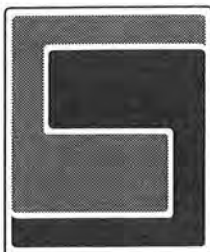


FIGHTING 69TH INFANTRY DIVISION

★★★★ *Association, Inc.*



VOLUME 55, NO. 3

www.69th-infantry-division.com

MAY — JUNE — JULY — AUGUST
2002

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

P.O. BOX 69
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bulletin

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Liberated Prisoners at Wurzen

April 25, 1945



Submitted By: **Ethel Glaser**, Wife of **Al Glaser**, *Company I, 273rd Infantry Regiment*
38753 Ryans Way, Palm Desert, California 92211

THE MAIL BOX

By Dottie Witzleb, Editor



Company E, 273rd Infantry Regiment

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Mr. Kent P. O'Kelly, P.O. Box 4598, Emerald Isle, North Carolina 28594-4598 — Co. C, 273rd: This letter was prompted by an item on page 27 of the Association Bulletin Vol. 55, No. 1.

I had tried hard to forget the awful experiences of the war, until at about the age of 70, the Biloxi Convention surprised me. By sheer accident, I discovered the existence of the association when I overheard the band leader (for the Biloxi reunion dinner) say something about the "69th Division." This was at an open-air concert on a Saturday near where I was living in Biloxi. Thus, I "woke up" and joined the Association that night.

The Bulletin item indicated the students were looking for stories about how we were drafted or enlisted. I did neither. Having tried to give this account of what happened several times, it was met with yawns and changes of subject only.

Anyway, my story must include my best friend, Bill Johnson. We grew up like brothers from babies through college. We became separated only because of the war. In my senior year of college, he joined the Air Corp and was soon killed over in Germany in a B-24 bomber. (We both had over 150 solo hours in Air Corp training.) The Air Corp gave us a choice - either join the Air Corp in Texas or finish college - no more trainees. I stayed in school and got my Mechanical Engineering degree.

From the school's R.O.T.C. I wound up at Ft. Benning, Georgia. The final week when my class was to receive lieutenant bars, we were on an exercise where I was injured by patrolling wires in a slit trench. Following a severe infection from which I recovered in a month or two, I was given Sgt. stripes and shipped off to a mud-hole called Camp Shelby.

Many stories have appeared in the Bulletins over the years which better tell the stories of units like mine, C Company, 273rd Infantry.

Yes, we were first to meet the Russians and I do recall seeing them and exchanging waves and shouts across the river at least a day or two before the highly publicized "first meeting."

My post-war experiences included a transfer to the 29th Division in Germany. Then back home in another 13-days on the stormy Atlantic in a Liberty Ship. At home it seemed everyone in America had forgotten about the war. No welcome home event for us.

My life since has been totally involved with the space program, beginning before the first space flight through development of the Space Station; being employed in the Engineering Departments of Northrays Grumman and Lockheed Martin.

Betsy Black, P.O. Box 521, Burlington, North Carolina 27216, Telephone 336/226-0809 or E-Mail blblack@bellsouth.net: I have recently received my first issue of the 69th Bulletin and am absolutely thrilled! I have been trying to find information regarding my dad who served in the 271st Infantry, Company C, and there on the back was that picture sent in by **Joe Melka** from that very company and it had Joe's address. I wrote him and today I received a picture of him and my dad. I am so excited about the Bulletin and look forward to receiving any back issues that are available. *See picture and story elsewhere in this issue.*

LeVerne Loveland, 517 Rosewood Terrace, Linden, New Jersey 07036-5832 — Co. G, 271st: I just completed reading Vol. 55, No. 2 and as usual enjoyed it. The article "Men of the Link-Up" by **Paul Staub** listing the three patrols' members at three different locations on page 36, which included the times of the contact, has intrigued my interest. Then on page 55, I read the article by **Frank Taraburelli** telling about his patrol meeting Russian soldiers on April 19, 1945.

Any infantryman knows from experience that advance scouting patrols consist of a small number of men usually traveling on foot. Since the Germans were on the run and facing defeat and most of the country was in Allied hands, it is understandable that many patrols were done by several jeeps in advance of large troop movements. And surely the Russians also had their advance patrols.

What **Mr. Staub** lists as Patrols #1 and #3 certainly are not advanced patrols, but an assortment of 2nd Battalion members who undoubtedly also made contact with Russian forces. Patrol #2, of which **Mr. Staub** was a member, would truly be classified as an advance patrol. We all know how the Army works. At times proper communications are not sent promptly back to higher headquarters, or if they are, those headquarters may have specific reasons not to act on them. It appears that General Reinhardt preferred to have the link-up at Torgau on the Elbe River.

If you recall your WWII history, the American troops liberated Paris, but General Eisenhower kept them from entering and gave the free French the honor of doing that. It was a smart political move.

(Continued on Page 3)

THE MAIL BOX

(Continued from Page 2)

So let's finally cease the discussion which has been going on for so many years about which unit made the "link-up" with the Russians and just be proud that it was the 69th Infantry Division. Who knows, that also could have been a planned political decision to honor the Fighting 69th!

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Although we have gone over and over the link-up controversy, we will continue to publish the opinions and recollections of our members. That is what the bulletin is for. LeVerne, we also appreciate and respect your continued input.)

Enrique Santiago Sojos, 1009 Genoveva De Arteaga, San Juan, Puerto Rico 00924 — Co. I, 273rd: I want to thank the Bulletin and everybody that's associated with the Bulletin for all the past information and pictures of old time buddies. I especially want to thank **Mrs. Ethel Glaser**, the wife of **Sergeant Al Glaser** for submitting a picture in Bulletin Vol. 55, #2 on page 30. There you will find a picture of myself and **Al Glaser**, the buddies standing behind us. I see that they marked me unknown. I am still alive and kicking and I'm 76 years old, and my name is **Henry "Sandy" Santiago**. I have been living in San Juan, Puerto Rico for the past 43 years. I have a family of 3 daughters and three grandchildren. In the picture I am so young, but not anymore. I have lost all of my hair, but I am still in good spirits. Thank you **Ethel** for submitting the picture. It brought back a lot of memories.

If you would like to e-mail photos or articles to the Bulletin, you can send it directly to our printer at:

buhlink@stargate.net

Just make sure in the subject line, you include "69th" and the printer will turn it over to Dottie for approval for publication. Thank you.

A Note from your Membership Chairman, Paul Shadle

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

**If you are reporting
Membership Information on the internet -
a New Member, a Deceased Member,
or a Change of Address,
please also notify me at the above address.**

This will save the Association time and money and help keep our roster up to date.

A Note from Dottie, Your Bulletin Editor

Summer has finally arrived and it is time to think about attending the reunion this year in Hampton, Virginia from September 22nd to September 29th. I told you in the last bulletin I was going to visit a girl-friend of mine I had not see in over 15 years. What a great time we had talking about old times and catching up on all those years. Wouldn't it be nice if you went to the reunion and met someone you had not seen in 40 or 50 years. This has happened before and the men could not believe how much it had meant to them to meet an Army buddy after all these years. Friendships have been renewed and new ones have been made. Some of you who have never attended a reunion, please plan to do so soon before it is too late. Remember, we are all getting older now. Hope to see you in September.

I hope you have a very enjoyable summer and remember if you are a snowbird, please let me or **Paul Shadle**, Membership Chairman, know your winter address if you wish to have a bulletin sent to you.

A Note to the Snowbirds

When you go to your winter home, the post office does not forward the mail that is not first class. This includes your 69th Division Bulletin.

If we get a bulletin that is marked temporarily away, it costs the division 60 cents to get the bulletin back without your forwarding address. I usually do not get these back, as they do not give me the information that I do need to forward a bulletin.

If you would like to receive the bulletin when you are in the warmer climate, please let me know your winter address, when you are leaving for the warmer climate, and also when you plan to return home. This way, I will be able to send your bulletin first class to the winter address. The cost of first class is usually \$1.28. Thank you.

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.

69ers PLEASE HELP

Family Looking for Info on Thomas Arnold Turner, Jr.

Submitted By: **Susan Turner McMillan**

11540 West Baker Hollow Road

Columbus, Indiana 47201

Home 812/342-7463 • Work: 1-800-468-6564

My father, **Thomas Arnold Turner, Jr.** pictured on pages 163-164 of the Fighting 69th Infantry Division history published by Turner Publishing Company (no relation) died without leaving much information about his time in the 69th Infantry Division. My family is trying to establish some facts about his service. We do not even know which infantry regiment and company, or artillery battalion and battery, or supporting unit he was assigned to.

If you knew him, please write and let us know which unit he was assigned to and any information you can furnish about your acquaintance with him.

We believe he received a Silver Star at one time, but we do not know the story or facts of this award either. **If this gives anyone a hint, Frank Mankiewicz the Hollywood producer may have been in his unit.**

Again, I certainly thank you all of you for your assistance in this matter. Any information would be much appreciated.

HAVE YOU PAID YOUR DUES!

**Hope You Paid Your 2001-2002 Dues,
and if not, you better mail it in
because the New Dues Year is Upon Us!**

NEW DUES YEAR FOR 2002-2003

August 1, 2002 to July 31, 2003

Regular Membership \$10.00

Ladies' Auxiliary \$ 5.00

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Send Your Dues in Today!***

Send Your Dues To:

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West Islip, New York 11795-0474

Telephone: 631/669-8077

Do not send dues to Dottie Witzleb.

New Men Relocated Since Our Last Bulletin

Brian Barth - Headquarters, 272nd Infantry
12551 Castilla Place, Indianapolis, Indiana 46236

Richard Bentley - Company K, 271st Infantry
205 South 16th Street, Las Vegas, Nevada 89101

Burnell Brocious - Company G, 271st Infantry
2816 Meadow Avenue
Fort Myers, Florida 33901-6229

Ruben Cameron
P.O. Box 134, Reynolds, North Dakota 58275

Richard W. Copenhagen - Company B, 273rd Infantry
4506 Enchanted Mist Drive, Humble, Texas 77346

Norman D. DeMouth - Company E, 271st Infantry
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Harold P. Denet - Company B, 273rd Infantry
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Lafitte, Louisiana 70067

Ambrose R. Facio
1280 N. Harrison, Fresno, California 93728

Stephen Formel - Headquarter AT, 273rd Infantry
2136 Route 11, Hillsdale, New York 12529

James N. Freeland
120 E. 73rd Street, #3A, New York, New York 10021

Noble E. Goode - Company L, 271st Infantry
1204 E. Uppingham Drive
Thousand Oaks, California 91360

Joseph C. Gregory - ASC, 271st Infantry
3126 Satellite, San Antonio, Texas 78217

Jim Hendrix - Company I, 273rd Infantry
123 Browns Fishcamp Road
Crescent City, Florida 32113

U.S. Army Military History Institute
22 Ashburn Drive Carlisle Barracks
Carlisle, Pennsylvania 17013-5008

Albert J. Leschinski - Headquarter, 272nd Infantry
43 Disbrow Road, Matawan, New Jersey 07747

Thomas McManis - Battery B, 879th F.A.
43 Meadow Drive, Spencerport, New York 14559

Nate Morthern - Battery A, 880th F.A.
2205 Bunker Hill Circle, Plano, Texas 75075-2923

Alex Smerkanich - Company B, 272nd Infantry
152 Orchard Lane
Hatfield, Pennsylvania 19440-2426

James G. Tyson - Company C, 271st Infantry
P.O. Box 659, Bell Arthur
North Carolina 27811-0659

Message from the President



Raymond Sansoucy
Anti-Tank Company, 272nd Regiment
23 Paradox Drive
Worcester, Massachusetts 01602
Telephone: 508/754-8786

Dear Members,

We have a few items that we need to address as soon as possible.

Vice President **William Ruebsamen** will be resigning as Vice President. If anyone is interested in this position please contact me at the above phone number.

With the untimely death of our Ace Photographer, **Tom Yelcich**, we need someone to become our replacement for **Tom**. Do we have any volunteers?

Also, we need to buy granite bricks for our monument at Camp Shelby. When I attended the grand opening of the Armed Forces Museum, I was disappointed to notice the lack of bricks at our monument. Other divisions had the ground covered, we had none.... I know we have sold some since, but we can pave the bare ground around our beautiful monument like others have already done.

Let's all turn out for our next reunion in Virginia in September. **Bob** and **Theresa Pierce** have a great place at an awesome price lined up for us. They and their convention committee have done a lot of work. All we have to do is get there. We promise you that you won't regret it. It is certainly worth the effort.

Mr. Jack Hartzog would like to thank everyone who responded to his note concerning the patch that he requested.

He received numerous letters, patches and phone calls and HIS MISSION IS ACCOMPLISHED!

Thank you all once again.

Web Site News

Our web site has two new links that will really help 69ers, their families and friends by showing the soldiers and telling the stories from the WWII years. These links are:

COMPANY PHOTOS and **UNIT HISTORIES**

Just go to our Home Page:

www.69th-infantry-division.com
and click on the buttons with those labels.

The COMPANY PHOTOS link aims to display each Company, Battery or Special Unit in a posed picture with all of its soldiers shown during training or at the close of combat. But so far, the only Regiment on the web site with a complete set of photos of all units is the 272nd Infantry Regiment which published a regimental history with these photos in June 1945. Other Company and Battery photos have been added as available, taken from issues of the *Bulletin* from January-April 1994 to the present.

If you have copies of *Bulletins* dated 1993 and earlier, please check them for Company or Battery Photos, and contact:

Joe Lipsius

6314 Deerings Hollow

Norcross, Georgia 30092-1800

Telephone: 770/416-7725

E-Mail: annejoelip@earthlink.net

We will determine whether your Bulletin has a suitable and needed company photo. Also contact us if you have an original company photo that is not already on the web site.

The same applies to UNIT HISTORIES. You will find many fascinating and fact-filled histories already on our web site, but many more are needed. If you have a copy of your official unit history that is not on the site, please contact Joe Lipsius.

Help us build a better web site!

Found! **Back Bulletin Issues** **Starting with 1987**

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

If anyone is interested in back issues, please write to me at the above address. **Dottie** and I are currently compiling a list of what will be available and we will publish it in the next issue of the Bulletin. The cost of shipping and handling will be your responsibility.

Those Darned Friendly Russians!

Submitted By: **Ed Smaldone**

Company K, 272nd Infantry Regiment

508 White Springs Road

Geneva, New York 14456

Telephone: 315/789-1340 • E-Mail: N!!2@fltg.net



Ed Smaldone aboard the S.S. Aiken - July 1946

In the last great edition of the 69th Division Bulletin, I wrote about some of the humorous instances that occurred during wartime. This time I would like to relate other more serious happenings that stick in my mind.

This event happened a few days after we met the Russians April 25, 1945. **John Smreczak** and I, along with two Russian soldiers, were sent out to guard a railroad trestle with a large switching yard and a depot. I was looking out a window towards a wooded section when I spotted an elderly couple in an opening. I nudged **Smreczak** and remarked that they were either lost or running for sanctuary from the Russians. We notified the Russians that we were going out to get them, which we did. Unknown to us, the Russians informed the Officer of the Day which happened to be a Russian Major and told him what was happening. When we returned the Major insisted we hand over the couple. **Smreczak** informed him that they were our prisoners. He pulled his rank and threatened us with insubordination. He then took the couple back into the woods and had them shot.

The first time we made contact with the Russians was quite an experience. We were walking along a country road in staggered formation in somewhat flat

terrain. Up ahead of us was a steep hill. We had just stopped for a break and were reassembling when all of a sudden all hell broke loose. We were being fired on by Russian troops on horse drawn vehicles with mounted machine guns. We scattered to both sides of the road. We all had one single thought, what a way to die - by friendly fire. We had been given small American flags so that we would be recognized and the Russians were given flags also. But they were too small to be seen. This kept up for a few minutes until **Smreczak** hollered out in Russian who we were. All this time we never fired back. They explained to us later that it was their way of greeting us. With friends like this, who needs enemies.

As usual, during the war we would pick up different souvenirs. I happened along a flashlight that I had never seen before. Don't ask me how it worked. All I know is that if I kept pushing a lever on the bottom, the flashlight lit up. I carried that sucker across Germany for months. When we were pulling out and the Russians were taking over our positions, I handed the flashlight to a Russian and motioned for him to keep it. A few minutes later this same guy handed me a pistol. I stuck it in my fatigue jacket. When we had a break I took a closer look at the pistol. It had home-made handle grips and the barrel's two sides were uneven. I don't know if this guy was trying to tell me something or if it was the start of the cold war. I chucked it into the woods.

I'm going to close these war tales for brevity's sake, and with permission of the 69th Bulletin's editorial staff I will relate, God willing, some more unusual events that occurred while I was in service.

I am so grateful that they published my article, which has resulted in several phone calls from 69th Division veterans. Many thanks.



*Aboard the victory ship, S.S. Aiken - July 1946
Left-Ed Smaldone, Fulcher-Center, Right-Unknown*

69th Infantry Division Association 55th Annual Reunion HAMPTON, VIRGINIA

September 22nd thru September 29th, 2002

HOLIDAY INN
1815 West Mercury Boulevard
Hampton, Virginia



Robert and Theresa Pierce

Reunion Committee Chairpersons:

Bob and Theresa Pierce

Company I, 273rd Infantry

144 Nashua Court

San Jose, California 95139-1236

Telephone: 408/226-8040

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Ed and Louise Hill Registration

Erwin and Carmen Sanborn Hospitality

Bob Crowe Seating Assignment

Bob and Jean Ross Souvenirs

Bob Pierce Tours/Entertainment

Committee Members:

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George and Rita Wolff

Fred Avery

Joe Huber

George Phillips

Wilfred Ferda

Vivian Bailey

G. Scott Gresham

Keith Vickers

Frank Balicky

Archie Moore

* * * * *

HOLIDAY INN,

HAMPTON HOTEL & CONVENTION CENTER

The hotel is a large property at Exit 263-B at I-64 and Mercury Boulevard. It sets with a cluster of eight hotels surrounded by 13 acres of beautiful landscaped grounds. There are 321 rooms with plenty of convenient free parking. The main area of the hotel is a very large three-story atrium-style open room with a

restaurant, indoor swimming pool, exercise room, whirlpool, sauna, and gift shop, a cocktail lounge and seating areas in the centers. Complimentary airport transportation is provided to/from Newport News/Williamsburg International Airport. The hotel will arrange transportation to/from Norfolk Airport at a cost of \$10 per person round trips.

Room rates are \$55 per night single or double. These rates will apply 3 days prior and 3 days after the Reunion dates. Coupons will be furnished to each guest for discounts from 10-25% for each meal in the Tivoli Gardens Restaurant.

Coliseum Central. The hotel is located in "Coliseum Central," the largest retail and commercial center on the Virginia Peninsula, with four major shopping complexes plus many freestanding stores and smaller shopping centers. Across Mercury Boulevard from the hotel is Coliseum Mall, a complex a half-mile long, featuring 120 speciality stores, five department stores, "The Food Place" with ten restaurants plus a full service cafeteria.

There is food service galore within walking distance, in addition to the fine dining in the surrounding hotels. On the Mercury Boulevard are all the fast food and inexpensive chains: Waffle House, IHop, McDonalds, Jack in the Box, Denny's, Kentucky Fried Chicken, etc. On Coliseum Drive by the Mall is a restaurant row with the mid-to-higher priced dining establishments with a large variety of popular national chains, many with entertainment. For the gentlemen who are young at heart, "Hooters" is only a half block from the hotel, open for lunch through closing time.

Getting around in Hampton is convenient with the Hampton Trolley that connects to Coliseum Central area to the downtown waterfront with the Visitors Center and historic Queensway District. Trolley also provides service from Coliseum Central hotels to nearby shopping centers. Trolley picks up riders at each stop including the Holiday Inn, every 30 minutes, admission 25¢.

HAMPTON, VIRGINIA

Hampton is located in a region called Hampton Roads that describes both a body of water and a geographic region. Hampton Roads, the waterway, is one of the finest natural harbors in the world. The geographic region encompasses the cities of Chesapeake, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Poquoson, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Virginia Beach and Williamsburg.

The first boatload of English settlers to set foot on American soil was at Hampton in 1607, before moving up-river to found Jamestown. Hampton is the oldest continuous English speaking settlement in the U.S. Hampton is the site of the first Christmas celebrated in the New World when starving colonists from Jamestown visited the Kecoughtan Indians in December 1608 and shared oysters, fish and holiday cheer.

(Continued on Page 8)

UPCOMING 55th ANNUAL REUNION

(Continued from Page 7)

Spanish pirates roamed the waters off the colonies of Virginia until 1718 when the famous pirate, Blackbeard, was killed in a fierce battle. After the battle his head was displayed on a spike at what is now Blackbeard's Point on the Hampton River. Hampton has the dubious claim to be the first city in America where the first African slaves were brought in 1619. Today they boast of their deep roots in African-American heritage with more than a dozen African-American Historic Sites.

HOTEL AND REUNION REGISTRATION CUT-OFF DATE

Hotel Registration and Reunion/Tour Events Registration Forms both have important deadline due dates this year of **August 22, 2002.**

Hotel room rates have a very special Reunion price of \$55.00 with an absolute cut-off date of August 22, 2002. Reservations received after August 22nd will cost the regular rate of about \$89.00 plus tax.

Reunion Registration for Tours and Events have become a critical issue in recent years because of minimum guaranteed attendance requirements. Food service minimum guarantees only allow a 5% overage, attendance above the 5% are priced at 150% of the meal service cost. Tour companies require payment in full up to three weeks in advance with no refunds.

Late registrations have been a real inconvenience; and no-shows have caused your Association to pay for tours/food service never received. Banquet Dinner reservations received after the deadline date may not be seated with their friends but assigned to open seating. Tour reservations received after the deadline will be accepted on a stand-by space available basis.

Please honor the Reunion Registration date of August 22, 2002. Call the Treasurer or Reunion Chairman to cancel if you cannot meet your Registration commitment.

SCHEDULED TOURS & EVENTS

Colonial Williamsburg and Yorktown Tour

Depart via motor coach with a tour guide to 18th Century Williamsburg. Along the way your guide will provide an interesting narration of the Virginia Peninsula and Hampton Roads area. In Williamsburg, a historical interpreter will guide you through the events that helped shape America's history. The leisurely walking tour through the restored area of this lovely colonial Capitol City is about two hours. Following the tour, enjoy free time to browse through Merchants Square, a quaint picturesque shopping area with its many unique specialty shops. Enjoy lunch on your own in Merchants Square or the colonial taverns. This overview tour does not include admission tickets to exhibits such as the Capitol Building or Governors Palace. A complete tour is much more expensive and would require a full day at Williamsburg.

After a short bus ride we will visit the historically famous Yorktown where British Lord Cornwallis surrendered to General George Washington to end the American Revolution. View the exhibits at the Yorktown National Park Service Center, watch a short film and see the battlefields.

Ocean View Beach, Fort Monroe - Casemate Museum and Jamestown

Enjoy a motor coach ride along the Chesapeake Bay on Ocean View Avenue, with a stop on the overlook at Susan Constant Shrine. Next stop is Fort Monroe, the largest stone fort ever built in the U.S. See the beautiful Centurion Chapel where Dwight D. Eisenhower's son was married; and the Old Point Lighthouse. Inside Ft. Monroe we will visit the Casemate Museum, where exhibits include the prison cell of Confederate President Jefferson Davis, kept exactly like it was when he was imprisoned. There are many Civil War artifacts including displays related to the Battle of the Monitor and Merrimac.

We will stop for lunch on your own, continuing to Jamestown Settlement on the James River. At Jamestown we will step back in time through the portals of living history. Costumed interpreters are guides to the past. Exhibits include replicas of the three ships that arrived at Jamestown in 1607. There are also replicas of Powhatan Indian Village and James Fort.

Norfolk City Tour:

MacArthur Memorial, MacArthur Center and a Harbor Cruise on the Carrie B.

Board the motor coach with your tour guide and learn about Norfolk's colorful 320-year history as you ride through the lovely historic district and restored areas. View the stately homes along the Hague, old St. Pauls Church, the Moses Myers House, the Chrysler Museum of Art, the historic Freemason District, Nauticus, the Battleship Wisconsin, and many other points of interest. Visit the Douglas MacArthur Memorial located in Norfolk's restored 1850 City Hall for a glimpse into our country's history. During your visit you will view the outstanding collection of artifacts, documents, photographs and memorabilia which trace the life and times of five-star General Douglas MacArthur. You will also have the opportunity to view the 25-minute film which chronicles General MacArthur's life. The General is entombed in the rotunda of the memorial. Enjoy a stop at the brand new MacArthur Center located in the heart of downtown Norfolk, anchored by Nordstroms and Dillards, and offering over 150 specialty shops, boutiques and restaurants. Lunch on your own at the center. Following lunch, board the Carrie B, a reproduction of a Mississippi-style paddle wheeler, for a two and one-half hour narrated tour of the Hampton Roads Harbor. Cruise past the Norfolk Naval Base, the largest naval installation in the world where you will see the mighty aircraft carriers, submarines and many other types of ships.

(Continued on Page 9)

UPCOMING 55th ANNUAL REUNION

(Continued from Page 8)

Hampton City and the Virginia Air and Space Center

Motor coach transportation will take the group to downtown Hampton on the Hampton River. First stop will be a group tour of the \$30 million Virginia Air and Space Center. The world class facility features more than 100 "Hands-On" exhibits that tell the story of Air and Space Exploration. Among the exhibits is the Apollo 12 Command Module, a Mars Meteorite and a three billion year old Moon Rock. Hampton was the first training center for NASA where the first astronauts, the Mercury Seven, were trained. The Center offers historical and interactive exhibits highlighting the history of flight.

The tour includes the IMAX Theater with a giant five-story screen with 16,000 watts of surround-sound. The theater features films related to flight, exploration, and science. After the Air & Space Tour, the group will be given a ride on the Hampton Carousel. Built in 1920, the Carousel has been completely restored to its original beauty and is housed in its own weather-protected pavilion on the waterfront. Great group photo opportunity!

The group will now be on their own for lunch and a self-guided tour of downtown Hampton (maps will be furnished). Visit the historic Queen's Way Retail District; the harbor with commercial fishing boats; and see the charm of stately Victorian homes. Don't miss St. John's Church established in 1610, it's the oldest continuous English-speaking parish in the U.S. There is a recorded message introducing visitors to the church and its features, which include a stained-glass window depicting the baptism of Pocahontas and a museum located in the parish hall.

Group Night Out at Fisherman's Wharf

We will test the claim that Hampton Roads has the best seafood in the world. Wednesday evening, we will dine at the Fisherman's Wharf overlooking Hampton Roads Harbor. This restaurant claims to be the largest and finest seafood buffet on the coast featuring over 75 items fresh off the boat. For those who cannot eat seafood, the buffet includes several varieties of beef, chicken, and pork entrees. We will have a private room reserved at the Fisherman's Wharf with room for over 200 people. Come join the group for an all-you-can-eat seafood buffet. Price includes service charge, tax and bus transportation.

FOOD SERVICE

Early Bird Buffet

Waldorf Salad, Ham and Macaroni Salad, Potato Salad and fresh fruit Ambrosia, sliced Round of Beef, baked herb-roasted Chicken, and broiled Flounder; roasted herb red bliss potatoes, and Fettuccini Alfredo; green bean almondine and corn on the cob; selected varieties of desserts; hot rolls and butter; and, coffee and iced tea.

Banquet Dinner

There are two entree choices: Prime Rib Roast of Beef or Chicken Cardinal with shrimp in a lobster cream sauce. Dinner includes salad, fresh vegetable, potato, rolls and butter, dessert, coffee and iced tea.

Breakfast Buffet

Assorted juices, dry cereals, fresh fruit, French Toast with maple syrup, omelettes cooked to order, cheese blintzes, biscuits and sausage gravy, home-fried potatoes, grits, coffee, tea, butter and preserves.

69th Infantry Division Association

56th Annual Reunion

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

August 17th thru August 24th, 2003

ST. LOUIS AIRPORT MARRIOTT HOTEL

I-70 at Lambert Int'l Airport

St. Louis, Missouri 63134

In past years we struggle to find a Reunion Chairman who was willing to organize a committee in any location. Consequently, last minute decisions hindered our selections, choices, and bargaining leverage. Since we formed a semi-permanent committee, choices and prices have been more flexible with good results. This flexibility has now allowed us to project our Annual Reunions two years in advance.

The gnawing problem now is getting enough worker bees to assist the committee chairman. The appeal for help at the Ft. Mitchell Reunion this year was a huge success - we now have a large group of volunteers for Hampton.

St. Louis will be more difficult because there are only 11 members in the area. Now is the "Call to Arms" or as Uncle Sam says "I Need You." Please volunteer to help your Association have continuous, pleasant and successful Reunions. More on this subject in subsequent Bulletins.

St. Louis is an outstanding choice for a Reunion; it is located almost in the center of the Continental United States; accessible by land, air, and rivers; has a very significant historic background; and is the heart and soul of Mark Twain and Mississippi River Boats; St. Louis Blues music, sports; Gateway to the West; and, home of Budweiser Beer.

The next Bulletin will describe the Marriott Hotel, attractions, events, local transportation, shopping, gambling, and areas of interests. There will also be a brief description of the history of St. Louis and its many cultural to fame.

Robert L. Pierce

Reunion Committee Chairman

144 Nashua Court • San Jose, California 95139-1236

Telephone: 408/226-8040

271st Medical Battalion

Submitted By: **Anita K. Lee**
Wife of: **Charles Lee** (deceased)
2155 Paulding Avenue
Bronx, New York 10462



Germany 1945: Millis, Kowal and Horstedt



Bremerhaven, Germany - January 1946



Bremen, Germany - November 1945



Chow Call - Pegou, Germany - 1945



Kowal and Carter, Germany 1945

Jane Matlach receives letter of thanks from Colditz Project

Submitted By: **Melissa Parker and Adam English**

Melissa Park
43 Aberavon Road
London, England E3-5AR

(EDITOR'S NOTE: A few years back, Melissa and Adam appealed to the 69th for assistance in gathering information regarding Colditz Castle which was used as a Nazi prison during World War II. The 69th helped to liberate those prisoners. Bill Matlach went out of his way to assist them. Thus, the reason for this letter.)

Dear Jane and Family,

My apologies that we have not written to you until now. Adam and I had no idea that **Bill** had passed away until we saw the Bulletin. We were shocked and saddened to hear the news although we had never met Bill. How devastated you must be. Bill made a big impression on both of us in the short time that we knew him - in fact if it had not been for Bill then there would not have been a "Nazi Prison Escape."

I don't know if you remember how it all started, but we were given Bill's name and number by **William Beswick** as someone who could help us make this Colditz documentary. I did not know Bill's official role in the Association and only realized later that it was his long experience and dedication to the 69th that led to the recommendation. So, when I phoned you that day and you told me that Bill was at the 1999 Annual Reunion, I sent off my fax appeal to him at the hotel, little thinking there would be any result. After all, none of the men of the 69th who had liberated the P.O.W. camp in Colditz had been found and interviewed on camera since the war; over forty books had been written about the place and the events of 1945 but none had first-hand testimony from the liberators. It took Bill and his extraordinary dedication and kindness to change all that. Bill read out my appeal and as a result three liberators appear in "Nazi Prison Escape."

Adam and I did not go on to make the programme but we did the initial research to which Bill was the key, giving us access to the truth after 55 years of misinformation, myth and story-telling. Because of him, some of the ex-P.O.W.'s of Colditz are today in contact with their wartime liberators and this gives them real pleasure. One of the ex-G.I.'s whose hand went up at that meeting even came out to England to meet one of the ex-P.O.W.'s - it didn't happen due to illness, but it still may, and it would be the only time it has happened since the end of the war.

Whenever I rang Bill for help or whenever Adam did, he was always so obliging. He would say he was just enjoying a pre-dinner cocktail with you - we would be put at our ease although we knew we were being demanding and a little intrusive. I was so sorry when we had to leave the company we were working for and therefore back out of the documentary. I felt as though I had not fulfilled my part of the bargain when Bill had done so much to bring this project about. I was also sorry that I would not have to ask Bill for help again.

Long after Adam and I were off the project, I was contacted by the daughter-in-law of the Battalion Surgeon who had tended the victims of a shooting in the concentration camp of Colditz during the liberation. Bill knew that I had been looking for this man and by some extraordinary coincidence his daughter-in-law had appealed to the Association for information about his wartime experiences, leading Bill to put us together. I gave her all my research and I know she is now on a journey piecing another part of previously unknown Colditz history together. This would not have happened if it had not been for Bill.

He touched many lives in the brief time we knew him. I imagine he wrought many small miracles during his life. How wonderful to be married to such a man. How sad to lose him. Adam and I will never forget him and if we have a pre-dinner cocktail tonight we'll raise a glass to Bill. Here's to lovely, kind man who went above and beyond the call of duty.

Our deepest sympathy to you and your family.

Combat History of Fighting 69th Needed

Submitted By: **Horace R. Drew, Jr.**

881st Field Artillery Battalion
861 Waterman Road N.
Jacksonville, Florida 32207-5240
Lt. Col. U.S.A.R. (Ret.) 0-379891

During the war I served with **Colonel Conran** in Division G-3, making nightly runs to flanking divisions on liaison duty and otherwise as ordered. My war letters to my new wife, Lt. Rae Berger, Signal Corps, are now being prepared for publication.

I am in need of a combat summary from November 1944 to May 7, 1945 of the 69th, and especially between Le Harve, France and the "Liberation" of Leipzig, Germany. A detailed war map would be great. Due credit will be given to the source of such information. The letters only show for example "somewhere in Germany" and I'm having trouble recalling details. Anything will be appreciated!

Thank you for publishing my "War Interlude" from my family history "Our Story."

**69th INFANTRY DIVISION ASSOCIATION 2001
55th ANNUAL REUNION
461st AAA BN. - 661st T.D. BN. - 777th TANK BN.
Holiday Inn • Hampton, Virginia
SEPTEMBER 22nd thru SEPTEMBER 29th, 2002**

SEND THIS RESERVATION FORM TO:

ATTENTION: RESERVATIONS

HOLIDAY INN

1815 WEST MERCURY BLVD., HAMPTON, VA 23666-3229

Telephone: 757/838-0200 or 1/800-842-9370 • Fax: 757/838-4964

Please reserve one of the following:

\$55.00 + Single _____ \$55.00 + Double _____ \$65.00 + Triple _____ \$75.00 + Quad _____

ALL ROOMS ADD 12% TAX

Print full names of ALL persons sharing room: _____

NOTE: Special accommodations required: (if available)

HANDICAPPED EQUIPPED _____ NON-SMOKING _____

KING SIZE BED _____ QUEEN SIZE BED _____ 2 DOUBLE BEDS _____

I / We plan to arrive (day) _____, September _____, 2002. (Check in after 4:00 p.m.)

I / We plan to depart (day) _____, September _____, 2002. (Check out before 11:00 a.m.)

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

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

Send Confirmation to: (Please Type or Print)

Name: _____

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

City / State / Zip: _____

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

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

Check or Money Order (one night's lodging plus tax) payable to the HOLIDAY INN, or

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

American Express Master Card VISA Diner's Club Discover

Credit Card Name _____ Number _____ Expires _____

I, (your signature) _____ authorize the HOLIDAY 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 22, 2002**. 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 regular rate. Group rates will be honored for three (3) 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

55th ANNUAL REUNION

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

HOLIDAY INN • HAMPTON, VIRGINIA

SEPTEMBER 22nd thru SEPTEMBER 29th, 2002

Registration form to be mailed to: **Jane 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 Hampton, Virginia during the week of September 22nd thru September 29th, 2002 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: _____

Guest's Full Name: _____

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 22nd — Early Arrivals on your own.				
Monday, September 23rd — Registration and Hospitality Room Open				
Tuesday, September 24th — COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG and YORKTOWN				
8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.		\$ 30.00		\$
Wednesday, September 25th — OCEAN VIEW BEACH, FT. MONROE.....		\$ 32.00		\$
CASEMATE MUSEUM and JAMESTOWN, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.				
FISHERMAN'S WHARF SEAFOOD BUFFET, 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.		\$ 32.00		\$
Thursday, September 26th				
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING — 8:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.				
HAMPTON CITY, VIRGINIA AIR AND SPACE CENTER,				
with IMAX and Carousel, 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.		\$ 16.00		\$
EARLY BIRD BUFFET, Cash Bar 6:00 p.m.; Dinner 7:00-9:00 p.m.		\$ 30.00		\$
Friday, September 27th — NORFOLK CITY, MacARTHUR MEMORIAL				
MUSEUM, MacARTHUR CENTER and HARBOR/NAVAL BASE CRUISE.....		\$ 34.00		\$
9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.				
PX BEER PARTY — 8:30 p.m. to 12:00 Midnight		\$ 5.00		\$
Saturday, September 28th — 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 - 7:30 p.m. to 12:00 Midnight				
Entrée Choices: Prime Rib _____ or Chicken Cardinal		\$ 30.00		\$
Sunday, September 29th - Farewell Breakfast - 7:30-9:30 a.m.		\$ 12.00		\$
Replacement Cost for Lost or Broken Permanent Badges		\$ 4.00		\$
SUPPORT YOUR HOSPITALITY ROOM: DONATIONS PLEASE!!!				\$
DUES — New Dues Year - August 1, 2002 to July 31, 2003			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. **MAIL IN CUT-OFF IS AUGUST 22nd.**

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.

Preserve & Honor Your 69th Division - Donate to the "Buy A Brick" Program

At Camp Shelby, Mississippi, where the 69th Infantry Division began its training and earned its original nickname, "Bolte's Bitching Bivouacking Bastards," a multi-million-dollar facility was dedicated October 27th, 2001. The Armed Forces Museum's mission is to honor the services and sacrifices of Mississippi servicemen and women of all branches of the service and those from other parts of the country that trained in Mississippi during times of war.

The Fighting 69th Infantry Division and other veterans organizations have dedicated monuments on the grounds of The Armed Forces Museum. You can see the 69th's monument by visiting its Web site and the sub link "Memorials" and "Camp Shelby."

Another way available to honor a group or individuals is the Museum's "Buy A Brick Program" which offers patrons the opportunity to personalize stones or bricks placed in The Court of Honor or elsewhere depending on the size. Proceeds from this program help support the Museum. Purchases are tax deductible and a lasting way to commemorate the service of a group, individual or yourself.

A group of 69ers decided it would be fitting to "Buy A Brick" in memory of **William R. Matlach** who died October 16th, 2001. Bill had served as Association Treasurer for the past few years and held every major office in the Association. A drive was undertaken by mailing letters to 45 69ers seeking to raise money to buy a Signature Stone (\$250) of gray granite (12"x12") to be placed in the Museum's Court of Honor. The effort was more than successful. A proof of Bill's Signature Stone is shown.

Enough excess funds were also received to buy an 8"x8" brick. Several donors agreed for this to be used to honor **Tom Yelcich** who was dubbed The Association's official photographer several years ago. Tom died suddenly this year on Easter weekend. A proof of the brick for Tom is also displayed on the following page.

**WILLIAM R MATLACH
WEST ISLIP NY
1ST LT PLATOON LEADER
CO E 273RD INF RGT
69TH INF DIV
PRES VP SEC TREAS
FIGHTING 69TH INF DIV
ASSOCIATION, INC**

Bill Matlach's signature stone of gray granite, 12x12

**TO HONOR ALL WHO
SERVED IN THE 69th
INFANTRY DIVISION
FROM ACTIVATION
MAY 15, 1943
CAMP SHELBY, MS
UNTIL IT REACHED
TORGAU, GERMANY
APRIL 25, 1945 - FIRST
U.S. TROOPS TO MEET
RUSSIAN TROOPS
IN WW II**

*Signature Stone 24x24 to be bought
to honor 69ers from the proceeds of this drive.*

**IN HONOR OF THE
69th INF DIV
CAMP SHELBY, MS
MAY 15, 1943
TORGAU, GERMANY
APRIL 25, 1945**

Excess multiples of \$100 will buy this 8"x8" stone.

It had been decided to seek contributions through The Bulletin from 69th members, or family members of departed 69ers, to buy at least two (2) of the largest Signature Stone, 24"x24." These stones cost \$1,000 each. They would be placed in The Court of Honor at different locations. Any excess multiples of \$100 would be used to buy 8"x8" stones scattered around the Museum area or near the 69th's Monument among individual bricks of 69ers already bought. Proof of these two stones appear with this story.

In our last Bulletin, our Membership Chairman reported more than 4,200 names on the mailing list. A donation of only \$10 from just 200 of these members will ensure the success of this effort. A contribution of \$25 each from 80 people will put this project over the top! If your financial circumstances permit, there is no better way to pay lasting tribute to the 69th than this "Buy A Brick Program."

(Continued on Page 15)

BUY A BRICK PROGRAM

(Continued from Page 14)

Don't you agree it would be a fitting honor to members of the 69th to have such stones on the grounds of the Armed Forces Museum? If you toured the grounds of the Museum, wouldn't you be honored to see these markers for your 69th Division? And to you children of 69ers - what better way is there to honor your father's service to his country in World War II than these stones commemorating The 69th Infantry Division!

Please mail your contribution to our Treasurer:

Mrs. Jane Matlach

19 Barberry Road

West Islip, New York 11795

Make your check, **in any amount**, but the more the merrier.

ARMED FORCES MUSEUM

While on the subject, 4"x8" bricks are available to honor individuals for \$50, and the 8"x8" bricks for \$100 to honor individuals. An 8"x8" example is shown below. The larger stone may also be purchased for individuals. What a wonderful way to have a permanent remembrance of your service, or a loved one's service in WWII, than in this Buy a Brick program. For complete details on how to order a brick of various sizes for yourself, or for a loved one, write or telephone for a brochure to:

Armed Forces Museum Foundation

Building 850

Camp Shelby, Mississippi 39207-5500

Telephone: 1-601-558-2757

Hours: 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Tuesday - Saturday

If you are on the internet, this information may be obtained from the "Honor Service" link on The Fighting 69th Infantry Division Web site.

Do not send checks to the Museum except for a purchase of a stone for yourself or family member.

For the program outlined to honor the 69th, send checks to Jane Matlach.

**TOM YELCICH
ASSOCIATION
PHOTOGRAPHER
COMPANY I
272ND INF RGT
69TH INF DIV**

Granite brick 8x8 for Tom Yelcich

A Special Honor

Submitted By: **Theodore Benson, M.A.**
7311 Stratford Street • Sacramento, California 95822

I am writing to advise you of an honor recently received by one of your members - my father, **Ellis Benson** (Special Agent, C.I.C., retired).

My father was a member of the C.I.C., attached to the 69th Infantry for much of WWII. His duties included surveillance of suspected Nazi sympathizers and interrogation of POWs, with the dual goals of helping re-establish local government free of saboteurs, and also, of course, identifying and apprehending war criminals. He received the Bronze Star during his tenure, and at one point was the Military Governor of Hamburg! To our knowledge he is the only surviving member of his unit, though he keeps in touch with the son of a former colleague - now himself a retired U.S. Army Intelligence Officer.



Ellis Benson - DHQ. HQ.

I thought his 84th birthday would be an excellent occasion to recognize his accomplishments. So I advised the Governor of California, Gary Davis, of these facts. In response, he issued a special proclamation that was delivered to my father's astonishment by special messenger.

* * * * *

GOVERNOR GRAY DAVIS

STATE CAPITOL • SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA 95814

Happy 84th Birthday!
Ellis Mortimer Benson

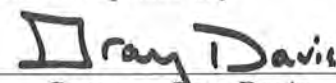
March 31, 2002

It is a great pleasure to join friends and family in wishing you a happy 84th birthday!

I applaud your ongoing dedication to your community and outstanding service to our nation during WWII. Your strength and sacrifice helped to change the course of world history.

This is truly a milestone birthday and a unique opportunity to recognize your invaluable contributions. I hope the gathering of loved ones helps you celebrate this momentous occasion in a meaningful way.

On behalf of the people of the State of California, I extend best wishes on this special day.


Governor Gray Davis

Battery C, 879th Field Artillery Battalion

Submitted By: **Anna E. Weaver**, Widow of: **Robert V. Weaver**

14 Boyer Street, Littlestown, Pennsylvania 17340

My husband, **Robert V. Weaver**, was a forward observer and instrument man with Battery C and earned a Bronze Star. Bob was inducted May 3, 1943 at age 18, spent 18 months at Camp Shelby, Mississippi and sailed for Europe on December 7, 1944. He fought from January to April and then was a M.P. until he had the points to come home. He was discharged March 27, 1946. I hope that someone will enjoy seeing these photographs.



*Bob Weaver, Harold Egner and Bob Aylesworth.
Pretty flowers, eh!*



Sergeant Schirado, Motor Sergeant and Bisher



*Benkendorf. Front view of the Baron's castle where
we have taken up residence. X indicates where I sleep.*



Baseball Team: Zimmerman, Chapman, Hank Davis, Lt. Desmond, Miriale, Mosterma. Sitting is Phillips and 1st Sergeant Philbrook



Bob Weaver with Lieutenant Desmond



Frankfurt Railroad Station after being bombed



Brosky, Chanery and Two Russians



T/4 Bisher, Motor Mechanic and T/5 Moody, Truck Driver in front of the Baron's Castle, 1945



Bob Weaver, Andy Anderson, McKay and Tykam on the tennis courts in Bad Nauheim



J.C. Phillips and Bob Weaver. He was in my section. A good guy from Florida. At the gate of our castle.



Bob Weaver and German girl



Pfc Mecholie and over 105's



Mortillow - Supply Sergeant from California. Good guy.



Andy Anderson



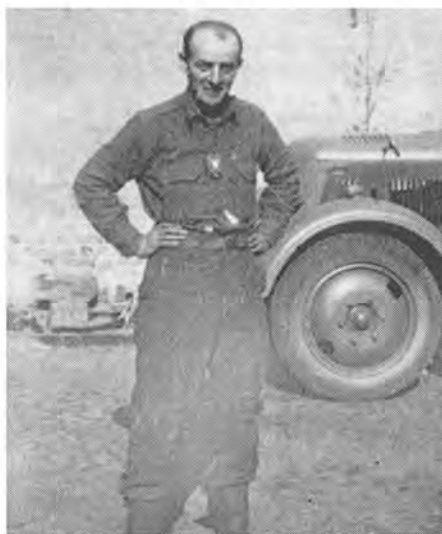
Hammit, my Radio Operator



T/4 Coldume on Commander's Jeep



Kowalski



Lieutenant Kahenic



Bisher and Pfc Estep

Better Late Than Never

Submitted By: **Ralph Utermoehlen**

Company I, 271st Infantry

222 Stonepost, Manhattan, Kansas 66502

The morning of March 2nd, 2002, I made my first visit to Camp Shelby and its museum. I also really wanted to see our 69th monument. Even though I was a 69th replacement who trained in Hood, Texas, I have always wanted to see the place where the Division was formed and trained.

We had lunch in the centralized dining facility on the post, which is operated like a cafeteria. It had a very pleasant atmosphere - not like the old mess halls of our day. At least that's one part of army life that has greatly improved since World War II.

I want to thank you for keeping the Bulletin going so we can relive the past and keep abreast of what is currently happening with the Division.





Dottie Witzleb



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

THE AUXILIARY'S PAGE

by - **Dottie Witzleb**
Ladies Auxiliary Editor
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or
183 Pineslope Road
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22555 Hallcroft Trail
Southfield, Michigan 48034-2011
Telephone: 248/357-4611

Ellen McCann, Chaplain
39 Mayflower Road
Woburn, Massachusetts 01801

A Message from your Auxiliary President, Ethel Ruck

Dear Ladies of the 69th Auxiliary,

In spite of the sad beginning of our last reunion in Northern Kentucky, it turned out to be a very special time. The tours and entertainment were first rate. Ninety regular members plus seven "first timers" attended our Saturday morning Auxiliary meeting. I thank Gloria, her officers and all the reunion committee members for putting together a fine program.

The next reunion for the Fighting 69th will be in Hampton, Virginia. This will be the fifty-fifth reunion for our men, and the fifty-first for the Auxiliary. I wonder if those members who attended the first reunions could have ever imagined reaching number fifty-five? It would be great to hear from some of them. I urge all our ladies to make plans to attend our next reunion at Hampton from September 22nd to September 29th, 2002. The tours and activities listed in the April Bulletin promise to make this gathering a very interesting and fun time.

Traditionally, our Ladies' Auxiliary has provided lap robes, (36 x 45), booties, bibs, and other handmade items for the Veterans' Hospital near our meeting site.

Tote bags that can fasten to patients' walkers would be helpful. If you have a pattern for those, please feel free to sew and bring them with you. If you have unsolicited greeting cards that you receive in the mail, the patients could also use those. In years past, we have given a \$500.00 check to a representative of a local VA hospital to purchase personal care items for the patients such as toothpaste, shaving cream, etc., and we plan to do so again.

On the lighter side, please don't forget the small exchange gift (no more than \$5.00) for our own membership at the Saturday morning Auxiliary meeting. The officers and past officers have always requested to bring a couple of extras for our "First Timers."

Edith Zaffren has been doing a tremendous job in sending out birthday and anniversary cards. Thanks Edith. We all were very sorry when we learned that our treasurer, **Bill Matlach** passed away. We are grateful to his wife, **Jane**, for filling in beautifully. **Dottie** has been doing a great job also. Without her hard work, there probably would be no Bulletin. Thanks.

Since our last reunion in Northern Kentucky, my husband, Harold, has joined the ranks of many of our men who have become patients receiving chemo treatments for cancer. We are learning to take one day at a time, with the help of a lot of prayers. God willing, we will see you all at Hampton, Virginia.

Sincerely yours, Ethel Ruck

A Letter Home to My Son

Submitted By: **John P. Runden**

Battery C, 879th Field Artillery Battalion

15 Pheasant Run

Forked River, New Jersey 08731

I recently came across a letter I had written my son who was ten years old, from Bremerhaven, Germany dated April 26, 1945. He was bedridden then with rheumatic fever and his mother and I were deeply concerned.

I had tried in this letter to offer him (and his mother) a picture of what my outfit, the 879th F.A. Bn., had experienced without including any of the gruesome things we saw. No pictures of the dead, whether American or German, or any description of our visit to Buckenwald.

As I reread this letter after all these years, I was struck with the idea you might be able to use it in a future issue of the Bulletin.

P.S. About my son, John, Jr. He recovered from the fever and in due time joined the Marine Corps where he was appointed as one of the several Lance Corporals guarding President Eisenhower on his tour abroad!

Following is the letter.

* * * * *

Germany, April 26, 1945

Dear Johnny,

I think about you every day and wonder how you are. It's tough to be sick at any time; to be sick in the spring of the year is perhaps worse. Still it is pleasanter in looking out the window, which you probably do a lot, to see trees in new leaves and feel the warmth of the sun than to watch drizzly, leafless trees, and the brown bare earth. I hope soon you will be entirely well. You know, son, that much of your future health and general well-being depends on you. If you disobey your Mother's orders the results may be very unpleasant. To get up before Mother gives you the okay, to fret, or refuse to eat properly may mean your staying in bed a lot longer than you should. So please take care. I know you will and so I don't really worry about that, but a young boy naturally wants to be up and doing things so I know that you must be tempted to get up and run around although you may know you shouldn't.

Over here everything is going along well. The war is certainly almost a closed book for Germany. Right now things are pretty quiet for me as far as the war is concerned. Of course there is plenty of noise right here in this kitchen where I am writing this letter. Some of the fellows have gathered here with mandolins, banjos and a violin and are having a jam session. If there were a piano here, your old man would probably be in it too.

We have had a good deal of excitement from time to time, and a lot of funny things have happened too. We have been pretty close to the receiving end of enemy

artillery shells; we've had our share of trouble with mines; enemy aircraft have tried to bomb us, and nearly succeeded one time. These planes usually come over at dusk. We call them "Bed Check Charlies" since, when we're living in the field, we are preparing our tents or bed sacks around dusk, while there is yet a bit of light to see. These raids are always exciting and sometimes really frightening for a lot of us. (I include myself in the word "us" now and then.)

Late one afternoon four Jerry planes swept over us as we were travelling in a motor convoy along a road. As soon as they were recognized (which was a little late in coming) our vehicles stopped and we took to cover like a bunch of rabbits. When you're being attacked by planes there is nothing to do but find shelter as fast as possible. As it happened, we were passing through a small German village so the men of my truck piled out and dashed for the cellar of the nearest house. The civilians who were standing in the streets watching us pass through had the very same idea that we had. We were all in the same boat - American GIs, and German civilians who are made up of old women, small children, old men and crippled young men. The civilians were more terrified by far, particularly the women, some of whom usually get hysterical with fear. You never saw such a jam as we all made getting down those cellar steps. I made pretty good time reaching the house; but a whale of a lot of people made better time, so I stood at the doorway waiting to see what was going to happen. The Ack-ack boys and the machine gunners in the ring-mounts on some of our trucks were whoomph-whoomphing the shells at the planes which had peeled off as we took for cover and swooped down over the convoy. I had expected some strafing which to my mind is worse than bombs because there are so many more bullets in one of these planes than bombs which could have one's name on it. There was a deep sounding crumph noise as one plane spat out its bomb or bombs. Thinking that the business was over I stepped out of the doorway into a little courtyard. The ack-ack which had been decreasing at once increased and one of the planes swept almost overhead. Before you could say your initials backward I had skidded into the doorway. No baseball player sliding for home plate was ever so eager as I to "hit the bag for a safe." In a few moments all noise ceased, the drone of the aircraft engines disappeared in the distance and we all got back in our trucks and drove on laughing at ourselves for the way we had rushed to cover. One soldier accused another of disregarding Emily Post's Rules of etiquette in reaching the basement before the women civilians. He replied that Emily Post forgot to mention the rules of courtesy in such a situation. Another fellow claimed that one of our boys had crawled downstairs to the cellar between the trembling legs of the old ladies who occupied all of the space on the stairway so one could not pass them.

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A LETTER HOME TO MY SON

(Continued from Page 20)

On another occasion, we were in the field in a shallow valley. The enemy was too close for complete peace of mind. We had dug foxholes as insurance against the Jerry shells which landed not too far away. Mine was pretty deep to begin with but every time a batch of shells landed nearby, I dug it another foot deeper. Before long I was told that if I dug it any deeper I would be AWOL. At any rate, it was good and deep with the dirt piled carefully around the edges. Suddenly the Ack-ack and machine guns began spitting forth lead. It was dusk and it was hard to see the planes clearly but one had only to follow the tracer bullets glow as they sped towards their targets. Whole streams of shells from many different guns placed fairly far apart converged on several faintly seen aircrafts which became larger as they peeled off and swept down to give us the works. One plane seemed to be coming right at me as I peeped over the edge of my hole. It was so low suddenly that I thought it had been hit and was going to crash into the slope behind us on the far side where I couldn't see. It had let out a streak of smoke which may mean that it has been hit, or may mean that Jerry is playing possum. Suddenly the plane zoomed up over the slope behind me, heading straight at an Ack-ack battery near the hill crest. This fellow's a dead duck for sure, I thought. The shells seemed to be crashing straight into him at close range but he kept coming only a handful of feet above the ground. He swept over the little ridge down into the valley with the anti-aircraft fire streaking after him. I was so sure that he was going to crash in the shallow, meadowy vale about two hundred yards from me that I leaped from my hole to see the climax of this drama. His wings were wobbling from side to side; the controls seemed weak and feeble. In a moment, I thought, one of those wing tips will brush the ground and he'll do a fiery cartwheel a couple of times before the explosion takes place which will send him out of this world. In leaping out of my foxhole I put myself right in line with the machine gun fire coming from the ridge crest and cutting up the meadow in a line right down to the plane. Fortunately I dropped back in time. The plane however sped right on down the valley and swooshed up the ridge on the far side in front of us with no daylight showing between its belly and the crest as it crossed over. It looked as if that plane had made a clean getaway. We were admiring the pilot's nerve in sweeping right down to the Ack-ack and chancing a smash-up on the ridges when we learned that the plane, in swooping over the crest in front of us, had smacked dab into a house blowing himself, that is the pilot, the plane and house to smithereens.

That night the shells kept coming in around us. The bad feature of being out in the middle of a wide treeless area is that you can hear too much and have too

broad a view. Actually it is a safer place than a woods but with trees around you one has, at least, an illusion of protection. Furthermore, one can't hear quite as much nor see so much going on. The result is that one is not as nearly perturbed over the happenings of the day. With the shells landing in this large area, the noise they made seemed to indicate that they were closer to us than they probably were. So I slept in my fox hole as nearly everyone else did. Unfortunately I had dug it for depth rather than length so it was a bit short. The ground too, which was very soft and easy digging, dried quickly under a firm, warm wind and crumbled constantly covering me with a fine silt. I managed to fit my sleeping bag in the foxhole and stretched my shelter half over the top supported by a couple of poles and big hunks of earth and rock along the edges to hold them in place. However, from time to time during the night these big hunks fell in and shattered inside my sack which I didn't zip entirely shut. Consequently I was full of dirt by morning. My hair was full of it too.

Sometimes when we were under a roof (and we have for the most part been living in German houses) the vibration of our guns shook down bits of plaster on us. Most of these houses are extremely well built - built to last a long, long time. Their walls frequently are all of two to three feet thick; yet the concussion from "outgoing mail" as well as "incoming mail" shakes them. Some nights it is as though a hundred Twentieth Century Limiteds were roaring right past your window, there is so much shaking. One gets used to it after a while; at least one learns to sleep through most of it.

One evening shortly after we crossed the Rhine the enemy pooped over a lot of mortar shells. We had a fairly long ride in reaching the place where we slept so I was tired. We arrived at dark in this little town and I bunked down as soon as I could in a bed - the first bed I had for a couple of months. Actually it was the first real bed (not a bunk) I had slept in since I slept in a Red Cross center in London. So you can realize how much I enjoyed my new-found comfort. I had debated before going to bed whether or not I should dig a foxhole in the front yard. Since the yard was crowded with jeeps and gear of various sorts, I decided to hell with it. But about four or five in the morning these mortar shells began thumping in around us. They don't make a loud noise. It has a dull sloppy whuuumphph sound but sounds deadly enough when you know what it is and what it can do to a man. I was sleeping up a storm, there on that bed with the good mattress, the feather tick under me and the soft blankets and sheets over me. The slow, sloppy thumping of the shells was enough to wake me up. I thought: should I get the hell out of here and hide in a ditch or behind the house or stay where I am? I was tired enough that I just pulled the blankets up a few inches up around my neck, gave my pillow a good pat, and dozed back to sleep.

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A LETTER HOME TO MY SON

(Continued from Page 21)

When we come to a town where we are going to stay for a while or just for overnight, we simply give the civilians the scam signal and out they go. We let them take some of their things with them but enough bedding has to remain in the house to take care of us. These feather ticks which our grandparents used to have and which the Germans still use extensively are really the nuts. They are certainly warm and soft. The one drawback is that on awakening one has, now and then, a peculiar sort of itch which sure as heck doesn't come from poison ivy.

Frequently the German civilians cry and blubber when they leave. It makes one, at first, sympathetic towards them. These civilians seem on the surface no different than civilians back home. But a lot of American soldiers are being shot daily by these same harmless looking civilians. Frequently in leafing through the photo albums of some of these families, one sees snapshots of the family itself rigged up in Nazi party uniforms and the children of the family in parades of Nazi youth clubs of one sort or another. So after a while, we don't feel at all sorry about evicting these people from their homes. In France the Germans certainly did much more than simply evict families from their homes. There they butchered them in droves, and in Poland and Russia they did more of the same thing.

Almost every day we see hordes of German soldiers who have been taken prisoner or who have voluntarily surrendered moving back to the rear. As captives they don't look very rough; with guns in hand they are plenty rough in combat. We have seen even more of the former prisoners of the Nazis. They are the French, Polish, Russian, Belgian, and Czech slave laborers. In some parts of Germany it seems that every household had some of these unfortunates working in the fields and around the farmhouses. As we go barreling through a town these freed slaves stand proudly on the road sides and shout their exultation at being free to us. In one place a group of Polish girls pulled branches of blossoms from the fruit trees along the road and threw them in our path. They are the happiest people I have ever seen. Some are crying, some are waving at us frantically holding their fingers in the V sign, others draw a finger across their necks and point to the Germans who are apt to be cowering in the background. "Hitler kaput" is one of the favorite expressions - Hitler's finished.

In speaking to some of these people I hear almost the same story over and over. "I have been here for five years - I hate all Germans - I would like to kill them all, even the little children - they never fed us nearly enough - we were always hungry - we worked long hours every day - we were insulted and humiliated constantly - many of our comrades were killed - we were beaten - we had to work as hard as ever, even when we were very sick," and so on.

In a prison camp for French prisoners I found a whip which was used on the prisoners. In another place some French and Polish prisoners told me they were forced to work in a bomb factory even during

allied bombardments, that machine guns trained on the doors from the outside kept them inside, and that their barracks were built against the bomb store house, etc. The penalties a foreign slave worker suffered for even speaking to a German girl or woman were harsh. The favorite punishment was "shipment to a camp in the east" which meant, as you probably know being worked to death, or worked until one could not produce enough and then a gas chamber or an oven.

A good many odd and funny things happen as well as the grim, for example, the night we came into a village and found a white peacock which let out some awful sound. It sounded like a poor imitation of a huge tomcat made by a man with tremendous lungs. It was enough to wake the dead. The creature disappeared before we went to bed for the night. I've suspected foul play all along.

Frequently we stop in villages where the infantry has just moved in. We join them in the merriment which often takes place once a village is secured and the front line moved up far enough so one can be gay with reasonable safety. On one such occasion some of the boys were out on the streets strutting about with tall black hats, the property of some sob or citizen of Hitler's third and last Reich. A couple others had found a horse and carriage and were riding about like a couple of counts. In this town the Polish slave laborers were housed in an old fashioned music hall, decorated with cupids, Greek Gods, flowers, etc. and having a small semi-circular stage where once singers and dancers performed. When I went there the main floor was filled with double decker bunks, the aisles with free Poles who were drinking beer which they had taken over from some warehouse or tavern. A group of them were on the stage singing their national and patriotic songs. They offered me a drink and one of them, who spoke French, and I, had a long talk. It was an exhilarating experience. We'd speak for a few minutes in French and then he'd explain in Polish what he had said to his friends. They, in turn, would sometimes ask him questions to put to me and I'd answer him in French after which came his replies to his friends. They felt, in the death of the President, a loss such as we have felt and still feel.

Well, John boy, it's getting late. I could write more but I expect that by the time you have worked your way through this monstrously long letter you'll need an extra night of sleep. I lost the little journal of sorts in which I have kept track of the main events and a lot of the little curious things which crop up from time to time and so, have no doubt, left out a lot of things I would have written of.

The news which just came over the BBC through the Jerry radio in this house was awfully good. It does look as though a week or two should see the end of hostilities of any large sort in Germany. I have my job to do here; at home you have yours - to get well as quickly and completely as possible. So, take care and be good to Mother by doing as she says in all things.

All of my love,
Dad

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

We are interested in all news from Chapters, Groups, Branches, Companies, Battalions, Regiments, Recon, Artillery, AAA, Units, T.D.'s and minis for this column. Mail your date(s), location, banquet cost, activities and room rates, plus a good write-up to **Fighting 69th Division Bulletin**, P.O. Box 69, Champion, Pennsylvania 15622-0069 or 183 Pineslope Road, Acme, Pennsylvania 15610-9606, as early as possible. Then follow through with a write-up immediately after the event(s).

California Western Chapter

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President's Report on the Laughlin, Nevada Round-up

Members and guests of the California Western Chapter 69th Infantry Division Association had a great time at the Round Up in Laughlin, Nevada April 14th-18th, 2002.

To all the chapter members that staffed the Hospitality Room, I would like to extend many thanks and much appreciation. They included **Harold Faulkner, Bill Rubsemen, Stan Hawk, Bob Pierce, Homer Lind, Walt Haag** and others. Ladies assisted also, with special thanks to **Pat Lind** for her errands to restock dwindling supplies.

A lesson I have learned; the Hospitality Room is not a place to go just for refreshments and snacks. The primary function is for friendship and camaraderie. This is what brings us back year after year.

Instead of a tour everyone did his or her own thing. Some went on a jet boat trip on the Colorado River to see the London Bridge and visit Lake Havasu. Others went on a cruise of the Colorado River. Some visited various casinos. Some came home richer and, yes, some came home poorer!

Tuesday evening our own member **Carl Christol** gave a very interesting talk on terrorism and International Law. **Carl** was well informed on the subject and gave an excellent presentation.

Plaques of appreciation were awarded to **Delbert** and **Donna Philpott** for their many years of service as membership chairmen, **Lee Wilson** for his many years as Treasurer, **Bob** and **Teresa Pierce** for their many years of site selections, and **Al** and **Bobbie Gwynn** for serving two terms as President. I would like to give further and special recognition to **Delbert**



New Officers and Chaplain of the California Western Chapter: Left to right, Lee Wilson-Treasurer, Bob Shaw-Chaplain, Walt Harpain-President, Harold Faulkner-Vice President and Homer Lind-Secretary.

and **Donna Philpott**. They not only served as Membership Chairmen, but **Donna** has consistently furnished me with much needed information, made suggestions, and sent me reminders, all invaluable to me as President.

The final event was a great dinner Wednesday evening. We were honored to have the 69th Infantry Division Association President **Ray Sansoucy** and his wife **Janet** at our dinner. **Ray** urged us all to attend the National Reunion in Hampton, Virginia in September.

2003 Reunion: Site selection is Fresno, California for the year 2003 California Western Chapter Round Up. It will be at the Ramada Inn-University April 27th through May 1st, 2003. This will be the 10th Anniversary of the California Western Chapter. A schedule of events is now being planned. Please mark your calendars for these dates for great 69th friendships and camaraderie.

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

(Continued from Page 23)



John Tounger, President Ray Sansoucy and Stan Hawk at Lake Hanasu with London Bridge in background during the California / Western Chapter reunion.

269th Engineers

Frank Nemeth, News Reporter

66 Gaping Rock Road

Levittown, Pennsylvania 19057-3410

Telephone: 215/945-3809

Hi 269ers,

Hope this finds you all in good health and everything is going well for you and yours. I've sent in the photo below from a 69th Reunion which I think was held in Washington, DC. I don't recall the year.

Sorry to say **Bill Clayton** (Co. H&S and A&C), passed away last March. **Bill** and **Freda** made most of the 69th Reunions and also the Tri-State reunions.

Hope to see you all at the next 69th Reunion which will be held in Hampton, Virginia in September.

If you have any old photos, send them in to the Bulletin. Dottie will send them all back - you can make book on that!! So take care until then.

Your Ole Pal,

Frank Nemeth, Company B



Left to right - front table: Ted Nemeth, Frank Nemeth, John and Lulu Pontieri, Jim Sears, Dale and Jean Highfield, all of Company B. Max Weinzierl (Co. H&S), Ray and Louise Weekly (Co. C).

Back Table: Stuart McGregor and Mom (Co. B), Mrs. and Lou Steinbrunner (Co. H&S), Edward and Zola Davis (Co. B), Max Goodman (Co. H&S) and Chuck Herring (Co. B).

Company I, 272nd Infantry at Kentucky Reunion

Submitted By: **Ethel Ruck**

622 Melville Avenue, Chattanooga Tennessee 37412-264514



*Tom Yelcich with Entertainer
at the 2001 Reunion
Tom recently passed away.*



*Left to Right: Ralph Goebel, Hal Ruck, Ethel Ruck, Tom Yelcich, Marilyn
Frentress, Forrest Frentress, Ursula Goebel*

Co. H, 273rd Infantry

Submitted By: **Jess W. Best**

P.O. Box 86, Grampian, Pennsylvania 16838



Jess Best, South Germany, Stuttgart - October 3, 1945

*Photo Right, Mississippi 1943 - Left to right:
Courtney, Horton, Walters, Jess Best. First names
unknown. Man sitting, front, Joe Bell.*



'Til We Meet Again

THE COMBAT STORY OF COMPANY B, 369TH MEDICAL BATTALION

Activated 15 May 1943, Camp Shelby, Miss.

Submitted By: **Nancy Bann**
5553 Terra Granada Drive, 3A
Walnut Creek, California 94595

Written By: **Captain James W. Williams**

This book is intended to keep ever fresh the memory of your comrades of Collecting Company B of the 369th Medical Battalion serving the 69th Infantry Division, known as the Fighting 69th. Thru the maze of pitfalls of the ETO from January, 1945 to the 9th of May of that year, this company discharged its duty with honor, and enjoyed its recreation with gusto. If these pages should ever in the future bring a



Capt. James W. Williams

twinge of regret for what is past, remember that there are 100 of us, and we all feel the same way. So, "Here's to old Company B - down the hatch!"

COMPANY HISTORY

This is the story of a collecting company. Company "B" 369th Medical Battalion, as it performed its duties, of tending those whose bodies, limbs and minds had been torn asunder, in satisfying the insatiable appetite of the God of War.

War, as such, is indescribable. Mere words cannot reveal the feelings, the emotions, the thoughts, the fears, of the men of collecting company "B." We would rather have this booklet remain as a memo of our activities, our travels and to serve in future years, as we peruse its pages, as a reminder, that America must ever be alive to the doings and the happenings of the whole globe. Never again can we isolate ourselves.

Collecting Company "B" came into being 15 May 1943, upon the activation of the 69th Infantry Division. For the following 18 months the company's personnel, as part of General Bolte's "BBB" crew, was to learn the intricacies of De Soto National Forest. Countless hours were spent in blackout drives, blackout bandaging, water purification and allied subjects. "D" series and the "March to the Sea" were fitting climaxes of the training era.

After training, came preparation for movement overseas, with its attendant counting of pills, nuts and bolts: checking of individual equipment; and packing and crating of organizational equipment. The increasing tempo of last minute preparations reached its peak

one fine day in November 1944 when ole Company "B" boarded a train, impatiently awaiting to convoy us from Camp Shelby to Camp Kilmer, New Jersey.

Once in Camp Kilmer, we marched about in driving rains from building to building until the physical examination building was reached: all of us who could see lightning, hear thunder and chew milk were pronounced fit for overseas duty.

So after endlessly rehashing all the security rules we were whisked away by train to New York, whence we walked and walked, with full packs and duffel bags, until we finally glimpsed her, our ship, with gangplanks leading into her innards, our home for the next two weeks. "U.S.S. Le Jeune!"

The sea was not too kind to some of us, helping some to decide that after all maybe the army did have it all over the navy. Life on board ship consisted of one continuous line after the other; lines for chow, for latrines, for P.X., to go on deck, to go below deck, for fire drill, for abandon-ship drill. "Sweepers man your brooms!"

Then on the 12th of December, 1944, Company "B" was introduced to jolly England, via the port of Southampton. Disembarking the next day, we were taken to "The Grange," just north of New Alresford. Nearby was the town of Winchester, containing King Arthur's round table. Our time in England was occupied in drawing arctic boots, drawing vehicles, going to Alresford, Alton, Portsmouth, London, in drinking watery brew, and in having a spot of tea and a morsel of rabbit with the local gentry. The fond recollection of the "honey bucket" and the sight of the "H and C" wagon will always be remembered.

In January, 1945, in a driving snowstorm, part of the ole Company's personnel, together with the vehicles, left for the continent, to be followed the next day by the rest of us. In Southampton, we boarded the "S.S. James McKay" and the "Sobieski." By the 26th of January, 1945, we had all collected in Forges les Eaux, France, occupying a casino building, that had formerly been used by Hitler's Supermen as a hospital. Some of us rode cattle trucks from Le Harve to Forges, cold and miserable, others drove the vehicles over frozen roads at night, not certain of the way.

In Forges, we loafed around, saw movies in a cold mess hall, bought post cards and waited for the word that was to send us against the foe.

On 2 February, 1945, we began a journey that was eventually to place us in the "Bulge," created by Von Rundstedt's Christmas offensive.

St. Erme, France, was our first stop on this journey. Our abode was a monastery; the fourth floor to be exact, entrance only by ladder. Some of us rode to St. Erme on the damnable 40 and 8's. What a man won't do to fight a war!

On a dark and stormy night in February 1945, the 10th precisely, "B" company pulled up at Montenau,

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"TIL WE MEET AGAIN - CO. B, 369th MED. BN
(Continued from Page 26)

Belgium after having been impressed by the sight of Malmedy. We were cold, wet, hungry, miserable with no place to stay. While here, we were joined to "The Regiment," 272nd Infantry. This was the land of trigger-happy guards, dead jerries, and mines. Watch your step, soldier! For 3 days we caught our breath and waited to push on, while the hot breath of combat blew on our necks and became a living reality. From Montenaus, a quartermaster party went up to Hunningen, Belgium, right on the border of Belgium and Germany for we were relieving the 99th Division. Hunningen had little to offer except mud, manure, dead animals and shelled houses. Quarters were finally arranged for, after a set-to with collecting Company "C" over a house, from which we were later thrown out by a Major from the 106th Division.

By the 13th of February, 1945, we had set up in Hunningen, supporting our regiment that was in reserve, along the outer fringes of the Siegfried line. Here, we saw our first sample of strafing and had our first encounter with the fabulous "88's." From here, some of us, as litter bearers, were sent out to help the medics in the 271 and 273 infantry, where the going in the Siegfried was tough. During this experience, some of us had "close calls" and some found, that one door won't admit two men at the same time, when seeking shelter from "88's."

The 4th of March, 1945, found us laboring away at building log dugouts, near Loshermergraben, Belgium. It was cold, snowing and our log roofs all leaked. We slept in Belgium and had our mess just across the International highway in Germany, and then "this is it!" as we were going through the Siegfried line! Pillboxes or no pillboxes! Dragon's teeth or no dragon's teeth! Mines or no mines!

So, some of us begged 2 rooms from the T.D.'s in which to set up a station, at Neuhaus, Germany. We saw our first bunkers, and encountered mines everywhere. Vehicles blew up on the road we had just traversed.

After clearing a helluva road block, "The Regiment" took Dahlem, enabling us to set up there on 11 March 1945. Here, we were to pick up food trailers and reconstruct them for our use. We had free access to the showers - ah! - Clean clothes - "gut!" Now we were sweating out the Remagen bridgehead - and sure enough! the 25th of March, 1945, saw us in Waldorf - just behind the bridgehead and some 3 miles from the Rhine. Now we were girding loins preparatory for the crossing of the Rhine amid a combat team of Infantry, Cavalry, Rangers, Division, Corps and self-propelled artillery-powers plus! Our crossing was somewhat of a let-down after the tension generated by the thought of "Crossing the Rhine." Our "Watch on the Rhine" lasted only 2 days! being accomplished in bright moonlight, using a 1370 foot pontoon bridge. We arrived in Weitersberg in the middle of the night on the 27th of March, 1945 - anxious lest the "88's" on the opposing ridge open up on us. The next morning "The Regiment" took Fort Ehrenbreitstein and Bad Ems, to which

we went on 29 March, 1945 - staying in a German O.C.S. barracks, along with Regimental Headquarters.

By the 31st of March, 1945, we were in Dehrn on the Lahn River, flooded by Jerries blowing up of dams. On Easter Sunday, we marveled at the state of German nutrition and their clothes during the Easter Parade.

And now, once more the ole company must spend a wet, cold, miserable night of travel - 108 miles to Altendorf under blackout conditions - an accomplishment! Here, S.S. men in G.I. clothes and vehicles shot messengers, here, an Engineer convoy was strafed, practically in our front yard.

The 4th of April, 1945, found us in Brundersen. A stop over point on the route to Kassel. It was here that some of us acquired a roadster - classy!

In Bettenhausen, a suburb of Kassel, (6 April 1945) we marveled at the destruction wrought by bombs in the latter city. From this point, our regiment began to clear Jerry out of the rough terrain so our armor could roll again. Our casualties were getting heavier but we were well equipped to care for them in an apartment building.

We spent the day in Uschlag on the 7th of April, 1945 - just waiting here until "The Regiment" cleaned up ahead, before resuming our ever forward movement. Jerry planes were overhead.

Later in the day, on 7 April, we arrived in Klein-Almerode. This was destined to be our night for handling the largest number of casualties - three ambulances were borrowed from Army - our route of evacuation to clearing was treacherous: over muddy, narrow, twisting, darkened road, but we made it.

Early on the morning of the 8th of April, 1945, we packed up and wearily made our way toward Witzenhausen, where we once again found ourselves in an apartment building. Jerry threw "88's" at intervals all day at the pontoon bridge "The Regiment" had across the Werna River and at night, sent his planes over the town. In Witzenhausen, we encountered 12 American soldiers, all wounded, as prisoners, in a Jerry hospital and we were given a Jerry ambulance for our use. In this town, **Pfc Richards** received a scratch on his leg while his ambulance was being hit several times by Jerry's fire. **Richards** was to be the only man, in the company, to receive a wound at the hands of the Germans.

Leaving Witzenhausen, we arrived in Arenshausen on 9 April, 1945, minus our roadster, which was too low to cross the pontoon bridge. Quite unexpectedly, here we ran out of "friendly" territory held by Jerry. So the ole company withdrew, behind a railroad embankment, acquired itself a hotel, set up a station in a beer parlor and sat down to spend the day.

Later the same day, we pulled into Heiligenstadt and occupied a hotel, with beer on tap, plus a large home. The hotel had been vacated by S.S. troops, a few days previously. Some of us aroused the ire of a German medical officer when he had to lift a German soldier who was wounded off a litter.

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'TIL WE MEET AGAIN - CO. B, 369th MED. BN
(Continued from Page 27)

By now the Division had done its job, of clearing Jerry from the rough terrain and had emerged into flat open country - just to the liking of our armor. With riflemen aboard tanks and T.D.'s, we were to follow in close wake of the armored giants, until the Russians were met - and pursue them we did, even though it frequently strained everything we had to keep the pace. Jerry was on the run now, this was no time to ease up and let him get set again - so "Forward! Forward! against the foe!"

The first breathing spell in the chase came at Schlotheim on 10 April, 1945, where we occupied a house owned by an English speaking woman. The Division was moving so rapidly at this stage, that we didn't know where the clearing company was. On the 11th of April, 1945, amid a cloud of dust, we took off for Rettgenstedt. The roads were ground into fine powder by the passing of so many vehicles; another item to add to our list of discomforts. Three Jerry planes attempted to give us a going over as we entered the town to occupy a schoolhouse and a nearby house. Two miles away, we found the armored division's clearing company - a break for us! In this town, some of our members "liberated" a ton and a half English truck. We were now wondering how much longer the chase would continue - we longed for time enough to shave, bathe, and to go to the latrine. How about you big-shots calling off this war for a day or two and letting us guys rest a while?

In the middle of the afternoon, of the 13th of April, 1945, we set out from Rettgenstedt, "to go as far as we could go." By 2300, we had reached Naumburg where there had been a scrap in the afternoon. Not knowing exactly where "The Regiment" had set up, we decided that discretion was the better part of valor and elected to sit tight and spend the night. We secured a hotel large enough to house us plus the Regimental Aid Section and quickly fell asleep. Arising early, we went in quest of "The Regiment" and succeeded in finding our dog tired quartering party in Prititz. In this village, we heard of the President's death via a T.D. radio. Only 10 cans of gasoline could be obtained - we were really eating up Jerry's homeland. Supply was becoming a great problem - so great that C and K rations were the order of the day - ugh! - once we had eaten Panzer division rations.

Once again we wearily set out, the afternoon of 14 April, 1945, in a convoy that stretched as far as the eye could see - "Cub" planes overhead acted as our "eyes" - to go "as far as we could go." Little did we know, that very afternoon was to see an incident that would shock us into the realization that a war was going on and into the knowledge that war was more than merely "pursuing the enemy" - for we were now entering the Leipzig territory, defended by a heavy concentration of dual purpose "88's." So there we were proceeding in convoy - half asleep - thoughts across the sea 4,000 miles away and - bang! - the self propelled artillery deployed in surrounding fields sounded off! Stopping to investigate we learned that Jerry artillery

was dead ahead - we withdrew to the town behind us and took houses amidst the 9th armored personnel. Within an hour, Jerry planes were making pass after pass at our town - dropping fragmentation bombs. Miraculously, none of ole Company "B" were hurt. We were destined to sit in this spot for 2 days while "The Regiment" took the numerous flak guns - they longed for rest - ah!

Came the 17th of April, 1945, and another long remembered incident in the life of "B" Company. We set out for a position to the rear of Leipzig, in order to surround the city and, by dark, had reached the city of Pomssen. "The Regiment" received orders to push ahead - casualties were to be expected - collecting company "B" must sit tight in order to best fulfill her mission of caring for wounded men - so service and anti-tank companies and a battery of field artillery were graciously left behind, to cover the medics.

After a night, which saw nothing develop, on 15 minutes notice, we began a drive to Zweenfurth - some 10-12 miles away - arriving on 18 April, 1945. Now, Leipzig was encircled and we awaited the final assault! In Zweenfurth, we passed the time, by caring for our vehicles and watching the lineups of Jerry prisoners across the street in the P.W. cage.

The 20th of April, 1945, saw the entry of the regiment into Leipzig and we followed suit by occupying an apartment building in Paunsdorf, a suburb of the city. Here, we concerned ourselves with the treatment of burned and poorly nourished Poles and Russians.

Five Jerry soldiers in civilian clothes surrendered to us via a German woman doctor, just as we left for Wiederitzsch on the 21st of April, 1945. Wiederitzsch was just north of Leipzig, where we were fortunate enough to secure five nice houses - plenty of room for all-lights, water and a washing machine - what a deal! Here, we sat behind the Division line at the Elbe river, to await the Russians.

Having met the Russians, in a world renowned episode, some of us went to Mochrehna on the 24th of April, 1945, to accompany the regiment as it guarded the roads that important personages were to travel. The rest of us followed on the 31st of April, 1945 when we were all gathered in Oberaudenhain. Here we swapped yarns with the Russians, viewed their endless streams of wagons, tasted their "he-man" vodka and marveled at their woman soldiers. While here, we took up baseball in earnest. We all decided, that the Russian soldier was a big-hearted, carefree guy who could scrap.

On the 3rd of May, 1945, we bade the Russians goodbye and moved to Borna where we were to lose our foreign vehicles and where a woman was to write, in sand, "Soldier, you are welcome," and, "Soldier America, is All-right" on the sidewalk. Here, we were told, that the war was over and began to sweat out the C.B.I.

11 May, 1945, saw our entry into Zeitz - where we had plenty of nothing to do and tried to answer such pertinent questions as "Wonder if we'll get home?" "When, how, where." Some of us were lucky enough to draw passes to England, Paris, Brussels, and the Riviera.

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'TIL WE MEET AGAIN - CO. B, 369th MED. BN
(Continued from Page 28)

This, then is a story of collecting company "B," of its activities and journeys in the E.T.O. There are no heroes - just 100 men doing their best to help end it all.

Calvin W. Birmingham
Gilbert H. Colnot Jr.
Burgos G. Gabriel
James M. Hopkins
Robert H. Hudspeth
Edward A. Nye
Claude L. Bain
Glen V. Hill
Harold J. Kihl
Harry Lawson
Clarence E. Silvey
Robert H. Thurston
Joseph F. Gietka
Julius K. Ort
Eugene F. Roberson
Nicholas Sikoryak
Glenn A. Solomon
William F. Barendt
William S. Barnhart
Max Goodelman
Robert L. Pierfy
Harold L. Wilson
Michael V. Crudele
Salvatore D. Franco
Lawrence C. Goebel
Reed J. Hounshell
Peter F. Julian
Oscar L. Killian
Dominick N. Lazzari
Glenn R. Nicol
James H. Sowers
James O. Stafford Jr.
Frank A. Andrew
William J. Averbeck
James M. Bann
Richard F. Beard
Thomas L. Bothel
Edna M. Carlton
George Casper
Audry H. Chamberland
Elwood N. Chesley
Raymond E. Collins
John E. Dacklin
George W. Deojay
Richard L. Gamble
Gerald W. Goodwin

Albert C. Heim
Max R. Hollis
Sherman Howard Jr.
Harry Katz
John D. La Mantia
Hollis T. Landrum
Richard E. Lewis
Gerald Lowe
Archie Maltzman
Charles Mascari
Walter E. Mastin Jr.
Edward T. Minson
Clarence W. Murphy
Mike M. Nalepa
Walter S. Omiatke
Kenneth W. Rahe
Russell T. Reed
Marvin E. Slichter
Herbert H. Uhlich
Albert H. Antz Jr.
Richard F. Barnes
Clifford E. Black
Lehman Blackwell
Charles E. Bowers
Dominic F. D'Acquisto
Albert E. Doney
Edward S. Draper
William H. Durham
Chester J. Dzienis
Casmere W. Gdula
Pascual A. Gutierrez
William E. Harris
Weston C. Jackson Jr.
William L. Lambert
Sidney Lieberman
Alfred J. Panarello
Lloyd A. Persson
George W. Richards
John M. Steinmetz
Seth A. Traxel
Donald J. Trimble
Clarence E. Vesper
William G. Whitehead
Herman E. Young
Adelard J. Cote

OFFICERS

James W. Williams	William A. Watson
John F. Cotant	Robert W. Hoffmann
Ansel R. Carnahan	John R. Liliendahl Jr.

Departed Men From The Company

Kenneth M. Horne	Paul A. Lovett
Donald L. Barman	Everette F. Sullivan
Wilmer J. Vivant	Kenneth E. Rankin
Clyde W. Van Horn	George E. McKay

Bulletin Still Bringing People Together

Submitted By: **Betsy Kirkman Black**

P.O. Box 521, Burlington

North Carolina 27216

Daughter of Clyde Kirkman, Company I, 271st

I would like to share with all members of the 69th an incident that is really remarkable. I am a new member of the 69th Association and upon receiving my very first copy of the Bulletin, I saw a picture on the back cover sent in by **Joseph Melka**, Company C, 271st Infantry Regiment, and immediately I remembered that name from a little book my dad had carried with him in the war. Sure enough I found **Joe Melka** and a New Jersey address in that book. The **Joe Melka** that sent the picture on your cover had a Florida address, but right away I wrote him a letter and asked if he was the man in my Dad's book and if he perhaps remembered him! I was absolutely thrilled because not only did he remember, but also had a small picture of him and Dad as they arrived at Rossleben, Germany in May 1945. He sent me that picture *below*.

Joe and I are corresponding and my thanks to you for printing his picture and making this all possible!

My Dad died in 1989. His name is **Clyde Kirkman**, from Graham, North Carolina. He and Joe both served in Co. C, 271st Infantry. If there is anyone else out there who remembers either of them, please let us know. Joe's address is 3096 Kings Lake Blvd., Naples, Florida 34112-3619, and my address is above.



*Clyde Kirkman, left and Joe Melka, right
Rossleben, Germany - 1945*

The End of the Road with Company D, 271st

Submitted By: **John Tounger**
Company D, 271st Infantry
#1 Pine Hills Court
Oakland, California 94611-1530

On the morning of April 26th, 1945 our 4 machine gunner jeep patrol left Eilenberg going east. I was not aware that we were heading for Torgau on the Elbe River. We did not encounter any enemy soldiers. We arrived in Torgau and there we saw several news reporters and **Lt. Bill Robertson** who posed for our jeep driver, **Chuck Knebel** (now deceased). Note the flag had a torn corner. I was told a naval officer who was liberated tore off the corner for a souvenir.

We left Torgau and stopped at the first village to get something to drink. I was in the lead jeep with **Chuck Knebel**, driver, and **Sgt. Kluck** and a little Jewish boy who spoke English and German. He became our interpreter. Speaking to the German civilians we were told that a German army camp about 2 miles away wanted to



This picture was taken by Chuck Knebel, April 26th, 1945, about 5 miles outside of Torgau towards Eilenberg. Chuck was driving the jeep and I was in the jeep behind my machine gun. I told Chuck to stop and grabbed his carbine and marched with the prisoners. It was estimated that there were between 2 and 3 thousand Germans who surrendered.

surrender to the Americans because they were afraid of the Russians. We agreed, providing they pile up all there weapons. We got near the camp and sent the kid over to negotiate. They agreed and we drove into the camp.

They formed a column of 4 abreast and headed toward Eilenberg. We were driving along side of the column and to my amazement, the line got larger and larger until we could no longer see the end of the column. The German soldiers came out of everywhere to join the column.

I asked **Chuck Knebel** to stop the jeep and I grabbed his carbine and put it over my shoulder and marched along the column and **Chuck** took a picture. I wanted a picture to show my dad. We estimated there must have been between 2000 and 3000 prisoners. As we came to the outskirts of Eilenberg, we saw our general's car heading toward Torgau.

The picture of me along the column of prisoners is in several publications. I had a blown up copy with me at the 50th Anniversary Tour we took with the 69th and ABC TV Peter Jennings News War interviewing **Lt. Bill Robertson** in the room next to ours in London. I showed the picture to the cameraman and he called me in and taped the picture on the wall while I was being interviewed. This was shown on ABC Evening News. ABC sent me a copy of the tape that I requested.

The picture of the Company D, 271st men on the following page with the Iron Cross was given to me by **Pfc. Walter Prestage**, who was in our platoon.



On our return to Torgau, April 26th, 1945. Sergeant Max Foster of Co. D, 271st. German unit surrendering to us instead of the Russians.

THE END OF THE ROAD WITH CO. D 271st
 (Continued from Page 30)



Lieutenant Bill Robertson and patrol holding up the homemade flag. Picture taken by Chuck Knebel in Torgau on April 26th, 1945. Robertson is in the far right corner.



Photo Above:
 Russian infantry with a female medic. This was the Russian mode of travel - no jeeps.

Photo Right:
 Outskirts of Eilenberg heading toward Torgau to meet the Russians. April 26th, 1945.

Picture taken after our 4-jeep mounted patrol cleared the 25 miles of road for safe travel of our general from Eilenberg to Torgau.

Note 1-Star General on door.



Left - unknown, Sergeant Gad and Pfc. Walter Prestage
 Anyone know who the soldier on the left is?

History of the 880th Field Artillery Battalion

PART II

Written by: Leonard Nathan

*Reporter on the Omaha, Nebraska World Herald
newspaper before being drafted into the U.S. Army*

Submitted By: Stanley W. Bratt

*Headquarters Battery, 880th Field Artillery Battalion
3607 Countryside Lane, Glenview, Illinois 60025-3721
Telephone: 708/724-5733*

Month of March 1945 (cont.)

A party went forward to the Cologne Area 0600 on 23 March and the Battalion prepared to move up the Rhine to its new area. The next day at 1605 the head of the column pulled out of Franken and again the way took the battalion through scenic territory, this time the Valley of the Ahr. The Div Arty IP was the famed Spa and wine center of Bad Neuenahr, situated in a deep, rocky gorge. The sanatoria and thermal centers had been given over to the Medical Corps. Overlooking the town and valley was a castle high on a ledge. What was extraordinary about this valley were the miles and miles of terraced vineyards along the face of the mountains. About two-thirds of the trip lay through such interesting countryside. At dusk the Battalion moved into the flatter country of the Cologne Plain.

Not a town nor village in this whole area had escaped the ravages of war. The closer to Cologne, the more devastated the area. By 2027 the battalion had arrived in Rondorf, just outside Cologne. Service Battery was in Meschenich, another Cologne suburb. The firing batteries were in houses on the outskirts of the village, while headquarters was in the enclosure of a large farm, the CP being located in a richly furnished manor house. Message Center was in a large kitchen, FDC in the drawing room, the Officers Mess and dayroom in the dining room, and the CP in the parlor. The second floor, with downy beds was given over to officers, while the enlisted men inherited the crowded floor of a poorly ventilated attic.

Here the battalion was in support of the second battalion of the 28th Regiment of the 8th Infantry Division and was part of the 1st Army's VII Corps. For the first time since 7 March, the Battalions guns were trained on German positions, this time on the east bank of the Rhine. But even at this time German resistance was crumbling so rapidly that there was little to fire on. Harassing missions were fired as well as occasional targets of opportunity. In fact, service practices were resorted to and NCOs conducted firing problems.

In addition, the battalion commander was responsible for the well-being of the community and directed civil affairs. The Burgermeister was a Catholic Priest, Pasto Matthias Cosler. The sole infraction of the law was committed by a middle-aged bosomy Hausfrau who was caught on the streets after hours. Tearfully protesting in the English she had learned while cooking for a British officer during the last occupation of Cologne, she insisted it would not happen again.

Although the battalion had been told it would probably stay in Rondorf for a week, on 28 March a march order was received. Noon of the 28th of March, the Battalion was to have passed from control of the 8th Infantry Division to control of the 86th, recently arrived from the states and moving up to the line for the first time. However due to the change of circumstances the Battalion reverted to Division Artillery control. The afternoon of 27 March, a forward party was alerted to go on reconnaissance the following day, but even as the forward party waited in Rondorf, the Battalion was given a march order.

The Rhine defenses had crumbled and the German armies were in full retreat. The 3d Army had crossed at Oppenheim, the British at Wesel and Emmerich. The 272d Infantry Regiment had entered the eastern part of Coblenz and took Fort Ehrenbreitstein, the last spot occupied by the American army following the last war. Men and vehicles were pouring into the main part of Germany against only the lightest resistance.

At 1513 the Battalion left Rondorf. As it drove out of the village, the Cathedral of Cologne could be seen - the twin spires and the great bulk of building looming over the rubble of the ruined city. A short distance away were the towers of the Hohenzollern bridge.

Old men and even children were working in the fields along the roads. The trenches, built to impede the American advance on Cologne, were being filled and some had been reclaimed by the fields.

The entire route lay through the picturesque valley of the Rhine with its rocky cliffs and ruined castles, the Rhine of German folklore. Bonn was the first large city and here, as in all places, was more evidence of the terrific power with which the Americans struck. The handsome city was a city of ruined buildings although it was not the mass of rubble that was soon to be encountered. The capture had been accomplished with lightning speed. No building was untouched, no glass window intact.

At Bad Godesberg the river was reached and at 1650, the convoy started across Bridge 36, a pontoon built in 16 hours by U.S. army engineers in collaboration with the Navy. From Bad Godesberg, scene of the Hitler-Chamberlain meetings before Munich, to the destination, the road clung to the Rhine. The once peaceful and beautiful valley was horribly scarred, for only a few days before a tremendous battle had been

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HISTORY OF THE 880th FIELD ARTILLERY

(Continued from Page 32)

waged for the eastern bank. Barges and pleasure boats had been sunk, although a surprising number were intact, loaded with coal and steel and other necessities of war, a rich booty for the invader. Hotels and gardens, once the scene of much gaiety, now were shattered.

Houses along the way flew white flags of surrender. Some had even put out the red, blue, and gold of the Weimar Republic. One store carried a sign, "This store is owned by an American Citizen," the lettering in red and blue against a white background.

Remagen, the symbol of Germany's Rhine failure, was reached at 1725. Pouring westward across the pontoon bridge that had taken the place of the fallen span, were trucks loaded to capacity with German prisoners of war. Not far in back were convoys of displaced persons, for the most part, French. Their vehicles flew hastily-made Tricolors and they exuberantly cheered the Americans.

At 1945, the Battalion reached Niederlahnstein, across the river from the main part of Koblenz. The Battalion was quartered in a former German Army barracks, the Gneisenau Kaserne. This was the headquarters of the 880th Infantry Regiment, a garrison unit. The place was elaborate, occupying a magnificent site overlooking the Rhine. The buildings were scarred by American artillery but except for broken windows, they were still suitable for housing. The entire battalion plus the 724th found ample room in the barracks. The firing batteries were in two buildings, headquarters in another. The Headquarters orderly room was in the Officers' bar and the CP in a comfortable lounge.

The place was a gold mine for Nazi souvenirs and the men of the Battalion went on a mad search, turning up everything from Officers' daggers to bass fiddles. "C" Battery flushed a prisoner in the search for souvenirs, a slight poor example of the Master race. He had not eaten for 8 days. One prisoner taken in the place by the 724th was a lad of 15 or 16.

From Koblenz a spearhead was to start out with the 9th Armored Division in the front, followed by the 2d Infantry Division, with the 69th bringing up the rear. This arrangement continued until the capture of Kassel when the 69th Division took the lead.

On 30 March a reconnaissance party went forward to scout new billets in the Division assembly area in the vicinity of Limburg. The 880th was assigned the village of Ahlbach, province of Nassau. With the help of the Burgermeister, billets were obtained. This was the first instance of working with a Burgermeister who was avowedly a member of the Nazi party. The village was small, untouched by the war and the attitude of the people indicated complete unreality as to the immediate situation.

The battalion left Niederlahnstein the morning of 31 March and shortly thereafter arrived at Ahlbach. Some of the vehicles of the advanced party travelled over one of the famed Hitler Autobahn, the four-lane military highways. All the roads of the region were especially good.

Hundreds of liberated prisoners - French, Dutch, British, Indian, Italian, and Poles, jammed the roads and headed westward, having commandeered buses, bicycles, and wagons. Others walked, heavy bundles on their backs. They waved to the American soldiers and were eager to be friendly.

The month came to a close with the capture of 7 Nazis. The evening of 31 March, a Polish laborer came to the CP, in the Gasthof in Ahlbach, and told that he and another Pole had found two German soldiers on a nearby farm. These two, had in turn, been in contact with five more. A hasty expedition started out on a jeep and soon returned with 7 Germans. Three had been Ack-Ack men, one was from the Luftwaffe, and three, having been wounded on the Eastern Front, had been sent to the 80th Infanterie Regiment in the Gneisenau Kaserne in Koblenz. They were, after interrogation, placed in a goat stable for the night, and after digging sumps before breakfast, were turned over to the Regimental cage.

Month of April 1945

April proved to be one of the most momentous months of the war and the 880th was called upon to play an important role in the final onslaught against the crumbling regime of Adolf Hitler. The crossing of the Rhine, in force, had pushed the Germans back and the speed of the advance kept them from forming a defensive line.

Easter ushered in the month. The Battalion had arrived in the village of Ahlach the previous day and was waiting orders for its next move. The enemy was retreating to the north and east at too rapid a pace to keep up with. There was a mood that all that remained of the war was occupation of various cities. The time in Ahlach was devoted to care and maintenance of equipment.

Since the Catholic Chaplain was unable to come from Divisional headquarters in Limburg to Ahlach, the local priest was requested to conduct the Easter Service. The priest, a tall, jovial red-head, never tired of telling that he was an artilleryman in the last war and had fought against the Americans. He was, he kept reassuring all who spoke German, no friend of Hitler.

Greater difficulties were encountered in arranging for the Protestant Easter Service. The village was Catholic and no Protestant church was available. Nor was there any hall large enough to hold all the men desiring to attend service. In addition the weather was

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HISTORY OF THE 880th FIELD ARTILLERY

(Continued from Page 33)

threatening and it was considered inadvisable to use the Field. The Priest, hearing of the battalion's plight, offered to use his Church - a policy usually forbidden by the Church and contrary to army regulations except under the most extreme conditions. Permission was granted by higher headquarters.

A large number were present at the service. The Division Artillery Protestant Chaplain conducted the service while the Priest himself played the organ. A tow-headed little German boy, who couldn't help but smile in shy friendly fashion at the Americans, pumped the squeaky bellows with one foot. Whatever the irregularities involved, the service by its very nature was impressive and the men were genuinely inspired.

The next morning at 0900 the forward party left for Riede, 111 miles to the northeast. In the neighborhood of Kassel, the 1st and 9th American armies had linked to trap a large German army defending the Ruhr industrial region. The 69th Division was to take up position on the east flank of this encircling arm.

At 2000 the Battalion cleared the area. The night was one of the nastiest encountered and the convoy moved with great difficulty over strange roads. Heavy clouds obliterated the moon and the route was lost in blackness. Several vehicles went off the road, two overturned and several other pieces of equipment received minor damage. Injuries were suffered by two or three men. Not until 0840 did the Battalion close its new area at Riede. Despite the length of its march, the battalion here too was out of contact with the enemy although it was known that many Germans were hiding in the nearby woods and hills. Most of the men tried to catch up on their sleep, but a number organized a prisoner hunt and jeeps went out to flush the woods. The only quarry was a meek-looking fellow in over-sized civilian clothes, who claimed to be a Sudeten Czech.

Riede, like all German villages, was filled with numerous foreign workers who were intent on getting home. But as yet the stream of foreigners was small and not until eastern Germany was reached did they become a serious problem.

The morning of 4 April, while the men were at breakfast, enemy planes appeared overhead and the attached Ack-Ack let loose without effect. The planes strafed an Engineers battalion working on the road and accounted for two killed and two wounded.

At Riede the Battalion reverted to direct support of the 272d Infantry, remaining however, for the time being, under Division Artillery control. The forward party left at 1530, 4 April for Balhorn, and at 1700 the battalion followed, arriving forty minutes later. Balhorn was to be the division rendezvous, preparatory to a new move, and the town was filled with divisional

elements, all of which started to pull out in the early hours of the following morning. At 1013, march orders were given and at 1130, 5 April, the Battalion cleared Balhorn, heading originally for the nearby village of Duernberg. However, the way was clear and the movement continued the full 23 kilometers from Balhorn to Kassel.

Kassel had surrendered at noon, 4 April, and the Battalion arrived in the city at 1415 the following day. The city was a complete wreck, absolutely leveled by air attacks; the heaviest in October of 1943 killed, according to local informants, 60,000 persons. The main thoroughfare had been cleared and the Battalion entered as one of three columns moving down the street.

The 880th took up positions in the suburb of Sandershausen. Billets were occupied in a row of workingman's flats on the Rauschenstrasse. The Cannon Company of the 272d had put its guns in a neighboring vacant lot. At 1510 the Battalion was ready to fire. At 1525, "B" Battery phoned that counter-battery fire had been received in its area, and at 1551 "C" Battery reported two rounds had fallen close to its guns. The Liaison Plane was fired upon by small arms and forced down. The pilot, **Lt. Johns**, and the Observer, **S/Sgt. Wojtanowski**, walked to safety.

By 0600 the next morning, four harassing missions had been fired in addition to one registration per battery. The objective was a village to the east, Dalheim, where resistance was light, but still stubborn enough to hold up the column. Smoke poured from behind the neighboring hills and fire lit the evening sky as the shells that landed in the village set it aflame.

Because of the rapidly developing situation, it was decided to break the battalion into three teams - A, B, and C. Combat Team "A" would consist of one or two batteries plus part of Fire Direction and would go forward while Combat Team B remained in position. When A was ready to fire, B would go forward. Combat Team C would bring up all elements left behind. For the next few days this procedure was followed.

At 0912 of 6 April, as the men were standing in the streets watching the 272d Cannon Company fire a mission, Counter Battery fire was received landing at a considerable distance. Buildings in the line of fire were shattered and the men were ordered into basements since it was thought the enemy might be zeroing in.

The forward elements started out at 1800 on 6 April and at 1940 were in Dalheim. The 955th Medium Artillery Battalion continued to reinforce the fires from Sandershausen. As the forward elements came into the village, action was still apparent. The CP was established in the most likely-looking house, a Gasthof whose roof, however, was in flames. Counter-Battery fire injured **Pfc. Joe Self** of "B" Battery and damaged

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HISTORY OF THE 880th FIELD ARTILLERY

(Continued from Page 34)

a vehicle. The Gasthof continued to smolder all the next day and food stored in the place was handed out to the local population.

While the Battalion remained in Dalheim, the 272d Infantry Regiment, with Tank Destroyers, took the next town of Kleinalmerode. Fighting continued in the center of the village until 1130 and at 1245, the forward elements of the Battalion arrived. The previous evening 150 rounds had been sent into this town and many buildings continued to smolder even after the battalion had moved out.

Because of counter-battery fire, the CP was hastily established in a basement on the western fringes of the town. Unnoticed at first was the headless corpse of a civilian lying under a blanket on the floor. The CP was hastily moved into another room.

The commander of the German combat team was killed in the town, and **Pfc. James Pool**, driver for **Lt. Col. Landis**, going through his pockets discovered considerable pertinent information, including the location of important enemy installations.

Radio reports placed the Division as the spearhead of the 1st Army in its drive toward the Werra River. The 272d Infantry was the leading unit of the 69th. The objective of the 272d was a bridgehead on the east side of the Werra River large enough to permit armor to get across and into position for maneuver. The Werra, while not very wide, remained an important obstacle since a few miles north of Kassel it joins with the Fulda river to form the Weser, at whose mouth stands Bremen. The 9th Armored Division was waiting to the rear of the 69th to cross the Werra at Witzenhausen and spearhead the drive toward Leipzig.

The forward elements left Kleinalmerode at 1450 and the two forward firing batteries, A and C, were in position to fire by 1547. The last vehicle left Kleinalmerode at 1610 and arrived in Witzenhausen at 1620, 19 miles from Kassel.

Columns of prisoners were being marched into Witzenhausen, while hundreds of refugees lined the roads from the city. This was only another of the many indications of how unprepared the Germans had been for the invasion. Not only had the speed of the advance caught them unaware, but the people were psychologically unprepared.

The CP in Witzenhausen was in the home and office of a cigar manufacturer, while the rest of Headquarters Battery received a beautiful mansion for its quarters. The building was the home of a paper manufacturer whose records found in the house indicated he had been a party member since 1929. Everything in the building indicated great wealth. A painting by Velasquez hung in the drawing room and on the landing was one by Tiziano Vecelli.

At 1000 on 9 April the Battalion left Witzenhausen for Hohengandern. The 2d Division was on the left and the 43d Cavalry of the 3d Army on the right. Fire Direction, which in Witzenhausen had enjoyed an elaborate office with modern desks, now was housed in an ancient primary school with long benches and low school desks.

The forward elements of the Division were moving ahead with great rapidity and little firing was done from Hohengandern. By 1605 both the forward elements and the rear echelons had cleared the village for Uder, which was closed by 1638.

The next objective of the combat team was the town of Heiligenstadt, which the Germans declared an open city and surrendered since there were 4,000 Germans wounded in local hospitals. By this time the war seemed to have changed into a battle between the First and Third Armies to see which would get to Berlin first, and the 3d Army shoved the 6th Armored Division in front of the 880th. The forward elements continued to advance so rapidly that again firing was impossible. The only danger at Uder came from 500 enemy troops reported trapped in the woods to the north and howitzers were kept trained on the area in the event of trouble.

At Uder the Battalion started to carry the dough-boys of the 272d. Seventy-five men rode on trucks of the attached 461st AAA, while 58 were allotted to each of the firing batteries. At 1820, the Battalion cleared Uder and at 2140, in the dusk, reached the village of Grossgrabe. Here several houses were taken over, including a large Gasthof. Again no firing was possible since the guns were out of range. The 69th's relation to other units was: the 2d Division on the left, the 9th Armored in front, and the 3d Army on the right.

The next morning as the men were waiting march orders, sniper fire, at first believed to be coming from a high church steeple, wounded two men of "C" Battery. Machine guns were trained on the steeple and all possible openings were raked with fire. The church itself was searched without results. All male civilians of the town were being rounded up for questioning when the Battalion left.

No idea was given as to the next destination. A forward patrol was out and wherever resistance might be encountered, the lines would form. At 1515 the Battalion stopped at Schilfa. Mess trucks prepared to feed, but by 1540 the march order was given and all mess equipment had to be reloaded. Within five minutes the battalion was clearing the village. At 1850 the Battalion reached Ostramondra and moved into an old Schloss belonging to Captain Dedo von Krosigk. In peacetime the manor house, with its surrounding moat, must have presented a most picturesque scene; but the place had been housing refugees from Leipzig and Berlin and the lower floors of the Schloss were

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badly used. Members of the von Krosigk family, evidently closely identified with Saxon nobility, still resided in the upper story. At 2000 while the Battalion was eating chow, enemy planes appeared overhead and the attached Ack-Ack, supplemented by battalion air protection, went into action, without results.

The next morning the battalion again set out on its strange journey, clearing Ostramondra at 1156. The movement continued through the day until at 1450 a halt was called at Gernstedt. At 1600 the Battalion was alerted to march, but at 1605, a fire mission was transmitted. "C" Battery returned to firing position within five minutes, while "A" and "B" batteries were sent 5,000 yards up the road.

What had happened was that General Major Eric Schultz, a Field Artillery officer who was convalescent in Naumberg, was ordered to organize a defense of the city. He gathered together 160 nondescript troops who built a barricade and set up machine guns at the approaches of the city. An American Infantry Recon jeep was fired upon as it approached the barricade and the four occupants rushed for safety. One however was taken prisoner, but was freed when the 880th started laying in shells.

When the crash occupation was made, the Infantrymen on the ammunition vehicles began packing shells for guns. Others crowded around the radios to listen, with admiration, to the transmission of the fire mission. All had heard the artillery thundering out but few had seen it in action and they were impressed by the speed with which positions were occupied and the precision of routine. When at 1800 the first "Cease fire, mission accomplished" came over the radio, they gave a resounding cheer.

Later other fire was called for and not until 1905 was "C" Battery given its "Cease fire." In the meanwhile the road had become choked with vehicles of both 1st and 3d armies, and again it looked as though progress would be impossible. Nevertheless the Battalion crawled on and before the outskirts of Naumberg were reached at 2230, the day's mileage amounted to 28 miles.

General Schultz, who had been responsible for the four-hour hold-up, was captured with his orderly in Bad Koesen by the forward party led by **Captain Tindel** and including **Lt. Miller**, **1st Sergeant Masters**, **Cpl. Blackwell**, **Cpl. Hoarn** and **Pfc. Rich**. The General was, at first, arrogant and haughty, but eventually calmed down and informed **Col. Landis** that the artillery laid on his position had demoralized his men.

Houses were occupied in a suburb of Naumberg that evening and by 1125 the next morning the Battalion had cleared the area. Naumberg itself was reached within a few minutes and it presented an amazing

picture. Despite heavy bombings on the industrial outskirts, the people appeared extremely friendly and crowded around the rear vehicles, displaying not the slightest animosity toward the invaders. A Dutch soldier, who had been a medical orderly at a nearby hospital, informed the men that the previous day German soldiers with Panzerfaust had taken up position on the main streets, but when the tanks of the 9th Armored arrived in the city, no firing was heard. A few blocks away, closer to the main section of Naumberg, the populace was looting a military warehouse. Women, old people, children, the poor, the rich, all were loaded. Small wagons jammed the streets and people were rolling barrels of butter and hoops of cheese down the walks with the toe of their boots.

From Naumberg on, the roads were packed with vehicles as unit after unit moved steadily forward. At 1525 the Air OP reported 88s were shooting at the Liaison planes. Bursts were so close that **S/Sgt. Wojtanowski**, the observer, insisted he could smell the smoke. "A" Battery made a crash occupation of position and in ten minutes the battery was putting shells on the position of this enemy Ack-Ack. However, at 1540 the Infantry Liaison officer reported an American patrol was in the vicinity and asked that the fire be held. Later it was resumed and the 88s ceased to give further trouble.

At 1600 the Battalion entered the village of Jaucha and occupied extremely pleasant houses belonging to workers in the nearby open pit mines. **Lt. Miller**, on coming into the town, tested the lines to nearby factories and was able to communicate with towns still in German hands.

The three days spent here were devoted primarily to wiping up scattered resistance in the area. On 14 April, 36 AA guns were knocked out or overrun and 476 prisoners were taken by the combat team.

The Battle of Leipzig

On 16 April the Battalion left Jaucha in the encircling move to invest the great German city of Leipzig, fifth largest of the Reich and now only second in importance to Berlin itself. Often called the Paris of Germany, Leipzig had always been the foremost cultural center of Central Germany, famed for its beauty, its university, its fur market and musical conservatory. Here on a battlefield just outside the city, Napoleon's army received its greatest defeat and the Bonapartist empire was shattered. The monument built to commemorate this battle was to become the scene of Leipzig's most dogged resistance in the current war.

To the V Corps was given the mission of reducing Leipzig as an obstacle to American success. The 9th Armored Division was to spearhead the 69th Infantry Division in its drive to cut off the city from the east.

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The 2d Infantry Division was to be drawn up on the western outskirts of the city. The VII Corps was fighting for Halle to the northwest of Leipzig.

Before the attack, several possibilities were considered. The city might surrender without a fight. Air attacks had created enough damage to make its usefulness to the German War machine very doubtful. Morale in the city, as in all of Germany, was at low ebb, while the Americans were flushed with their easy movement across Germany. There was some talk that the city would be declared open since it sheltered a large number of wounded. A few of the refugees contended that the defense would be of a token nature, the city surrendered when American soldiers approached the outskirts.

The most authoritative information received from escaping forced laborers and PWs, indicated that the SS was forcing a fight. Troops in the city were estimated from ten thousand to twenty thousand with about 300 SS troops, not including the large number of SS troops who had changed into civilian clothes. German infantry was dug in at strategic spots and AA from the excellent Leipzig air defenses were to be used as artillery. Immobilized tanks were placed at street corners and a strong fear remained that the unpredictable Germans might try house-to-house fighting such as was carried on in Breslau.

The roads traveled to complete the investment were crowded with thousands of GI vehicles, with the addition of large numbers of captured German trucks and staff cars. The roads chosen seemed to be the back alleys and great clouds of dust settled on the great army. Movement was slow because of the traffic entanglements. Snipers, Panzerfaust, and small arms impeded the advance and the Infantry was forced to clean out areas of resistance by-passed by the armor. Burning haystacks testified to the thoroughness of the Infantry activity.

Two major problems, aside from the military operations, confronted the battalion on this move - Germans surrendering and allied refugees. Everywhere the American army turned, Germans gave up. Most were boys, others were older men. Only a few were of an age comparative with the Americans. One of the most spectacular prisoner catches was made by **Lt. Isaminger**, who with **Tec 5 Ornett** and **Pfc Sakars**, entered a German-held town through error and came upon a fully-manned machine gun position. They were able to persuade the Germans to surrender and before they left the village they had taken 26 prisoners.

About noon the Battalion went into rendezvous waiting for the road to be cleared, and they remained until early afternoon. After another two hours of slow progress another rendezvous was reached. In the meanwhile the forward party continued on to Pomsen

where some resistance was being met. Toward midnight the remainder of the battalion arrived in Pomsen and bedded down for the night around an old farmhouse.

Pomsen, even in the dark, presented a picture of complete confusion. Tanks of the 9th armored rumbled clumsily down the main street. Infantry jeeps were parked in crowded line and doughboys took over billets for a moment's sleep. Tank destroyers gathered on side roads in preparation for the sweep on Leipzig. The 880th had traveled 37 miles that 16 of April.

Early the next morning at 0615, the forward elements of the Battalion moved out of Pomsen for the town of Zweefurth. Snipers had been active on the road the night before, possibly from behind the haystacks now burning. The CP was established in a charming house belonging to a Zweefurth architect. Originally the guns of the firing batteries were set toward the east, in expectation of an attack from that direction, for there was no infantry between the battalion and what Germans remained on the flank. Later in the day the guns were trained on Leipzig, 8 miles away. Only one mission was fired from this position, on a machine gun emplacement. The situation in the city was such that front lines could not be determined and direct fire weapons were utilized. All day long the road in front of the CP was busy with military traffic and refugees, mostly the slave laborers desperately trying to escape their German captors.

A Polish girl, who had come to the CP to see about getting food for a large band of Russians and Poles she was leading to freedom, watched 12 German PWs marched into the courtyard. They were a bedraggled crew and she smiled contemptuously and said in caustic tones, "How haughty they were in 1939."

Several British commandos arrived on the scene with a German Feldwebel who had plotted their escape and had for twelve days been leading them through German territory to the American lines. He had been motivated by a great affection for the British prisoners, an intense dislike of the Nazis, and a fear that the SS troopers might take revenge on the British in the closing days of the war.

Escaping allied prisoners brought tales of what was occurring in Leipzig and revealed gun emplacements and brought other information of strategic importance.

Through an electric storm that night, explosions could be discerned in the direction of Leipzig and later great fires could be seen.

The next afternoon, as the Infantry started into Leipzig, the battalion moved four miles from Zweefurth to Sommersfeld-Engelsdorf, on the very outskirts of Leipzig. The Battalion CP was in a large farmhouse owned by the city of Leipzig and run by an Inspector, Rudolph Haase. Within the compound of the farm, trouble was brewing between Haase and his foreign

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workers who complained he had mistreated them and now refused them food. To relieve the tension, Major Peters ordered the German to give his Poles a swine to slaughter.

In Leipzig the Infantry quickly moved up the streets to their objectives. The only serious opposition was from isolated sniper fire. The railroad station, originally one of the principal objectives, was by-passed and was eventually taken by **Lt. O'Brien** and his forward Observer party. **Lt. O'Brien** captured 150 prisoners and quantities of arms. The 2d Division was rapidly reaching its objectives and by 0930, 19 April, the report was received, "No leading elements. Friendly troops all over town."

While the Battalion was in this position, numerous refugees arrived, among them three Frenchmen who had escaped the previous day from the Concentration Camp of Erla Naschinwerk in Leipzig. So starved they could hardly walk, the men told a story of horror of how the inmates of the camp had been massacred by SS troops. The men were taken to Regiment and when the city was occupied, a committee investigated the camp and found the remains of hundreds of inmates who had been shot by their guards.

The Monument

Despite the report the 69th and 2 Infantry Division had joined up in Leipzig and that the city was in American hands, isolated spots of resistance remained. The most important of these was the Napoleon monument, which marked the spot of the Battle of Leipzig or the "Battle of Nations" where Napoleon was defeated in 1813. Because this battle is often considered to mark the birth of German nationalism, a certain symbolism was attached to the stubborn defense. The Germans in the monument were fully aware their cause was hopeless and that no strategic value was to be gained by prolonged fighting in this spot.

The monument, a tremendous stone structure rising 91 meters, was built like a fortress. At the base, the walls were 27 feet thick and in no spot of the entire structure were the walls less than six feet in thickness. Two hundred and fifty Germans were holding out with machine guns and machine pistols. Other German snipers were dug in around the outside of the monument on high spots guarding its approach.

Although the Battle of Leipzig was primarily an Infantry show, four of the men of the 880th were taken prisoner by the Germans and were able to witness the final scenes of the fight for the city.

On the night of 18-19 April it was found necessary to maintain a relay station near the central portion of Leipzig to keep open communications between FDC and Forward Observers. The main flow of battle had passed into the center of the town, and there remained

only sniper fire and small enemy patrols. The relay station was to have been close to regimental headquarters so it would be protected from any remaining enemy action. But the intended spot and protection was believed necessary.

The morning of 19 April, at about 0930, a machine gun detail with a .50 cal. machine gun was sent with a jeep to protect the station from any sniper fire. Members of this detail were: **Cpl. Dyko**, **Pfc. Chrzanowski**, **Pfc. Daily**, and **Pfc. Denton**. They arrived at the station and prepared the machine gun for action. Since the relay station was placed partially under the out-jutting of a gasoline station, it was decided that the best policy would be to mount the machine gun on the jeep, thus making it mobile and increasing the field of fire. This was done and the jeep was parked about thirty yards from the station.

Despite the fighting in the city, civilians continued to move up and down the streets in pursuit of their normal activities. The street corners were covered by MPs and Infantry. Tank destroyers were parked on either side of the Relay station and additional machine gun positions were scattered in the immediate vicinity.

Shortly after the arrival of the machine gun crew, a jeep belonging to the messenger of the 569th Signal Company, drew up and asked the men to accompany him through a stretch of road where he had been subjected to sniper fire. The impression gotten by the 880th men was that the snipers were only a short distance away and that he had approached them, rather than other machine gun crews in the vicinity, because their fifty caliber was mobile. Spontaneously, according to the men themselves, they jumped into the jeep and followed the messenger at a fast clip through the heart of Leipzig. In addition to the machine gun crew was the chief of the Relay station, **Sgt. Doscotch**. After a five minute chase, the men decided they were going too far afield and were about to return when the other jeep turned into a large park. Here it stopped, and the two men told them that this was the place where they had recently picked up three prisoners and undoubtedly more Germans were hiding in the nearby woods. With this, the jeep turned around and left.

Civilians informed the group that German soldiers were in the vicinity, but **Sgt. Doscotch**, not seeing any evidence of snipers, ordered the jeep to be returned to its original post. As it rounded a corner into the main street the men noticed the messenger, now wounded, behind a tank. His driver had been killed. The messenger was motioning to them and they thought he was beckoning them. Later they learned he was motioning them to stay away. Thinking they had located the snipers, the 880th men drove their jeep over the curb, up against a fence about 15 feet from the front of the tank. Four of the men dismounted from the jeep while **Daily** remained at the machine gun. As the men approached the tank, rifle fire opened up and the men

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dove for the safety of the tank, all making it safely. **Daily** was not hit in this first burst and with the cry, "There's the sons of bitches," he opened fire with the machine gun. The effect of his fire could not then be observed, but later one dead and one wounded German were found. **Daily** fired about thirty rounds before he was hit high in the chest. As he fell back, he was hit by a second bullet which spun him around so that he landed on his stomach. His body was wedged between the jeep and a board fence. He called out, but the men were unable to cross the open space separating them, and shortly afterwards, he died.

The firing continued for about ten minutes and then quieted down. At this time **Pfc. Denton** borrowed **Cpl. Dyko's** first aid pack and bandaged the wounded messenger's leg. It was a flesh wound and not serious. Next the men tried to figure out a means of escape. They figured out that every time American Artillery opened up on the Napoleon monument 100 yards away, the German snipers would duck. In such an interval the men considered they would have a good chance of jumping the nearby concrete fence and rushing to safety. As they waited a favorable opportunity, the life of Leipzig continued only a few yards away. Civilians rode past on bicycles. One man even stopped to ask if he could get through, as if they were in any position to stop him. Two Polish girls spent five minutes waving at the men and though they considered sending them for help, they realized the girls lives would have been endangered.

Soon, from the direction of Leipzig, came a jeep and they tried to warn it away. It continued and then stopped directly alongside the tank. Two French newspaper correspondents from the Paris Soir ran around the tank to the men to get their story. As their driver rounded the back of the tank, he was hit in the thigh. Behind him was a photographer, Gaston Madru, who dropped to his knees and attempted to take an action shot. Snipers at once shot him in the stomach. His French colleagues pulled him into the shelter of the tank and tried to help him, while **Denton** looked after the jeep driver.

About this time the German opened up with burp guns and rifle fire. In addition to the small arms, they now launched two Panzerfaust shells directly at the tank, rocking it so that it gave every indication of toppling over on the men. For the sake of the three wounded men, the soldiers decided to surrender. Both of the French correspondents had been members of the Underground and during the occupation had worked for a paper appropriately enough entitled, "The Sniper." They quailed at the prospect of again falling into German hands.

After an hour of being pinned down, one of the correspondents handed **Sgt. Doscotch** a white handkerchief, which was tied to the barrel of a carbine. (Time: 1130

to 1145). When it was raised, the Germans shouted, "Kommen hier." The men gathered up the wounded and carried them across the street up a steep embankment to the front of the Napoleon monument. Here five young German soldiers hurriedly felt their pockets and inquired about weapons and food. They were anxious to get the men inside because American artillery was giving the monument a thorough pasting. The American artillery was amazingly accurate. Self-propelled 155s were dropping shells in through a window about 15 feet square. These shells continued to drop through the main floor to within 50 feet of where the men were later held prisoner.

As soon as the men entered the isolated fortress, the Germans came forward to help with the wounded. One of them saw **Doscotch** leaning against a wall, though he too was wounded, and offered to carry him to safety. The Americans were informed that they would be treated according to the terms of the Geneva Convention, but they soon realized it was more than just the Geneva Convention that was responsible for their excellent treatment. The Germans were fully aware that the situation was hopeless and at every opportunity they asked the Americans to put in a good word for them when the garrison was forced to surrender.

The men carried the wounded up several stairs into the building and to a small room where a busy German doctor was working by the dim flickering light of a candle. He could do very little except bandage the wounds and administer morphine to those in pain. After he was finished, the men helped the wounded down into the cellar.

The men were placed in a large book-filled room under the monument. The structure had apparently long before been converted to military use. A radio transmitter had been installed in the upper room while the library was converted into quarters for German soldiers. The valuable books of the library, in addition to those from several nearby universities, were stacked in the storage room where the prisoners now were held. The aisles on either side of the book stacks were filled with German soldiers.

In addition to the German garrison of approximately 250 men, there were in the building 26 American enlisted men, only eleven of whom were not wounded. Two officers, **Major Martin** of the 777th Tank Battalion and **1st Lt. Wilson**, Forward Observer of the 881st FA Bn, were also held.

The German medics were very kind to the men and went out of their way for their comfort. Several could speak English and conversed with the men. They admitted they didn't want to fight and they knew they were surrounded and hopelessly outnumbered, but their Hauptmann had given the soldiers their orders, orders to fight, so they fought.

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Notwithstanding the situation in which the Germans found themselves, they still took time to show the monument to the prisoners and to tell them its history. Denton wandered all over without a guard. A German officer inquired when the men had eaten and then had Dyko padd out a can of sardines for each two men, cigarettes, and black bread. The men shared schnapps and cognac and when water was passed around, one of the German medics warned that it was not too good and that they should drink sparingly lest it bind them.

Most of the men were from Leipzig, but the Americans' guard was a frightened 14-year-old from Cologne who kept worrying about his parents. He showed his prisoners pictures of his family and wanted to give them his gun and binoculars. Two of the NCOs were older men, one 45, and the other, probably from the regular army, was 52. The latter was most eager to see the Germans hold out to the bitter end and during the process of surrender, he berated every man who took advantage of the opportunity to give up.

Two of the men, during a lull in fighting, sidled up to the Americans and confided that in the years to come they hoped to migrate to the United States. One, who had been a medical student, regretfully told how he had been forced to leave school to enter the army. A friend of his had been taken prisoner in the early days of the war and now in Texas was being permitted to continue his medical studies. Although he had once been convinced of the righteousness of the German cause, he had started to entertain serious doubts. The other hopeful migrant was a Luftwaffe man who intended to work as a carpenter once he got to the States.

When a machine gun was placed in an opening into the room, the German medical officer protested it would bring fire upon the American wounded and prisoners. Upon his demand the machine gun was taken to another spot. When it became necessary to move the wounded, the German soldiers assisted in carrying them to a safer spot.

The Germans were very frightened by the artillery which continued until about 1500. Then small arms fire was heard and one Infantryman climbed to the top of the monument and dropped hand grenades inside. The American prisoners, who had been attempting to influence a surrender, again sought the Germans to give up their stupid struggle. The prisoners were moved to a point near the stairway. The German soldiers, wearing full packs, but carrying no weapons, lined up in back of the prisoners. For twenty tense minutes everyone waited for an American fighting man to stick his head in the door. According to the 880th men, if Sad Sack had come in the Germans would have surrendered to him. But when no further effort was made to rush the monument, the Hauptmann came downstairs and ordered the soldiers to take up arms and start firing again.

The prisoners were moved to a safer part of the cellar while the Germans prepared for another American attack. No more artillery fire was heard and at 1800 the men prepared to bed down for the night. In the early evening the French cameraman died.

The Germans, whenever opportunity presented itself, plied the captives with questions far removed from the immediate situation. Despite the men's refusal to engage in political discussions, the Germans wanted to know the attitude of the United States toward Russia and why America had entered the war. They were curious as to the American feelings in regard to Jews, and if it were true that President Roosevelt was, as they had repeatedly been told, a Jew.

The evening was devoted to carrying both German and American wounded downstairs. At about 2030 the German medical officer wanted to know who among the wounded could walk, and about 2045 of these men were evacuated in American ambulances. It was then learned that the Germans planned to raise a Red Cross over the building in the morning.

When it became clear that the monument was to surrender, the Americans became anxious that vengeance might be taken against them and, without detection, they entered a gun room to arm themselves. The 14-year-old soldier had fallen asleep in a radio control room upstairs. Under the surrender terms the Germans disarmed themselves and stacked the arms in the same room where this Hitlerjugend was sleeping. Not until an hour later did the Infantrymen bother to wake him up and place him with his comrades.

Late in the evening the German soldiers began leaving their positions (where to, the men did not discover). The Americans were told to wait twenty minutes after the guard left and then they would be free. But they decided to take no chances because in the dark it would be impossible for the Americans outside to know them from the Germans. At about 0100 on 20 April a guard came down to the men and requested them to go upstairs with him. There they found the lights on and a G.I. standing by the door with a white flag. From him they learned the Germans had surrendered.

In a small room **Colonel Lynch** was discussing the terms and across the hall German soldiers were disarming themselves.

The officers, all of whom lived in the nearby area, were given honor passes, while the men who had opposed the fighting, were packed off to PW enclosures.

Sgt. Doscotch, Chrzanowski, Denton and the two correspondents went down into the street again to recover their weapons and to find Madru's camera with the film on which had been recorded the Battle of Leipzig.

The 880th jeep was burned and the press jeep had been blasted by Panzerfaust. On their return to the monument they discovered the American Infantry had moved in.

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All the men who were involved, were demoted for leaving their posts.

On 20 April, the Battalion left Sommersfeld and occupied quarters in Plaussig. Here the battalion was to be given an opportunity to clean up and repair equipment. According to advance information, the VII Corps was to cross to the north with the 104th Division spearheading the VII Corps drive.

A new factor entered the picture the following day when at 1030 it was announced that the Red Army had reached Riesa on the Elbe, only 25 miles away and a link-up of the two allied armies was imminent. At 0930 the Battalion was ordered to move to reinforce the fires of the 879th before Eilenberg.

As a task force of the 273d approached the town, white flags had been raised and the recon outfits went through without opposition. When tanks and Infantry attempted to move through the town, they suffered casualties before a renewed onslaught. The next morning white flags again flew and as the Infantry approached, the white flags were pulled down. It was decided to level the city because of its failure to observe rules of warfare. Approximately 12,000 rounds landed on the town. Of these the 880th fired 2,196 and the town of Eilenberg was wiped off the map. Men of the battalion visited the site after the shelling and were impressed by the complete ruin that had been created.

On 25 April 1945, the Red Army and the 273d Infantry linked. The union of the two armies had been awaited for several days and several divisions had been making an effort to be the first to participate in the epoch meeting. For two days after the 69th had made the contact, word of the meeting was withheld and the men eagerly awaited its publication.

The stay in Plaussig was enlivened by an increase in responsibility for the civilian population. The Germans themselves came forward with a multitude of problems to be unentangled. These ranged from queries about missing relatives to requests for passes to the next town or the other end of Germany. The Burgermeister, Sperling, was found to have been high up in the Nazi party and he was discarded in favor of Herr Hennig.

A principle source of difficulty in the area was the Auslander. These people had been brought by the millions to Germany where they were underpaid, underfed and oppressed. Now they were anxious to translate their liberation into meaningful terms. If they were to remain in one place, as the Americans requested, they wanted to be fed. The situation was too complex to be governed by a few directives. Several riot calls came from the nearby town of Portitz where every attempt by the Auslander to get food was stubbornly contested by the Germans.

On 27 April a new scene of the fantastic panorama was introduced when three recently-released German political prisoners arrived to apprehend the local Gestapo man. In the lining of their coats they still wore the symbol of their imprisonment, the red triangle, to identify themselves with the resistant movement. According to one of the men, the underground had been active against the Nazis and that in Leipzig alone there were over 80 separate groups.

Distinguished visitors were entertained on 28 April - Lt. Gen. Jan Shof Van Der Meersch, Major Gattoir, and Captain Van Eynden, all of the Belgian army, were guests of **Col. Landis** at dinner. This group was identified with the work being carried on in behalf of Belgian political prisoners in Germany.

At 1800 on 28 April, the 69th Division was detached from the V Corps and came under the jurisdiction of the VII Corps during the stay near Cologne.

Plans were made to move southward on 29 April. The Division was to occupy positions previously held by the 2d Division. However the movement was postponed until the next day and the next.

During the month of April a number of honors were given to men of the 880th. Air medals were awarded to **1st Lt. Clarence E. Preble**, **1st Lt. John L. Johns**, and **2d Lt. Lester Carver**. Bronze Stars were won by: **Major Glenn D. Blake**, **Captain Henry B. Machen**, **1st Lt. John Cooper**, **1st Sgt. John Kemnitz**, **S/Sgt. Archie Johnson**, **Sgt. Herbert C. Kroenke**, **Cpl. Harold W. Hoarn**, **Pfc. Charles W. D. Rich**, **Tec 5 Robert D. Redmond** and **Sgt. Howard K. West**.

The strenuous activities of the month of April were brought to a close by a period of rest and recreation in Plaussig.

Month of May 1945

With the beginning of May preparations were in progress for the battalion to move southward to replace units in the process of withdrawing from the area. The First Army had lost contact with the enemy all along its front and fighting was confined to pockets in the British sector around Hamburg and to Czechoslovakia, where the 3d U.S. Army and the forces of the Russians were racing to the rescue of Prague.

The second day of the month the battalion departed for Otterwisch some distance southeast of Leipzig. The route lay through the outer suburbs of the city and some of the road was familiar, having been covered during the encirclement move.

Otterwisch was another of the pleasant villages dominated by a great Schloss and a six hundred year old church. The Schloss, belonging to a family by the name of Von Arnim, were occupied by the Swiss Consul who had moved out from Leipzig during the air raids. Pleasant relations were established between the Staff and the Consul.

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HISTORY OF THE 880th FIELD ARTILLERY

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Because of the quiet situation, training schedules were put into effect and the battalion reverted to garrison life. Tours to Leipzig were initiated and convoys went daily to drive through the ruins of the town which had been taken by the Division. In Otterwisch the usual problems of the Auslander were encountered.

On 6 May, Lt. General J. Lawton Collins, commander of the VII Corps, visited the area with Major General Reinhardt and Brigadier General Maraists. The three generals stopped in the CP and General Collins mentioned he would return when he had more time.

While in Otterwisch the 69th Division and the VII Corps was detached from the First Army, which was soon to return to the States, and became part of the Ninth.

Three men, **Staff Sergeant Henry Wojtanowski**, **Staff Sergeant DeLoach** and **Sergeant Stanley Supinsky** were commissioned second lieutenants on 8 May at a review attended by **General Maraist**. Later the same day Bronze Stars and Air Medals were presented at formations.

At 1500 the next day, the war in Europe officially came to an end and at midnight the status of the Battalion changed from combat to occupation. Whatever the wild scenes of rejoicing in New York and London, the celebration in Otterwisch was very tame. Absolutely nothing differentiated it from other days, except that the men began to sweat out the CBI and counted points to see if they had anywhere near the 85 required for discharge. The most significant change was in the regulation regarding black-out.

A forward party went out on 9 May to Merseburg and on 11 May the Battalion moved from the rural village of Otterwisch to the important industrial center of Merseburg, between Leipzig and Halle. An old cathedral city dating from the period when the Slavs and Germans faced each other on the Saale River, Merseburg had become an important part of the great I.G. Farbenindustries. On the outskirts, at Schkopau, was the Buna plant and nearby the oil refining center of Leuna. In addition, German experimental aircraft stood on the large nearby landing field. Because of its important location, Merseburg had been badly damaged by allied aircrafts.

The mission of the 880th was to keep order in Merseburg, to see that the regulations of the Allied Government were enforced, that the factories were protected and that food stores went unmolested. To successfully carry out its task, the Battalion was faced with an unprecedented guard schedule.

The Oberlyzeum fur Madchen was taken over to house the CP, the battery CPs, supply rooms and other headquarters installations. The Albrecht Durer Schule,

next door, was used as the guard house for screening activities, and for the detention of persons picked up on the streets for violations of the various regulations.

Officers and men were billeted in an area of attractive homes, modern in design and equipment. "C" Battery was apart from the battalion in Schkopau.

The three camps under Battalion control were: Camp de Schkopau, Camp 52 Merseburg, and 46 Weisenfels Strasse in Merseburg. Over ten thousand foreign workers of two dozen nationalities were housed in quarters connected with the factories of the town. Liberated prisoners of war were in the process of being drafted for the repatriation of the displaced persons. Schkopau and Camp 52 had about 4,000 inmates of various nationalities, while the camp at 46 Weisenfels Strass numbered about one thousand Italians.

Because of the growing shortage of food in Germany, the repatriation of displaced persons was accelerated and the Battalion began overseeing the shipment of foreigners. The first groups to leave were the French and Belgian; and then the gigantic task of returning the Russians was set in operation.

Railroad cars were gathered and trains made up to transport the Russians to Grimma, where liaison officers of the Red Army took them home. The Russians decorated the cars with flowers, red flags, and portraits of Stalin.

Another job given to the battalion was a survey of captured engineer equipment which could be used for the construction of Redeployment Depots along the coast.

Passes and furloughs were resumed and members of the battalion started going to Paris, to the Riviera, and even back to England.

During the month of May the following Bronze Stars were presented: **Major Glenn D. Blake**, **S/Sgt. Archie A. Johnson**, **Sgt. Herbert C. Kroenke**, **Cpl. Forrest C. Eley**, **Cpl. Harold W. Hoarn**, while **Lt. Beatty** received an oak leaf cluster. **1st Lt. Clarence E. Preble**, **1st Lt. John L. Johns**, **2d Lt. Lester Carver**, and **2d Lt. (then S/Sgt) Henry Wojtanowski** received air medals. **Lt. Johns** and **Lt. Preble** also received oak leaf clusters.

Major Peters, **Cap. Barnett**, **1st Sgt. Johnson**, **Sgt. Caminiti** and **Pfc. Brewer** were awarded Bronze Stars but presentation was not made at this time.

The main question of the month remained, "Where next?"

The fate of the Division was undecided. Discharge of those men with long service started, but the bulk of the men wondered about the Pacific Theater or the chances of remaining as part of the Army Occupation.

Author of this history record, (Leonard Nathan T-4), died in July of 1991.

Bad Boys Make Good - 57 Years Too Late!

Submitted By: **Howitzer Al Kormas**
Headquarters Battery, 879th Field Artillery
12500 Edgewater Drive #503
Lakewood, Ohio 44107

The following letter was sent to the Court of Two Sisters Restaurant in New Orleans, Louisiana by our own Al Kormas.

To Whom It May Concern:

In 1944, six of us in the 69th Infantry Division who were stationed at Camp Shelby, Mississippi, had a weekend pass to your fair city. For every girl there must have been a dozen servicemen on leave.

We decided to have a meal in a fine restaurant and were recommended to your establishment. We knew it would be our last opportunity to be in New Orleans, as we were now headed for overseas and combat.

Pooling our meager dollars together, a total of \$40.00, we crossed the cobblestone courtyard to the outdoor tables, and were accompanied in the palm trees by a waft of fine quiet music, which made an ideal setting, especially compared to where we were stationed.

We had a great waiter, very friendly, and he went all out to please us. We ordering a round of drinks, then each of us leisurely ordering a grand meal - lobster, steak, shrimp, etc. Then another after-dinner drink, and finally the check, and the waited sauntered away.

The bill came and was a little over \$44.00 I believe, and on checking out our resources, we realized we were about five dollars short.

We had a military conference, and being on cloud nine with your fair city and dining facility, we concluded to ordering another drink. As the waiter had to go out of sight to get our drinks, we slowly sauntered out, two by two. One of the last two hesitated and his comrade had to pull him to get him started. We waited outside and we heard our comrades running over the cobblestones, and a few employees chasing after them, our new combat boots echoing over the cobblestones when we all took off running.

Very shortly afterwards, we did go to Europe for combat, being the first Allied troops to meet the Russians at Torgau, Germany April 25th at 1330 (1:30) hours.

We have kept in contact over the years and regret our actions at the time, and would all like to ease our conscience. We have decided to write to you and apologize for this incident. We are now senior veterans, from our late 70's to early 80's. We wish to apologize to the waiter also, hoping he was not stuck with the check.

Al Kormas
69th Infantry Division Artillery

The six men involved were Howitzer Al, Hank Parker, Shorty Hartman, Larry Pankop, Jim Gray, and McMullen

* * * * *

Can you believe the restaurant actually wrote back to them! Below is the content of the response.

The Court Of Two Sisters Restaurant

613 Royal Street
New Orleans, Louisiana 70130
www.courtoftwosisters.com

June 26, 2001

Dear Mr. Kormas,

Thank you very much for your recent letter. We will remove that \$44.00 from our "cold file" and close the case. All is forgiven!

Enclosed is a Court of Two Sisters cookbook and brochure. We hope you are reminded of the good time that you and your friends enjoyed at our restaurant so long ago. We would also like to send your "co-conspirators" our cookbook and best wishes. We'd appreciate it if you could mail us their names and addresses.

If you or your friends are ever in New Orleans again we would like for you to be our special guests at the Court of Two Sisters. Thank you again for getting in touch with us after so many years!

Sincerely,
Jerome Fein and Jerome Fein III
Co-Owners

BEETLE BAILEY

By Mort Walker



Company G, 272nd Infantry Regiment

Submitted By: **Ted Majewski** and his son, **Gene Majewski**
Box 56622, Chicago, Illinois 60656

Ted's son, Gene, states that his father would love to receive cards and letters from anyone who would like to write.



M/Sgt. Ted Majewski - Bremen



Billings and McLeaf - Bremen



*S/Sgt. Curtis, S/Sgt. Fleege, Cpl. Schultz, Sgt. Old
Cadre - April 25, 1943*



*Sgt. Labove, Sgt. Schneider - April 25, 1943
Cadre - Camp Sidair, Oregon to Camp Shelby*



Unknown



Msgt. Ted Majewski, Camp Shelby

COMPANY G, 272nd INFANTRY REGIMENT
(Continued from Page 00)



Bombed out house being leveled by German laborers just before the dynamite charges are set off.



What's left of the building - two days later.

Flea Market Find

Submitted By: **Patricia Brown**
125 Clifton Drive • Reidsville, North Carolina 27320



Patricia purchased this photo at a Flea Market in North Carolina. She noticed the 69th insignia on the uniforms and helmet of the men. If anyone can identify this photo, please write to Patricia and the Bulletin.

Please Read Me!

We continue to receive copies of photos with the expectation that they will appear in the Bulletin and disappointment expressed when they don't appear. The fact is, they won't appear.

PLEASE, DO NOT SEND COPIES OF PHOTOS. THEY ARE NOT GOOD ENOUGH FOR REPRODUCTION. If you were in the newspaper, send us a newspaper, don't make a copy of it and send it. We can't use it. As far as WWII photos go, we need the photo or a scan on disk. Not a print-out from your computer. Please follow these simple instructions when sending in photos. We want to publish what you send, but we want it to be recognizable or we won't print it. **We will return your photos.**

**DEADLINE FOR MATERIAL FOR NEXT BULLETIN IS
SEPTEMBER 31st, 2002 • Volume 56, Number 1
September, October, November, December 2002
*Get Your Material In On Time!***

With Co. I, 273d Regiment

Written By: **Robert L. Muckel**

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

655 South Chiques Road

Manheim, Pennsylvania 17545-9156

The Road to Coblenz

We were walking along on the road in a single file with a long line of men on each side. Ahead of us in the distance could be seen a convoy of big Army trucks coming towards us. Moving out of their way so they could pass by, we all jumped into the drainage ditches on the side of the road. Standing there looking, we wondered what kind of cargo they were carrying as they all appeared to be loaded! As the first one passed us, we could see it's contents as the green canvas roof cover was rolled up, exposing the cargo. The truck was loaded down, with the bodies of dead American soldiers. They must have been thrown on there like tree branches. There were arms, legs, and boots sticking out in all directions. Even over the high wood rails of the truck sides. They must have been piled on there about five feet high.

Every truck in the convoy carried the same cargo. We watched them go by with morbid thoughts flashing through our minds. We knew the bodies must have been collected from the battlefield and Graves Registration is now taking them back for burial. But there were so many of them. After seeing this, our spirits seemed to sink a little.

Getting back on the road we continued walking, soon coming to a high steep cliff, we could see for miles around. Way down below us was the Rhine River. The huge stone piers stood there in the river, jutting up in the air with the twisted steel girders of the once great spans now crumbled and lying in the water. We began walking down the road on the steep mountainside, coming to a big flat area on the river bank. The Germans were sending over aerial bursts. Some of them were bursting here and there over the river, but most of them seemed to be exploding near the bank on the other side so we didn't pay much attention to them. Looking out over the river, we could see a large steel, box-like boat coming towards us.

As it came close to the bank, the front part of it began to open like a big door, then slammed down on the bank forming a ramp for us to enter the craft. We got on the boat then we heard the clanking noise of chains, as the heavy steel doors slowly closed. Backing away from shore, the boat turned around, and began chugging across the river heading for the far shore.

Reaching the other side of the river, we unloaded from the boat and began walking up a twisted road on the side of the mountain. We passed a German army jeep parked on the left side of the road. In the front seat behind the steering wheel was its driver, the sole occupant. He was sitting in an upright position with his hands lying on his lap. His bare head was tilted backward over the seat back. His mouth hung open.

There was a small round black and blue hole in his forehead right between his eyes.

We came to small town. Shots were heard here and there - probably hidden snipers. We began checking out the houses. Some of our men entered a big factory. Inside they found brand new automatic Luger pistols in all stages of assembly. It was a pistol factory. The men went wild. Almost everyone seemed to end up with one or more brand new pistols. As I entered a house to check it out, I found it was occupied by a woman and a little girl. When the little girl saw me come in the front door, she started screaming and ran behind her mother. She stood there with just her head showing and a frightened look on her face. Her two small hands were tightly clenching her mother's apron. As I stood there looking at this scene before me, with the little girls' head peeking around the corner, I started to laugh.

This must have relieved the tension a little bit because the woman then smiled at me. I tried to explain to her that I meant them no harm. I then asked her if she had anything to eat, as I was hungry. She said no. She asked me what my name was and I told her. Before leaving, I gave her one of those small K-rations with chocolate bars and told her to give it to the little girl.

Leaving the house and rejoining my squad, we were informed by our superiors that we would be staying in town for a few hours. It was about an hour after I had returned when I heard my name called out. Corporal Earl Riley, our Assistant Squad Leader, came over to me and said, "A German woman was looking for you. She asked me to give you this." He then handed me a large china bowl with a cover over it. Taking it and pulling off the cover, I found that it was hot vanilla pudding. Bless that good woman.

Lights in the Night

The darkness of the night would slowly close in on us. Our company was filing through the woods. All was quiet, no one spoke. The only sound to be heard was that of our feet moving slowly across the damp ground of the forest. Looking to the front, we suddenly saw what appeared to be sets of small round, white objects. There were two strings of them moving along about five feet above the ground. They seemed to be floating in the air, moving up and down in a jerking motion. Some of them seemed to disappear, then reappear again. We came to a stop wondering what the heck was happening here as the white objects came closer to us and kept passing by without making any sound. We began making out gray forms which seemed to be mixed in with them. As they came closer yet, we found it was a company of African-American infantrymen. What a relief. For a while there, I thought I was seeing real ghosts with their dark clothing and skin, and it being night time. The only part of their body visible to us was their big white eyeballs, as all soldiers who

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WITH COMPANY I, 273rd REGIMENT

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have been on the front-line for any length of time soon acquire that wild-eyed look. It is a result of constant danger, nerves, loss of sleep, and so on.

Bayonets

It was night time, when we are ordered to halt. Before us in the distance was a thick forest. We knelt down on the ground, wondering why we stopped. We were told of the possibility of the forest being occupied by the Germans. The order was passed around to fix Bayonets. I thought to myself, "Fix bayonets? Charge through the woods? Why it's so dark, you can't even see the bayonet on the end of the rifle. If any Germans are in there and lying on the ground, we would probably step on them not knowing they were there. Oh well, just follow orders." Before the charge, we were told not to veer off to the right or left but to keep going straight ahead until we came out on the other side of the woods. The order was given and off we went. I kept running along, tightly gripping my bayoneted rifle looking straight ahead of me trying not to run into a tree. It was so dark I can hardly see. In the distance where the woods ended was an open field lit up by moonlight. I used this as a guide. I kept trying to pierce the darkness for any sign of a human form hoping that I didn't see any but if I did, that I would be lucky enough to take him by surprise. I kept my finger on the trigger, just in case.

The further I ran the better I felt because I had not seen any Germans yet. Well that evening turned out to be a pretty good one, because we didn't find any Germans. You know, I often thought about this little night time experience. Did our officers really know to begin with, that there were no Germans in the woods and they put us through this little exercise just to keep us on our toes?

The Tents

Walking down the road, we came to a scene which at the time, seemed hard to believe. Sitting off to the side of the road in an open field was a large canvas tent with a big red cross emblem on its roof. It was an American Army Aid Station. Here, emergency operations and treatment were performed on the seriously wounded before being sent to a regular hospital for further treatment.

This, of course, was a normal thing... Sure! But right beside it was another tent with a slightly different cross on its roof. This one was occupied by the German Army Medical Corps. I saw one German doctor come outside the tent and use a rag to clean the blood off his hands. Then two German litter bearers carrying a wounded German soldier on a stretcher entered the tent. I thought to myself, "Here we have the same people up front killing and maiming each other and back here we have them working together. What a crazy mixed up world this is."

The River

After about another hour of walking, we came to a stone bridge spanning a river. It had walls about four feet high on the sides. So being curious, I went over to the wall and looked down at the water. What I saw shocked me. I couldn't believe my eyes. Instead of water, there was blood. Right away, this brought to mind one of the tales my old uncle told me of some of his experiences over there during the First World War.

As a member of the Medical Corp, he told me of seeing a river of blood, which at the time I found hard to believe. Now I knew the old boy knew what he was talking about. I had seen it with my own eyes.

Why was the river this way? After reaching the far bank, I kept looking at the river, following it upstream with my eyes. Off in the distance I found the answer to the mystery. On the right hand side, way up on a hill was a large German military hospital. Down at the river on the same side at the beginning of the water's edge, the bank was composed of white sand, slanting slowly upward for a distance of about fifty feet. On this bank were stacks of bloody stretchers piled along the whole length of the bank. The stretchers were all dripping blood. The long sandy bank itself was covered with blood. There were German medical corpsmen dipping the stretchers in the river to wash away the blood, then piling them back in stacks again to dry. I thought to myself, "There must be a large number of wounded Germans up there in that hospital. There would have to be to make the whole river red."

The German Villagers

There was one thing in particular I noticed about the people in the small farming villages. Most of them appeared to be well fed and healthy, quite different from the haggard and thin looking people in the big towns and cities. I supposed it was because they were self-sufficient, growing their own food in the small fields surrounding their village.

On the main street, like all the rest of them I had been through, was a large stone and metal fireplace sitting in a corner by itself. Here the people would take turns baking their weekly supply of dark round loaves of pumpernickel and white bread. With this and a cellar full of potatoes, they never had to worry about going hungry, unlike the people in the cities and towns who had to buy all of their goods when and if it was available, and if they had the money.

Some of these villages suffered no damage at all and life was going on as normal. In quite a few of these German farm homes, we saw boys and girls who came from all over Europe from the different countries the German army had occupied. They were being used as slave labor. They received food and housing, of course, and looked quite robust and happy, and also well fed. The slave laborers working in armament factories did not receive such good treatment. Many of them had very little to eat, worked long hours, and many died from overwork and malnutrition.

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A Strange Night on Guard Duty

It was getting dark as our Company entered a small deserted German village. Our different squads were ordered to find a half decent house with a roof on it and occupy it for the night. I was ordered to stand guard duty at the front door of the home which our squad decided to occupy. It was so dark outside, I could see nothing. I had to rely on my hearing to do my job. Standing there alone in the quiet darkness near the front door, I suddenly had the strangest feeling. I don't know quite how to explain it - it just seemed as though there was somebody else out there with me someplace close by. It was kind of spooky. I thought that maybe because I was so sleepy, I was beginning to imagine things and it would be best to let these kinds of thoughts pass from my mind.

The time passed and the surrounding area was slowly lit by the light of morning. I decided to take a good look around me and just happened to look down on the ground to my left side. There beside the doorway only two feet away from me was a human hand and about six inches of the wrist and forearm sticking up out of the ground. No wonder I had a strange feeling last night.

Startled, I stood staring down at the hand and wondering how it came to be there. It must be connected to a body lying under the ground. The fingers of the hand were spread out, like a claw as though it were trying to grab at something. The claw shape of the hand led me to believe that its former owner was down in a hole in the ground and was suddenly covered with dirt and died of suffocation while trying to get out from under the earth. This seemed like a pretty good guess.

But the ground surrounding the hand was all level and smooth and there was no sign of an artillery shell having hit nearby, covering the hole and its occupant with dirt. This left one other logical answer. The body lying there under the ground might have been buried alive intentionally. Who knows the true story. In wartime, anything can and does happen.

Man with a Pistol

Our company was occupying an abandoned German army barracks. We were just coming down the wide, second floor staircase inside the building when one of the soldiers next to me suddenly pulled a German pistol out of his jacket. This did not strike me as odd, because a lot of our buddies were usually flashing one of their looted pistols at one time or another and we were all used to the sight. Paying no further attention to him, I continued on down the steps. As I reached the bottom of the staircase, I heard the gun go off. I also paid no attention to this as the men had a habit of trying out the pistols they had acquired from German prisoners, but of course they never fired them inside a crowded building before. Oh, well, during the war one gets used to strange experiences. So I gave the matter no further thought.

Later I was told the man had blown his brains out. Why? No one knows!

The Grenade

As we lay along the bank beside a sunken dirt lane with the enemy machine gun bullets zipping by over our heads, we noticed one of our men had a fragmentation grenade in his hand and its safety pin was missing. His fingers were clasped around the release handle holding it shut. We knew that if he opened up his hand, the release handle would fly off and seconds later, the grenade would explode, hurling out in all directions small pieces of red hot steel shrapnel, and killing or maiming anyone within its range.

Knowing the enemy was too far away from us to throw a grenade at them and do any harm, the guys asked him why he was holding it with the pin missing. His answer was, "If I get wounded in the head, I don't want to suffer. I will blow my head off." We just looked at him.... We knew he was serious and meant what he said. So everybody gave him plenty of elbow room. Me, I walked further down the lane and found another position to fire from.

I thought, "It's bad enough to have the Germans on the other side of the field in the woods trying to kill us, let alone run the risk of one of our own men accidentally killing us."

My Little Pistol

We came to a big German farm house. Here we were to stay for a few hours. We entered the house and removed our field packs and other equipment and made ourselves at home. Our commanding officer gave us all an order. There would be no firing of weapons, unless it was absolutely necessary. I thought to myself, "Firing of guns? That reminds me,.... 'I have never tried out that small, twenty-five caliber Walther automatic pistol I took from that big German mayor back in that village.'" Having some time on my hands and nothing to do, I thought I'd go outside for a while and look around. Going out the back door, I found a large courtyard. On the right hand side was a large barn. I went over and opened one of the big double wooden doors and looked inside. There was hay piled along the walls the whole length of the building. About seven feet above the barn floor was a wide wood ledge. This too extended the whole length of the barn and was also piled high with hay.

I went inside thinking to myself that this would make a good place to try out my little pistol. As small as it was, it shouldn't make much noise. I took the gun out of my pocket and aimed it at a thick pile of hay lying there on the floor. When I pulled the trigger, ...there was a sound like a big cannon firing. I turned around, ran out the door, and headed back to the farm house. Just then, one of our men appeared standing in the doorway. With a startled look on his face, he asked me, "Did you hear that shot?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Do you know where it came from?" I said, "It sounded like it came from that barn over there." He answered, "It must be a Sniper."

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WITH COMPANY I, 273rd REGIMENT

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By this time there were soldiers running all over the courtyard. A couple of them hollered out, "What's going on?" The guy I was talking to, yelled out, "There's a sniper in the barn." They all headed for the barn. I followed them in. I stood there watching them walk around the barn floor and along the wood platform above it thrusting their bayoneted rifles into the hay piles. I then turned and walked out the door, thinking to myself, "wouldn't I be surprised if they really did find someone in there?" To this day I doubt if anyone ever found out what really happened in that barn.

The Airplanes

We climbed onto the back of the open trucks and dropped the long, narrow, wooden rail seats on the sides. We sat down on these, facing each other and piled our field packs in the space between us. Looking around, I noticed a big fifty-caliber machine gun mounted right over the passenger seat of the open cab of our truck. It was loaded; its belt lined with big shells lying side by side in a row extended from the gun's side down to a big steel box containing its supply of bullets. She was ready to fire. All one had to do was pull back the receiver handle and start shooting. I looked at some of the other trucks in our convoy. Most of them were equipped the same way.

We began moving and had traveled just a few miles, when suddenly we heard the whining noise of airplane motors. With a screeching of brakes, our trucks came to a sudden stop, jolting their occupants forward on their seats. I heard someone shouting in a loud voice, "Get off the trucks and take cover." Startled, I looked around wondering what was going on. Looking up, I saw two black aircraft with a white cross painted on their sides - German fighter planes. They made a long shallow turn then began diving, heading straight for our line of trucks. We all jumped off the trucks and started running in all directions. Looking back as I ran across the field, I expected to see the truck drivers manning their big machine guns and shooting the airplanes, but there was no one at any of the guns. This surprised me. Now what good are loaded machine guns if there is no one there to fire them? When we left the trucks, I took it for granted that someone would stay and man the machine guns. After all, what are they there for? We were out in open fields with no cover. About five hundred feet away was a big thick, wooded area. I headed for it. Suddenly, I heard a loud roaring noise close behind me.

Glancing back, I saw a plane coming towards me. He appeared to be about sixty feet above the ground. These planes were equipped with two thirty-seven millimeter cannons - one on each wing. As I ran, I watched the shells hitting the ground on both sides of me, throwing dirt in the air and forming small craters about a foot round and a foot deep with each hole about six feet apart. My heart was beating a mile a minute. Out of breath, I stopped running and stood there watching the plane as it zoomed back up into the

sky thinking maybe it would leave now and find another target. It made a big wide circle, and came at me again. Again I started running, this time, in a zig-zag pattern to try and keep it's pilot from aligning up his guns on me. The plane's cannon opened up again, spitting it's shells at me. Suddenly, I heard another sound. Turning and looking back towards the trucks, I saw one of our platoon members on one of the trucks manning the big machine gun and shooting at the plane. I watched as the plane left a long trail of black smoke behind it, then crashed.

Boy, I was glad someone had kept his wits about him and had sense enough to man one of those machine guns and fire back at those planes. (And enough guts too!) For this act the gunner received the Bronze Star Medal, with Cluster.

The Search

As our company entered a small village, we were given orders to search all the buildings and bring all males outside. Entering the first house I came to, I found it occupied by a young couple, a man and a woman about twenty-five years old. They were both sitting in their living room. The man has a big white plaster cast on one leg. It covered his whole foot, ending just above the knee. Lying beside him were a pair of wooden crutches.

The first thought, to enter my mind was, "Does this man really have an injured limb or is it just an excuse to gain sympathy and privileged treatment from the enemy?" I just knew, without a doubt, by his appearance, youth and good health that he was a German soldier.

When I entered the room, they both looked up at me with a surprised expression on their faces. I looked down at the man and pointing my rifle at him, motioned for him to get up and go outside with me. At this point, the woman became emotional as the man grabbed his crutches and tried to get up on his feet. The woman threw her arms around him, screaming, "No, No, Please. No, No, Please, Please." The man was trying to come with me, but the women, kept holding on to him. She would not let go. She was crying with the tears running down her face. Each time he pried one of her arms or hands loose from his body, she would again grab him someplace else. The man was trying his best to break away from her.

He kept talking to her, trying to quiet her down and free himself without hurting her in the struggle. I thought to myself, this poor fellow is having a tough enough time, trying to stand up with his crutches let alone try and get away from her yet. All of this time I kept looking at his face. I thought to myself, this guy looks like a pretty decent sort of person. I could be wrong, but I will take a chance.

Looking at them, I said, "Stop." I then made motions for him and her, to sit back down in their chairs which they both did with a grateful look on their faces. I then turned and left the house. (The main thing that helped me make the decision I did was that I never could stand to see a woman crying.

2002 Trip to Strehla and Torgau

April 16th to May 7th, 2002

Submitted By: **Charles Martens**

Battery C, 724th Field Artillery

1250 Norma Drive

Buffalo, Wyoming 82834-2402

Telephone: 307/684-9207

I had plans and reservations to go to Torgau in 2001 but picked a very bad day - September 12th. Of course everything was cancelled.

I received an invitation from Andrea Staude, the new mayor of Torgau and from my good German friends of Torgau, the Heinz Richter family and Herbert and Edith Schedina and their son Peter to come to Torgau for Elbe Days. I was planning on two weeks but Heinz said that was too far to go for such a short time, why don't you stay longer, so I made it three weeks. Both these men and their families had visited me here in Buffalo, Wyoming in 1999.

Bill Beswick was planning on being there too I guess, but for health reasons couldn't make it. I was the only American Veteran there and Alexander Sylvashko was the only Russian Veteran there for just a few days.

Herbert Schedina and Heinz Richter picked me up at Tegel Airport in Berlin on April 17th.

The first weekend Heinz and I spent in Chessnitz with his daughter Ina, son-in-law Jochen, and granddaughters Tina and Kristin. The granddaughters had visited me here in Buffalo, Wyoming with Heinz and Vera in 1999.

I spent the next week and Elbe Days as a guest of Herbert and Edith Schedina in Torgau. The rest of the time I was a guest of Heinz and Vera Richter in the country about ten miles out of Torgau. I left to come home on May 7th and on May 8th Herbert and Edith left on a tour to China.

April 25th Herbert, Heinz and I went to the Memorial Services in Strehla where quite a few people had gathered. Alexander Sylvashko had not arrived yet so I was the only veteran there. Andrea Staude, the Mayor of Torgau was there along with Andreas Haberland the Mayor of Strehla and some other dignitaries. Several speeches were made and quite a few flowers placed at the Memorial wall. My red, white, and blue bouquet was one of the smallest ones but I didn't have taxpayers to pay for it. It had a 69er's patch on it and that made up for it's size.

On Saturday, April 27th they held the Memorial Service at the 3 flag Memorial across the Elbe River from Hartenfels Castle in Torgau. It was quite impressive. It started out with everyone standing silently for



Mayor Andrea Staube, the new mayor of Torgau, me, Charley Martens, Rainer Kutchke the president of that district, and the mayor of Strehla, Andreas Haberland at the Wreath Laying Memorial by the Monument Wall at Strehla, April 25, 2002 - Alexander Sylvashko had not yet arrived.

5 minutes while the bells rang from the different places in Torgau. I know I thought of the events and times 57 years ago, how young I was and all of us and how many young boys died in the war - American, Russian and German - who never got to go home again. I also thought of their mothers. At times like that I always think of Robert Shaw's poem, "Beneath the Monument," "Fallen Soldaten, in another time you might have been our friend." Those were my feelings, also when I saw that young teenage German soldier laying there with a bullet hole in his forehead right between his eyes. Bob could put it in words much better than I ever could, "There are no Victors" in war, "The Monument is a celebration of death." "Where are the Monuments of Peace?" I answered that to some people from the German Parliament in a question and answer session they had with Alexander Sylvashko and I in the Torgau City Hall. I told them that they are our 3 flag Memorials here in Torgau and at Strehla. This drew quite a nice round of applause. Alexander reached over and patted my arm and said Da Da Da.

There was a very strong, cold wind blowing from across the river. I had to brace myself to keep my balance. Since there was no live military band there that morning, they played recorded music while the three flags were raised very, very, slowly by one young girl and two boys. Mayor Staude and the Pastor from the castle church gave speeches. Then we all followed a four piece jazz band across the bridge to the Russian Monument by the castle. How that band could play in that cold gale wind I don't know.

(Continued on Page 51)

2002 TRIP TO STREHLA AND TORGAU

(Continued from Page 50)

We stopped at the German Cemetery and **Joe Polowsky's** grave. The services were cut very short as it started to rain, a very cold rain. Then we went to the Russian Soldiers Cemetery. By this time it had stopped raining. There again the service was very short. I didn't have any flowers but went up to the Monument with Sylvashko as he put a small bouquet there.

They took him and his interpreter and I to the City Hall in the city's van. We were to have a question and answer session with members of the German Parliament and their aides and secretaries. The members of Parliament themselves begged out as they went to Erfurt after that tragic shooting there. The other people came on to Torgau and I was told they would ask the same questions and take the answers back to their bosses. They gave me a very bright young German boy for an interpreter. I can tell you I was very uptight sitting there with him and Alexander and his interpreter at the table in the front of the hall.

The first question they asked is why we keep coming back to Torgau, I told them, "I come back because I like Germany, I liked it in 1945 also. I just didn't like them shooting at me all the time." This brought a roar of laughter and applause and a pat on the arm from Alexander and Da Da Da. That broke the tension as far as I was concerned, and I then talked to them as I would my friends and neighbors. I also told them I come back to visit my German friends in Torgau and Strehla to keep the "Spirit of the Elbe" alive and promote peace. This also brought applause. I got them to laugh several other times and as the meeting was dismissed and as everyone got up to leave, I told my



The American soldiers from the U.S. Consulate General's office in Leipzig placing the wreath below the American flag at the 3 Flag Memorial.

interpreter I had one more thing to say. He stopped them and I told them I also keep coming back to Torgau to get the good German beer. This also brought on a good round of laughter and applause.

In the hall after this, a lady came up and thanked me for being there to answer their questions and for having such a good sense of humor.

We then went into the Mayor's chambers with our interpreters for refreshments. At the table there were sandwiches and cake and cookies and a glass of champagne at each place. Sylvashko said very loudly "Vodka?" We all laughed and Mayor Straude got a bottle of vodka from the liquor cabinet but Sylvashko said No, No, he was just kidding. I asked Mayor Andrea if she would still be Mayor when I came back 20 years from then (I'd be a couple months from being 100). She laughed and acted if she didn't doubt whether I would be back in 20 years. (Heinz told her I was 80 now) but she said as a mayor's term is 7 years, she would have to be elected 2 more times and she wasn't sure of that.

The 76th U.S. Army band gave a concert at the Cultural Hall Saturday evening. Heinz, Herbert and I and our party had reserved seats in the front row. Herbert's wife Edith and her younger sister sat back farther with her cousins. They played the old Count Bassie, Glenn Miller and songs like that, and the German people loved it as much as I did too. I met many of the band members who seemed quite impressed that I had been an American soldier there 57 years before.

I must say that even though it was very cold and wet at times, I had a wonderful three weeks. My hosts, the Herbert Schedina family and Heinz Richter family were wonderful to me and had very enjoyable and interesting things for us to do. I will write again about the other social things we did.

I wish you all could have been there for both the serious and the fun things, too. I hope to keep going back as long as I am able and as long as I am welcome.

(Continued on Page 52)



At the Memorial Service by the Three Flag Memorial across the Elbe River from Torgau - April 27, 2002. Alexander Sylvashko, the only Russian veteran first in the long coat, the man between us is Herbert Schedna, and I am on the right.



At the Wreath Laying Ceremony by the Monument Wall and 3 Flag Monument at Strehla, Mayor of Torgau Andrea Staube on the left and me, Charley Martens, on the right. May 25, 2002.



Herbert Schedina, me, Charley Martens and Heinz Richter in our front row reserved seats in the Cultural Hall in Torgau at the band concert put on by the 76th U.S. Army Band.



The monument at the former Prisoner of War camp near Zeithaim, Germany - April 26th, 2002.



Wreaths and bouquets below the monument in the German Cemetery.



Heinz Richter with the cane and I, Charley Martens, in the 69ers Artillery cap at the Wreath Laying Ceremony, at the monument of the former Prisoner of War Camp near Zeithain, Germany.

Origin of the K-Ration

As you were sitting in your foxhole in the rain, snow or blistering sun, did you ever wonder how those K-rations got their name? Who invented this waxed Cracker Jack box with the words "K-ration, one meal" stamped on it?

For those of you who have lost hours of sleep puzzling over this burning question, the top secret information has been uncovered. Professor Ancel Keyes, director of the Laboratory of Physiological Hygiene at the University of Minnesota, developed these rations - so the name K for Keyes: K-rations. Dr. Keyes was doing research on the link between nutrition, diet and heart disease. He was asked to develop a field ration.

Following is a digest from his research paper **"Rations for Airborne and Other Mobile Troops."**

The need for mobility of troops and supplies is recognized as a need for a field ration. Ordinary field kitchens are out of the question in most conditions. The new type "C" ration fills an important need but at 4-1/2 pounds per ration, are too heavy and bulky for the fighting line units. The D ration is for emergencies only. A new type of ration is needed for front line troops. This ration must sustain them for one to four days for any single operation. Fighting efficiency is greatly impaired without proper supply of food. Semi-starvation for only a day results in the derangement of the metabolism of the body. The D bar may aggravate this derangement. Requirements for a "blitz" ration may be summarized as:

1. Such a ration should be a fighting ration - not for emergency.
2. It must be compact and lightweight.
3. There should be a proper balance of nutrients without too much fat and with adequate proteins.
4. It must be adequate in total calories.
5. No cooking should be required.
6. It should be adequate in vitamins and minerals, notably Vitamins A, C and B vitamins, phosphorous, and potassium.
7. It should be resistant to prolonged exposure to extremes of climate.
8. It should not disrupt normal elimination of the bowels or derange the chemistry of the body.
9. It must be palatable and should be relished by the men, not only for a single meal but for a succession of meals.

A ration that will not be eaten is worse than useless. Fighting efficiency is greatly reduced. Variety is essential, which means varied consistency as well as flavor. Tests show that a daily ration for combat troops should be at least 3,200 calories.

Various mixtures were attempted and tested on hired subjects. An example of one of these mixtures is rendered kidney knobs, prime oleo oil, seedless raisins, peanuts, cerelese, shredded coconut and salt. The biscuits also went through a number of alterations. The

inclusion of good concentrated meat products resulted in a satisfactory biscuit.

The composition of the ration is as follows:

Meal 1 - Special biscuit, veal loaf, malted milk tablets, soluble coffee and sugar.

Meal 2 - Special biscuit, ham preparation, dextrose tablets, lemon powder and sugar.

Meal 3 - Special biscuit, dry cervelat sausage, boullion paste, D bar.

The report indicated that these rations could be safely recommended for large scale use. Some modification suggested a second type of biscuit and alteration of the spices.

Test results said that the men were in better shape at the end of the test than counterparts on Garrison rations. Conclusions were that the rations packed as three meals would provide 3,600 calories and the weight of each meal would be 11 ounces. The Wrigley Chewing Gum Company of Chicago had a contract to make thousands of the K-rations.

An interesting side-light is a note from the wife of a WWII veteran. She worked on the K-ration assembly line at Kellogg's, putting packets of toilet paper into the boxes. She and the other girls would often include a note with their names and addresses. She never received a reply. So now, as Paul Harvey would say, you know the rest of the story.

Submitted by Howitzer Al Kormas

Info sought on WWII Russian Posters

Submitted By: **Richard Levy, Hq., 271st**
5316 Lindley Avenue • Encino, California 91316
Telephone: 818/996-4911

One of the ladies in our complex, who was a companion to an owner who died last year, found in the crawl space of the town house they were living in approximately 30 Russian posters which are deteriorating quite rapidly. Somehow the owner of the town-house had obtained these posters, which are painted on kraft paper with Russian poetry and the artist's name on the bottom of the poster.

Apparently these posters were put on the windows of TASS, the Russian News Agency in 1942 and 1943 to excite the Russian people because there was no television and very little radio at that time. Some of these posters are in vivid colorations which can still be visible after almost 60 years of being hidden.

In 1945, The Library of Congress issued a quarterly report in which copies of these posters were listed. Whether they are still in the Library of Congress I do not know. The lady who owns these posters would like to know if they are of any value? If any of our 69th Division members have any additional information on these posters, I would appreciate it if you would write or telephone me. Thank you.

Memorial Day 1999

Submitted By: **Robert F. Brunsell**
Service Company, 271st Infantry Regiment
1215 Virgin Lake Drive
Stoughton, Wisconsin 53589-5451

Following is a Memorial Day address I gave at the cemetery in Evansville, Wisconsin:

I am honored to be asked to speak today. I have marched to this cemetery for almost 65 years, first as a Boy Scout, later in the high school band and the last 50 years as a veteran of World War II. At the start, the last surviving Evansville Civil War veteran, Gard Babcock was the parade leader. We boy scouts also helped him in the 1930's dedicate the flag pole in the lower park, near the present Boy Scout building.

But now to Memorial Day 1999.

MEMORIAL - serving to help people remember some person or event, the most common memorials being these grave stones placed about us.

MEMORIAL DAY - a legal holiday in memory of servicemen and women of all wars, who gave their lives for their country.

Although Southern women decorated the graves of both Union and Confederate soldiers during the Civil War, Memorial Day was established in 1868 to honor the Union dead. Since then, it has grown to honor all those who gave their lives that freedom might exist for us here today.

In memory of the dead, in honor of the living, for inspiration to our children, we gather on this day to deck with flowers, the graves of our patriots.

Since the 56 signers of the Declaration of Independence in 1776 possibly signed their own death warrants to establish the United States of America as a free land, we have had to defend that freedom many times. These were patriots who loved their country, ready and willing when the need came, to die for their country. They took their places in the ranks and offered their bodies as a bulwark to protect the flag. They dismissed the most extraordinary acts of heroism as nothing more than devotion to duty.

Their feats of heroism make us forever indebted to them. They died for us. They are at rest. They sleep in a land they made free, under a flag they rendered stainless. We are not called to fill the places of those who have gone, but to fill our own places. We had to accept the responsibilities of war, let us also accept the responsibilities of peace.

Those who died gave the ultimate sacrifice. We, the living, must not accept the freedom granted by their heroic action without striving to eliminate the need to fight wars, which caused these many deaths. We need to learn that to every right there is attached a duty and to every privilege an obligation. We must take interest in those who govern our country and action in telling them how dedicated we are to a diplomacy that will eliminate future wars, while preserving freedom and justice for all men.

In times of peace, as in times of war, men and women of the armed forces have stood ready to protect our ideals of democracy. We will not forget their heroic deeds for they were done in the name of freedom. We

cannot forget their loyalty, for it gave their struggle meaning and kept our nation strong. We must not forget them, men and women who loved liberty more than life itself, for they gave their lives that this nation might continue to live as a land of the free and the home of the brave.

They forged on the anvil of their own sacrifice all that we hold dear. May we never lightly esteem what they obtained at a great price. May we be mindful of the price that was paid to obtain that freedom and the cost that must be met to keep it.

Franklin D. Roosevelt said "We, too, born to freedom, and believing in freedom, are willing to fight to maintain freedom. We, and all others who believe as we do, would rather die on our feet than live on our knees."

We must let no ravages of time testify to coming generations that we have forgotten as a people the cost of a free and undivided republic, but may we learn more the goodly heritage that is ours.

May we live that the sacrifices that have been made for our liberty shall not have been in vain. We have been made heirs of a great heritage and trustees of priceless things, so let us not forget the price that was paid for them and the eternal vigilance required to preserve them.

May we in this nation so live in it, that others will desire it and seek after it. May those memories still be continued past the time when, like our parents, our children will be gone.

Thomas Gray in his "Elegy in a Country Churchyard" stated, "The paths of glory lead but to the grave." The paths HAVE too often in the past; let us seek a better path of glory for the future.

Let us be a beacon for the 21st century.

**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 Soldier Honored

Submitted By: **Wendell Perry**

Company A, 661st

14 Downing Place

Presque Isle, Maine 04769-2115

Presque Isle veteran receives medal for participation in Elbe River Link-Up

By Kristine A. Harger, *Staff Writer*

PRESQUE ISLE - More than 50 years after World War II ended, veteran Wendell Perry has received the thanks of the Russian government.

Perry, who served in the 661st Tank Destroyer Unit attached to the 69th Infantry Division of the U.S. Army, was at the Elbe River when the Allied and Soviet forces linked up on the river in Torgau, Germany, on April 25 1945. Their joined forces went on to fight together until the Germans surrendered May 9, 1945.

In honor of that victory and the combined effort, Perry received a bronze medal from the Russian Federation, marking the 50th anniversary of the end of the war, known as The Great Patriotic War in Russia. He received the medal in the mail just a few weeks ago.

"We were not long with them (the Russians), but it was quite an experience," Perry said. He was lucky enough to have a camera with him, and captured the image of members of his unit bringing Soviet Marshal Ivan Koniev and three Soviet soldiers, across the Elbe to meet General Reinhardt. He also snapped a picture of Koniev.

Perry actually read about the commemorative medal in the 69th Infantry's magazine long before he received it. Earlier this year, he received a call from Russian Ambassador Yuri Ushakov "to make sure my name was spelled correctly."

The bronze medal is about 1.5 inches wide. It shows Red Square with the Spassky Tower and the Wall of the Kremlin on the right and St. Basil Cathedral on the left. Lights from fireworks are on both sides of the tower. In the lower part of the medal are dates 1945 and 1995, with the Order of the Great Patriotic War in the center. The reverse has an inscription: "50 years of Victory in the Great Patriotic War 1941-1945." Below the words are two laurel branches tied with a ribbon.

The certificate the medal came in bears Perry's name and is stamped with the seal of the President of the Russian Federation and signed by President Boris Yeltsin.

Perry was 18 years old when he signed up in Caribou in 1943. His older brother had already entered the service.

Perry was sent to Fort Devens in Massachusetts where he spent one night before heading to basic training. His unit landed in Le Harve, France, right after it was rebuilt by Allied troops. They spent one night in France before heading into Belgium. Perry was a jeep driver for his lieutenant and sergeant.

At the Battle of the Siegfried Line, there were tank traps and mines and other defenses the Allies had to get through. "It was well built up," Perry recalled. After taking the Siegfried line, his unit continued on, "right into the heart of Germany."

His lieutenant was shot during the Battle, "He was sitting right next to me," Perry said.

They captured several small towns along the way to the Elbe River, Perry said. At one such town, his brother's unit relieved his own, but they were unable to greet each other. "He was on the other side of building," he said.

Just prior to linking up with the Russians, Perry's unit fought in the Battle of Leipzig on April 18, 1945, one of the last battles of the war.

Throughout the war, Perry was never wounded. "Plenty of bullets went right by me," he said.

After the war ended, he worked his way back through Europe, arriving in the United States in 1946. That same year he went to work for Sears & Roebuck in the Turner Building. He was the receiving manager there for 35 years, retiring at age 60. He was married to the late Ruth (Johnson) Perry, with whom he had a son, Brian. His second wife, Jeannette Tuttle died last November, his first wife in 1970.

These days he is active in American Legion Post 88 and VFW Post 2599, both of which he has been a member of since his discharge in 1946.

Asked why he signed up in 1943 rather than wait to be drafted, Perry only said, "I thought it was my duty."



"Good work, General!"

From the Chicago Daily Tribune V-E Day Paper
May 8, 1945 - Sent in By Ethel Glaser

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.

2002

SEPTEMBER 11th, 12th, 13th and 14th, 2002

BATTERY C

880th FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION

**Location: Dutch Host Inn
SUGARCREEK, OHIO**

For Information Call or Write:

Lowell McFarlin

P.O. Box 236, Jeromesville, Ohio 44840-0236

The rates will be reasonable. Plans are not yet finalized for all the activities, but there will be ample time for visiting and sightseeing along with a meal or two tossed in. More information to follow. All 69th members are welcome to attend. Write us!

* * * * *

SEPTEMBER 22nd to 25th, 2002

69th CAVALRY RECON TROOP

51st ANNUAL REUNION

BIRD-IN-HAND, PENNSYLVANIA

Bird-In-Hand Family Inn

(4 miles east of Lancaster)

Room Rate is \$85.00 per night plus tax

Wed. Night Pennsylvania Dutch Style Dinner: \$16.50

Complimentary 2-hour bus tour of Amish Country

For Information Call or Write:

Barbara and Charles Fox

2110 Spencer Road

Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Telephone: 301/585-6384

* * * * *

JULY 11th, 12th, 13th and 14th, 2002

COMPANY I, 272nd INFANTRY REGIMENT

**Location: Grand Rapids Airport Hilton
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN**

Room Rate is \$79.00 single or double

Reservations must be made by individuals before June 21st, 2002. Tell them you are a member of Company I.

Reservation phone number is: 616/957-0100

* * * * *

SEPTEMBER 30th, 2002

Deadline for news material and pictures for:

Bulletin Volume 56, Number 1

September, October, November, December 2002

Bulletin expected mailing date is late November or early December.

For Information Call or Write:

Harris Timmer

1815 Sherwood Drive S.E.

Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506

Telephone: 616/949-5128

* * * * *

2003

APRIL 27th thru May 1st, 2003

CALIFORNIA WESTERN CHAPTER

2003 SPRING ROUNDUP

FRESNO, CALIFORNIA

Ramada Inn-University

A schedule of events is now being planned.

Please mark your calendar for these dates

for great 69th friendships and camaraderie.

For Information Call or Write:

Walter Harpain, President

2555 W. Bluff Avenue, Unit 112

Fresno, California 93711-0380

Telephone: 559/432-2133

* * * * *

MAY 15th, 16th and 17th, 2003

MIDWEST GROUP SPRING MEETING

STARVED ROCK STATE PARK, ILLINOIS

Starved Rock Lodge and Conference Center

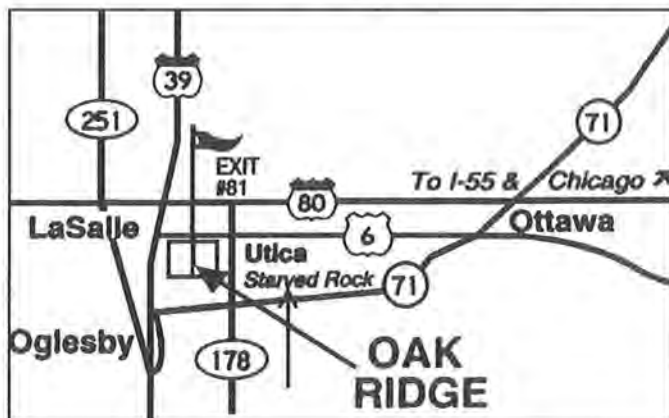
P.O. Box 570

Utica, Illinois 61373

Reservations: 1-800-868-7625

**Rates: \$95.00 plus Tax-approximately 11%,
less Senior Citizen Discount**

(Midwest Group continued on Page 57)



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

(Continued from Page 56)

Starved Rock State Park is located on the Illinois River, south of interstate 80 and east of interstate 39. Go one mile south of Utica on Route 178.

We shall be staying at the lodge, which was built in the 1930's and has recently undergone extensive restoration. There are many hiking trails, beautiful scenery (including unusual rock formations), and boat rides on the Illinois River. The lodge has an indoor pool.

A block of rooms will be held for us until 30 days before the event. The place is busy, so don't delay. Deposit of the first night's tariff is required to guarantee your reservation. **Mention the 69th Infantry when you call to reserve your room.**

Program:

Thursday, May 15th: Check-In Time, 3:00 p.m.

Hiking • Heated Pool

Hospitality Room

Dinner at Selected Restaurant

Friday, May 16th: Golf at a course to be selected.
Tours for non-golfers.

Hospitality Room • Dinner at Selected Restaurant

Saturday, May 17th: On Your Own.

Check-out time, 11:00 a.m.

For Further Information Contact:

Gene Mischke

1021 West 3rd Street

Spring Valley, Illinois 61362

Telephone: 815/664-2437

September 22nd thru 29th, 2002 69th INFANTRY DIVISION ASSOCIATION 55th ANNUAL REUNION Hampton, Virginia

HOLIDAY INN

1815 West Mercury Boulevard, Hampton, Virginia 23666-3229

Telephone: 757/838-0200 or 1/800-842-9370 • Fax: 757/838-4964

HOSPITALITY ROOM - EARLY BIRD DINNER - PX BEER PARTY

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP AND AUXILIARY MEETING

MEMORIAL SERVICE - BANQUET DINNER DANCE

SHOPPING AND MORE - SUNDAY GOING HOME BREAKFAST

OUR ACTIVITIES AND TOURS WILL INCLUDE:

COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG AND YORKTOWN

OCEAN VIEW BEACH, FORT MONROE CASEMENT MUSEUM and JAMESTOWN

NORFOLK CITY TOUR: MACARTHUR MEMORIAL AND CENTER

HARBOR CRUISE ON THE CARRIE B.

HAMPTON CITY AND THE VIRGINIA AIR AND SPACE CENTER

GROUP NIGHT OUT ON FISHERMAN'S WHARF AND MUCH MORE!

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Bob and Theresa Pierce

144 Nashua Court, San Jose, California 95139-1236

Telephone: 408/226-8040

Committee Chairmen: Ed and Louise Hill, Erwin and Carmen Sanborn,

Robert Crowe, Bob and Jean Ross, Bob Pierce

***Registration Forms, Details of Tours, etc. elsewhere in this issue.
Please register as soon as possible.***



"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.

Lawrence Aldenhovel
3800 S. Decatur Boulevard
Space 20
Las Vegas,
Nevada 89103-5820
Co. B - 661st T.D.

Edgar Biles
2924 Lincoln Avenue
N. Little Rock, Arkansas
72114
Anti-Tank - 271st

Louis Bock
5200 E. 263rd Street
Faribault, Minnesota
Co. D - 461st AAA

Fred Brown
9 Piney Mt. Church Road
Candler, North Carolina
Co. D - 461st AAA

Lewis Brown, Jr.
1826 U.S. 17 N.
Merry Hill,
North Carolina 27957
Co. E - 272nd

Henry Bryant
122 Bryant Circle
Maxton, North Carolina
Co. D - 461st AAA

Robert Burch
1356 Fahlander Drive N.
Columbus, Ohio 43229-5106
Service Co. - 271st

Francis Carrig
4275 Shortsville Road
Shortsville,
New York 14548-9759
Co. D - 271st

Steve Christoff
184 Ashford Court
Valparaiso,
Indiana 46383-8036
Co. M - 272nd

William Clayton
2585 Rittenhouse Road
North Bend, Ohio 45052
H&S - 269th Engineers

Art Cook
2615 Cook Drive
Rhineland, Wisconsin
54501
Co. E - 272nd

Sam Deibert
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Orwigsburg, Pennsylvania
17961
269th Engineers

Louis DeLao
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Safford, Arizona 85546
Cannon Co. - 273rd

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Warren, Ohio 44485-1853
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Glenwood, Indiana 46133
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(Continued on Page 59)

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