written or said about the memorial is based on distortions and misinformation distributed by those who oppose our efforts to establish this tribute to America's WWII generation. Here are the facts.

1. Critics claim that the memorial was approved behind closed doors by a small group of individuals without regard to the law. Not true!

The WWII Memorial is the product of an open and democratic process, in full compliance with all applicable laws. The site and design were debated in the media and 22 public meetings since 1995. No one has been denied the right to be heard, and critics have had full opportunity to state their positions during the many public meetings held over the past five years.

2. Critics claim that the memorial will desecrate grounds made sacred by the civil rights movement and will greatly impede or prevent future public gatherings and marches on the Mall in the vicinity of Washington and Lincoln. Not true!

Two events often cited - Marian Anderson's concert and Martin Luther King's speech - took place at the Lincoln Memorial, more than a quarter-mile from the Rainbow Pool. The design will not interfere with

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THE FACTS - CORRECTING THE CRITICS

(Continued from Page 23)

future such events and marches; rather, the WWII Memorial will itself become the site of many future gatherings.

3. Critics claim the memorial will pave over 7.4 acres, destroying the open vistas and natural beauty that define the National Mall. Not true!

The design will not pave over 7.4 acres. The principal area of the memorial will not be paving, but water, grass and trees as it is today; only thirty percent of the total acreage will be hard surface. The design preserves present vistas in all directions, an important design requirement from the beginning, and the memorial landscape plan preserves and enhances its park-like setting.

4. Critics claim the memorial will block the Mall's open space between the Washington Monument and Lincoln Memorial, inhibiting pedestrians from walking through this part of the Mall. Not true!

The design allows the open flow of visitors between the Washington Monument and Lincoln Memorial. The existing pedestrian pathways that wind around the memorial and along the Reflecting Pool will be the same as they are now. Visitors approaching the memorial will have the choice of entering it or continuing along the existing pathways to their destination.

5. Critics claim that the memorial will destroy the historic Rainbow Pool. Not true!

The Rainbow Pool will be lowered and rebuilt in its historic configuration. The Pool's waterworks, which have not functioned for decades, will be restored to their original splendor. The Rainbow Pool will earn greater historic significance as the centerpiece of the only memorial to a 20th century event commemorated on the main axis of the Mall.

6. Critics claim that the design echoes the Nazi Fascist architectural language of triumph and public spectacle. Not true!

The design complements the classic style of Washington architecture. It is the language of much of the federal architecture found in Washington. It is ludicrous to claim that Nazi gigantism, which separates its brand of architecture from other periods in history, bears any relevance to the scale of the WWII Memorial, whose vertical dimensions are modest in relation to the principal visual features of the Mall.

7. Critics claim the WWII Memorial is being built on ground that is part of the Lincoln Memorial. Not true!

A 1922 report of a meeting of the Lincoln Memorial Commission contained this unequivocal statement: "The chairman stated that while the Lagoon [the Reflecting Pool and Rainbow Pool] was part of the plan for beautifying the park surrounding the Memorial, it was not part of the Memorial, and the Lincoln Memorial Commission had no connection with its construction." What could be more clear?

8. Critics repeatedly imply that a site in Constitution Gardens was the American Battle Monuments Commission's preferred site for the WWII Memorial. Not true!

Of six sites initially made available for the memorial, a site in Constitution Gardens was deemed the best by ABMC. However, when the Rainbow Pool site was made available for study, ABMC immediately chose it in preference to the site in Constitution Gardens, recognizing that there was not a more appropriate place to commemorate the most significant event of the 20th century than at the Rainbow Pool site on the central axis of the National Mall.

9. Critics claim the memorial will create problems of arsenic contamination and flooding, and contaminated ground water will be pumped into the Tidal Basin and Potomac River. Not true!

Testing by project engineers revealed that ground water now seeps into storm water pipes that run through the site, allowing ground water to flow untreated into the Tidal Basin. These defective pipes will be replaced and contaminated soil will be removed during construction. The project thus will reduce ground water flows into the Tidal Basin, and ground water that is discharged will be treated to EPA standards, including those for arsenic. This will improve existing conditions. Much of the western end of the Mall sits within a flood plain. Thus, the WWII Memorial will sit within the same flood plain as the Jefferson Memorial, the Reflecting Pool, the Korean War Veterans Memorial, the FDR Memorial, and the D.C. World War I Memorial. If a flood occurs, water will be removed from the WWII Memorial plaza by storm water pumps within 24 hours after flood water levels have receded, and the memorial will be cleaned, as will other memorials in the area.

10. Critics claim that the WWII Memorial will alter the meaning of our National Mall. Not true!

The National Mall contains cherished symbols of freedom: the Capitol and Washington Monument, symbols of the nation's founding in the 18th century; the Lincoln Memorial and Grant statue, symbols of the nation's preservation in the 19th century. There is not a more appropriate place to recognize the 20th century's triumph of democracy over tyranny than directly in line with those other symbols of our democratic ideals. The WWII Memorial will reinforce the message of our National Mall—the message of freedom—for generations to come.

The consistently favorable decisions rendered following 22 public meetings and the many endorsements received from prominent newspapers and individuals support conclusions that: The National WWII Memorial is the right statement in the right place. The design is open and transparent, preserving views in all directions. The architecture complements the classic style of Washington. The architecture creates a sense of place and sets the stage for remembrance and celebration. The memorial is destined to be one of the great public gathering places on the National Mall.

Researcher Captivated by World War II

Submitted by: **William R. Matlach**, *Treasurer*
Company E, 273rd Infantry Regiment
19 Barberry Road, West Islip, New York 11795

(EDITOR'S NOTE: In years past, we have published articles about Chris Van Kerckhoven, a native of Belgium. He has found articles belonging to members of the 69th over the years. We are pleased to find that he is still going strong in his research. Chris is an Honorary Member of the Association.)

From The Het Nieuwsblad and Het Volk Newspapers

Written By: Wendy Van den Broeck

Westerlo

"It is a hobby that has gotten a little bit out of control," explains 'Historical War Researcher' **Chris Van Kerckhoven** (44) whenever he picks up the subject. "I have a weakness for the Battle of Geel which took place during September 1944, which left a thousand dead." "Born in Zammel near Geel, I was raised with the memory of the Second World War. On top of that, my grandfather was well-read and in his extensive library I spent many an hour."

"In 1982 I bought myself a metal detector which afforded me the opportunity to be able to dig up a lot of material. Well documented, I know in advance what can be found. Sensation is not my motive; it is the historical background I am after. My domain of action has expanded to the Ardennes which has become my second habitat. Quite often I come across explosives and when I do, I immediately notify the proper authorities."

Finding shaving soap

Chris Van Kerckhoven's main interest lies in the personal items he finds and the subsequent research. "Once I found a canteen from an American soldier. With his name and serial number, I was able to locate him. The owner was recovering from spinal surgery and was still partially paralyzed. My letter, including photographs, gave meaning to his life again. When, for example, I find shoes or shaving soap, I try to find the original manufacturer. Often these companies still exist and they are quite excited when they hear from me. According to them it is the ultimate proof of their products' quality. The appreciation you get makes it worth your while," he explains proudly.

"Meanwhile, my interests keep expanding and some time ago I started investigating the history of crashed World War II aircraft. After prolonged studies I have been able to identify two. Another field of operations is the Norbertijner Abbey in Tongerlo. Here I have found several coins dating from the 15th

and 16th century. Even World War I fascinates me. Once or twice each year I visit the former battlefields of Ypres."

A thousand letters

His research has brought him recognition from overseas and he has contacts with persons in high places all over the world. Among the people who have congratulated him were former presidents Reagan and Bush and general Swartzkopf. Chris Van Kerckhoven is also a member of several British and American veterans clubs.

"After my nine to five job, I go home and spend most of my time in my library. I am after all, a self-thought man. Foreign magazines often ask me to write articles and apart from that, I also give numerous lectures. Sometimes, however, it does get to me. All over the world people contact me and I just cannot turn them down. There has been a year during which I received more than a thousand letters."

Chris Van Kerckhoven

Historical War Researcher - Photojournalist

E.J. Van Gansenstraat 21
B-2260 Westerlo, Belgium



Chris Van Kerckhoven: more than fascinated by history . . .

After 55 Years, Court Martial Forgiven

Submitted by: **Arthur Moore**
Battery C, 881st Field Artillery Battalion
55 High Gate Road, #4
Newington, Connecticut 06111

Note from Arthur: This is not a 69th Division story, but I think it will be very interesting to the members. Just goes to show you how lucky some of us were - including me!

THE HARTFORD COURANT
By Jeff Donn, Associated Press

Roscoe Crosby Blunt Jr. was court-martialed for fraternizing with the enemy. His crime: chatting with a German teenager . . .

SHREWSBURY, MASS. His mother and father died without knowing. He told only his wife. His three grown sons just learned several years ago when he wrote a war memoir. Others heard Dec. 22nd, 2000, the day that President Clinton granted his pardon.

For so many years, he protected his secret as well as any army post he guarded against Hitler's soldiers. In 32 years as a police reporter, he kept it from colleagues while he exposed the secrets of others. He offered no hint to the jazz musicians who shared the stage with him at after-work gigs.

This was his secret: On April 2, 1945, the U. S. Army court-martialed Pfc. Roscoe Crosby Blunt, Jr. for fraternizing with the enemy. This was his crime: He chatted with a German teenager while her mother was washing laundry for him and his commander.

For that, the U. S. government took 55 years, eight months and 20 days to forgive Rockie Blunt. But he's not ready to forgive the government.

A NONCHALANT SOLDIER

In September 1943, as Allied soldiers wrested Italy from the Fascists and laid groundwork for the D-Day invasion of France, Blunt, a descendant of colonial settlers, lover of art and music, aspiring writer, was drafted from college into the worst conflict in human history.

At swampy southern training camps swarming with chiggers, the 140 pound Yankee, barely out of high school, learning to shoot a nine-pound M-1 rifle and slosh on his belly through the mud.

Despite his zeal, he never really took to Army discipline. When its rules seemed pointless he ignored them with an almost merry nonchalance. He would go absent without leave for a day or two on a lark. A simple private, he posed on the phone as Col. Blunt to reach a relative stationed at another military camp. If things were quiet, he'd fall asleep on guard duty. "I THOUGHT I was crazy but he was actually crazier," remembers a veteran of Blunt's platoon, Daniel Driscoll, of Madison Township, Pennsylvania. "He cared absolutely nothing for discipline."

At other times, Blunt was gung-ho to a fault, even at his own risk. He volunteered for dangerous, unspecified duty, which turned out to be disarming land mines. In his six months of combat, he killed 17 German soldiers.

Blunt's infraction occurred during a bloody, muddy affair blocking Hitler's last offensive - what came to be known as the Battle of the Bulge. Blunt's unit and others in the 84th Infantry finally punched through enemy lines and thrust deep into Germany, reaching the Rhine River by March 1945. Blunt's company commander summoned him one day and asked him to find somewhere to wash his uniforms. Blunt knew the rules against fraternizing with enemy civilians. But he also knew you don't refuse your commander.

He knocked on a few doors in the town of Rheinhausen and found a woman who did laundry. Her 17 year old daughter caught his eye. Soon the two were firing questions back and forth like pen pals. What is life like under Hitler? Are American streets really paved with gold?

The next day Blunt returned with his own uniforms. He paid with two packs of cigarettes, a precious wartime commodity.

"In my mind there was nothing wrong with what I had done. To this day, there is nothing wrong," he says. "What strategic secrets are you going to give to an old washer woman and a ... girl?"

But an American officer from another unit saw him at the house and reported him to commanders. Within two weeks, he sat before six officers acting as judge and jury.

The commander who sent him on the errand intervened but could only reduce the punishment. Blunt was convicted and sentenced to three months of kitchen duty and a \$120 fine.

"To me it was the most terrible thing that happened to me - worse than the Bulge. I was so terrified that my mother and father would be ashamed of me." His combat buddies just teased him. Every real soldier gets at least one court-martial, they said. They weren't so far from wrong. During the war eight million soldiers served in the U. S. military. It convened no fewer than two million courts-martial.

He left the army with an honorable discharge testifying to "honest and faithful service to this country." He holds a Purple Heart for his badly frozen feet, which still ache from too many hours in icy fox holes. He also received the Bronze Star for bravery.

APPLYING FOR A PARDON

In December, 1998, Blunt happened to read a news story about presidential pardons granted for the holidays. A young congressional aide helped fill out a pardon application from the Justice Department. It outlined Blunt's military service and life since the

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AFTER 55 YEARS, COURT-MARTIAL FORGIVEN

(Continued from Page 26)

army. Blunt doesn't drink and rarely swears. He had never received a traffic ticket. Two congressmen wrote affidavits testifying to Blunt's good character. FBI agents interviewed him and his neighbors. But when he was asked if he was sorry for his crime and ready to take responsibility, he almost choked. "I'm not. I never have, and I never will be," he recalls saying.

Finally, two years into the process, the phone rang. Blunt had been granted a "full and unconditional pardon." His name was listed with 58 other people convicted of lying, conning, cheating, drug trafficking, and other wrongs. Most of the attention went to former U. S. Rep. Dan Rostenkowski, pardoned for misusing public funds. Still, Blunt was satisfied.

But then he received a letter from the U. S. Justice Department's pardon attorney, Roger Adams.

"A presidential pardon," Adams explained, "is a sign of forgiveness. It does not erase the record of conviction and does not indicate innocence."

And just like that, Rockie Blunt's joy flashed into outrage. "Frankly, I got screwed and the army never admitted it. And they're still not admitting it," says Blunt. "I was foolish enough to think somebody might apologize."

Co. G, 273rd Infantry



William Jackson and driver, Howard Klopp

Submitted By: **William B. Jackson**

3 Robert Duke Pl., Newnan, Georgia 30263-2927

French Government Honors Liberators of World War II

Submitted By: **John Durst**

Company A, 273 Infantry Regiment

1832 Alta Street, Redlands, California 92374-1718

Telephone: (909) 793-4711

(DAV) *Disabled American Veterans March Magazine*

The French Government is offering "Thank You America" certificates of appreciation to all U.S. Veterans who served in France after the Normandy invasion during World War II. The DAV, the VA, and other veterans service organizations will help veterans apply for the certificates.

"The certificate is meant to express the gratitude of the French people to American veterans who participated in the Normandy landing and the liberation of France, on French territory and in French territorial waters and airspace, between June 6, 1944 and May 8, 1945," said French Ambassador Francois Bujon de l'Etang. "The certificate will not be issued posthumously."

Application forms may be obtained from any DAV National Service Office (see the Jan.-Feb. issue of DAV magazine). A copy of a military record showing proof of service in France between June 6, 1944, and May 8, 1945, should be attached to the completed form, which can be submitted to the DAV National Service Office. Applications will not be returned, so only copies of military records should be included.

"We want to extend the greatest possible effort to ensure that all eligible veterans receive this gracious expression of thanks for their military service and sacrifice," said DAV National Service Director Kenneth D. Wolfe. "It is anticipated that the applications will take several weeks to process."

The certificates will be issued by the 10 Counsels General of France in the United States on behalf of the French people. The French Consulates are in Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, New Orleans, New York City, San Francisco and Washington, D.C.

"It is heartwarming to see that France is remembering its allies from World War II," Mr. Wolfe said. "The men and women who served with courage and sacrificed so much for freedom will certainly appreciate this expression of gratitude from the government of France."

Veterans can get additional information and obtain an application from their nearest DAV National Service Office, VA state offices, or at the French Embassy Internet site <http://www.info-france-usa.org>.

I sent my application directly to the French consulate in Los Angeles and I received my certificate in exactly 3 weeks. I sent a copy of my honorable discharge and the page showing my medals, especially Europe, Africa and the Middle East medals. There was a place on the application which asks where you had been in France in 1945. I landed at La Havre and spent 10 days at "Tent City" at Laon, France.

Two Recent Events Help Preserve WWII History

Submitted by: **Ralph Utermoehlen**

Company I, 271st Infantry Regiment

2221 Stonepost, Manhattan, Kansas 66502

The new D-Day Museum in New Orleans, Louisiana and the return of the 1942 LST 325 Landing Craft to Mobile, Alabama are drawing visitors in large numbers.

My wife and I had the opportunity to be among the visitors in early March 2001 and we recommend fellow 69th members make an effort to visit both of them.

The D-Day Museum traces events leading up to the invasion and follows through to the Link-up with pictures of the 69th at Torgau and the formal surrender. What really impressed us was the constant stream of visitors from our generation on down to small children. This means that the great struggles of the 1940s will not be forgotten.

To climb aboard that Landing Craft Tank 235 and visit with those Navy Veterans and to hear how the rusty old 235 was found in Greece, brought back to life and sailed to America is a very touching story. Those dedicated former sailors wanted this abandoned vessel which participated in the invasions of Africa, Sicily, Italy as well as D-Day, not be lost forever, which has been the fate of so many other pieces of our history.

The Veterans, whose average age was 72, struggled to acquire the ship, then spent months making it sea worthy enough to sail once again.

When you hear how dangerous their crossing in December and January was, despite warnings from the U.S. Coast Guard that it was not a safe vessel, shows just how brave and dedicated these veterans were. This story is capped off by the fact that the sailors paid their own expenses to save this part of history.

A foundation has been established with the hope that it can be completely restored and become a floating museum in the future.

The volunteer veterans that are hosting visitors aboard, are also working on restoration of the vessel.

* * * * *

Thanks Mother for Saving Things

Submitted by: **Ralph Utermoehlen**

This past fall I was going through a box of stuff that was brought home after my folk's death 25 years ago. I was looking for some momentos that I remembered my father had from his Army Service in France during WWI. I wanted to give these to my grandson, along with a bit of my WWII stuff, for him to pass on to his sons when he finished caring for those momentos. My grandson was a Marine during the Gulf War and has a great interest in Military History.

To my surprise, this box also contained every letter I sent home from my 13 weeks of Basic Infantry Replacement Training at Camp Hood, Texas. This also allowed me to recall, 56 years later, how fast and intense the weekly progress took place in transforming this farm kid into an Infantryman.

Besides those letters, all the V-Mail from Europe was there, as well as the momentos I wanted. The thing that caught my attention was an A-P news story that was in the Kansas City Missouri Times Newspaper on February 11, 1945, shown below that brings back memories for those of us that were a part of that effort to get us semi-trained soldiers to fill the ranks of the 69th and other depleted Divisions on the Western Front. The article clears up some things I have wondered about such as the number of GI's involved, the number of centers we came from, the logistics of the operation and how it came about. The article doesn't say that the leave was for 5-days at home including Christmas Day.

The plan for fast air transport from Hood, Texas had to be changed after a day and a half of bad weather causing false alerts. We had Christmas supper at the Mess Hall before boarding a troop train for those of us living in the Mid-West. Our orders said if your home is up to 100 miles from the train route, get aboard. I have often wondered how the East coast and the West coast guys got home as well as how short their leaves were.

Perhaps the coastal 69ers that were at Hood can answer or tell of their experiences.

FLY GI'S ON FURLOUGH

Men Are Rushed Home

Before Being Sent to Stop Germans

Kansas City Times - 1945

Washington, February 11. (AP) — Emergency mass flight of 400 transport planes made possible a Christmas furlough for 6,000 soldiers suddenly ordered overseas to help stem the German break-through last December. With the need for military security passed, the War department told the story today.

The men were destined to be replacements on the western front. At the last minute, it appeared that the pre-embarkation furloughs of the men would have to be cancelled, but General George C. Marshall, chief of staff, ordered the furloughs to be granted even though curtailed. The problem of getting the men home and back in time for departure overseas then arose.

Officers of the army's air transport command, the 1st troop carried command and ground forces went into an all-night huddle, out of which came a plan for getting infantrymen from twelve replacement centers to thirty-nine selected centers in various parts of the country and then to their homes.

The 400 planes flew a total of 13,429,569 passenger miles to do the job — equivalent to the average total passenger miles flown by all domestic commercial airlines in two and one-third days. The planes got the men there and got them back in time to be assembled at Ft. George G. Meade, MD, on January 6, ready for going overseas.

Look for Our 69th Division Decal

Submitted by: **Michael Moscaritolo**
69th Division Recon Troop

19 Trotters Circle, Kissimmee, Florida 34743-7727

Everyone should have one on his car.

While I was parking my car in the Church Parking Lot, I spotted a car already parked with our 69th Decal on the window. The car registration was from Pennsylvania. I knew it had to be a "Snow Bird" who was visiting for the winter. This was in the beginning of March 2001.

I hurried out of church after mass was over and discovered that they had already departed. I missed them by only seconds. I said to my wife, Mary, "I hope they return next week so I can catch them."

The next week, I left mass quickly and those two "Snow Birds" were already in their car. Of course I was at the driver side before he started his vehicle. What a nice surprise I received. It was our Past President **Jim Boris** and his wife **Tillie**. We found out that they were renting a large beautiful home here in Kissimmee, Florida for the winter. The house is located about one mile from my home. And we were attending the same church, St. Catherine of Siena.

When we finished talking, the whole parking lot had emptied. We exchanged pleasantries, and our telephone numbers and addresses.

Jim and **Tillie** informed us they were leaving our beautiful climate and heading north by April 1st. We didn't have much time, so we called each other a couple of times and Mary and I had them over for a lovely dinner and spent a pleasant day together. Jim and I promised to keep in touch, and if all goes well, they will return this winter.

Mary and I can hardly wait for their return visit. Stay well Jim and Tillie.



*Michael Moscaritolo and James Boris, 881st F.A.
Photo by James Boris*

The Story of Taps

Submitted by: **Gail Stalker**

Service Company, 272nd Infantry Regiment
5116 E. Glen Arran Lane, Orange, California 92869

We have all heard the haunting melody of "Taps." It's the song that gives us that lump in our throats and usually tears in our eyes. But do you know the story behind the song? If not, I think you will be pleased to find out about it's humble beginnings.

Reportedly, it all began in 1862 during the Civil War, when Union Army Captain Robert Ellisombe was with his men near Harrison's Landing, Virginia. The Confederate Army was on the other side of the narrow strip of land. During the night, Captain Ellisombe heard the moans of a soldier who was severely wounded on the field. Not knowing if it was a Union or Confederate soldier, the Captain decided to risk his life and bring the stricken man back for medical attention.

Crawling on his stomach through the gunfire, the Captain reached the stricken soldier and began pulling him toward the encampment. When the Captain finally reached his own lines, he discovered it was actually a Confederate soldier, but the soldier was dead.

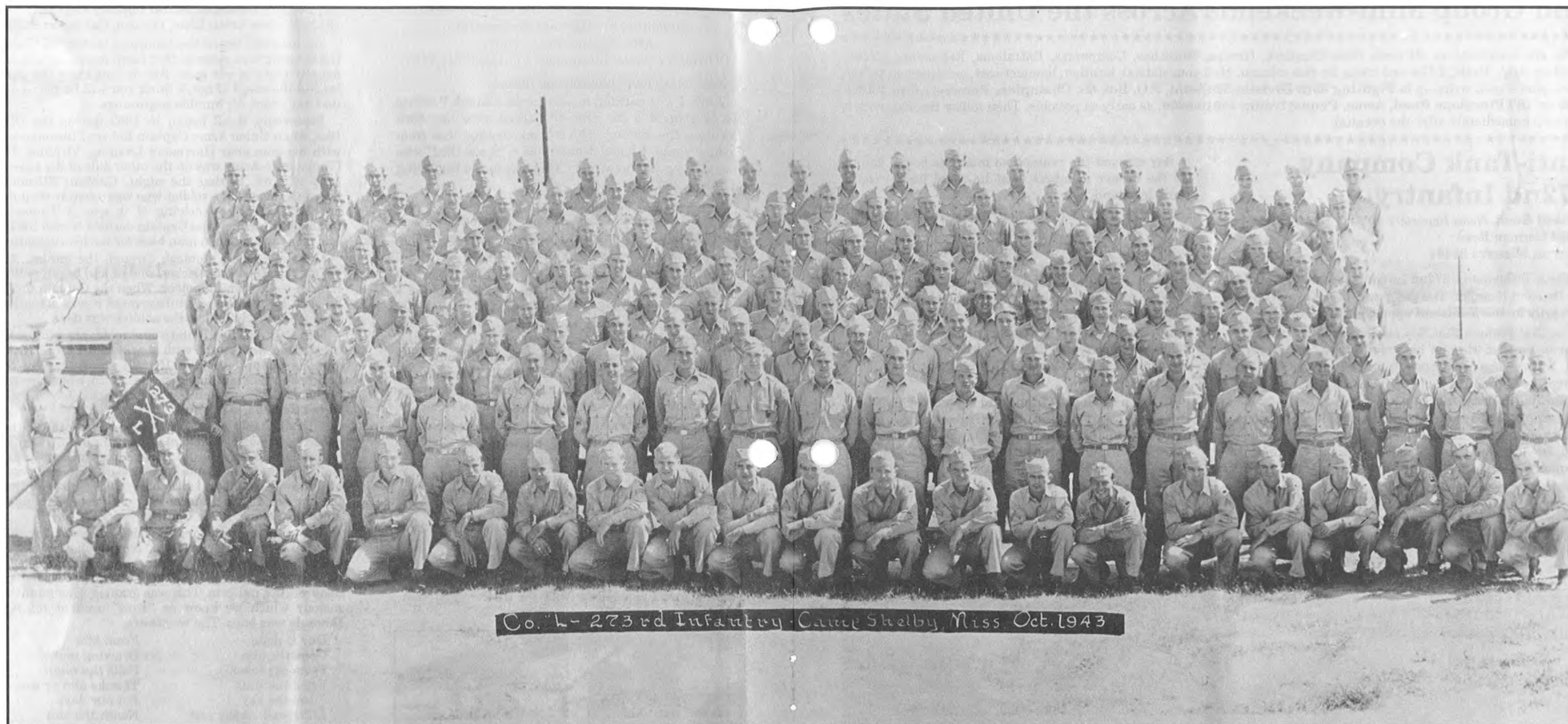
The Captain lit a lantern and suddenly caught his breath and went numb with shock. In the dim light he saw the face of the soldier. It was his own son. The boy had been studying music in the South when the war broke out. Without telling his father, the boy enlisted in the Confederate Army.

The following morning, heartbroken, the father asked permission to give his son a full military burial despite his enemy status. His request was only partially granted. The Captain had asked if he could have a group of Army band members play a funeral dirge for his son at the funeral. The request was denied, since the soldier was a Confederate.

But out of respect for the father, they did say they could give one musician. The Captain chose a bugler. He asked the bugler to play a series of musical notes he had found on a piece of paper in the pocket of the dead youth's uniform. This was granted. The haunting melody which we know as "Taps" used at military funerals was born. The words are:

Day is done	From afar
Gone the sun	Drawing nigh
From the lakes	Falls the night.
From the hills	Thanks and praise
From the sky	For our days
All is well, safely rest	Neath the sun
God is nigh.	Neath the stars
Fading light	Neath the sky
Dims the sight	As we go
And a star	This we know
Gems the sky	God is nigh.
Gleaming bright	

I too, have felt the chills while listening to "Taps" but I have never known all the words to the song until now. I didn't even know there was more than one verse, nor did I know the story behind the song but now I have an even deeper respect for the song, and the many soldiers who have earned the right to have it played over their final resting place.



**Company L, 273rd Infantry Regiment
Camp Shelby, Mississippi - October 1943**

Submitted by: **George M. Fiore**
4412 31st Avenue, Long Island City, New York 11103-2251

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).

Anti-Tank Company, 272nd Infantry

Russell Koch, News Reporters
14054 German Road
Bucyrus, Missouri 65444

The A.T. Company, 272nd Infantry Regiment met at the Houston Reunion. The group was brought together primarily by the persistent appeal of **Roy Bush**.

The first reunion that Roy attended was in Denver, after he retired. He and his wife **Marge**, and **Betty** and I were the only ones from A.T. Company in Denver. I had not known Roy previously but we got acquainted pretty quick as we were both from Missouri. He lived near Kansas City and I about 280 miles south, near Fort Leonard Wood. We became good friends and kept in touch, especially prior to Reunion times.

Roy enjoyed the reunion so much he began calling all the former members, that he could locate urging them to attend.

Shortly after the reunion in Danvers, Massachusetts, Roy's wife was diagnosed with cancer and died a short time later. A very difficult time for Roy but he attended the next two reunions in Houston and Orlando. He missed the Atlanta reunion due to heart surgery in the spring of 2000. He was recovering and feeling quite well at Christmas time. But he went back in the hospital in the latter part of January. where he died on February 4th due to a blood clot on the brain caused by a fall on the ice. This is my understanding anyway.

We have lost a good friend and supporter of the 69th Infantry Division, and the member of Anti-Tank Company will be remembering Roy with fondness for years and being reminded that our number could be called at any time. So goodbye good buddy.



Front: Novac and Austin. 2nd Row: Gustafson, Campese, Bush, Van Houten. Back Row: Koch, Calhoun, Shelton, Huber, Walter, Sansoucy.

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

(Continued from Page 32)

Company I, 271st Infantry

H. Lynn Jones, *News Reporter*

1081 Meadowbrook Drive
Milan, Tennessee 38358

Company I, 271st Infantry met for their annual reunion March 15th, 2001 near Lake Wales, Florida, hosted by **Dale and Peg Thompson**. The site was the rolling hills of Florida (yes, there are some) on the shores of Lake Easy at Highland Park Hills Country Inn and Golf Course, a 1920's inn and country club restored with the ambiance of the earlier period and whose owners, Eric and Bob Weaver, proudly displayed our Company I Poster.

Dale and Peg provided a welcome bag of local mementos, including fresh, easy peeling citrus from their own trees for each of us, as we checked in at the hospitality room.

Those members attending were **Douglas and Nathalie Buckstadt** from North Carolina, **Richard and Jane Haines** from Massachusetts, **Lynn and Lou Jones** from Tennessee, **Bob and Phyllis Jorgenson** from Wisconsin, **Hy and Mae Rita Kurfurst** from Washington, **Marty and Edie Miller** from Colorado, **John Noone** from New York, **Leigh Tenney** from Arkansas, **Harris and Hazel Timmer** from Michigan, and **Robert Ferrera** from Florida, a first timer.

Leigh Tenney located **Robert** at 719 W. Ohio Avenue, Tampa, FL 33603. Robert had been with Company I at Camp Shelby and in England before he was transferred to the 83rd Division in the Christmas exodus. We were very happy that **Robert**, his daughter **Martha** and her husband **Mike** joined us to become part of Company I again. We regret that illness and the other infirmities of growing more mature and seasoned prevented some of our regulars from attending. We did indeed miss you.

All attendees arrived in time for dinner "on your own" at the inn at Lekarica (a composite of the names of the Weaver children) Restaurant and a short visit to the hospitality room before calling it a day.

We began Friday with a continental breakfast and an orientation of the Take Wales Ridge, the central part of Florida, the location of the two highest points above sea level in the peninsular of Florida, and the part of present day Florida that was above water 350,000 years ago. This ridge area also contains some of the most unique ecosystems in the world and the most endangered. A short tour of the surrounding area was followed by lunch at Lekarica and a tour of Lake Wales museum to become acquainted with the early history of the area. We drove to Lake Rosalie, one of the Kissimmee River chain of lakes, to have dinner at Mar Lisa Cove Restaurant to enjoy great steaks and seafood (including catfish for the discriminating) in a very relaxed atmosphere.

Saturday started with a trip to world renowned Chalet Suzanne, a most unique restaurant for a

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Front Row: Lou Jones, Mae Rita Kurfurst, Peg Thompson, Edie and Marty Miller, Phyllis Jorgenson, Robert Farrera, Nathalie and Doug Buckstadt and Bob Jorgenson. Back Row: Lynn Jones, Leigh Tenney, Hy Kurfurst, Dale Thompson, Jane and Richard Haines, John Noone, Harris and Hazel Timmer

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

(Continued from Page 33)

leisurely breakfast of scrambled eggs, turkey bacon, pancakes, eggs benedict, and some of the best coffee ever. We then motored to Bok Tower Gardens to enjoy the beauty and solitude of the gardens and listened to the outstanding carillons. This sanctuary was given to the American people by Edward Bok, an early publisher of the Ladies Home Journal.

We celebrated St. Patrick's Day on Saturday evening with an Irish feast with **Dale** and **Peg** at their home overlooking beautiful Lake Babson just south of Lake Wales. They provided bags and sent us into the citrus grove to pick as much fruit as we wanted to carry home. Mary Lou O'Leary remembered us with a surprise birthday basket for **Hy** which was enjoyed by all. **Dale** presented each of the men of Company I with a miniature Combat Infantry Badge as a reminder of what we were and what we did and encouraged us to wear them proudly on our lapel as we appear in public. The response by other veterans particularly is truly remarkable.

The 2002 reunion has been set for June (exact date to be announced) in Grand Rapids, Michigan. **Harris** and **Hazel Timmer** will be our hosts and can be reached at 1815 Sherwood Drive, Grand Rapids, MI 49506 or by phone at (616) 949-5128 or E-Mail at Ltimmer@Juno.com.

661st Tank Destroyers

Bill and Ellen Snidow, News Reporters

492 Kow Camp Road
Pembroke, Virginia 24136

**Reunion Held at
Roanoke, Virginia
July 27th thru 30th, 2000**

The 661st TD's met at the Airport Holiday Inn on July 27 thru 30th. Twenty-two veterans with wives, children and grandchildren were in attendance.

The gathering was hosted by **Bill and Ellen Snidow** and their grandson **Nathan**. We all enjoyed a well stocked hospitality room where we shared memorabilia of WWII, history books, pictures and VCR tapes of past reunions.

We visited the Transportation Museum, Dixie Caverns, Mill Mountain Star, many shopping centers, antique stores and army surplus stores, as well as the swimming pool and sun bathing.

On Saturday the mayor of Bedford gave the group a private tour of the WWII National Monument which is to be dedicated June 6th, 2001. This was arranged by Edna and Harry Murray who are residents of Bedford.

There were 57 in attendance at the banquet and they enjoyed a delicious foodfare and festivities on Saturday evening. Mother nature provided a spectacular display of fireworks as well as a downpour.

Those attending:

Bill and Margaret Dawson	Virginia
Bill and Jo Beswick	Virginia
Guy Knowels	Oregon
Ginny Todd	Oregon
Craig and Sheri Mellinger	Pennsylvania
Ruth Mellinger	Pennsylvania
Dawn Kilhefner	Pennsylvania
Fred and Nancy Baumgartner	Florida
Ralph Bragg, Chris and Mark	Virginia
Ernest Sensabau	Virginia
Ralph and Vers Chase	Pennsylvania
Sam and Gertrude Goldberg	Florida
Walter Jamerson and friend Marie	Virginia
Thomas and Frances Knick	Virginia
Pat Patterson: friend Chris	Florida
John and Eva Golden	New Jersey
Chuck and Frances Yannul	Virginia
Dick and Thelma McKinnon	Michigan
Bob and Ann Shull	New York
Marcel and Carol Pugsley - Cindy, Shelley	Florida
Peter and Carol Beskit	Pennsylvania
Bill and Mary Wall, son-in-law Paul Steer	Ohio
Mike and Dorothy Kotnik	Ohio
Jules and Pat Slopek, son Jake	Ohio
Bill and Ellen Snidow, grandson Nathan	Virginia

The 2001 reunion will be held in Ohio with **Jules** and **Pat Slopek** as hosts. Letters will be sent out soon.

(Continued on Page 35)



Pete and Carol Besket and Ralph Bragg at the WWII National D-Day Monument

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

(Continued from Page 34)

California Western Chapter

Allan L. Gwynne, *Past President and News Reporter*
Company A, 271st Infantry Regiment
6065 Timberlodge Lane, Roseville, California 95747

Report on the Santa Rosa Round-up

The members of the California-Western Chapter of the 69th Infantry Division Association experienced another successful Round-up in Santa Rosa, California on May 6, 7, 8, and 9, 2001.

Registration on Sunday and a free day on Monday gave attendees a chance to see the local attractions including the Charles Shultz "Peanuts" Museum, the Luther Burbank Gardens and the Railroad Square Museum. A bus trip on Tuesday took 34 of us to the Napa Valley and a visit to the Hans Kornell Champagne Cellars where we were given a tour and an opportunity to taste their excellent product. We continued to the V. Sattui Winery for lunch and another tour and tasting.

On Wednesday we held a short business meeting interrupting the serious business with a talk and good fellowship in the hospitality room. In the evening we held our banquet preceded by the candle and rose ceremony honoring all of our deceased comrades. Since our last report we have lost **Earl Ramsey**, **Vic Walton** and **Janet**, the wife of **John Havey**.

Since the roster shows the presence (at many of our functions) of the **Bob Rosses** from Massachusetts

(which is definitely not California or Western) we should explain that three of our members (**Al Gwynne**, **John Pereira**, and **Del Philpott**) were all in Company A of the 271st with **Bob** during our final dash across Germany to the Elbe.

The next Round-up is proposed for Laughlin, California in April, 2002.

Roster of those present at the May 6-9, 2001 Round-up

Members

Allan and Bobbi Gwynne Roseville, California
(*Past President*)
Delbert and Donna Philpott Sunnyvale, California
Homer and Pat Lind Grass Valley, California
(*Secretary Elect*)
William Ruebsamen Sun City, California
John and Mary Pereira Roseville, California
John and Dena Tounger Oakland, California
Lynn Farrar Lafayette, California
Harold and Nancy Faulkner ..Walnut Creek, California
(*Past Secretary, Vice President Elect*)
Robert and Jean Ross Wilbraham, Massachusetts
Walter and Shirley Harpain Fresno, California
(*Past V.P., President Elect*)
Richard Hopkins Roseville, California
Walter Haag and Dorothy Milbrae, California
Thomas and Lou Gallegher ... Long Beach, California
Stanley and Lois Hawk Lemoore, California
Lee Wilson and Jan Stockton, California
(*Past Treasurer, Treasurer Elect*)

Associates

Harvey and Amy Rose Pacifica, California



Gathering around past president "G.I. John" Tounger's fully restored World War II Jeep are the Division attendees of the May 2001 Round-Up of the California-Western Chapter.

Front row:

*Wilson, Gallegher,
Farrar, Pereira,
Gwynne, Tounger
Lind, Hawk, Philpott*

Back row:

*Hopkins, Harpain,
Rubesmen, Ross,
Faulkner, Haag*

Unit History of the 724th Field Artillery

Submitted by: **Joseph Marion**

Battery A, 724th Field Artillery Battalion
11381 E. 37th Street, Yuma, Arizona 85367

This unit history of the 724th Field Artillery Battalion was written by **Lts. Oesch** and **McCormick** in 1945 just after the war ended. I was wounded and evacuated to a Paris hospital before the history was printed and distributed. However, in 1992, I got **John Oesch's** address and he send me a copy of his very old and yellowed German printed original. John's death was reported in the 69th Bulletin soon after that time. Many of the 724th F.A. men had been transferred before the history was distributed, and, like me, they never received it. Hopefully, other members of the 69th Division will also enjoy reading it.

* * * * *

Excerpts from letter that John Oesch wrote to Joe Marion on January 7th, 1993.

I was interested and pleased to receive your letter of December 30th. The history of the 724th F.A. Bn. was published and printed in Germany in 1945 and distributed to the members of the Battalion who were still in the area. No other editions were printed.

I have enclosed of copy of the history. You will note that in the account of the artillery duel at Kitzen, you are listed as one of the casualties.

A few days after this artillery duel, I was sent back to Division Headquarters and was able to stop at Kitzen and examine the German gun emplacements for the 88s. I found our shells had caused severe damage. German residents told me that casualties were high in the German gun squads. In one emplacement, I found a panoramic sketch of the area west of the German guns which I removed and saved. All the key landmarks were shown with the exact range and azimuth to each one including the church tower in Kitzen. When the firing started, my radio operator and I climbed to the top of the church steeple from where I could easily see the flash from the 88s. I sent a fire mission to the C.P. and was told that **Colonel Gooch** was already adjusting fire. The Battalion was surely in a dangerous situation and we were lucky that our casualties were not higher.

During combat I served with Battery B. We have had several reunions in recent years in Cleveland with some of our members coming from as far away as California and Iowa. We had a good time reminiscing about the humorous as well as the dramatic events of our service.

I wish you success as you prepare your own records of service for your family.

UNIT HISTORY 724th F.A. Bn. APO 417, U.S. ARMY FROM 22 NOVEMBER 1944 to MAY 1945

This History of the 724th F.A. Bn. covers its activities from the time it entrained at Camp Shelby, Nov. 22, 1944, until the last days of the war in Germany up to May 1, 1945. It was completed from Battalion records by the Unit Historians, for the purpose of supplying an accurate account of Battalion activities, during transit and combat.

By order of Lt. Col. Stacy W. Gooch

* * * * *

The 724th Field Artillery Battalion, the medium unit of the 69th Division Artillery, entrained on Wednesday, 22 November 1944, at Camp Shelby, Mississippi, for New York, Port of Embarkation. The weather was fair and cool. The unit arrived at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, 0900, 24 November, having passed Thanksgiving Day in route on the train.

The stay at Camp Kilmer was a short one, during which time final processing of the Battalion was accomplished. Twenty-four hour passes were issued, and those fortunate enough to have homes nearby visited their people for the last time prior to overseas departure. The others visited New York City, many for the first time.

The afternoon of 30 November saw the Battalion leave Camp Kilmer, and arrive at the New York Port of Embarkation. Red Cross Volunteer Workers served hot coffee and doughnuts to the men and officers of the unit in the fog shrouded dimness of the Staten Island dock, where the U.S.S. Le Jeune, the ship that was to make the overseas crossing, was moored. The men filed up the gang plank in a seemingly endless line, and at 2100 of the same day the embarkation had been completed.

The next morning, 1 December 1944, the ship, having been made ready for sailing by its Navy crew during the night, steamed out into New York Harbor, filled to capacity with 69th Division troops. The first day at sea was cool and clear, and passed uneventfully. The second day out, a typical mid-winter North Atlantic storm was encountered, and sea sickness evidenced itself to a considerable extent. The sea calmed the next day, and the remainder of the voyage was quiet. At the time of departure no one knew the destination, and it was not until two days later that an announcement was made that it was Southampton, England. Thus ended the primary topic of conversation.

The first glimpse of foreign soil was caught the morning of 12 December when the Isle of Wight was sighted in the distance. The ship dropped anchor for a short while and the pilot was brought aboard. As the Le Jeune made its way slowly inland to the port of Southampton, the outline of the Southern coast of

(Continued on Page 37)

UNIT HISTORY OF THE 724th FIELD ARTILLERY (Continued from Page 36)

England became much clearer. The ship docked at Southampton at 1500 12 December, and the Division troops listened to a welcoming address by two British officers. The Battalion remained on board ship that night with the exception of "A" Battery, which was housed on shore in order to facilitate unloading of equipment from the hold of the ship.

At 1300, 13 December the Battalion debarked and within two hours was in route to its temporary camp site, which was Camp Ranikhet, situated about two miles from Reading, England. The Unit arrived at the camp around 2000, and the members of the battalion experienced considerable difficulty finding their way about that night in a typical English fog of considerable density. The men quickly oriented themselves and had their first contact with the English people in the town of Reading. Passes were not long in forthcoming and practically everyone in the Battalion visited London at least once. The Christmas and New Years holidays were spent at Camp Ranikhet, where everything possible was done to celebrate the Christmas Season in American style.

The first three weeks of the new year passed, relatively speaking, uneventfully. The Battalion remained at Camp Ranikhet. A two day field problem was held at Larkhill on the Royal Artillery Range where the howitzers were fired for the first time since the unit's departure from the United States.

As the month's end approached, the Battalion readied itself to move to the Continent, and on 22 January left Camp Ranikhet for port of Weymouth, only a short distance west of the port where it first landed in England. On the 23rd of January the unit, less a rear detachment of one hundred and sixty men, boarded Landing Craft, Infantry, for the Continent. On the afternoon of 24 January the Battalion landed at Le Havre, France, and proceeded by motor column, inland, a distance of one hundred miles to an assembly area at Le Heron. The rear detachment joined the rest of the unit the following day at Le Heron. The last week of January was spent there, where equipment was readied for combat.

The 724th Field Artillery Battalion on Friday, 2 February 1945 left Chateau Le Heron, France for an assembly area southwest of Laon, France, in the vicinity of Marchais. A week was spent there, during which time last minute preparations for combat were made, and also the basic load of ammunition received.

On Friday, 9 February 1945 the Battalion made a one hundred and fifty mile motor march to a forward assembly area at Ambleve, Belgium. The unit closed in the assembly area 0600, 10 February. The small town had been cleared of enemy elements only a week or so earlier, and the ravages of war were widespread everywhere.

The mission of the 69th Division was to relieve the 99th Division on a line running north south from Hellenthal, Germany to Udenbreth, Germany. The 724th F.A. Battalion received as its mission that of relieving the 372nd F.A. Battalion, the medium unit of the 99th Division. The Battalion Commander's party went forward on 11 February to Krinkelt, Belgium, the position area occupied by the 372nd F.A. Battalion. They were oriented there by members of that Battalion, and made preparations for the displacement forward of the 724th F.A. Battalion. The movement into position was accomplished quickly the morning of 12 February 1945. **Lt. Rayner**, Battalion Forward Observer, had the honor of being the first officer from the unit to adjust fire in combat, when he registered Charlie, Baker, and Able Batteries in that order.

On 16 February **Col. Gooch**, the Commander of the Battalion from the time of its activation, returned from his tour of duty at Division Artillery as S-3, where he had been since October, and took over command of the unit from **Col. Bement**, who returned to Division Artillery as S-3.

At the time of its relief of the 99th Division, the 69th Division's mission was to defend along a north south line on the west side of the Prether River, on whose opposite bank on the high ground to the east the enemy occupied strongly fortified but lightly held positions. The division's action during its first two weeks in the line was confined to strong patrolling activity and probing of the enemy's position. During this defensive period the Battalion's mission was one of general support and reinforcement of the fire of the 879th F.A. Battalion. The Division's first offensive action was taken on the morning of 27 February at 0600 H-hour. Its mission was to take the high ground, Buschem, Honningen, south through the town of Dickerscheid to Geisheid, to Rescheid. The 724th F.A. Bn. had as its mission that of general support in the Division sector. At 0630 a preparation fire for the Division attack was delivered. During the attack five counter battery missions were fired, thirty-two harassing missions, ten defensive missions, and four against counterattacks. The total ammunition expenditure for the day was eight hundred and eight rounds. By 2400 on the 28th the Division had obtained its initial objective and in some sectors had moved even further eastward. On the 28th of February, the Battalion expended four hundred and twenty five rounds to continue its support of the attack.

During its initial month of combat firing the Battalion fired a sum total of two thousand six hundred and thirty-eight rounds distributed by mission as follows: thirty-eight check point registrations, twenty-eight counterbattery missions, eighteen against enemy infantry, ten against single guns, forty-five interdiction missions, one cratering mission, two against pillboxes, thirty-nine against enemy held

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towns, one against an enemy OP, one against an enemy command post, one barrage, and five against enemy tanks and vehicles.

The initial month of combat also saw the Award of the Purple Heart bestowed upon one member of the Battalion. Tec. 5th Grade **Walter H. Wolff**, 32949813, Field Artillery, received it in action against the enemy on 28 February 1945, while in the execution of his duties as a wireman, maintaining wire lines in the vicinity of the observation post. **Wolff** entered the Military Service from New Jersey, and received the award on the same day he was wounded. See G.O. No. 9, Hq. 69th Inf. Division, 6 March 1945, Par. No. 2.

There was no change in the position of the Battalion at the end of the month. Positions originally occupied on the 12 February were still being used, but reconnaissance for new positions in the vicinity of Hollerath, Germany had been completed and arrangements made for the occupation of new positions since 25 February 1945.

The 724th Field Artillery Battalion on 1 March 1945 displaced from its initially occupied position in the vicinity of Krinkelt, Belgium, and moved forward to a new position in the Ardennes Forest, a few kilometers west of Hollerath, Germany, where it received the mission of reinforcement of the fires of the 379th F.A. Bn. and general support of the Division. The Battalion remained in this position until 7 March 1945, during which period a total of six hundred and twenty-one rounds was fired, consisting of the following types of missions: Four counter-battery missions, eleven checkpoint registrations, four harassing missions, three against enemy vehicles, one against enemy infantry, and two against enemy counterattacks. It was during this time also that the 186th F.A. Bn. was attached to the 724th F.A. Bn. comprising the 724th F.A. Group with **Lt. Col. Gooch** as Group Commander.

With the assistance of a heavy fog and light rain that reduced visibility to a minimum, the enemy withdrew from its prepared defenses, and retreated Eastward as quickly as possible, thereby forcing the Division to lose contact with them, temporarily. The 724th F.A. Bn. reconnoitered a possible new position area in the vicinity of Schnorrenberg on March 7, 1945, but in view of the enemy's rapidly executed withdrawal, pressed its reconnaissance farther eastward, and made a final selection of positions in the vicinity of Schmidtheim, Germany. It was here that the Bn. CO party captured its first two prisoners, both of whom offered little resistance, stating that owing to illness they had been left behind when their organization fled eastward toward the Rhine. The Battalion closed in this area March 7, 1945.

There was a period of relative inactivity at Schmidtheim Germany from March 7th to March 16th, 1945. The Division was still out of contact with

the enemy, and the Battalion fired no missions during this time. Emphasis was placed upon care and cleaning of material. On March 11th the 467th A.A. Bn. relinquished Anti-Aircraft support of the Battalion to "D" Battery, 461st A.A. Bn. It was at this time also that the 186th F.A. Bn. was detached from the 724th F.A. Bn.

The historic crossing of the Rhine at Remagen on March 7th, 1945, by elements of the 9th Armored Division necessitated as much artillery support as possible for units to follow across shortly thereafter. On March 15th, the 724th F.A. Bn. was temporarily detached from the 69th Division Artillery and assigned to the 406th F.A. Group, whose headquarters was at Burgbrohl, Germany, a short distance from the Rhine River. Reconnaissance parties from the Battalion left Schmidtheim on March 15th and selected positions in the small village of Kell, about eight kilometers west of the Rhine. The Battalion occupied these positions on March 16, 1945, and began firing almost immediately.

The Battalion remained attached to the 406th Group for a period of one week, during which time it supported operations on the East bank of the Rhine directly across from the town of Andernach. A total of 1624 rounds were fired, consisting mainly of counter-battery, harassing and interdiction missions. On March 23rd the Battalion reverted to 69th Division Artillery control.

It's relief having been accomplished, the Battalion reconnoitered new positions in the town of Bruhl, Germany, about ten miles south of Cologne on the West bank of the Rhine. The 69th Division Artillery had temporarily been attached to the Eighth Division Artillery, and the 724th F.A. Bn. relieved the 45th F.A. Bn. occupying its positions in Bruhl on March 25th, 1945. The Battalion by its presence in the Cologne area at this time participated in the encirclement of German Army Group "B," and fired several rounds into the enemy pocket, the western boundary of which was the Rhine River. In all, three hundred and twenty-three rounds were fired by the Battalion during the three days it remained attached to the Eighth Division Artillery.

The answer to the question as to when the Battalion would cross the Rhine, was answered on March 28th, 1945 when positions in Bruhl were vacated, and an assembly area at Fort Ehrenbreitstein on the East bank of the Rhine opposite the city of Coblenz, was occupied. In reaching its destination, the Battalion crossed the Rhine at Bad Godesberg over a pontoon bridge, the span of which was 1410 feet, and the time of construction sixteen hours and forty-five minutes. During its motor march south along the East bank of the Rhine in route to the assembly area, the unit passed the famous Ludendorf Bridge, where the first crossing of the Rhine took place between Remagen and Erpel.

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The 724 F.A. Bn. remained at this assembly area two days only, and on March 30th closed in another area at Dietkirchen, Germany. The other elements of the 69th Division were assembled within a thirty mile radius of this town awaiting orders to move farther eastward. The end of the month found the Battalion still occupying this village, where Easter Sunday was celebrated.

During the month of March, the second month of combat for the Battalion, a total of two thousand five hundred and sixty-eight rounds were fired, bringing the Battalion total to five thousand two hundred and six for the period February 12th to March 31st, 1945. A total of six different positions were occupied during the month, and a distance of one hundred miles covered between Krinkelt, Belgium and Dietkirchen, Germany.

Presentation of the Purple Heart Award and Bronze Star Award was made to several members of the Battalion during the month. **Pfc. Ervin T. Best**, 20408701, Able Battery, was awarded the Purple Heart on March 15, General Order 14, Hq. 69th Infantry Division. The following men and officers received the Bronze Star Award on March 21, 1945; **Major W.A. Scoville**, **Major John F. Porter**, **1st Lt. Marvin S. Fineberg**, **1st Lt. John H. Oesch**, **Cpl. John H. Carringer**, **Cpl. Paul N. Adams**, **Tec. 5 Robert M. Inyart**, **Pfc. Wendell Clark**, **1st Lt. Denman H. Ayres** and **S/Sgt. David V. Ramsay** received the award on March 22nd 1945, while **Tec. 5 Albert M. Talerico** became a recipient of the decoration on March 27th, 1945.

The month of April was a noteworthy one for the 724th F.A. Battalion in many respects. It was during this month that the Battalion drove deep into Germany after the exploitation of the Remagen bridgehead by the First Army. It was a month marked by sudden and repeated moves, by the capture of numerous prisoners, by a vicious artillery duel with AA guns at Leipzig, and by the smashing of stubborn resistance in cities by heavy and concentrated fire. The culminating event was the link-up with the Russians by the 69th Division.

April 1st found the Battalion in Dietkirchen where it had been waiting since March 30th to move eastward. Armor of the First Army in the meanwhile was driving north-east toward Kassel and forming the right pincers of the Ruhr pocket. At midnight April second the Battalion left Dietkirchen to move approximately 120 miles northeast to Anraff where the Battalion closed into an assembly area the morning of April third. Fifteen prisoners of war were taken during this trip and upon arrival, bringing the Battalion total to 25. On the morning of April 4th the Battalion had its first close contact with the German Air Force when

three Me 1109s flew low over the area and were fired on by AA units, attached to the Battalion. Later that same afternoon the Battalion closed into a position of readiness in Phillipiendorf, while the battle for Kassel was still in progress.

On April 5th, the Battalion moved into position north of Kassel at the town of Simmerhausen and prepared to support an attack of the Division across the Fulda River. The Mission was to give general support to the Division and to reinforce the fires of the 881st F.A. Bn. The 9th Armored Division, which had spear-headed the drive to Kassel, now stopped to be re-equipped and re-organized after the rapid drive from the Rhine. The 69th was to cross the Fulda River and seize the important city of Hann-Munden where the Fulda and Werra rivers meet to form the Weser.

On April 6th elements of the 273rd Infantry Regiment succeeded in crossing the Fulda at two points south of Hann-Munden - one at Spele, the other at Wilhelmhausen. There was no firing by the Battalion on the fifth or sixth, as the crossings were unopposed. The enemy, however, was holding out at Hann-Munden and fought bitterly in the village of Lütterburg. The Battalion Commander, **Lt. Col. Gooch**, and his reconnaissance party were unable to get a position at Lütterburg as bitter fighting continued there until dark. By the morning of the 7th, however, the town had been cleared and the Battalion crossed the river at Kassel and went into position prepared to support the attack east along the Werra River Valley.

On April 7th the Battalion did its first firing since crossing the Rhine on March 28th. It was on that morning that **Lt. Oesch**, Forward Observer with the 1st Battalion, 273rd Infantry Regiment, adjusted on a column of five enemy vehicles which was moving slowly up the hill-side on the north side of the Werra River valley. The column, consisting of two 88's towed by armored halftracks, two trucks and a staff car, had already been stopped by our tanks firing from the south side of the river. The Battery concentration bracketed the stalled vehicles though no direct hits were scored. A total of 119 rounds were expended at Lütterburg, there being 26 rounds spent in preparation, 28 rounds in counter-battery fire, 11 rounds in harassing and interdiction fire, and 32 rounds on other targets. The Battalion did not remain long in Lütterburg, for that night it moved 5,000 yards farther east into the Kaufunger Wald, just outside of Steinberg.

In the meantime, the first Battalion of the 273rd Infantry Regiment, on April 7th, had crossed to the north bank of the Werra River opposite Laubach and proceeded to clear the north bank and drive east. By the eighth it had reached Atzenhausen. It was here that the Battalion helped the Infantry out of a tight spot by forcing two Mark V tanks and supporting

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infantry to withdraw from their position in the woods 1800 yards south of the town. The fire mission from **Lt. Oesch** was relayed by **Lt. Col. Gooch** who at that time was out on reconnaissance for positions on the north side of the Werra. Forty rounds were fired on this target and forty-five more rounds were later placed in the woods just before the infantry moved through them in a night advance.

On the morning of April 9th the Battalion crossed to the north side of the Werra River on a pontoon bridge at Witzenhäusen and moved into position at Marzhausen. The 2nd Battalion, 273rd Infantry Regiment, had crossed the previous day at Hedemünden. Now the mission of the 724th F.A. Bn. became that of general support, reinforcing the fires of the 879th F.A. Bn. instead of the 881st F.A. Bn. No rounds were fired at Marzhausen but the Battalion did take four more prisoners. This was to become an increasingly regular occurrence as the 9th Armored Division, which was once more going to spearhead the advance, bypassed small groups of enemy troops in woods and towns which were off the main roads.

Our rapid advance necessitated a displacement from Marzhausen and in the same afternoon the Battalion moved some 10,000 yards further east to the town of Freinhagen. Eight more prisoners were rounded up in the town square, bringing the total to forty. Though there were no fire missions while at Freinhagen, excitement was created when a PW reported that there were some sixty soldiers in a woods near "C" Battery's position that wanted to surrender but two SS troopers would not let them. A "task force" from the Battalion was organized to investigate but in the darkness no contact was made.

The 9th Armored Division was now driving east ahead of the 69th which meant the 69th must become completely motorized if the foot troops were to keep up with the rapid advance. It was on April 10th that the Battalion first carried infantrymen on its tractors and trucks. Approximately 200 infantrymen were riding with the artillerymen when the Battalion closed into position at Wingerode shortly before midnight April 10th. The apprehensive civilians of Wingerode were holding their hands in the air when the advance party rolled into the village, for this was their first sight of the "barbaric" Americans. Thirty-seven more prisoners were taken here, bringing the total bag of PW's for the Battalion to seventy-seven, and one more town was added to the list of those "taken" by the 724th.

There was no firing from Wingerode and on the morning of April 11th the Battalion rolled east once more in the wake of the advancing 9th Armored Division. By 1800 that night the battalion was thirty-five miles further east and in position in the village of Bushel. It was here that their FW 190's came out of

the setting sun in a long glide. All guns of "D" Battery, 461st AA Bn. plus the Battalion's 50 caliber machine guns opened up with such well placed fire that the planes veered away and one was seen trailing smoke as it steadily lost altitude and disappeared from view. It was later reported that the plane crashed one mile outside of Buchel. Buchel yielded the usual group of "Supermen," bringing the total of PW's captured by the Battalion to 92.

No rounds were fired from Buchel, and the next morning April 12, **Lt. Col. Gooch** and his party left on reconnaissance for positions farther east. That afternoon the Battalion moved out of position, proceeded east through the Burgwenden Forest where Head-quarters Battery captured 21 prisoners, while the Battalion was halted in the woods. Later that afternoon **Capt. Dennis**, while picking up route markers captured 23 prisoners in this same area, bringing the Battalion total to 135. At approximately 1800 the Battalion halted about one kilometer east of Golzen and deployed along the road to await further orders. Here the Battalion experienced again what was to be almost a regular nightly occurrence - an attack by German planes. Four Me 109's approached at an altitude of 1,000 feet and started to circle for the attack. The crews of the Bofors guns had their weapons in action in a matter of seconds and in a short time effective rounds from these and the Artillery's 50 caliber machine guns were bursting near the planes which were driven off, but not before two bombs were dropped about 350 yards from the nearest vehicle. The Battalion continued the march and at 2200 that night it closed in Uichteritz, some 3 kilometers west of Weissenfels.

The main part of the city of Weissenfels was on the east bank of the Saale River and it was here the Germans were putting up a stiff resistance in the heart of the city. Our troops had cleared the west bank of the river and were preparing to attack across it the next day. In Uichteritz two prisoners were taken but, more important, a small factory that made machine pistols was overrun in "B" Battery's area and about 60 French, Polish and Russian slave laborers and PW's were freed. There was no firing that night, but the next day, April 13th, the Battalion dropped 191 rounds into the city, the principal targets being a factory and a troop barracks. There was also one smoke mission of 20 rounds and a counterbattery mission of 24 rounds. Our infantry crossed the river about noon and worked their way into the heart of the city and, though there was still fighting in the city that night, resistance was ended the next day.

The Battalion was now to proceed eastward and become engaged in the memorable Battle for Leipzig. Since the bridge was blown at Weissenfels, the Battalion had to retrace its steps and cross the Saale

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River at Naumberg on the afternoon of April 14th and proceed eastward. The 9th Armored Division had bypassed Leipzig and driven east to the Mulde River, leaving Leipzig and its ring of AA guns to be taken by the 69th and 2nd Divisions.

It was on the evening of the 14th that the Battalion ran head-on into the outer ring of depressed AA guns and suffered its first casualties from enemy fire. At 1930 the Battalion closed into position in the little village of Kitzen which was about 18 kilometers southwest of the heart of Leipzig. It had the mission of general support and reinforcing the fires of the 879th F.A. Bn. which was in position 6 kilometers south of Kitzen at Stontzch. There were no elements of friendly infantry in front of the Battalion and none to the flank. When **Lt. Col. Gooch** was informed over the radio by **Lt. Psaltis**, Forward Observer with the 3rd Bn., 271st Infantry Regiment, that they were going to attack Kitzen, he radioed back that the Battalion was going into position there.

At 1930 and while the howitzers were being prepared for action, two air bursts from 88's cracked over "A" Battery's position without warning and others followed in rapid succession. Upon **Major Scoville's** suggestion that an OP be found near the CP, **Lt. Col. Gooch**, **Major Scoville** and **Capt. Wightman** ran to the third floor of the house opposite the CP from where the flashes of the enemy guns could be seen clearly across the flat farm land about 4,000 yards due east. **Lt. Col. Gooch** began adjusting with "A" Battery immediately and a voice relay was used to get the commands to the Fire Direction Center across the street. The gun crews of the Battery worked quickly and the adjustment was swiftly completed. **Major Scoville**, who returned to the OP before dark. **Capt. Dennis** fired two missions from the third floor of the CP - one on the enemy battery and another the next morning on a building housing enemy troops. Before nightfall a total of 115 rounds was dropped on the dug-in battery of AA guns and they did no more firing that night. "A" Battery had three casualties: **Sgt. Aycox**, **Pvt. McCabe**, and **Pfc. Lazorwitz**. **Tec. 4 Kalup** of Headquarters was also hit.

That night **Lt. McCormick**, Battalion Survey Officer, set up a short base to locate the enemy battery accurately in case they did any firing during the night. Though there was no firing during the night, excitement was provided when one of two German prisoners attempted to escape in the darkness and was killed by rifle and machine gun fire from the alert guards.

All was quiet that night but the next morning, April 15th, at 0800 the enemy battery opened fire again and placed heavy and accurate concentrations over and in "A" Battery's position. **Lt. Col. Gooch** who was at the

CP at the time, again adjusted on the guns and an artillery duel followed during which there were times when both the guns of the Battalion and the German guns were firing at the same time. A total of 9 counter-battery missions was fired in the morning during which time 277 rounds were dropped in the dug-in battery. The enemy position was well protected by troops dug in about the installations and these could be seen moving during lulls in the shelling. A total of 90 rounds was effectively placed on these troops and an additional 39 rounds were fired on buildings in which enemy troops were seen. Though the fire from our guns inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy, our own Battalion did not escape unscathed. **Lt. Fonde**, **S/Sgt. Gallager**, **S/Sgt. Mitchell**, **Pfc. Shayka**, **Pfc. Hurt**, **Pfc. Fair**, **Cpl. Jensen**, **Pfc. Jarriel**, **Pfc. Tyndal** and **Pfc. Drew**, all "A" Battery, were wounded during the firing on April 15th. **Pvt. Basner**, Headquarters Battery, **Tec. 4 Stepch**, Medic and **Pfc. Marion** of "A" Battery were also hit. A half-track of "D" Btry., 461 AA Bn. was knocked out by a direct hit on the motor.

At 1000, "A" Battery moved to an alternate position at Eisdorf, 1 kilometer west of Kitzen. While at Eisdorf, "A" Battery received 20 more rounds from the enemy guns but suffered no casualties. That afternoon the rest of the Battalion moved and went into positions at Pegau 6 kilometers to the south.

The plan of attack was now changed and the 2nd Division took over the sector west of the Elster River. The 69th had the area east of the Elster and was to attack to the north toward Leipzig. At Pegau the Battalion was in a position to fire north in support of the attack. Its mission was to be in General Support of the Division and to reinforce the fires of the 879th F.A. Battalion.

On the morning of the 16th, the 3rd Bn. of the 271st Infantry Regiment attacked toward Rüssen but met bitter opposition. When **Lt. Stubbs**, Liaison Officer from the 879th F.A. Bn. was killed, **Cpl. Turner**, "C" Btry. Forward Observer, took over his duties. When **Cpl. Turner** was relieved by **Lt. Psaltis**, he returned immediately to duty as Forward Observer. Our troops were unable to get into Rüssen that day, but at 2100 a rolling barrage was fired by the Battalion enabling the Infantry to take the town without a casualty. A total of 223 rounds were fired on the 18th including the rolling barrage of 54 rounds, 3 counter-battery missions of 49 rounds, 1 harassing mission of 62 rounds on the town of Zwenkau and 63 rounds to support a counterattack.

On the 16th the Battalion was still within range of Leipzig's AA guns, for that afternoon two rounds of 88mm landed in "B" Battery's area and 4 rounds hit in "C" Battery's area but no one was injured. That evening "B" Battery displaced from the Battalion and moved to a position at Kieritzch, 8 kilometers further east, to give added support to the 879th F.A. Bn.

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On the next day, April 17 the 2nd Bn., 271st Infantry Regiment captured Pulgar and then Zwenkau after a furious battle. During this attack across the open fields, and in the face of leveled AA guns, close support was given the Infantry by Battalion through the Forward Observer, **Lt. Fineberg**. The 3rd Bn., 271st Infantry Regiment attacked the town of Löbschutz in the morning and succeeded in taking the town. Heavy AA fire, however, forced a withdrawal. The Battalion, through **Lt. Psaltis**, Liaison Officer with the Infantry, laid down a heavy preparation that night and the town was re-taken. During the afternoon **Lt. Parson**, Forward Observer at Rotha, placed effective fire on a Battalion of 88's near Zwenkau and set fire to the ammunition dump. A total of 224 rounds were fired during the fighting on the 17th. There were four counter-battery missions and one smoke mission. Ninety-six rounds were poured into Zwenkau and Lobschutz and six rounds were used to knock out a machine gun nest.

It was now decided to attack Leipzig from the east, and in conformity with this plan the Battalion on the 18th moved from its position south of Leipzig to a position east of the city at Kleinosna. The heart of the city, some 10,000 yards away, was within easy reach of the Battalion's howitzers and soon after they were in position the Battalion was registered on the main railroad station by **Lt. Rhoads**, from the plane flown by **Lt. Visin**. They were the only rounds to be fired into Leipzig by the Battalion. The 1st Bn., 272nd Infantry Regiment, whose Forward Observer was **Lt. Oesch**, met no opposition warranting the fire of 155's and by 2330 that night the Battalion had driven to the main railroad station and was less than 300 yards from the No-Fire line set up to prevent our artillery from hitting the 2nd Division, which was advancing into the city from the west. Later that night the 1st Bn., 272nd Infantry Regiment contacted the 2nd Division. **Lt. Winter**, Forward Observer with the 273rd Infantry Regiment, which was going into the city from the south-east, had no opportunity to adjust fire as no suitable targets arose.

The Battalion remained in position on the 19th with its guns still trained on Leipzig but there were no fire missions. The Battalion was alerted to watch out for German soldiers attempting to get out of Leipzig in civilian clothes and during the screening, two prisoners were picked up, bringing the Battalion total to 167.

On April 20th the Battalion changed the direction of fire from west to east and remained in a defensive position. Special attention was paid to cleaning of material. There were no fire missions.

The battle for Leipzig was now finished and the Battle for Eilenberg was to begin. Eilenberg, strategically located on the Mulde River, was strongly defended

by an assortment of German troops, police, and Hitler Jugend armed with machine guns, panzerfauste and supported by some artillery and nebelwerfers on the east side of the Mulde.

Late on the morning of the 21st, the Battalion received orders to displace immediately to Gostemitz to support the 1st Bn., 271st Infantry Regiment in its attack on Eilenberg that afternoon. The Battalion closed into its new position at 1340 and by midnight had fired a total of 473 rounds into the city, 341 of which were fired unobserved, according to plan. The remainder of the fire was adjusted by **Lt. Parson** who was with "A" Company attacking from the South, and by **Lt. Fineberg** who was with "C" Company, which was attacking from the southwest.

The Infantry met stiff opposition and did not get into the town that night, and the next morning, the 22nd, the attack was resumed. Three companies got into the western edge of town, but were unable to make any headway into the town that day. A total of 742 rounds were fired into Eilenberg by midnight of the 22nd but the enemy was not yet dislodged.

On the morning of the 23rd the attack was resumed and three companies drove east through the city, block by block. **Lt. Parson** and **Lt. Fineberg** were relieved in the late afternoon by **Lt. Oesch** and **Lt. Winter**, respectively. By nightfall the town had been cleared to the Mulde River and the infantry dug in along its banks. A total of 563 rounds were fired into Eilenberg on the 23rd, and of those 537 were fired by plan to "level" that part of the town which was east of the creek running through the center of town.

On April 24th, the Battalion received orders to move south to Polenz, where it was to be in general support of the Division and to reinforce the fires of the 881st F.A. Bn. It closed into position that afternoon but did no firing. About 2200 that night the Battalion was warned that it might have to move back into its old position at Gostemitz to fire on Kultschau which was across the river from Eilenberg. **Lt. Col. Dunlop**, Commanding the 1st Bn. of the 271st Infantry Regiment, had issued an ultimatum to the Commander of the German troops in Kultschau that if he would not surrender his garrison by midnight the town would be leveled by artillery. At midnight orders were received to move and by 0300 the Battalion was again into its old position prepared to fire 1,000 rounds into Kultschau.

The Battalion was assigned a definite sector to "level" in the city, and at 0600 the firing began. By 0900, 393 rounds had been dropped into a small area, leaving only rubble where formerly buildings had been. **Lt. Col. Gooch**, who was at the OP manned by **Lt. Oesch**, spotted foot troops approaching a farm house on the other side of the Mulde and adjusted on them with one Battery, but effect of the fire could not be determined.

Its mission of helping smash Kultschau having been completed, the Battalion now returned to Polenz, sight

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UNIT HISTORY OF THE 724th FIELD ARTILLERY (Continued from Page 42)

of one of the largest, permanent airdromes in the Reich, whose field was littered with hundreds of planes that had been destroyed by the fleeing Germans. The Battalion closed in this position on the afternoon of the 25th. Later that day a tractor caught on fire and blew up with 18 rounds of projectiles plus bazooka and small arms ammunition. The tractor was destroyed and a nearby house was set on fire. **Capt. Diekman**, Battery commander, was burned on his face, but there were no other casualties.

There was to be no firing by the Battalion for the remainder of April. Everyone was now waiting for the link-up of the Russians and our forces. It was reported that the German forces between the Elbe and the Mulde were disorganized and in confusion. On the 26th the electrifying news was announced: — an infantry patrol from the 69th contacted the Russians at Torgau at 1640 on April 25th and returned with a Russian officer and three enlisted men from the 58th Guards Division, part of Marshal Koniev's Army.

The Division was now in a defensive position on the west bank of the Mulde. The Battalion on the 26th and 27th had classes on security and stressed maintenance of equipment.

On the 28th the Division and the Battalion was released from V Corps and assigned to the VII Corps. That afternoon the Battalion was informed that it was to be in charge of the Allied Prisoner of War Camp, Camp DeWalde, at the Airdrome at Polenz, which was established by the 69th Division to take care of the thousands of American, British, French, Dutch and Polish prisoners of war who were now streaming across the Mulde at Wurzen.

On the morning of the 29th the Battalion took over operation of the camp from the 186th F.A. Bn. and moved to the PW camp where the howitzers were placed in a non-firing position. The primary mission of the Battalion was now to feed and house the allied PW's. The last day of the month found the Battalion applying itself energetically to its new job of caring for the 9,248 Allied PW's under its care.

During the month of April, the third month of combat for the Battalion, a total of 4200 rounds was fired, bringing the Battalion total to 9,406 for the period February 12 - April 30, 1945. The greatest number of rounds to be fired during any 24 hour period was 893. This firing was done at Gostemitz on the morning of April 25th. A total of 14 different positions was occupied and two of these were occupied twice, at Polenz and Gostemitz, making a total of 16 moves. A distance of 408 miles was covered from Dietkirchen, Germany to Polenz, Germany.

During the month of April several men received the Bronze Star Award. **Lt. Col. Gooch** presented the award on the dates stated to the following men for

"meritorious service:" **Pfc. Avery A. Shaffer** on April 10th; **Tec. 4 Nick R. Carr** and **Tec. 5 John W. Spivey** on April 18; **Pfc. Clyde E. Loper** and **S/Sgt. Harold E. Rindt** on April 24th.

The following officers received the Air Medal on April 10th: **1st Lt. William P. Craddock Jr.**, **1st Lt. Robert J. Visin**, **1st Lt. Charles H. Rayner**, and **1st Lt. John J. Rhoads**.

On March 24, 1945, **Lt. Col. Stacy W. Gooch** was presented the Bronze Star Award by **General Maraist** for "meritorious service."

For the Commanding Officer: Battalion Historians,

Lts. Oesch and McCormick

A&P Platoon Buddies meet after 50 years

Submitted by: **Edwin J. Weiss**

A&P Platoon, Hq. Co., 1st Bn., 271st Regiment

600 Three Islands Boulevard, Apt. 421

Hallandale, Florida 33009

I had a call from an old 69th Division buddy who I had not seen in over 50 years. His name is **David Gordon**, 126 Cedar Road, E. Northport, New York 11731. We were both in the A&P Platoon, Headquarter Company, 1st Battalion, 271st Regiment.

We met each other at the Marriott Hotel in Fort Lauderdale, Florida with our wives and had a very enjoyable time talking about our days in the 69th Division. Both of us stayed with the 69th to the end when we met the Russians at the Elbe River.

We are both hoping that other soldiers from our company will contact us.



Old Glory Speaks

(Author Unknown)

Submitted by: **George and Madeline Haddad**
Company E, 272nd Infantry Regiment
30180 Cheviot Hills Drive
Franklin, Michigan 48025-1552
E-Mail: gmhaddad@mediaone.net



I am the flag of the United States of America.

I was conceived in the dreams of liberty and in the hope of freedom.

I was designed by the hands of Betsy Ross, and in her sewing was my cradle. Though I was never an orphan, I was adopted by the Continental Congress in 1777, and proclaimed the National Emblem of a nation newly born on this continent, fighting valiantly for survival and destined to bring to all mankind a new concept of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. I have been many places, and have seen many things.

I have witnessed every event of American history. I was there in the late twilight at Fort McHenry, and inspired Francis Scott Key to write the immortal Star Spangled Banner, now our National Anthem.

I saw Molly Pitcher take the cannon swab from the hands of her dead husband and help carry on the fight for freedom.

I felt the biting cold at Valley Forge, and gave warmth and comfort to General Washington and his tired and hungry Continental Army. I rode with Ethan Allen and the Green Mountain Boys. I saw the signal that started the midnight ride of Paul Revere. I was flown above the decks of Old Ironsides, and from the masts of the Yankee and China Clippers. I blazed the trail with Daniel Boone and Davy Crockett. I led the settlers coming West and crossed Death Valley in a covered wagon.

I was carried through the Halls of Montezuma to the Shores of Tripoli by the United States Marines. Once I fell to the ground at Custer's Last Stand, and there were no living hands left to pick me up.

I galloped up the slopes of San Juan Hill with Colonel Teddy Roosevelt, and his Rough Riders of the Volunteer United States Cavalry. I stayed with the boys 'till it was over, over there, and on the battlefields

of the Marne, Chateau-Thierry, Saint Mihiel, and the Argonne Forest. I saw many of the youths and manhood of our Nation fall and lie still in death. They had given their last full measure of devotion. The war was over for them forever, and I kept my lonely vigil over their graves and stayed to watch the poppies grow amidst the crosses, row on row, in Flanders Field.

I was raised by five brave men during the Hell of Iwo Jima. I waved farewell to the four immortal Chaplains and the Sullivan Brothers who went down with their ships to honored glory.

I am many things to many people. I followed our brave troops into Korea, and the steaming Communist infested jungles of Vietnam. I faithfully went along to look after things at Grenada, Panama, the Gulf War, Somalia, Haiti, Macedonia, Bosnia and Kosovo.

I am an inseparable link in the chain that binds men to God and Country; each link welded and forged in the fires of purity by the sacred hands of God himself. And because I am on the side of God, the Godless would destroy me, but they dare not, because I am protected by the mighty land armies of the Nation, the powerful and deadly fleet of the U.S. Navy, the Eagle, Globe and Anchor of the U.S. Marine Corps, the screaming eagles of the Air Force, and the swift cutters of the U.S. Coast Guard, watching and waiting to swoop down and destroy anything that would dare to harm me.

I have not changed much in my over 200 years. I still have my original thirteen stripes, but as each State came into the Union, a new star was proudly added to the constellation of my blue field. It began with thirteen stars, now there are fifty.

I draped the caskets of our Nation's heroes, borne to their final resting place. There have been caskets of Presidents, Generals, Admirals, humble Privates and Seamen, plus our Unknown Soldiers.

Wherever free men gather, wherever there is justice, equality, faith, hope, charity, truth and brotherly love, there I am.

MAY HISTORY NEVER WRITE MY OBITUARY
FOR I AM THE STARS AND STRIPES . . . FOREVER
I AM OLD GLORY!

We Need Cover Photos

The Bulletin needs quality photos for the cover. We generally like to have cover photos that would be appreciated by all members of our 69th, such as particular events or scenery that the 69th participated in or a group of small shots of a particular outfit are appropriate, as long as there is activity involved in the photos. Please look through your boxes of World War II memorabilia and send them in. We will return them unharmed. Please! Do not send photocopies.

Members of Company C, 271st Infantry Regiment

Submitted by: **Robert L. Klein**, *Company C, 271st Infantry*
9229 Austin Avenue, Morton Grove, Illinois 60053-1502



Top Row, left to right: Henry Madoff, Denver Haney, Edmond Godsey, Arco Peterson
Middle Row: George Goodwin, Robert Hance, Sam Campbell
Bottom Row: Ray Paras, Earl Mills, Cornelius Martin, William Kitchens, Daniel Kinney

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FOR THE BULLETIN SHOULD BE MAILED TO:
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DUES GO TO OUR TREASURER ONLY.**

Wallace J. Moulis writes...

Wallace J. Moulis, Col. USA Ret.

Headquarters, I&R Platoon, 272nd Infantry

6565 Snowbell Lane

Falls Church, Virginia 22042-2256

After reading the article on the D-Day Museum and seeing a picture of my buddy **Langdon Tannehill** in the bulletin, I decided to send you the attached letter I wrote to my hometown newspaper which was published on June 15th, 2000. I was initially assigned to Company C and was then transferred to I&R Platoon which I commanded until war's end. It was the best assignment I had during my 30 years of service.

Editor, *Teche News*

June 15, 2000

St. Martinville, Louisiana 20582

Dear Sir:

I read with considerable interest your comments in the *Teche News* issue of June 7, 2000. I concur wholeheartedly that the museum is a first class facility and well worth the trip to New Orleans. I also want to express my appreciation to you for describing in considerable detail the duties I performed at the Eisenhower Center for many years. I will make an effort to expand on your comments.

The National D-Day Museum opened on June 6, 2000 in New Orleans celebrating the 56th anniversary of the invasion of Normandy. The fact is, the invasion was anything but routine. In spite of the best ground and air support, as well as years of planning, D-Day could have easily stood for defeat. And in the end it was only Allied ingenuity and the dogged determination of the foot soldiers that brought victory.

Many events surrounding D-Day had special meaning to me. I was graduating from the U. S. Military Academy at West Point with the Class of 1944 (The D-Day Class). Every member of my class received a personal message from General Eisenhower welcoming us as young leaders, upon whose shoulders the heaviest battle burdens habitually fall. This message was not released until after the invasion began.

Additionally, our Commander-in-Chief, President Roosevelt broadcast a D-Day prayer at 10:00 p.m., June 6, 1944 as follows:

"Almighty God: our sons, pride of our nation, this day have set upon a mighty endeavor, a struggle to preserve our Republic, our religion and our civilization, and to set free a suffering humanity.

"Lead them straight and true; give them strength to their arms, stoutness to their hearts, steadfastness in their faith

"They will need Thy blessings. Their road will be long and hard. For the enemy is strong. He may hurl back our forces. Success may not come with rushing speed but we shall return again and again, and we know that by Thy grace, and by the righteousness by Thy cause our sons will triumph."

On D-Day the largest Armada in recorded history set out across the English Channel to attack Hitler's Atlantic Wall on the coast of Normandy. General Dwight D. Eisenhower (Ike) was hand picked by President Roosevelt to lead this operation (code name OVERLORD).

John Eisenhower (USMA '44), a classmate reports in his book *Strictly Personal* that he received a visit from his father a few days before the invasion. This visit was kept secret in order to keep the Nazis off guard. The secret was magnificently kept and was not announced until Ike arrived in London to take up his duties as Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force. His directive read:

"You will enter the Continent of Europe and in conjunction with the other United Nations, undertake operations at the heart of Germany and the destruction of her Armed Forces."

In preparation for D-Day, the Allies had assembled the mightiest force in history: nearly three million men - including 1.7 million Americans backed by 16 million tons of arms, munitions, and supplies. Also in readiness were 5,000 warships and supporting vessels, 4,000 landing craft and 12,000 aircraft. The Allied Forces had reached a high state of readiness when the invasion began.

Before dawn, 24,000 U.S. and British airborne troops, including the U.S. 82nd and 101st Airborne troops were dropped behind German lines, followed by massive air and naval bombardments. Nearly 2,000 bombers hit enemy defenses. Offshore more than 200 warships fired up to 200 tons of shells per minute.

In summary, by the end of D-Day, the Americans held the ridge of the cliffs overlooking Omaha Beach and had pushed a mile inland. East and west of Omaha Beach, the landings were much more successful. The U.S. 4th Division had seized Utah Beach with relatively little opposition and joined forces with paratroopers who had been dropped near Ste. Mere Eglise. The British and Canadians had overwhelmed three beaches and advanced about three miles toward the city of Caen. All told, the Allies had landed five divisions, some 154,000 men.

Victory did not come cheap. American losses were grievous: 1,465 killed, 3,184 wounded, 1,928 missing. British estimates: 2,500 to 3,000 casualties. Canadian casualties, 946. Total Allied casualties were 10,000. German casualties were between 4,000 and 9,000. The Allies had come to stay. We were now ready to organize a breakout. The overland march to Berlin and the war's end had just begun.

National D-Day Museum

The nation saluted the men and women who helped secure the Allied victory during WWII with four days of special events when the National D-Day Museum opened June 6 - the 56th anniversary of the Normandy invasion.

(Continued on Page 47)

WALLACE J. MOULIS WRITES . . .

(Continued from Page 46)

Participants in the grand opening celebration at the New Orleans facility included:

- Secretary of Defense, William Cohen
- Congressional Medal of Honor recipients (including our own Jeff De Blanc)
- Director Steven Spielberg
- Actor Tom Hanks, and
- Master of ceremonies, Tom Brokaw, author of the *Greatest Generation*

A fleet of U.S. Navy ships, military bands and representatives from U. S. amphibious invasion joined parades and tributes honoring the Veterans of WWII. The parade included a flyover of 40 aircraft ranging from vintage WWII airplanes to contemporary helicopters.

The museum, founded by author and historian Stephen Ambrose will house some 2,000 oral histories contributed by veterans. Exhibits and artifacts will tell the story of U. S. amphibious operations around the globe during WWII. Ambrose goes on to say "The

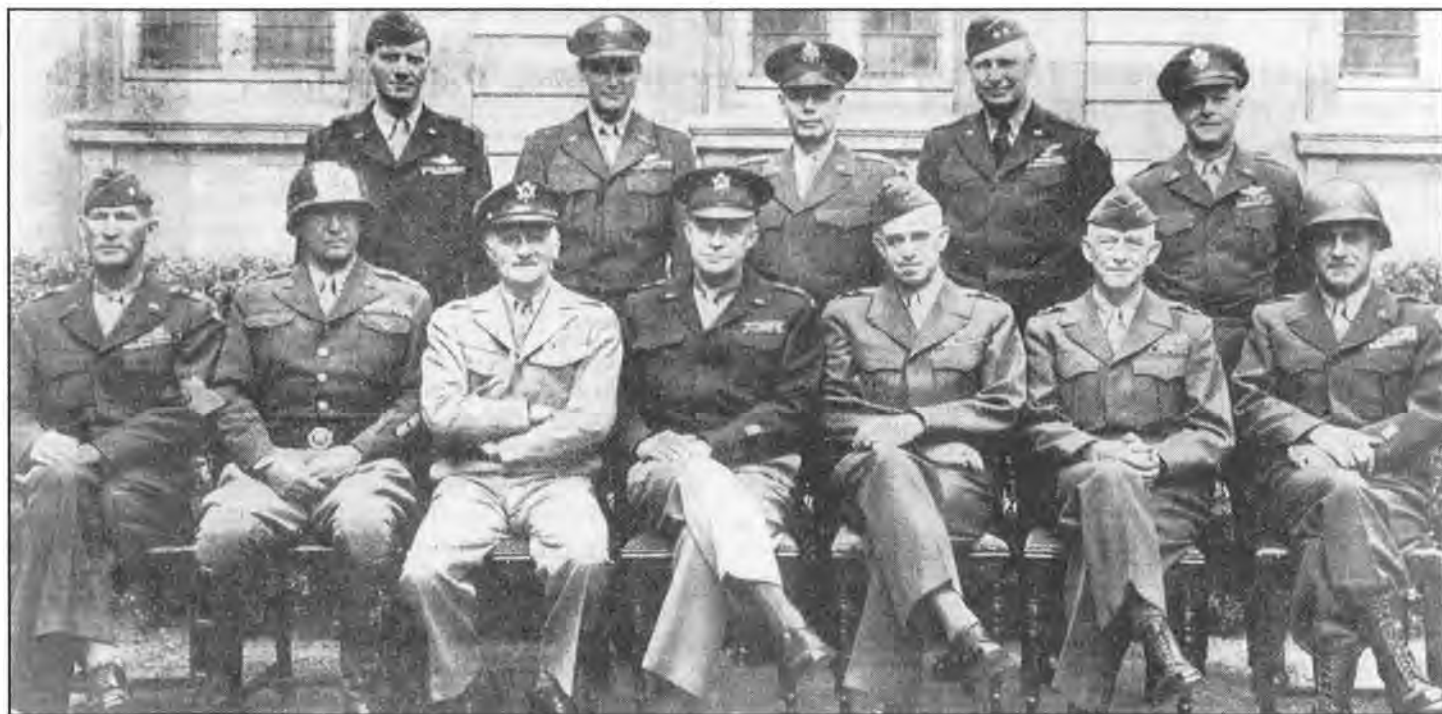
National D-Day Museum will celebrate the American spirit. Young and old will come to learn of their proud heritage."

Visitors can walk into a German pill box overlooking the invasion beach at Normandy or listen to Gen. Dwight Eisenhower make decisions in a multi-media display. Spitfire and avenger airplanes, German staff cars, sentry boxes from the Atlantic Wall and a reproduction of a Higgins boat are in the museum's Louisiana Memorial Pavilion.

American mobilization action and life on the home front are illustrated with photographs, recruitment posters and personal memorabilia in the "America Goes to War" exhibit. The Beaches Gallery highlights the most crucial phase of operation OVERLORD the fighting on the beaches and sacrifice of the D-Day combatants from Americans at Utah and Omaha to the British and Canadians at Gold, Juno and Sword beaches. Artifacts on view include a pocket Bible carried into battle and a helmet that saved a live by stopping a bullet.

The museum is a work in progress, showcasing D-Day in Normandy at present and planning for future exhibits on D-Day in the Pacific.

The Big Boys Celebrate



U.S. Army Generals held their own victory meeting a few days after VE Day, May 1945. The Signal Corps cameramen persuaded them to pose for a group picture, said to be the first of its kind. The celebration was held at General Omar Bradley's 12th Army Group Headquarters in Bad Wildunger, Germany.

Seated, left to right: Lt. Gen. William H. Simpson, CG, U.S. 9th Army; Gen. George S. Patton, Jr., CG, US 3rd Army; Gen. Carl A. Spaatz, CG, USSTAF; Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower; Gen. Bradley; Gen. Courtney H. Hodges, CG, US 1st Army; Lt. Gen. Leonard T. Gerow, CG, U.S. 15th Army. Standing: Brig. Gen. Ralph F. Stearley, CG, 9th Tactical Air Command; Lt. Gen. Hoyt S. Vandenberg, CG, 9th AF; Lt. Gen. Walter B. Smith, Chief of Staff, SHAEF; Maj. Gen. Otto P. Weyland, CG, 19th TAC, and Brig. Gen. E. Nugent, CG, 29th TAC.

Submitted by: **Harold Faulkner**, *Cannon Company, 271st Infantry*
280 Monticello Drive, Walnut Creek, California 94595

Following are a few memories sent in to us by Robert Muckel. Robert has inadvertently become one of our feature writers so it seems, and we do appreciate his contributions. Come on fellows, you can all do the same.

* * * * *

Robert L. Muckel

*Company I, 273rd Infantry, 1st Squad, 3rd Platoon
655 South Chiques Road
Manheim, Pennsylvania 17545-9156*

On the Warpath

There was an American Indian in our outfit who was a member, I believe, of the Mohawk tribe from the state of New York. Because he was on the warpath against the enemy, the Germans, he had shaved his head just like his forefathers had done leaving a narrow strip of short, black hair down the middle of his head from front to back. He had a habit of walking around without his steel helmet on so as to let everyone know that he was on the warpath. Well, this did not go over very good with the officers, as everyone was required to wear their helmet at all times for protection. So naturally, he was told about it. But what good did it do to wear a scalp-lock while on the warpath if no one could see it? So whenever things were quiet on the front he would still take off his steel helmet.

* * * * *

The African American Soldier

Our column of trucks came to a stop, on a hill overlooking a river. On the other side was the town of Colditz, Germany which our Company I of the 273rd Infantry Regiment, was about to attack. As we unloaded from the trucks, one of the drivers, an African-American, yelled out, "Is there anybody here from Lancaster, Pennsylvania?" One of our guys talked to him, and pointed in my direction. He then came over to me and introduced himself. He told me his name and said, back home in civilian life, he had found a man going with his girlfriend and in a fit of jealousy, shot the man and then threw the pistol down a nearby sewer. He was arrested and put in prison. While in prison, a U.S. government official came and offered him a proposition. He has a choice - he could either stay in prison and serve out his sentence or join the U.S. Army and be sent overseas and put on the Front Line. If he then maintained a good record till the end of the war, his prison term and record would be destroyed, and he would be given a new start in life. So here he was in the Army.

He said to me, "Just what are you guys going to do here?" I answered, "You see that long ridge covered with trees, on the other side of the river? Well just beyond that is a town we must attack." He looked at me and said, "You know, I have often wondered, what it was like in the Infantry? I would like to go along with you fellows. Do you think, they would let me?"

I said, "Sure, why not. He said, "But I do not have a gun." I said, "Do you see that group of guys at the bottom of the hill?" He answered, "Yes." I said, "One of them is our Company Commander. Go down and ask him."

He took off running down the hill. About twenty minutes later, I saw him coming back up the hill. In his one hand he was holding a M1 rifle and in the other hand, a cartridge belt full of bullets. His face was lit up like a Christmas tree, smiling and happy for being allowed to go along with us. I thought to myself, "Most men, if they had a choice, would shy away from danger. But this fellow here... he is happily volunteering to face the bullets, and shells? Well, I am sure glad, he is on our side."

After the battle was over, the next day I made an inquiry about him. They said his performance was excellent and that he wanted to stay with us always. Unfortunately, I have forgotten the name of this man.

* * * * *

The Bridge

One night I was assigned to Guard Duty at a railroad bridge spanning a small river. The stars were out and a full moon lit up the middle of the bridge. This made my job a lot easier. At least I could see part of what I was guarding. My orders were: Under no circumstances was I to let anyone cross the bridge, regardless of who they were.

To stand watch, I knelt down in the dark shadows beside the railroad embankment. Time passed by and suddenly I heard a noise coming from the other side of the bridge. Appearing out of the darkness was a young black haired woman wearing a long black coat with a fur collar. And right beside her leaning on her for support, was a German Soldier.

He had white bandages on his head and around one of his legs. He seemed to be having trouble walking. I looked behind them to see if there was anyone else with them. No, they appeared to be alone. I stood up and hollered out, "Halt, stay where you are!" The woman then answered me in English saying, "I am an Army nurse; I am helping this wounded soldier."

Then they continued to walk toward me. I pointed my rifle at her, and said, "Lady, I don't care what you are! I have my orders. If you take one more step, I have no choice but to shoot you. (I really would not have shot her or the soldier either, unless one of them pulled a gun on me.) She stopped, not quite sure of herself, now probably thinking that I just might shoot if they came any further. I thought to myself, "She might really be a nurse, and him a wounded man. Then again she could be the soldier's wife or girlfriend. Maybe he was a high ranking officer and this was just an act of the nurse and wounded soldier bit they are putting on for my benefit so they can pass me safely." It was a stalemate. There they stood, on the middle of the bridge, and there I stood holding my gun on them.

(Continued on Page 49)

I thought to myself, "It was pretty darned stupid of these two to go walking around in the darkness of night, trying to get passed our lines. I might have shot them both. They were lucky we had a full moon tonight, so I could see them clearly." I had no intention of shooting either one of them, even though I had the authority to do so, if it was necessary. We could just stand there facing each other all night long. So I took a chance and hollered out, giving my name and guard position and had the corporal of the guard take them off my hands. I never did find out if those two were what they claimed to be.

* * * * *

Rest Area

We were leaving our snow covered foxhole home on the front line and heading to the rear area for a rest, loaded down with a full field pack, rifle, gas mask, and extra ammo, and our long heavy woolen overcoat. We began walking and walking. Every hour we stopped and took a ten minute rest. Then back on our feet, moving on again. This went on all night long. That pack on my back seemed to get heavier and heavier. Where the heck are we going? Why the rush anyway? We were walking in two long files bunched up pretty close together. Normally we were supposed to keep about ten feet between each man. But right now, we didn't worry about such things. We were all walking along half asleep, our eyelids drooping. Morning came, and we were still moving. By this time we were bone tired, completely exhausted.

We walked on in a dazed condition, paying no attention to our surroundings, unable to even think clearly. The only thing that we were aware of was that we were on are feet and still moving, sometimes bumping into the man in front of you. We were like a long line of dominoes standing on edge an inch apart, push the first in line, and like a chain reaction, everyone of them would fall down. Up front of the column a rifle shot was heard. We stopped moving ... I forced my eyelids wide open, and tried to gather my wits about me in order to comprehend what was happening? Sniper ahead! We heard that they had sent some men out to get the sniper. We started moving again.

I now noticed we were on a dirt road, which was slowly inclining upward, with steep banks on each side and a large ditch below it. In order to stay on my feet I was now walking spraddle legged. My testicles were so sore, and felt like they were dragging on the ground. Suddenly like having a dream in slow motion, different scenes began appearing before my eyes. First the man's pack in front of me, then his canteen hanging below it. Then the world turned up side down and seemed to spin around. Then a blurring movement of ground and sky being mixed together, then all movement came to a stop. I saw the sky ... then the shape of a head, it was out of focus. I could make out

a helmet with a large white circle and a red cross. I saw eyes and lips were moving, but I heard and understood nothing. I saw arms waving, then nothing but open sky again. My eyes closed - everything became dark.

Slowly I opened my eyes. Where am I? Where is everyone? Rising to my feet, I looked around. The road was above me, I was down below the ditch. Looking back down the road I saw the sprawled forms of other soldiers. Turning around and looking uphill, the same thing. Slowly we began climbing back up the bank to the road. We started walking hoping to catch up with our company again. As we came to the top of the hill, we found both sides of the road lined with resting soldiers. They too must have reached the limits of their endurance and had to stop and rest. Shortly after rejoining them we began moving again. We approached a small village. Entering it we found it completely deserted. The town was deathly quiet. The only sound to be heard was that of our shuffling foot steps, as we walked along the street. It was a spooky feeling, like walking through a cemetery in the middle of the night. The bare shadow-filled windows and doors of the buildings looked like the vacant eyes and mouths of a human skull, and it seemed to stare at us in deathly silence as we passed by. There must have been severe fighting here at one time. The streets were cluttered with debris, and here and there power lines and telephone cables were lying on the ground blocking the street.

The buildings were pock marked with bullet holes, some with just part of the roof remaining. We looked for some intact buildings to enter and spend our rest period. Finding some which were fairly decent, we entered them and began making ourselves at home. Taking off my field pack, I put it down on the floor, and using it for a pillow, I soon fell fast asleep. How long I slept I had no idea, but it was still light outside. I got up, put on my helmet, grabbed my rifle, and went outside. Looking down the street, I decided to take a walk and have a look around. Coming to one of the buildings I went inside. Checking all the rooms and finding nothing, I then looked for a basement door. As I had learned from experience, the homes over here usually had large numbers of homemade bottled wines in the cellars which they drank with their food at meal times. Lighting the small kerosene lantern I carried with me, I went down the cellar steps and looked around. Alongside the right wall were wooden shelves, all bare except for two one quart bottles. Inspecting these closely they looked like they were filled with wine. Looking the corks over good, I found them covered with dust, brown with age tightly sealed, and showing no signs of being tampered with. I was taking no chances of being poisoned to death. Putting the

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REST AREA (Continued from Page 49)

bottles in my jacket, I continued to look around. Over in the far corner was a large wooded cabinet with closed doors. As I swung them open, what to my startled eyes should appear but three large smoked hams hanging in a row. Oh boy! "real honest to goodness meat." I ran up the steps, out the front door, and back to our quarters where I told my buddies of my find. They came along back with me and helped carry the hams.

While the boys built a fire in a stove to fry the hams, I had some time to kill before the chow was ready, I decided to inspect another house.

The next building I entered looked like a grocery store. There was one big room with the walls all lined with shelves, all empty except for a few small boxes piled in the corner of one. Inspecting the boxes I found them to be wet and soggy, as part of the roof was missing overhead. There was one dry box. Not being able to read the German printing, I surmised by the colored picture on front of the box that it contained cherry pudding mix. Putting it in my coat pocket, I headed back to our quarters. That ham must be ready by now.

As I opened the door to our quarters, I could smell the odor of the frying ham. Boy, did that smell good. I could hardly wait to get a big chunk and start chewing away. Once inside, I was given my share of the ham. Two small slices about the size of bacon. Oh well, how far do three hams go when there are two hundred hungry mouths to feed. Quickly gulping these down I was still hungry. Taking out my box of cherry pudding mix and having no milk, I filled a canteen cup with water and placed it on the hot stove. Into this I poured the pudding mix. I stirred the mixture. When it began to thicken, I took it off the stove and let it cool. After it cooled, I turned the cup upside down over the table. Out fell a white shimmering mass. I took my knife and cut it into slices. I picked up a piece and ate it, mmmm "not bad." It could use some sugar! Well that may have not been the best cherry pudding ever made but it disappeared real fast!

I opened the two bottles of wine I had and passed them around. I then went to my room, laid down on the floor and fell asleep. I think we stayed there a day or so, then started walking again. After several hours, we came to a small open field. Here in a big pile lying on the ground were our duffel bags, each one containing our personal belongings. They had been dumped there by trucks. We were given time to open our bag and take out what we wanted, or needed such as underwear, towels, socks. Some of us had picked up a few souvenirs, along the way. These were put in our bags for safe keeping. The bags were then put back on trucks and hauled away. This happened several times. I am glad it did because as time went by, I had more loot, and it became too much to carry with me.

Park M. Fellers writes ...

Service Company, 272nd Infantry
935 Jefferson, P.O. Box 396
Hillsboro, Illinois 62049

I am sending in this picture which other 69ers might like to see. I can't recall where I got this photo, but there are a few things I can recall regarding the men in the photo.

Mr. Armstrong, who is on the right, was the ARC Rep and it always took two or three trucks to get all of his stuff out in the field when we went on maneuvers. **Colonel Lanham** used to raise hell about it being a nuisance having him around, but I don't believe to **Armstrong's** face.

Warrant Officer Leary? I remember him and a W.O. who's name I can't recall at the moment, although he and I made a visit to London together about the time the V-2 rockets were coming in, which scared the you know what out of both of us. Anyway, these two old regular army guys are the cause of me getting seasick or part of it, a few days after leave to go to New York for ETO. They would play poker, smoke up the state room which made me grab my top coat in a hurry and I'd run out on the deck.

Also, regarding **Leary**, he and I shared a room in that Gaillotine Castle about our second or third day in France. **Leary** scrounged up some dry wood to keep us warm. Every room had a fireplace. Higher authority found out about it and from then on we had to use the green stuff that darn near suffocated us with smoke.

Pleasant memories, hey?



Left to right: Fellers, Leary and Armstrong

Shots of Camp Shelby in the 40's

Submitted by: **Irwin Nicholson**, *Medic, 272nd Infantry Regiment*
617 Patricia Road, Hurst, Texas 76053-4451

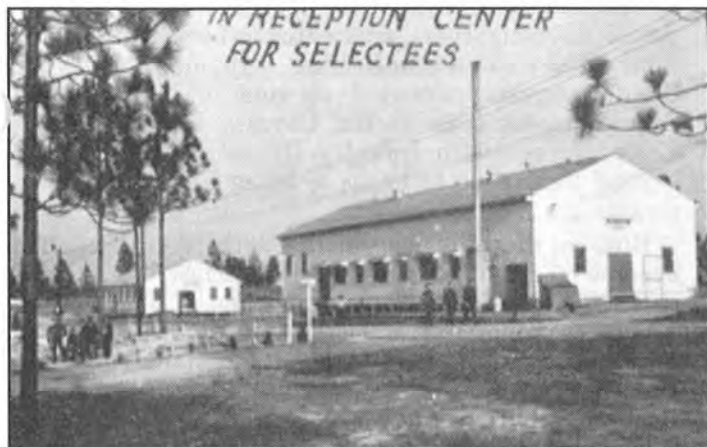
These pictures were in my mother's belongings when she passed on. I don't remember them, but I must have purchased them in 1943. I entered the division the day it was activated and transferred to the UAAF in January of 1944. I ended up in the 66th Division in combat, then on to the 42nd Division in Austria (Army of Occupation). I am currently a member of the 69th Division Association and enjoy the bulletin very much.



Headquarters - Induction Center



Regimental Canteen Building



In Reception Center for Selectees



A Service Club - Camp Shelby



Camp Shelby Flag



2nd Avenue in Camp Shelby

The following is the official report from the Pentagon on the Link-Up with the Russians retrieved from the National Archives by:

Robert F. Ammon

*Company D & H-1, 273rd Infantry, Regiment
908 Meadow Drive, Battle Creek, Michigan 49015-4614*

The Russian-American Link-Up - 25 April 1945

From: The War Department

The Adjutant General's Office, Washington

War Department Records Branch, A.G.O.

Historical Records Section - Room MB-585 Pentagon

At San Francisco delegates to the United Nations Conference sat down to the business of their opening session to preserve world unity after the war.

At Leckwitz, Germany, an American lieutenant and his patrol met a lone Russian horseman in a farmhouse courtyard at 1130.

At Torgau, Germany, another American lieutenant reached out and gleefully pounded the knees of a Russian soldier as both hung precariously from a top girder of a destroyed bridge over the Elbe River at 1600.

At Clanzchwitz, Germany, a patrol led by an American major spilled out of its jeeps and grinned happily at a troop of Russian cavalymen at 1645.

The date was April 25th, 1945. The scenes were in the United States and on the Western Front of Europe. At one the statesmen gathered to talk of the ways of peace, at the others the soldiers met to help the fighting. The meeting in the three towns on and near the Elbe River were the first contacts in World War II between the American and Russian Armies, between the Western and Eastern Fronts. All were made in violation of orders, but the contacts effectively divided the Nazi Armies on the Continent and hastened the end of the war.

The historic linkup was made between units of famous Armies. On the American side, the 273rd Infantry, 69th Infantry Division, was involved. On the Russian side, the 173rd and the 175th Infantry Regiments, 58th Guards Divisions, were involved. The 69th Division was a part of V Corps, under Major General Clarence R. Huebner, and of the First U.S. Army, under General Courtney L. Hodges, in the 12th Army Group of General of the Army Omar N. Bradley. The 58th Guards Division was a part of the 34th Russian Corps, under Major General Balankov, and of the First Ukrainian Army, under Colonel General Zhadoz, in the Army Group of Marshal Koniev. The American Corps and Army concerned had made the first landings in the invasion of western Europe, while the Russian forces in the union had fought back from Stalingrad to the Elbe.

On that cold, misty morning of the 25th of April, two motorized combat patrols rode out from the American lines at Trebsen, on the Mulde River, and moved to the east. From Kuhren, a third patrol, dispatched late that day before, also moved east. Unknown to anyone, still

a fourth, unauthorized patrol knifed out to round up P.W's. and returned with the glory. The four were from the 273rd Infantry Regiment, 69th Division. All were operating under orders not to patrol beyond five miles east of the Mulde; three, despite these orders, went to the Elbe River and contacted the Russian Army, while the fourth one turned back.

The days before the first meetings between the two great military forces had been ones of rumors and reports and rising excitement. The German Armies were almost smashed and contact between east and west appeared imminent for days anywhere along the front. Unknown to the front-line soldiers of the other side, the Red Army had been ordered to halt along the line of the Mulde. Both arrived along their respective river lines by about the 21st of April. The line troops on both sides waited for units from the other side to make contact.

In the growing anxiety on the American front, every odd ground formation became a "Russian Tank" and every strange radio voice became "the Russians communicating with us." Elements of the Ninth American Army reported radio contact with the Russian forces early in the third week of April. A staff sergeant in the 6th Armored Division is alleged to have been in radio conversation with the Russians on the 23rd. The same day, the 1st Battalion, 273rd Infantry, reported a Russians tank to its front bearing a white horizontal stripe around its hull - the agreed-upon recognition device. Investigation showed this to be an odd ground hummock with a clothesline stretched across it! Similar reports persisted up and down the front. Several units, such as the Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop of the 104th Infantry Division, had men out beyond their zone in hopes of being first to establish contact.

But, by the afternoon of the 24th, there still had been no meeting and, the American Army, at least, was chafing at the bit. That afternoon, Colonel C.M. Adams, commanding officers of the 273rd Infantry, sent out a patrol led by 1st Lieutenant Albert L. Kotzebue, of Houston Texas, 3rd Platoon leader of Company G. Kotzebue's orders were to "contact the Russians," but within the five-mile limit set by higher authority. He reconnoitered as far as the outskirts of Dahlen, found no Russians, and returned to Kuhren, where he spent the night because it was dark by the time he received orders to return.

That same night, at the Regimental CP in Trebsen (498107), Colonel Adams briefed the leaders of two more patrols which he had decided to send out on the same mission the following day and gave them the same instructions, "contact the Russians." but, again, within the five mile limit. Those were the orders, but there was a sort of humorous conspiracy among most of the patrol members that they were going to "meet the Russians" regardless. Nothing was heard from Kotzebue.

Before dawn on the 25th the I&R Platoon, under 1st Lieutenant Edward A. Gumpert, and accompanied by Major James R. Sykes, Regimental S-3; Captain Faye

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L. Long, assistant S-3; and Captain Hans L. Trefousse, IPW officer attached from V Corps, crossed the rickety bridge over the Mulde at Trebsen first. Closely following was the patrol containing men from E and H Companies, led by 2nd Lieutenant Thomas P. Howard, of E Company, but with Major Fred Craig, 2nd Battalion executive as senior officer present, and accompanied by Captain George J. Morey, assistant regimental S-2, and Captain William J. Fox, First Army combat history officer. East of the river, the patrol divided, the I&R Platoon taking the northern sector, Craig's group taking the southern sector. Nothing was heard from Kotzebue.

The morning was cold and both patrols probed out their areas, capturing disconsolate German prisoners, uncovering hospitals, freeing Allied prisoners, receiving the surrender of enemy towns. They sent back reports that the Russians were "at Terpitz" "at Gaunitz" "at Oschatz" "had a bridge-head at Strehla" "were very close." They reached the limits of their advance and asked permission to continue, each time with mounting urgency. From Regiment each time Colonel Adams gave the order to "hold," although, with each passing hour, he could feel the growing impetuosity in each of the patrols. The I&R Platoon was being very conservative and was in the neighborhood of Frauwalde. Craig's patrol was east of Detusch-Luppa. Both had been given instructions to return by dark, and the I&R already was on its way back. Nothing was heard from Kotzebue.

Then, into the Regimental CP by radio came the staggering message from Kotzebue.

"Mission accomplished. Making arrangements for meeting between CO's. Present location (870170). No casualties." It was timed at 1330; it was received at 1515. It had the additional note that the lieutenant had no direct radio contact with regiment, but had sent the message to the rear, where it was relayed.

That was it. The day before, V Corps had sent out a list of points of information and instructions which were to be gathered and complied with by any patrols making contact and meeting between commanders was one of these.

There was nothing positive in the message, but Colonel Adams realized what had happened and noted its import immediately. He quickly called the Division CG, Major General Emil F. Reinhardt, and the chief of Staff, Colonel Charles P. Lynch, and passed on the news. The General was as angry as a mad bull, feeling outraged that his orders had been disobeyed. He told Adams to make every effort to check the report's authenticity, for he did not want to go out on the limb with another unfounded report. Reinhardt then called the Corps CG, Major General Clarence R. Huebner, who, in turn, notified the Army Commander, General Courtney L. Hodges. This upward notification undoubtedly went to the White House, the Kremlin, and number 10 Downing Street. Very quickly the word went back down the line to hold off all announcements, not to

make any firm agreements about meeting, and to thoroughly check the story of the reported contact.

Back at the regimental OP, photographers and correspondents began to flood in and add to the already-harried atmosphere there. The regimental commander was fairly positive in his own mind that contact had been made but the information at hand was not conclusive enough to give the whole picture. No one knew whether or not this single patrol had slipped through all the enemy forces by a fluke and then had the enemy close in behind it.

Within the hour, Kotzebue came through with another message which showed that negotiations were proceeding but not that the sector in between was clear nor with whom he was in contact: "Arrangements not complete. Will contact you later."

From where he stood, things looked very clear to Kotzebue. His patrol had ridden into Leckwitz and had met a lone uncommunicative Russian cavalryman in a farmhouse courtyard among a lot of displaced workers at 1130, asked him where his headquarters were, was on the west bank of the Elbe at 1230 to firm up the first physical union between the two Armies. The first contact was undramatic, but his meetings on the Elbe were very cordial. Having made the contact, he wanted to let regiment know what was going on, but did not want to say in a radio message specifically that he had met the Russians.

Kotzebue had gone from Leckwitz to the Elbe at Strehla, which he mistook for Groba on his map, where he crossed and engaged in some discussion with several Russian Officers before being returned to the west bank of the river and transported to another crossing site at a ferry farther north. He got off his message here, containing the wrong town coordinates, to Colonel Adams before he crossed to Kreinitz and met Major General Vladimir Rusakov, commanding general of the Russian 58th Guards Infantry Division.

While Kotzebue was across the river, being toasted and feted with his patrol, Colonel Adams was endeavoring to make at least partial and tentative arrangements for a meeting between himself and the Russian Commander. "In arranging meeting for Tryhard 6 (Colonel Adams)," the Colonel radioed at 1604, "select a point not further east than GC 670-162." This was the town of Calbitz, a midway point which the CO thought would be acceptable to the Russians.

But the time continued to drag on and there was nothing concrete forthcoming from the reported point of contact. Everyone at regiment and higher headquarters was on edge with expectancy.

Finally, General Reinhardt decided to try another method of obtaining concrete information. He told the Chief of Staff to have Adams hold off for the time being. As a result, Adams messaged the patrol at 1730: "Hold in abeyance arrangements for meeting until further orders. Report by courier not repeat not by radio size and identity of Russian unit. Time and place of

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contact, type of communication Russian unit has with its next higher headquarters. Maintain contact and inform me of any movement."

In order to clarify the picture for himself and to have a senior officer on the scene, General Reinhardt, at General Huebner's suggestion, then dispatched his G-3, Lieutenant Colonel Richard J. Conran, and an interpreter by liaison planes to the reported spot meeting, at the set of coordinates given by Kotzebue. These later turned out to be wrong and the liaison planes reached Riesa, flew overhead, looked and could find no indication of a group meeting, allegedly were fired upon by small arms flak, and returned to Division headquarters. This added doubt and confusion to that already existing. Still time dragged on and no meeting of the commanders was made.

Then in from Craig's patrol about 10 minutes after the "hold in abeyance" order came the report: "Have contacted Lieutenant Kotzebue who is in contact with the Russians."

This injected a new element into the situation. There were two reports of contact now, but neither of them said anything specifically. Regiment didn't know what sort of contact this latter patrol had made.

With Craig the story was different. His patrol had pushed on and on "just a little bit farther and maybe..." against orders with the full hell raising conspiratorial agreement of all its members. At Clanzchwitz they had been overtaken by a pair of jeeps from Kotzebue's patrol and told that he had made contact earlier in the day and at that time was on the east side of the Elbe, not far away. Craig immediately gave the order to move forward and join. His line of jeeps had just about cleared the town when the patrol member saw a column of horsemen approaching from the east along a tree-lined paralleled road on their right. The column stopped, the horsemen galloped up, everyone's mouth dropped open. It was the Russians! The time was 1645. The meeting was short; the Russians continued on their mission "to Dresden"; the patrol raced to Strehla, found nothing, turned north, crossed at Kreinitz, General Rusekov was on the east bank of the river and, after a long parley, during which it became clear to the General that this was another patrol, rather than the emissaries he had expected to see as a result of Kotzebue's radio messages, he took up the task of feting and toasting the new group. Both contacts thus far had come in the sector of his 175th Infantry Regiment, whose commander, Lieutenant Colonel Alexander T. Gardiev, was one of the most decorated heroes of the Soviet Union and his best regimental commander.

There was nothing to do but sit back and wait and drink toasts. A message which was sent from regiment at 1805 saying that two liaison planes were en route with the Division G-3 and an interpreter indicated that Division was going to do the negotiating. But, an hour later, when no one had arrived, Craig, who by this time had taken over supervision of all arrangements since the two patrols were now linked and he

was senior officer at the Elbe, still wanted to know if Colonel Adams also was on his way to meet the Russian General. It was nearly 2000 when this query reached the CP, where the perplexity was more profound now that the Division liaison planes had been turned back and Colonel Adams had been told by General Reinhardt to go ahead and try once more for a meeting himself. The CO still had no concrete word that arrangements were complete nor any idea that it was feasible to get through to the reported link-up point.

At 2004 he replied to Craig that he would leave as soon as arrangements were made and sat back, slumped in his accustomed chair in the corner of the room, holding his chin in his hand, the window terrace to his back. The situation was still very much up in the air. He had two patrols in supposed union with Russians out beyond where they were supposed to have been, the Division Commander was angry and, at the same time, anxious to firm up the reported contact, and yet there was nothing definite upon which he could act, although, in his own mind, he was morally certain that the long-awaited meeting of the Armies had taken place. The CP was still chaotic, although there was relative calm inside this S-2-S-3 office, which had once been a drawing room. In the light of the tasteful glass electric chandelier which hung from the ceiling in the middle of the room, he gazed around him at the big maps of the front on the opposite wall between the two entrance doors, beyond which he had earlier banished the horde of correspondents and photographers who had made the place almost a madhouse, at the journal clerks in the alcoves, at the rich rug on the floor, at the telephone next to him. He was in the middle stream of history but had to wait, while the rest of the world waited, too.

Then the telephone rang.

It was Major Victor G. Conley, CO of the 1st Battalion. What! What's that he is saying? My, God. He has four Russians at his CP and wants to know what to do with them? Where'd they come from, who brought them in, how? Robertson? Oh, 2nd Lieutenant William D. Robertson, S-2 of the battalion had gone hunting prisoners and brought them in? Yes, bring them to the regiment. The Colonel hung up and relayed the news to those in the room. The word was spread and the whole place went into an uproar.

At the battalion CP in Wurzen, Conley, who had recovered from his first incredulity at sight of the Russians when Robertson drove up with them on his lone jeep got the whole group together and they immediately took off for Trebsen, after drinking several toasts to the linkup. It was 2050 by the time they had sped down the road east of the Mulde, crossed the old bridge at Trebsen, and entered the CP. Excitement was everywhere and, in a very short time, the full story of these Russians was coming out. Not only had there been two contacts on the southern part of the zone, but Robertson had made another in the northern portion at Torgau. A few minutes later, Colonel Adams was on the telephone again, talking to the Chief of Staff and giving him the first fragments of what had

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happened. The atmosphere was tinged with pregnant news. The regimental journal tells the story in all its stark simplicity as the stenographer managed to scribble down snatches of information. Of Colonel Adams call to Colonel Lynch:

"Take this message to the General I have in my office a Russian officer of grade corresponding to Major. Brought in by Major Conley. I have prevented entrance to my office, except to my immediate staff. I am now questioning through an interpreter to obtain the info Corps desires. Meeting of commanders Russian and U.S. Armies has been requested by the Russian officers at 1000 tomorrow at Torgau. Further details later."

Then, the journal continues, as a report of the events which followed:

"Accompanied by Lieutenant Robertson in the vicinity of where they made first contact. Came from Russian Army at Torgau on the Elbe. The only contact Red 6 (Major Conley) knows of - made late this afternoon. An individual patrol from Red Battalion (the 1st battalion, 273rd) getting German prisoners to the cage. Coordinates 6441. Is NE from where Torgau is. Had one jeep out there. Jeep came back. Also a Russian Captain and Lieutenant Patrol from Major Conley's outfit. No one sent patrol. The S-2 was out, going east herding in P.W.'s. and were (sic) interrupted in this town by firing. P.W.'s told him Russians were across from the river. Did not go out to meet the Russians. First we knew of it was when the man came back with the Russian officer: Something wrong with the O. that cannot tell 5 miles from 25 miles. Tracer 6 (General Reinhardt) wants to know how it happened. Orders were not to go out over 5 miles. Wants to know why he got way up there."

The division commander was notified and was explosive in his wrath. His first reaction was to court-martial everyone concerned, since it appeared that his orders had been disobeyed. When he reported the incident to the Corps commander he in turn, received the whiplash of General Huebner's displeasure. Everyone had the same orders - not to go beyond 5 miles east of the Mulde. But the damage was done. What was the rest of the story? The journal again records fragments of Colonel Adams words to the Chief of Staff:

"Contact was made at 1640 at Torgau. The 173 Company (actually, 173rd Infantry Regiment) which belongs to the 58th Guards Division - commanded by Major General Rusakov. He requests a meeting at Torgau at 1000 tomorrow. Tryhard 6 (Colonel Adams) is ready to make it."

But, before he sanctioned any definite move, General Reinhardt wanted to find out the details for himself. The general's orders:

"Wants Major sent to Division CP so he can personally with G-2 interrogate them before he makes any decisions or informs anyone. How soon can we get him back there. Has radio and telephone with his next higher commander. He is commander of 173rd Company (actually, a member of the 173rd Regiment)."

The excitement was at fever pitch at regiment and the information was coming out in hasty, garbled, undigested bits. Back at the Elbe the other two patrols were still negotiating and, and at the same time, wondering what had happened to regiment. Craig and Morey had two guide parties on their way back and were going to remain where they were until the colonel arrived. They knew there was little, if any, resistance between the two rivers over the routes they traveled. The journal comments:

"Captain Morey and Lieutenant Kotzebue had contacted Russians on the Elbe. Have communication with the forward elm. Moved that element up. Have another contact. Lieutenant Kotzebue and Captain Morey's patrol is at the Elbe, or has been. That is the patrol that had the first contact."

That is the picture as it was known at regimental headquarters on the night of the 25th, before Colonel Adams and the Russians departed for Division headquarters. There was definite word that Kotzebue had made first contact, but the exact details as to what was going on at the Elbe were slow and few in coming through. Everyone was excited and, in the attempts to clarify exactly what had transpired, officially and unofficially, attention focused on the four Russians who were present. There were other contacts, yes, but this was tangible evidence. Hence, the other patrols were forgotten in the rush and the erroneous story of the first linkup was spread to the world by the over-eager news correspondents and photographers. There never was any doubt when Craig and Morey messaged:

"Have met the general and toasted the Armies."

They went on to say that he desired a meeting at their position east of the Elbe, where there was no bridge but a hand-made ferry, and that they would wait there while guides, who were then on their way back, returned with the official emissaries.

But, again under pressure of the moment's excitement and high drama, little attention was paid to these messages. The matter at hand was to get the Russians back to division as quickly as possible, since they said they were in combat and were desirous of returning to their outfits right away. In addition to the stranglehold on dissemination of the news in official circles, a news ban on the correspondents went into effect about 2100 that night. As previously agreed, official announcement was to come from the capitals of the United States, Russia, and Great Britain.

So, after a short period of eating and toasting at the regimental CP, the entire party took off in a bizarre convoy for division, with the scores of correspondents trailing behind to keep after the story which was coming out in fits and starts. The time was about 2230 and the trip to Naunhof, site of the Division CP, was short.

There, the Russians were introduced to General Reinhardt and the division commander again was given the same data as had been revealed at regiment earlier. Robertson, a short, quiet, tired lad with a stubble of beard, again went through the details of his trip to round up prisoners, a trip on which he rode to fame, despite the fact that his contact was not the first one.

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THE RUSSIAN-AMERICAN LINK-UP

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Ostensibly going out, in his role as S-2 of the 1st Battalion to round up P.W.'s and clear the sector of displaced persons, Robertson rolled up the road from Wurzen towards Torgau. He soon ran out of Germans, but not of miles. He kept going and reached the Elbe City. After much shilly-shallying, he managed to ready a home-made American flag, climbed the river bank tower of the castle in the town, and, after some palaver and some shooting, succeeded in making himself understood, through an interpreter, to the people on the east bank of the Elbe - the Russians.

The negotiations completed, he dropped quickly through the tower's winding stairs, raced around the wing of the building, scrambled out on the blown castle bridge across the river, and, when about 100 feet from the east bank, pounded a Russian soldier on the knees in greeting and grinned with joy. His contact was made at 1600. He continued to the east bank, parleyed, toasted and drank with the Russian officers and men who met him, and started back to Wurzen with four of their soldiers - three officers and one NCO. After a short delay at the P.W.'s camp in Torgau, they proceeded to the 1st Battalion CP. There, the battalion commander was shocked, but recovered quickly. He hastily called regiment and was told to bring them all to the CP.

That was the whole story. General Reinhardt, still upset that his orders seemed to have been observed rather carelessly, ultimately relaxed and felt the glow of pride that his division had been the first one to link with the Russian Army. There was a general round of toasting and good will, but the Russians were urgent in their desire to return. So, after instructing Colonel Adams to attend the meeting in Torgau at 1000 in the morning, and to go back with them that night, the party returned to regimental headquarters at about 0100. Because of the Russians' wish to return immediately, it wasn't long before everyone took off for Torgau. Just before leaving, Colonel Adams, aware that his other patrols still were at the Elbe, sent a message to Craig and Kotzebue at 0225 to "hold in abeyance until further orders all arrangements for further meeting." But the message still left them in the dark as to what had been going on elsewhere. At the river, most of the members of the two patrols had gone to bed, hoping that the morning would bring some action their way.

The center of focus slipped then to Torgau, where the colonel's party arrived at about 0530 and was rowed across the Elbe in a couple of out-sized racing shells. On the east bank they were met by the Russian Officers and men of the 173rd Infantry Regiment. In a scene marked by its spartan simplicity, sharply delineating the fact that only the day before this had been the front line and, even now, still was in a shady limbo of uncertain security since the Americans had reached across the long stretch of German territory in such scant strength, the visitors were eagerly entertained. Amid the hearty toasts of both sides time slipped by until, shortly after the agreed upon 1000, Colonel Adams and Colonel Rogol, CO of the 173rd met formally along the road which parallels the east bank

of the river. It was a quiet friendly meeting between two frontline commanders who realized that, at last, their act marked the near-end of the war in Europe.

After the swarms of photographers and correspondents had had their fill, the two colonels returned to the feasting and toasting, which continued until Colonel Adams had to leave in order to meet the division commander, whose meeting with the Russian division commander had been arranged for 1600. Shortly after noon, he departed and returned to Trebsen, leaving some of his staff to help with the preparations for General Reinhardt's arrival.

At regiment the general was told of the completion of arrangements for his meeting with the Russian commander and, shortly afterwards, journeyed to Torgau, via Eilenberg, without event. Rowed across the Elbe in the same racing shells as the regimental commander and his party. General Reinhardt was met on the east bank by a number of Russian staff officers and, after a slight delay through misunderstanding of the exact time, was greeted by Major General Rusakov. The two generals exchanged greetings and then both, with their parties, adjourned to the same time building about half-mile from the crossing site where Colonel Adams had toasted with Colonel Rogol, and the procedure was repeated. As usual, the photographers and correspondents swarmed all over the place, taking hundreds of pictures. After about two hours of cordiality, the 69th Division commander departed and returned to his division CP.

Meantime, in a disinterested and tired spirit, the members of the other patrols still were sitting on both sides of the river at Kreinitz, still unaware of what had happened at regiment and at Torgau. They sent a few questioning messages, wondering when someone was going to come out to them. But, mostly, they just waited. Then, about 1700, another patrol reached them, led by Lieutenant Colonel George C. Knight, the regimental executive officer, and conveyed the news of the other meeting. This was an anticlimax!

That evening back in Trebsen, everyone tried to gather together the bits and pieces of the events which had transpired in the two days. The main surge of excitement was past and the members of the regiment were tired. But the exact sequence of what had happened was still cloudy. Gradually, these facts were straightened out. But, all the next day, there was an eager anxiety to hear a formal announcement of the linkup. Finally, the word came that the official announcement would be broadcast to the world at 1800 that night, 27 April. At the time, from Washington, London, and Moscow, President Harry S. Truman, Prime Minister Winston S. Churchill, and Soviet Marshal Joseph Stalin, proclaimed simultaneously the news to the world. The meetings were history. The meetings of the higher commanders still were to come, but the main event was over.

Two weeks later, World War II in Europe was ended with the unconditional surrender of Germany.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: In the next issue of the bulletin, we will publish the personal interviews of those men directly involved in the Link-Up.)

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.

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Robert Crowe, Bob and Jean Ross, Melvin and Joan Schulz

Committee Members: Joe and Peggy Shields, Gerard and Carol Frechette,

Jack Houston, Stanley Crouch, Norman Steffen, Robert Hogan, Gerard Gillenback

Registration Forms, Details of Tours, etc. elsewhere in this issue.

Please register as soon as possible.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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AUGUST 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th, 2001

BATTERY C

880th FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION

Location: Wingate Inn

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For Information Call or Write:

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516 Chestnut Street

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SEPTEMBER 30th, 2001

Deadline for news material and pictures for:

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Bulletin expected mailing date is late November or early December.

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* * * * *

All members are welcome to all mini reunions of other units. If you would like to attend one of these mini reunions, please contact the mini reunion host. They will be glad to have you!

WIZARD OF ID by BRANT PARKER & JOHNNY HART



Submitted by: **Howitzer Al Kormas**, Headquarters Battery, 879th Field Artillery
12500 Edgewater Drive, #503, Cleveland, Ohio 44107-1673

The following verse was printed in the Times Leader newspaper. Bill Smith, a columnist who writes for and about veterans for the Times Leader wrote:

Some time ago I received some mail, and when I opened this particular envelope, its contents contained a single sheet of paper with a verse written upon it. On top is written, "Found in a fox hole in Germany in WWIL." I ordinarily do not print articles such as this but this particular verse got to me. Its title is simply,

"Hello God"

Look God, I have never spoken to you, but now I want to say, "How do you do?"

You see God, they told me you didn't exist, and like a fool I believed all of this.

Last night, from a fox hole, I saw your sky, and figured right then they'd told me a lie.

Had I taken time to see the things you made, I'd have known they weren't calling a spade a spade.

I wonder, God, if you would shake my hand. Somehow I feel you will understand.

Funny, I had to come to this hellish place, before I had time to see your face.

Well, I guess there isn't much more to say, but I'm sure glad, God, I met you today.

I guess the "Zero Hour" will soon be here, but I'm not afraid since I know you are near.

The signal ... Well God, I'll have to go, I like you a lot, this time I want you to know.

Look now, this will be a horrible fight. Who knows, I may come to your house tonight.

Tho' I wasn't friendly with you before, I wonder God, if you'd wait at your door.

Look, I am crying. Me shedding tears. I wish I'd known you these many years.

Well, I'll have to go now, God, goodbye.

Strange, since I met you, I'm not afraid to die.

Submitted by: **Mike Kutzmonich**

Company H, 271st Infantry Regiment

R.R. 2, Wapwallopen, Pennsylvania 18660-9672



“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.

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(Continued on Back Cover)

the 69th

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“Taps”

(Continued from Page 59)

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MARY MACKIEWICZ
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MARIAN SHADLE
Wife of Paul Shadle
Company E, 271st Infantry

A NOTE ABOUT PHOTOS: Members, if you send in photos that are so bad they are unrecognizable, we will not be able to publish them in the bulletin. We do expect a lot of the photos to be of a lesser quality and that is O.K., but if they are completely blurred out, we regrettably will not be able to publish them in the bulletin.

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