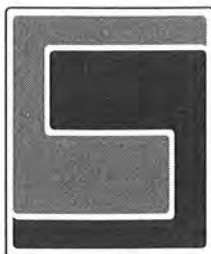


# FIGHTING 69TH INFANTRY DIVISION

## ★★★★ *Association, Inc.*



VOLUME 57, NO. 3

www.69th-infantry-division.com

MAY – JUNE – JULY – AUGUST  
2004

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

P.O. BOX 4069  
NEW KENSINGTON, PA 15068-4069  
724/335-9980

## bulletin

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\*Deceased

## Disabled Panzer somewhere in Germany



### Men of Company E, 2nd Battalion, 273rd Infantry

Left to right: On top of tank, Snyder, Hunt. Standing at ground: Kajcienski, Stewart

Submitted By: Vern Hunt, 7774 Richard Drive, Lucerne, California 95458

# THE MAIL BOX

By Dottie (Witzleb) Shadle  
Editor



Company E, 273rd Infantry Regiment

P.O. Box 4069

New Kensington, Pennsylvania 15068-4069

Telephone: 724/335-9980

**Arthur L. Ayres, Sr.**, 15 Cassidy Road, Apt. 8A, Budd Lake, New Jersey 07828 — Co. D, 273rd: I am writing to say hello and how much I like the Bulletin and to give you my thanks and appreciation for receiving them each time. I read them over and over all the time. But I want you to know this year is a bad one for me. I didn't receive the Volume 57, No. 2 as of yet, unless it was mailed late. My address has been the same for the past four years. I hope to be at the 2004 Reunion and I hope it will be one of the best.

**Stanley Eskin**, 1074 Exeter, Bldg. E, Boca Raton, Florida 33434-2973, [artistseasel@aol.com](mailto:artistseasel@aol.com) — Co. A, 269th Engineers: I'm amazed at how you manage to come up with more and better pictures and articles for the 69th Bulletin.

The latest one, January-February-March and April issue, to me, is the best one I have yet to read. The article written by **Dick Davis** of his experience while with the 661st Tank Destroyer, the Battle of the Bulge by **Park M. Fellers** of the 272nd Infantry and the story by **Gus R. Wiemann** of the 271st Infantry, are the finest and most interesting that I have read to date. I just couldn't put this issue down until I had read each and every word of their adventures.

I was saddened by the passing of **Colonel W. Everett**, the 269th Battalion Commander who was like a father to me while I was with the H&S Co. I was his orderly for a short time and he was responsible for my being transferred to "A" Co. to "get hardened up" for the task which lay before us.

I also see that four others from the battalion have passed on which makes me wonder how many of us are left to read the bulletins yet to come.

Much luck and good wishes to you, Dottie and Paul.

**John J. O'Connor**, 400 S. Homestead Road, 1st Floor, LaGrange Park, Illinois 60526 — Hq. Btry., 880th F.A. Bn.: I enjoyed the latest copy of the 69th Bulletin, especially the article "Soldiers by Force, Friends by Choice." I was acquainted with some of the "C" Battery members, both at Camp Shelby and overseas, and also after the war was over. We had reunions and met some of our old friends from the 880th F.A. Bn. I was an original cadre member and came to Camp Shelby as the headquarters Battery Radio Sergeant. In 1944, I was promoted to Technical Sergeant as Communications Chief.

The article was very nice to read but Lowell McFarland had one error in the "Three Amigos" article. He stated there was only one casualty in the 880th F.A. Bn. There were three KIA that I know of, i.e., **Lt. Robert Zimmerman**, an F.O., Headquarters Battery; **Cpl. John Hannigan** of "A" Battery and our own Headquarters Battery; and, **Pfc Garland Daily**, our machine gun operator who was killed at the monument in Leipzig.

**Garland Daily** remained at his machine gun until he was no longer able to do it because of his fatal wounds. He was a real hero - on all occasions. **Cpl. Hannigan** from "A" Battery had come to Headquarters Battery position with the "A" Battery Officer for meeting with our Battalion Co., I believe. This was the evening before **Cpl. Hannigan** was killed. I had a long meeting with **Cpl. Hannigan** and I was shocked to hear of his death the next day. **Cpl. Hannigan** was a great person and one of the 880th's heroes also.

**Colonel George Landis**, our Battalion C.O., is buried in a cemetery about twenty minutes from my home and I have visited his gravesite a few times. He was a valuable C.O. for our Battalion. Not to forget "C" Battery's gentleman C.O., **John Wallace**, a great C.O.

Best Wishes to "C" Battery members.

**Hubert Porter**, 900 Cedar Street, Atlantic, Iowa 50022-2010 — Anti-Tank, 273rd: I enjoy the bulletin very much and read every word of it. I would like to hear from former Anti-Tank men. I have enclosed this photo of my car plate.



Visit Us  
On  
The  
Web  
at



[www.69th-infantry-division.com](http://www.69th-infantry-division.com)

or contact

[annejoelip@earthlink.net](mailto:annejoelip@earthlink.net)

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

# A Note from Dottie, Your Bulletin Editor

## Note New Address

**P. O. Box 4069  
New Kensington, PA 15068-4069  
Telephone: 724/335-9980**

First, I would like to thank the members for their cards and good wishes for our marriage. The wedding went off without a hitch even though it was May-Day.

As I am doing my column, I am thinking about the trip we are taking to Alaska. It is a 14 day trip, seven days on land and then a seven-day cruise. Hopefully I will be able to do some more river rafting up North. We are both looking forward to it as a time to relax.

We have been busy trying to jam 2 seven-room houses into one. As you know, this is pretty difficult. We are doing our best but it is taking time. We have also been busy with the roster and the bulletin since the first of the year. You will read in Paul's column about all the Taps, Address Changes, and other bulletin projects we had.

I hope to see you at the reunion in Stamford, Connecticut in August.

## Looking for Hq., 273rd Members

If anyone knows the whereabouts or status of  
**Captain Conway** and/or **Luke Wynberg**,  
please write to:

**Bill Currier**  
1298 Hartford, Apt 3E  
North Haven, Connecticut 06473-2177  
These men are not on our association roster.

## MOVING

**Please print your new address below:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please send this form  
and your old address label to:**

**PAUL SHADLE**  
P.O. Box 4069  
New Kensington, PA 15068-4069  
Please allow six weeks advance notice.

# Cover Photo of last Bulletin Vol. 57, No. 2 identified

Submitted by: **Roy C. Patrick**  
*W.O.J.G., Assistant Chief of Staff, G-4*  
*Headquarters, 69th Infantry Division*  
4275 Owens Rd. #2116, Evans, Georgia 30809  
Telephone: 706/210-9597

The picture bottom left: At the Leipzig sign. Others - next to **General Reinhardt** are: **Captain Louie Rogers**, the general's aide (who was always with him) and **Acting Chief of Staff Gordon D. Ingrahm**, Division G-4. I was there serving on the General Staff. Of course, the man to his left is **General Robert V. Maraist**.

I volunteered in 1940-1945 for active duty with the United States Army. First duty station was Fort Bliss, Texas, with the 1st Cavalry Division (Mounted). Last active duty was Assistant Chief of Staff, G-4, WOJG USA, Headquarters 69th Infantry Division, Germany. I was present at the junction of the Allied and Russian armies at Torgau, Germany on 25 April 1945. Awarded the Bronze Star for meritorious service.

My autobiography, *FOOTPRINTS IN THE SAND*, published in 1991 after 12 years of work, resides in 50 university libraries. The book has five sections: Childhood, Military, Church, Business, and Family. No copy was ever sold. There is a copy (loose leaf) here in Brandon Wilde for the interested reader by calling 706/210-9597.





## Message from the President



**Bernard H. Zaffern**  
*Company L, 272nd Infantry Regiment*  
22555 Hallcroft Trail  
Southfield, Michigan 48034-2011  
Telephone: 248/357-4611

At our last reunion I said that I was interested in a suitable ceremony at our 2005 reunion commemorating the 60th anniversary of our link-up with the Russians. This will bring you up to date of my efforts as of this writing (late May).

At the reunion one of our members gave me the name of an individual at the Eisenhower Institute who might be of help. I wrote the Institute on 13 October 2003 asking for their assistance. I never received a reply.

I wrote President Bush on 2 January 2004, asking for assistance. Much to my surprise I did not receive a reply. On 8 March I wrote a follow-up to the White House enclosing a copy of my original letter. Again I heard nothing.

On 11 April I wrote to Senator Kerry and to Senator Levin (my senator and ranking member of the Armed Services Committee), figuring they might be interested. Again, no answer!

Apparently our elected officials of both parties are more concerned with getting elected than they are with a bunch of old veterans.

Then when I received our Bulletin, I saw the article about the Eisenhower Institute and wrote them again reminding them of my original letter and offering our cooperation. I received a reply stating they were no longer interested in the matter!

Please recognize that this is written in May and that by the time of the next Bulletin, much may have happened (I hope). I will continue my efforts to arrange a suitable ceremony.

Hope to see all of you at our next reunion in Stamford, Connecticut this year, August 22nd through 29th, 2004.

## New Men Relocated Since Our Last Bulletin

**Howard W. Brewer** - 69th Quartermaster  
2682 Highway 153, Twisp, Washington 98856

**Thomas J. Ellis** - Company F, 272nd Infantry  
6235 S. Meade Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60638

**Wilford L. Favors II** - Son  
115 First Street, Lindsey, Texas 76250

**Mark T. Green** - Company H, 273rd Infantry  
200 Buschlen Road, Bad Axe, Michigan 48413

**Irwin Kaston** - Company H, 272nd Infantry  
8 Waterview Way, Long Branch, New Jersey 07740

**Carole C. Krivanich** - Granddaughter, 271st Inf.  
22599 Huff Road, Milton, Delaware 19968

**James Licari, Jr.** - Son  
404 Pearl Avenue, Loves Park, Illinois 61111

**Debbie Movelle** - Headquarters, 272nd Infantry  
808 Juniper Court, Daphne, Alabama 36526

**Deborah F. Raub** - Daughter  
605 Bama Road, Bradon, Florida 33511-6901

**Louis M. Ross** - 69th MP  
232 W. Moody Ave., New Castle, Pennsylvania 16101

**Thomas A. Slopek** - Company C, 661st T.B.  
2515 Shade Road, Akron, Ohio 44333

**Homer W. Weeks** - Company L, 271st Infantry  
2620 N.W. 46th, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73112

**Joseph Wargo** - Battery A, 879th F.A.  
6436 Cabbage Lane, New Port Richey, Florida 34653

### **HAVE YOU PAID YOUR DUES!**

**Hope You Paid Your 2003-2004 Dues,  
and if not, you better mail it in  
because the New Dues Year is Here!**

### **NEW DUES YEAR FOR 2004-2005**

**August 1, 2004 to July 31, 2005**

**Regular Membership ..... \$10.00**

**Ladies' Auxiliary ..... \$ 5.00**

**Bulletin Donation ..... Up To You**

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

**Send Your Dues To:  
WILLIAM RUEBSAMEN, TREASURER  
Post Office Box 146**

**Sun City, California 92586-0146**

**Telephone: 951/301-9360**

**Do not send dues to Dottie.**

# A Note from your Vice President and Membership Chairman, Paul Shadle

Paul Shadle, *Company E, 271st Infantry*  
Note New Address

P.O. Box 4069 • New Kensington, PA 15068  
Telephone: 724/335-9980



While working with the Roster and Taps, I pondered D-Day. I was thinking of the many men that were pulled from the 69th Division as Replacements. We had 12 pulled from Co. E-271 and later learned that 4 of these men had been killed in action. It was a tough time for all of us as these were our friends and fellow countrymen. We that remained are to be thankful as we were able to come home to our country and our loved ones. We should all be proud of the job we did.

Both Dottie and I would like to thank all of you that have sent us blessings and good wishes for our marriage on May 1st, 2004. We work with a great bunch of men, women and children. Hope to see you in Stamford, Connecticut in August.

## ROSTER REPORT

From January 2004 until June 2004 we had 98 men listed in Taps, 158 address changes, and 46 deletions for various reasons. Some of these reasons are: Attempted unknown, moved left no forwarding address, incorrect number or street name, and deceased. PLEASE, IF YOUR HOUSE NUMBER OR STREET NAME CHANGE, LET US KNOW. It is also very important to send us your new address if you move ASAP. It costs the Division .70 cents to get this information back from the post office and \$1.15 to reissue the bulletin first class to your new address and this is becoming costly. We are trying to keep the roster updated before each bulletin is sent out and with your help, it will be a lot easier. Thank you. Paul

## Names that have been deleted for various reasons:

Edward V. Baron	Joseph T. Johnston
Dave Blue	Emanuel E. Land
W. C. Cox	Raymond Messimer
Harold B. Ellison	Orin K. Rudd
Nicholas A. Giannone	J. W. Thompson
Col. Thomas Harrigan	Ernest Triest
Raymone Hildenbrand	Robert White

\*\*\*\*\*

## Correction to Past Presidents Pictures

Volume 57, No. 1  
Sept., Oct. Nov., Dec.  
2003

Welcos "Dutch" Hawn  
was president  
from 1991 to 1993.

**Curtis E. Peterson**  
was president  
from 1993 to 1995.

*Photo right is  
Curtis E. Peterson*



## An Apology

We are sorry about the name of **Louis Pohopek** being listed in Taps. We were incorrectly notified. We are often notified by the post office that the person is deceased and have no way of telling if this information is true or not. Please let us know if you are listed in Taps and are still breathing.

## IMPORTANT NOTICE!

**Our membership and mailing rosters contain many inaccuracies and are out of date.**

**IF YOU HAVE NOT PAID DUES IN THE LAST TWO YEARS, YOU MUST COMPLETE THIS FORM AND RETURN IT TO CONTINUE TO RECEIVE THE BULLETIN!**

*Please print:*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Unit: \_\_\_\_\_

( ) Check for \$10.00 enclosed for current (2004-2005) dues

Mail to:

**Paul N. Shadle**

*69th Membership Chairman*

P.O. Box 4069

New Kensington, PA 15068-4069

# **69th Infantry Division Association 57th Annual Reunion STAMFORD, CONNECTICUT**

**August 22nd thru 29th, 2004  
SHERATON STAMFORD HOTEL  
2701 Summer Street  
Stamford, Connecticut 06905**

## **Reunion Committee Chairman**

**Robert L. Pierce**

*Company I, 273rd Infantry*

144 Nashua Court

San Jose, California 95139-1236

Telephone: 408/226-8040

The Sheraton Stamford Hotel is a deluxe 445-room hotel with all the special amenities; such as, coffee makers, hair dryers, etc. The lobby is a large beautiful atrium, there is a health club, indoor pool, and tennis court. The rate is single/double \$74.00 plus 12% hotel tax. This is a full service hotel with a restaurant and lounge.

The Sheraton is convenient to both I-95 and the Merrit Parkway and parking is free to 69ers. The hotel is only 200 yards from the Ridgeway Shopping Center with restaurants, shopping and services. A few blocks away in downtown is the Stamford Town Center featuring Sak's Fifth Avenue, Macy's, Filene's and 130 other stores. The hotel shuttle can be used for short, around-town rides.

New York Metro-North Railroad from Grand Central Station is only 44 minutes to the Stamford Transportation Center. The hotel shuttle will pick up at the Station.

There are several modes of transportation from LaGuardia, Kennedy, or Newark Airports. The closest airport to Stamford is Westchester in White Plains, New York, about 15 miles away. Westchester is served by airlines such as American, Delta, United and US Airways with 84 flights daily. Commercial shuttle service is available from Westchester Airport to Stamford.

## **Connecticut's Coastal Fairfield County**

This Southwest region is composed of three principal cities of Stamford, Norwalk, and Bridgeport. The area is 25 miles stretching along the shores of Long Island Sound and sheltered from the ocean air by Long Island. The area abounds with Early American, Revolutionary, Civil War, and Maritime history.

## **Stamford Region**

This region is 35 miles from Manhattan. Stamford's downtown is the center for nightlife, cultural activities, Performing Arts, Museums and fine dining. There are

five Broadway - quality productions and musicals. Among the city's unique architectural features are a fish-shaped church renowned for its stained glass. At the City Gateway is the largest free-standing stained glass structure in the world.

## **Norwalk Region**

Norwalk, a native American word for seafood, has remained true to its name as one of the largest producers of Blue Point Oysters in the world. A short boat ride from Norwalk is Sheffield Island and its historic lighthouse. The neighborhood of Westport is rich in rural settings, history and celebrities such as: Martha Stewart, Phil Donahue, Michael Bolton and Paul Newman who call this area home.

## **Bridgeport Region**

Bridgeport is Connecticut's largest city, built primarily by P. T. Barnum. The showman and Mayor turned this port city into a major manufacturing center in the 1800's. Here Connecticut and Long Island are connected by the Bridgeport and Fort Jefferson Steamboat Ferries, started by P. T. Barnum over a century ago.

## **SCHEDULED TOURS AND EVENTS**

There is just too much to see in the short five days in Stamford, considering travel time and other scheduled events. We have selected a cross section of the most interesting and accessible to group participation. NYC has been limited to a one-day tour because of schedule constraints, cost, travel time, and traffic into/out of the city. There is an abundance of opportunities to experience on your own such as: local theaters, bay boat cruises for sightseeing or dinner, lighthouse visits, magnificent water fronts, Yankee Stadium Museum, or a side trip to Times Square.

## **Bridgeport Tour**

The P. T. Barnum Museum depicts this man's extraordinary life and founder of "The Greatest Show on Earth." There is a complete scale model of "The Three Ring Circus," videos of his life and times; Victorian Art, architectural interior designs; and a special exhibits wing.

We will visit the Beardsley Zoo and Carousel Museum. The 33 acre park is dedicated to the rare animals of North and South America. Special features include an indoor rain forest, New England Farmyard, Greenhouse and the beautiful Carousel Museum.

Next stop is Captains Cove Seaport, a maritime and activities center with seafood restaurants, quaint shops, dockside-guided tours of the historic lightship, Nantucket, the largest last operational lightship afloat. Enjoy lunch on your own.

*(Continued on Page 7)*



### **West Point Military Academy Picture ID Required to Enter**

This is the oldest Army Post in America, dating to 1778. Our first stop will be at the old Cadet Chapel in the West Point Cemetery where we will hold a Memorial Ceremony with a Color Guard and an organist, Chaplain, Firing Party, Bugler, and Speaker. The service will have Co-Chaplains, a West Point Chaplain, and the Association's Chaplain, **Bill Snidow**. A perusal of the Cemetery will surely be interesting to many members.

From the Chapel we will go to the West Point Club for a buffet lunch (included). West Point tour guides will then join the busses for a narrated tour of West Point with the last stop at the Visitors Center, Gift Shop, and Museum. The Museum contains six exhibition galleries of military history and contributions made by the Army in building our nation.

**In order to go on the West Point tour you will need to supply Bob Pierce with your date of birth and what type of picture ID you will be using. This information must also accompany the registration. It is important that this information be received at least 10 days before the planned trip to West Point. If you do not supply this information, you will not be permitted to visit West Point. Bob Pierce's address is: 144 Nashua Court, San Jose, California 95139-1236.**

### **Norwalk/New Canaan Tour**

We will visit the Lockwood-Mathews Mansion Museum, a magnificent 62 room Palatial Residence built in 1868 and considered the finest Second Empire style country home ever built in the United States. The home is called "America's First Chateau," and is listed as a National Historic Landmark, as an American Castle. After lunch on your own in South Norwalk, we go to New Canaan to visit the New Canaan Historical Society, a community of seven museums in five buildings. Highlites are a 1764 center chimney saltbox home; Red Rock one-room school house built in 1799; a tool museum, a John Rogers studio and museum from 1878 displaying Rogers collection of statuary; the 1825 Town House and Library; and the Cody Drug Store with original furnishings from 1845.

Last stop is the WPA Murals, the most important collection of Depression Art comprised of 26 very large canvases depicting life in the 1930's and early forties. Other important art are "Mark Twain Illustrations," "The Voyage of Marco Polo" and "The Purchase of Norwalk 1640."

### **New York City Tour**

This tour is planned as a round-robin sighting tour of Manhattan to at least a drive-by of the most significant tourist attractions. It will also be a long day because of the NYC traffic. There will be at least two

stops with ample time to enjoy the sights and sounds of the Big Apple.

The plan is to drive directly to the farthest point, the World Trade Center Ground Zero location. This is the first stop with time to see the site. Heading back towards mid-town Manhattan, we will pass through China Town, Little Italy, SOHO and Greenwich Village. We will go by Madison Square Garden, Macy's, the Empire State Building, and the United Nations. With a swing back through Time Square, the busses will drop us off at Rockefeller Center with enough time to explore the numerous sights such as a tour of Rockefeller Center, Radio Center Music Hall, St. Patrick's Cathedral, Broadway and 42nd Streets, the theater district, and some cozy deli or restaurant for lunch on your own. Return to Rockefeller Center to board the busses for a pass-by of Lincoln Center and across Central Park to head for Stamford.

### **HOTEL AND REUNION REGISTRATION CUT-OFF DATES AND CANCELLATION POLICY**

Hotel Registration cut-off date, to receive the reduced rate of \$74 + 12% tax, is **August 8, 2004**. After that date the rooms blocked for our Association will be released for open occupancy at the regular price. Hotel cancellations will be accepted without penalty up to 48 hours prior to the arrival date.

Reunion Registration deadline is **July 24, 2004**. Please note, this date is different than the hotel registration date! Registration forms received after July 24 will be recorded in order of date received and assigned to tours on a space available/standby basis. These forms will also be used by the Registration Chairman to issue tickets available from cancellations/changes. Tour cancellation tickets we are unable to sell will not be refunded because they are also non-refundable by the tour company.

Hotel food service (EB Buffet & Banquet) deadline is also July 24th for Unit seating assignments. After July 24th, Unit seating will be on space availability or open seating. Food Cancellations for Buffet, Banquet, Breakfast will be accepted by contacting **Bob Pierce** or **Bill Ruebsamen** no later than 4:00 p.m., Monday, August 23rd, 2004. After that date, tickets not sold to stand-by members will not be refunded. Emergency Reunion cancellations will receive a full refund, less dues. No-Shows will not receive a refund.

Banquet Dinner Entree choices are not marked 35% of the time, the policy has been to assign the "Beef" choice. If you cannot eat Beef or Chicken, please staple a note on your Registration form. As an exception, it may be possible for a limited number of persons to get Fish or a Vegetable meal. This is not a choice! For a third entree choice, an additional cost of \$2 will be added to all entrees. Please, use this option if it is a health problem.

**WE STILL NEED HELP FOR  
REGISTRATION, SOUVENIR SALES,  
AND ESPECIALLY, THE HOSPITALITY ROOM!!**

# Cy Abrams remembers

**Seymour "Cy" Abrams**  
Company C, 269th Engineers  
8811 Canoga Avenue, Spc. 540  
Canoga Park, California 91304



I remember one incident in the Hurtzgen Forest in the southern tip of Belgium. Our squad was in a fox-hole originally occupied by the Nazis. There were six or eight of us in it, and it was snowing slightly and we were cold and wet. We were not allowed to smoke or light a match or a flashlight. It was night time. We were instructed to be aware of any sounds, no matter how low they may be or of any approaching objects as the Nazis may try to sneak in and infiltrate our position or surprise attack, especially when we were on guard duty in the evening.

One of the methods the Nazis used to infiltrate was to sneak in behind guards with a piano wire with handles on both sides. They would place the piano wire around the necks of the guards and choke them to death before they could cry out and alarm the others or have a chance to use their guns. It was time for evening guard duty, and we had a little heated discussion about who should go first. One southern guy popped up and said, "Let the Jew boy go out first. If it wasn't for them, we wouldn't be here." The other guys calmed him down. I volunteered to go out on guard duty because if I stayed inside, I would have ripped him apart. It was a relief to go out with another buddy that knew better why we were there. Most of the world knew. It was a scary night, pitch dark and very quiet. We would walk a short distance apart and then back to each other. We were in between the Nazis and the

American artillery. The guard changed shifts every hour. The bombardment started early in the morning. It was loud and fierce and lasted a short time. At 7:00 a.m., it was all over.

We got out of the foxhole and headed toward the Nazis who were swept back. The sight was unusual after the previous night's bombardment between our artillery and the Nazis. All the trees seemed sheared off at the top. We headed forward to where our trucks were. On the way there, we saw a sight I will never forget. Young GIs were lying dead, frozen in the snow. Many were young kids. They were camouflaged with sheets that blended in with the snow. The GIs that picked up the dead had not yet arrived. After getting in to our troop carriers, we headed out of Belgium as we were no longer needed there.

I met some of the men in the Russian Army in Miltitz, Germany. They told me they were from the same area where I was born. I exchanged booty with some of them (after all, they were our Allies) and practiced my now rusty Russian with them. After our meeting, they were heading on to Leipzig to occupy that city we had captured after a hard fought battle with the Nazis.

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## Young Man Wants to Meet 69th Veterans

**Benjamin Abbott**  
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E-Mail: [benjabbott@hotmail.com](mailto:benjabbott@hotmail.com)

My name is Benjamin Abbott, I am 22 years old and have been interested in WWII history since I was 10. Along with my twin brother Jon, I've been interviewing, video recording and collecting personal accounts and memorabilia of WWII veterans for the past 12 years.

I'm currently working on a web page that will show stories and memorabilia of some of the veterans with whom I've met. Although I have met with about 50 WWII veterans, I have not been able to meet any members of the 69th. I was hoping that perhaps I could speak with some of the members of the 69th Division who fought in WWII and share some of their experiences and memorabilia on our website.

Since quite a few of the veterans I've met do not have internet access, I was hoping that some of you would write to me, call me or e-mail me if possible. I'm very interested in the 69th Infantry Division and its part in the European Theater and would be honored to meet with, or speak to, any member from its famous outfit.

Below are links to my website:  
<http://www.geocities.com/panzerboy81/Harris1.html>  
<http://www.geocities.com/panzerboy81/Harry1.html>

I'm still in the preliminary stages of our website, but hope to add as many stories as we can.



# THE AUXILIARY'S PAGE

By **Dottie (Witzleb) Shadle**

*Ladies Auxiliary Editor*

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## A Message from your Auxiliary President, Theresa Pierce

Dear Ladies of the 69th Ladies Auxiliary:

There have been no earth-shaking changes to report since the last Bulletin. I know everyone will be planning which days to attend, what travel arrangements are best to reach Stamford, what tours are most suited to their interests, and how does their budget fit the program.

Don't forget the Exchange Gifts, about \$5.00 and maybe an extra one for First Timers. Also, any knitted/crocheted items, and the sundries for the veterans.

For entertainment, Saks Fifth Avenue Management have agreed to conduct one of their many demonstrations exclusively for the 69th Division Ladies' Auxiliary. Since they don't normally go off-site, they are still undecided regarding the program of most interest to our ladies group. I guess we all will be surprised.

Hope to see a lot of new faces among our large group of Regulars at Stamford.

## Attention Ladies WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER FROM THE WAR??

Ladies, if you can think of anything that occurred during war times that would make interesting reading, please write a short story and we will include it in the Ladies Auxiliary pages.

We are particularly interested in memories of Camp Shelby or Hattiesburg, Mississippi. Or perhaps you have some stories to relate from home during the war, as you waited for your 69er to return. Please send them to:

**Dottie (Witzleb) Shadle**

P.O. Box 4069

New Kensington, Pennsylvania 15068-4069

### - In Memoriam -

#### "LADIES' TAPS"

**VIRGINIA WESTON**

wife of **George Weston**

*Anti-Tanke, 271st Infantry Regiment*

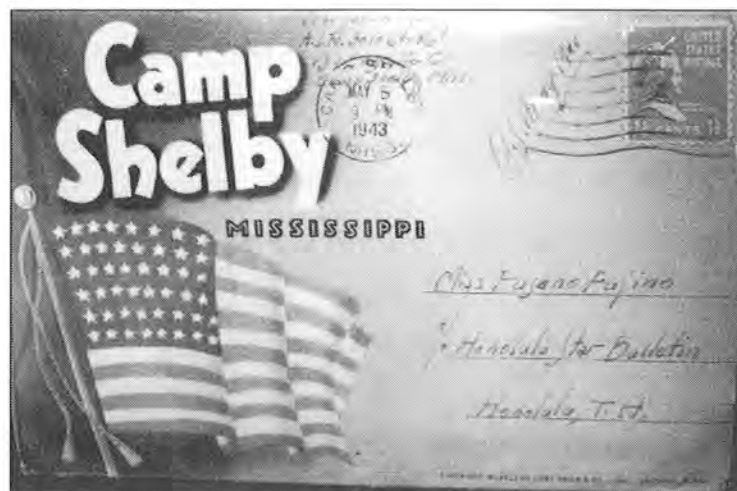
# Chet Yaz writes . . .

Submitted By: **Chet Yastrzemski**  
 Company E, 273rd Infantry Regiment  
 251A North Main Street  
 Southampton, New York 11968  
 or  
 2410 Cleghorn Street, #2101  
 Honolulu, Hawaii 96815

I was going through the Army War Museum located at Fort DeRussy, Honolulu, Hawaii, and came upon this picture postcard of Camp Shelby, Mississippi. It was sent by a soldier from the 442nd Regiment to his friend in Honolulu. The 442nd was composed of a Japanese Neisi American unit that trained at Camp Shelby in the same year as the 69th Division. They later were to go into combat in France, Italy and Germany. They were the most highly decorated unit in the U.S. Army. There was a movie and a book on this unit, "Go For Broke." They got their name because they liked to gamble, especially playing dice, known as craps. The majority of officers in the unit were caucasian with a few being Hawaiian. Lt. Inouye was one of them and he survived and received the Medal of Honor. He presently is a U.S. Senator of Hawaii.

Through my many years here in Hawaii, I have met some members of the 442nd at their local V.F.W. post. They all remember their training at Camp Shelby and being there with the 69th Division and running war tactics against our Division.

The relationship of this story and the picture postcard of Camp Shelby is the fact that I had sent this card to my parents in June of 1944 when I arrived at Camp Shelby. You will notice that the date of this card is May 6th, 1943 and the postage then was 1-1/2 cents. One point to remember - the 69th Division was activated in May of 1943.



Huge stained glass window (15x20 ft.) at the museum honoring all the veterans of Hawaii who received the Medal of Honor and other decorations. Their photos are on the walls and there is an audio portion on each veteran. You can listen to their war stories and how they received their decorations.

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## Shelby Farewell Party • Anti-Tank, 272nd



# Trespass Against Them

## History of the 271st Infantry

Submitted By: **Lawrence Verheye**

*Company F, 271st Infantry*

1251 Pierce Road

Wakarusa, Indiana 46573-9616

Written By: **Lt. John F. Higgins**, *2nd Battalion*

### Entering Germany

The 10th of February was the day we entered Germany. That morning, we moved out, combat-loaded, and took up the positions occupied by the 395th Infantry of the 99th Division in the vicinity of Hollerath, just inside the first belt of pillboxes of the infamous Siegfried Line. By 1630, all positions had been taken over, and the battle-green 69th was ready to apply the principles learned in all the months of training.

The men were far from comfortable that first night. With only one blanket and a sleeping bag in the below-freezing weather, not to mention the fact that we were subjected to harassing artillery fire, supplemented by "screaming meemies" and considerable use of the flares. Extensive patrol activity, aimed at feeling out the strength and disposition of the enemy, was carried out for the following two weeks, and it was not long before most men had become quite used to life at the front. As someone put it: "You don't have to worry about the ones you can hear!" After a time, you can fairly accurately tell where they will land. Morale of the command was excellent, especially when the kitchens arrived in the area, and it was possible to send up hot food to the men in the line.

During this period, all duffle bags were turned in, so that the units could travel fast and light. Condition of roads in the area was wretched, which seriously accentuated the supply problem. In the 17 days before our first attack, 30 prisoners were taken, of whom 10 were captured by our patrols. In this area too, great emphasis was put on maintaining weapons and equipment as well as much attention to proper sanitation.

### First Attack

After being postponed several times, our first attack was launched at 0600, 27 February. We arose at 0300, had breakfast and spent the remainder of the time in final preparations. The night was very still, and a slight mist hung in the air, an ideal morning for our purpose. It is not boasting to say here that anyone who had come into our area that morning could have accurately predicted that we would measure up to any combat assignment given us. There was no visible nervousness, no confusion, no slackening of morale. Everyone stood ready to perform his assigned tasks as though it were maneuvers at Shelby, secure in the knowledge that whatever exigencies arose, we were ready. To borrow the much-used expression: "This was it!", and every man in the 271st knew it.

The plan of attack was as follows: The 69th Division, two regiments abreast, with the 661st Tank Destroyer Battalion, were to seize and hold the high ground between Honningen and Giescheld inclusive, in order to clear the Hellenthal-Hollerath road for use as a supply route.

The 271st Infantry, with 879th Field Artillery, 880th Field Artillery and Company A of the 269th Engineers in support, would seize and hold its portion of the Division objective, after which it would be prepared to assist by fire the 273rd in the capture of Giescheld. The Second Battalion, with the 879th Field Artillery, a platoon of Engineers, a platoon of Company C, 661st Tank Destroyer in support, was on the left; the First Battalion on the right, and the Third Battalion in reserve. The Third was to stand ready to furnish carrying parties to the attacking battalions during the hours of darkness, and also to occupy Dickerscheid with one company, upon call from Second Battalion, when the town was captured.

Cannon Company supported the attack of the regiment, with priority of fire to the Second Battalion. Anti-Tank Company was to provide litter squads, and also have its mine platoon sweep the roads to Dickerscheid and Buschem, after clearing mines in the vicinity of the bridge site. Company A of the 269th Engineers was to construct a bridge in Second Battalion sector, and also clear mines and abatis in the First Battalion area. These were the plans, and with them well in mind, the 271st Infantry Regiment went into action the morning of 27 February 1945.

The First and Second Battalions crossed the line of departure on time and advanced towards their objectives. With a few unavoidable exceptions, the regiment reached and held its objective according to plan.

The First Battalion, in the face of stiff resistance, achieved its objective by 1030, with all companies committed. The remainder of the day they spent digging in and consolidating their positions.

Company G of the Second Battalion attacked Dickerscheid and by noon had taken four houses; by 1700 had nearly completed mopping up the town. Company F, attacking Buschem and Honningen, was able to take half of Buschem before being pinned down by fire from nearby Honningen, and was ordered to hold its present position for the night. One platoon of Company E assisted G in mopping up Dickerscheid and clearing the woods east of the town. Company K was then ordered to occupy Dickerscheid, which was accomplished, releasing G Company to close the gap between themselves and F Company.

The Third Battalion was alerted that night, but not committed until the next day. The next morning, E Company was committed to assist F Company, and the two companies cleared Buschem and went on to take Honningen. Two counterattacks were repulsed in the area.

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## TRESPASS AGAINST THEM

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At 1400, 28 February, Company B led the First Battalion in its attack on Hahnenberg, moving towards the village from the draw southwest of it. Concurrently, plans were made for the Third Battalion, Company I on the right, Company L on the left, to take Oberreifferscheid, following a five-minute artillery preparation. Company L, however, experienced some delay in the assembly area, and did not cross the line of departure until 1450. Nonetheless, the attack was successful, and positions were consolidated.

In all the advances of these two days, enemy artillery, mortar, nebelwerfer, and machine-gun fire were encountered. However, our artillery countered with good results, causing the enemy artillery to cease firing temporarily.

Throughout the attack, morale remained at its high level. Everyone performed his duties, and many far exceeded the call of duty. It was not a pleasant experience, but through close cooperation and teamwork, all missions were accomplished, and each man emerged more mature, wiser, more aware of the task ahead.

Praise must be given the Medical Detachment of the Regiment. Anyone who heard the cry "Hey, Medic!", in the heat of battle, will never forget the manner in which that call was answered. With disregard for personal safety, and themselves suffering casualties, our Medics were outstanding in the performance of their duties. Instances of aid men continuing their ministrations under sniper and mortar fire were common. There is no greater aid to morale than the knowledge to the individual that, if he is hit, there is help close behind. Evacuation of casualties was done expeditiously, to which fact many men today owe their lives.

One hundred and seventy prisoners were taken in those days, most of them by Company G in the Dickerscheid area. Twenty-four machine guns were destroyed, two captured, eight 80-mm mortars and six 50-mm mortars, and one 7.5 Infantry howitzer were destroyed; one anti-tank gun, four 88-mm self-propelled guns were knocked out and one battery of enemy artillery was silenced.

Casualties in the regiment were reasonably light. One officer and 38 men were killed; one man died of wounds, 19 were seriously wounded. Three officers and 117 men were missing in action, and non-battle casualties included four officers and 107 men. Total casualties for the period were nine officers and 305 enlisted men.

The first day of March found the regiment still advancing. Having captured the village of Wahld shortly before midnight on the 28th, Company B went on to occupy Hescheld. Company C sent a platoon to B as reinforcements, while Company A adjusted its positions to tie up with B. Other company positions in

the regiment remained the same; lines were adjusted and straightened, positions consolidated and contact established. Anti-tank weapons were moved well forward and roads were swept of mines. A bridge was erected to provide a continuous road to the First Battalion. Companies G and K changed places, restoring tactical unity to both battalions.

During the first few days of March, our entire front was under sniper and artillery fire. In Buschem, the anti-tank guns had to be moved to new positions after coming under direct fire of 88s. Most of the companies were able to get hot food to their men and to issue them clean, dry clothes, something which had not been seen for many days.

There were several minor skirmishes, which it is believed were aimed at forcing us to disclose the location of our weapons. Occasionally, there were barrages of artillery and mortars, most of which fell in the Third Battalion area. Small-arms fire was limited.

### Schmidtheim

German prisoners taken the morning of 6 March confirmed the fact that the enemy was leaving his positions and pulling back. The obvious reason was the large-scale offensives being launched on both our flanks by the bulk of the First and Third Armies who were close to effecting a function just short of the Rhine. The Krauts were fast deciding that the best way for them to travel was east and fast!

Accordingly, when a large-scale reconnaissance disclosed an almost complete lack of potential resistance in our sector, a plan was formulated whereby we could make a big move to the vicinity of Schmidtheim. This was the plan: At 0800, one reinforced company of the First Battalion would push out on reconnaissance in force to seize and hold the town of Schmidtheim, clearing up any pockets of resistance in its sector. The Second Battalion was to sweep the area in its sector of the regimental zone and leave a guard of not more than one squad in each town until relieved by the Military Government. Upon regimental order, the battalion would move to Schmidtheim. The Third Battalion was to seize the town of Hecken at dawn, and send one reinforced company to conduct reconnaissance in force and to outpost the regimental sector to the north and east of Schmidtheim. Special units were to support the advance as in previous similar movements.

The advance was made swiftly and almost without event. It was apparent that the enemy was withdrawing faster than our troops could keep up with them.

First Battalion arrived in Schmidtheim at 1330 and then moved on to clear the area to the east at 1715. The Second Battalion completed its mission, clearing the pillboxes in the regimental area. Third Battalion moved out at 0900 and after reaching Schmidtheim, Companies K and L went on to the east at 1500. Four

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## TRESPASS AGAINST THEM

*(Continued from Page 12)*

towns and 14 prisoners were taken in this move. When the area east of Schmidtheim was cleared, the Regimental Command Post was set up in Blankenheim. Regimental Headquarters Company and Anti-Tank Company set up in Blankenheim, as did the entire Second Battalion. The First and Third Battalions were in Schmidtheim. We learned at this time that we had been pinched out by the junction of the First and Third Armies and must await further developments before being recommitted.

Blankenheim had been dealt heavy blows by our Air Corps, but our stay there was comfortable and gave the men a chance for needed rest, reorganization and servicing of equipment. It was brightened somewhat by the fact that some of our exploring non-coms were able to find and liberate a good supply of wine. A few lucky individuals were able to get passes to Paris. We remained in the Schmidtheim-Blankenheim area for 15 days, during which Special Service provided entertainment, and presentations of awards for heroic achievement and meritorious service were made. Shower facilities were set up, and clean clothes issued.

Our next movement was to an area which had been recently figuring large in the conduct of the war. On the morning of 23 March, we moved out in motor convoy, and after an uneventful trip, arrived at Sinzig, which had, in better times, been a resort town on the Rhine, but which was now the scene of more activity than any sector since the St. Lo breakthrough. Streams of men and equipment were pouring through to cross the Rhine in the area of Remagen. Here we saw the remains of the Ludendorf bridge, which had done so much to facilitate the progress recently made. It was interesting to note the reaction of the German civilians to the tremendous display of men and equipment which was passing in a never-ending stream through their streets. One could see mixed amazement and a hint of resignation to the fact that it could not last much longer.

Regimental Command Post was in Sinzig, as were those of Second Battalion and Service Company. The rest of the regiment were in towns in the immediate vicinity. One of the highlights of our five-day stay was the opportunity for the men to take sulphur baths. Very luxurious for a doughfoot!

### Across the Rhine

On 28 March, we crossed the Rhine on Victor Bridge, the longest tactical pontoon bridge in the world, and a tribute to the Engineers who built it. All along the route to our destination were thousands of recently liberated nationals of conquered countries who were outspoken in their demonstrations of appreciation. The distance covered in the move was approximately 50 miles, and the regimental Command Post was set up in the town of Winden, near Nassau.

As the month of March drew to a close, the Regiment was still advancing rapidly without meeting any resistance from the Heinies, who were withdrawing faster than we could follow them. We were all wondering where they would make a determined stand and were not long in finding out.

Easter Sunday found the Regimental Command Post in Grossen Buseck, after having made several long and uninterrupted jaunts since the Rhine crossing. The day had with it an undertone of optimism on the duration of the European phase of the war. The hint of victory was unmistakably in the air, although everyone realized that much fighting remained to be done.

For the next few days, the regiment made successive moves until, averaging about 35 miles a day, we pulled into the ravaged city of Kassell on 5 April. Remember the feeling you got on entering Kassell? Everyone was in agreement that Germany was a good place for it to happen! What a mess!

Leaving Kassell on 8 April and moving eastward behind a spearhead of the Ninth Armored Division, the regiment again began making contact with the enemy. Each battalion was charged with the responsibility of mopping up the bypassed resistance in the zone of its advance. Orders were to continue a bold and determined advance until sufficient resistance was met to hold up the column. During this period, the First Battalion was attached to the 273rd Regiment and assisted in taking the town of Hann Munden, where stiff resistance was encountered.

### Battle of Weissenfels

The regiment's first large battle began the evening of 12 April. The Second Battalion moved up to take the town of Weissenfels, approximately 25 miles southwest of Leipzig. It was originally believed that the city was not too strongly held, but it turned out to be the major garrison before Leipzig, strongly and bitterly defended.

Entering the city's outskirts, a firefight of considerable intensity developed, and immediately Companies G and E were committed, supported by the weapons of H Company. It was immediately apparent that this was no small delaying force. Anti-tank guns were rushed to the scene and assisted in neutralizing strong points with point-blank fire. By dusk, only the west part of the city had been cleared after heavy fighting, and in the determination of their defense, the Germans blew up all the bridges across the Saale River, after withdrawing to the east bank. The river coursed through the city, and was a natural defensive barrier.

At 1930, the battalion CP was set up in a paper mill in the cleared part of Weissenfels, and patrols were sent out to estimate the strength of the enemy and reconnoiter for possible assault crossing points. Meantime, Companies E and F moved up into position

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## TRESPASS AGAINST THEM

*(Continued from Page 13)*

alongside G Company, poised for the attack in the morning. Assault boats were rushed up and G Company made a bold and costly crossing. In the process, five boats were shot up and sunk, with some casualties, and only two platoons got across. Quickly another crossing point was decided upon, and the remainder of G Company got across under fire from soldiers and civilians alike. Resistance was fanatical. F Company got across at the lower point without too much opposition and were quickly followed by E Company and the attachments of H Company. Fighting of great intensity raged when the bridgehead was made, and the riflemen were able to advance only a few hundred yards into the eastern part of the city. The Engineers had meanwhile started putting in a pontoon bridge, but armored help was urgently and immediately needed. By a round-about route through Naumburg, the aid of medium and light tanks of Task Force Zebra was rushed across the river and sped up to Weissenfels to help the doughboys.

When they arrived, they were immediately split up into three groups, one attached to each rifle company, and the city was likewise divided into three sectors, one per company. The work of clearing the city proceeded amid savage fighting and much interference from civilian snipers, whose special targets seemed to be medical aid men. The riflemen kept plugging ahead until the only Krauts left were dead ones, and the astounding total of 1,500 PWs were taken, among them many SS men and Gestapo agents. Next day, even after the city was considered cleared, there were still fanatical snipers making things uncomfortable for the troops.

One man in the Second Battalion discovered that the telephone lines were still intact; immediately proceeded to call the Weissenfels operator and tell her that if the sniping did not cease, we would withdraw from the town and level it with artillery. It wasn't long afterward that many snipers turned themselves in to the nearest GI. This same man in a previous town had cleverly extracted some choice military information from an operator, telling her in perfect German that he was lost from his outfit and asking where the German soldiers were. She told him and followed the conversation with an enthusiastic "Heil Hitler!"

It was on 13 April that we received the saddening news of the death of our Commander in Chief, President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The only tangible tribute we were able to offer to his memory was the fact that we were helping to bring about the victory for which he had labored and expended his life.

On this same day, the Third Battalion moved into action north of Weissenfels. In attempting to gain a bridgehead, the entire battalion was pinned down by a withering barrage of artillery, mortar, machinegun and flak fire. It was necessary to remain in this position until darkness when it was possible to move out.

Most of the casualties were suffered by Cannon Company, who were caught trying to go into firing position. The next day, the battalion moved south through Weissenfels, east and then north, back into its own sector, picking up a platoon of tanks and tank destroyers on the way. Their next order was to take the town of Lutzen, and this was done successfully. Four other towns were also taken by them the same day.

After clearing Weissenfels, the Second Battalion was ordered on 14 April to advance to Kreisan and clean up some batteries of dual-purpose 88-mm guns which had been giving our Third Battalion and a neighboring division much trouble. Company E moved to the attack, and by 1900 had completed its mission, overrunning and capturing 32 of the deadly weapons and amassing approximately 500 PW's.

Meanwhile, the First Battalion had been working closely behind Ninth Armored units, spearheading the bold regimental advance. Orders were to bypass resistance if possible. With Company A, 661 Tank Destroyer Battalion, and Company A, 777 Tank Battalion attached, the battalion left Birkungen and traveled 71 miles, often out ahead of the armor, to the town of Beichlingen, where sharp fighting ensued on the outskirts and in the castle area. Many snipers were flushed out, several big guns neutralized, and one medium tank was lost when it suffered a direct hit from an 88. From here, the battalion moved ahead to Bernsdorf, again in front of the armor, and at one time were the closest Americans to Berlin. On 12 April, they moved out ahead of the armor and advanced until heavy flak fire was encountered in the vicinity of Pulgar, but in accordance with their mission, the battalion broke away, cutting south to get back on the route of the armor. In so doing, a firefight developed with Volkstrum units in the town of Pettstadt, where several PWs were taken. During this fight, the battalion was shelled from its rear by fire which it later learned was being directed by a 17-year-old German girl, supposedly a nurse. First Battalion stayed in Pettstadt that night, moving out next morning through Naumburg and on to the town of Stontzsch. Next day, 15 April, the battalion had the mission of securing a regimental assembly area in the vicinity of Rotha, for the attack on Leipzig, and proceeded to Kiertsch, where a small firefight developed, and 100 PWs were taken.

On 16 April, First Battalion moved on to Rotha, and from there to Espenhain, where they came under severe shelling from AA guns at the head and tail of the long column. Company A was hard hit and incapable of moving, but B Company was able to go back to knock out the guns which were assailing the tail of the column. This was done successfully, and B Company held up in Rotha. C Company meanwhile was sent north to clear up two small towns, which was likewise accomplished. On 18 April, Company A went north and cleaned up the weapons in the vicinity of Magdeborn, which had held up the advance two days earlier. Six batteries of 40mm and three 150mm

*(Continued on Page 15)*



## TRESPASS AGAINST THEM

*(Continued from Page 14)*

howitzers were captured. First Battalion was then attached to 273d Regiment for the attack on Leipzig.

On 18 April, the Third Battalion pushed off from Pegau, aiming for its final objective, Zwenkau. They got only a mile down the road when heavy resistance was met in the vicinity of Audigast. The battalion was in a column of companies with a platoon of tanks and of tank destroyers attached, when small-arms fire, supported by tank fire, was exchanged for about an hour. K Company, with a platoon of tanks, was ordered to assault and take the town. No artillery fire was met until the town was taken, but after it fell into our hands, the Krauts again cut loose with artillery, anti-tank and flak fire. That night, Company L made a night attack behind a rolling artillery barrage, passed through Audigast and two towns beyond.

In the morning, however, it was discovered that the Krauts had moved back into the two towns which L Company had passed through early that night, and L Company was cut off, in a precarious position. Companies I and K were pinned down by heavy fire and unable to advance to their assistance. The Jerries began moving in from all directions and some got as close as 75 yards before being picked off by our men. Finally, a terrific preparation of our artillery was thrown in, and the Krauts withdrew to the north.

Since the Third Battalion was held up from its original mission of taking Zwenkau, the task was in the meantime given to the Second Battalion. On the morning of the 18th, the Second jumped off from Rotha to hit Zwenkau from the flank. The forward Command Post moved into an observation post at the far edge of Bohlen, where they could have observation of both Zwenkau and the positions on its eastern perimeter. At 0700, Company F moved forward across 3,000 yards of coverless terrain. It received heavy small-arms fire and devastating fire from six-inch guns and 88s. Heavy artillery and our anti-tank guns firing at point-blank range failed to dislodge the enemy from their well-dug-in positions, and F Company was forced to withdraw. Company E, meanwhile, had been sent to clear the small town of Pulgar.

This done, Company G was rushed through east to hit Zwenkau from the south. The attack was successful, and Company E was freed to tackle the 12 six-inch guns which had stopped F Company. In a memorable application of the principle of marching fire, E Company moved boldly across the open fields and overran the guns. Any Kraut who showed his head from his foxhole was a dead one.

Next morning at 0700, Company G moved out to take the town of Eythra. It was necessary to cross a bridge to enter the town, and this was covered by machine guns. However, by a stroke of good fortune, the Germans were caught napping, and before they could deliver and fire, they and their weapons were in our hands. The prisoners were used to clear their own roadblock, so that our tanks might pass through.

Eythra was soon cleared, and Company G posted itself around the perimeter of the town. Less than 500 yards away, the Germans were pouring artillery on the town, and the guns themselves were visible. It was then decided to withdraw and neutralize them with artillery. This was done; the enemy were silenced and the town secured.

Having regrouped the battalion, night attacks were launched against the towns of Gaucha and Zobigker by E and F Companies. The towns were secured without casualties by 0600, 18 April.

It was near the town of Rotha that members of Regimental Headquarters Company met the enemy on 18 April. A staff officer and his driver came under enemy fire just outside the town, and the driver was captured. The officer escaped, ran back to Regimental Headquarters, and summoned aid. The I and R Platoon was immediately sent out to locate the enemy positions, and in so doing came under enemy machine-gun fire. The aid of the Chemical Mortars Platoon was secured, and the I and R were able to withdraw under cover of a protective smokescreen. This pocket of resistance was later cleared up by Company A. The driver who was captured was freed later when the city of Leipzig fell. Two men were killed and several wounded in this action, which for a time had threatened the regimental Command Post.

*(Battle for Leipzig in the next issue of the Bulletin)*

## Photos of German Tanks, Vehicles, etc. Wanted

**Lee Archer**

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Web Site: [www.panzerwrecks.com](http://www.panzerwrecks.com)

I am a self-publishing author producing a series of books about destroyed, surrendered and abandoned German tanks and vehicles 1944-45 called Panzerwrecks. If possible, see my website at the above address.

If there are any members or families that have photographs of destroyed German tanks, SP guns, halftracks, etc., that you would like to contribute, I would very much appreciate it.

All materials submitted will be scanned and promptly returned. Insured postage costs will be met by me. Please rest assured that any images supplied would not be lent or copied without the owner's permission. If the photo is used, the owner/photographer will be credited and they will receive a complimentary copy of the book.

Thanks you for your time and I look forward to hearing from anyone who can help.

## Ken Maynard writes . . .

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Yuma, Arizona 85367-8612  
E-Mail [kjyumans@hotmail.com](mailto:kjyumans@hotmail.com)

The bugler of our Company D, 273rd, **Howard Wells**, would like to hear from his one-time company associates. He is ill and is now in Greene Memorial Hospital, 1141 N. Monroe Drive, Xenia, Ohio 45385 (at present). His phone number is 937-376-6795.

His home address is 2139 Marcia Drive, Bellbrook, Ohio 45305-1607. Phone number 937-848-4413, about 12 miles from the hospital.

Howard has had surgery in the past for his heart and this is an entirely new situation, involving that organ again. I spoke with him on the phone for about ten minutes and a nurse came in as I was told would happen, to monitor his blood pressure very, very often. Obviously from what his daughter told me on e-mail, he will be hospitalized for some time and then to rehab.

Howard is originally from a city about 70 miles from my home in Wisconsin. He lived in Tomah prior to going into service, which is just a few miles from the now Fort McCoy, an army base.

He told me that he put his trumpet in a trunk over 40 years ago, and about ten years ago, while rummaging around, discovered it again, took it out, started to practice a bit and then became a member in the Kettering and Centerville Civic Bands, going on tour to such places as Branson, Missouri and elsewhere these past several years.

I had lost track of him after the war and it has only been within the last 10 years that after a long search, and with the help of that wonderful ex-GI from New York, Jim Amor from the 87th Division, who has helped 100s of others locate old friends from WWII.

The photo was taken in 1945, while on leave in Switzerland. I am in the middle, **Wallace Stroud** is on my left and **Mac Blanton** on the right. Neither were from D Company. I met them aboard the train.

I might add that we three met a fine middle aged couple in Bern literally minutes after arriving in that city. We were walking from our hotel, just taking in the sights immediately surrounding us when this couple walking past greeted us, turned around and started talking to us in English. Turns out he was a member of the Swiss parliament. They invited us to visit their home later that evening, serving us various forms of pickles for one thing, many having been soaked in wines and liquors.

The next day we were asked to attend a parliamentary procedure, (French speaking) as guests in the balcony, with the wife of the official.

Later we were treated to the finest, richest pastries imaginable using our rations stamps. The following day we rented these three bicycles and rode a few kilometers to visit their countryside chalet.

This is only an aside, but while riding around the city of Bern, the fellow on the left, (facing) managed to get his wheels wedged into the tracks in the street, while going down a slight incline just as a street car was approaching. Only by a miracle was he able to yank the tire out of the track and escape a near disaster! It may have caused him to not smile for this photo.

(I just looked at the address on the back of the photo and noted it said Montreaux. I swear we were in Bern, the capitol, as that is where I thought the parliament met!)

I learned much later that this fine couple took time out to write our parents in the States letters telling, in my case, my mother, who they were and what the occasion was for writing.

I realize few veterans enjoy writing letters (I have learned that over the years) for whatever reason known only to them. However, most of us are getting to that age where an occasional note or phone call can help buoy up one's spirit, even if it's only for a moment, but it helps.

Again I wish to thank you for the tremendous job you have done over these last years. You are owed a great amount from all of us who were once a part of the 69th!!!



*Wallace Stroud, Kenneth Maynard and Mac Blanton  
May 1945, Montreaux, Switzerland*

# \*\*\*\*\* 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 4069, New Kensington, Pennsylvania 15068-4069, as early as possible. Then follow through with a write-up immediately after the event(s).

## \*\*\*\*\* California Western Chapter \*\*\*\*\*

**Harold and Nancy Faulkner**, *News Reporters*  
*Cannon Company, 271st Infantry Regiment*  
280 Montecillo Drive  
Walnut Creek, California 94595-2612  
Telephone: 925/945-6604

### **Report on the Spring 2004 Round-Up** **Arroyo Grande, California** **April 24-29, 2004**

Members, guests and friends assembled from Sunday, April 25 thru April 29, at Hq. (Best Western) CASA GRANDE INN, in Arroyo Grande. Much time was spent in the hospitality room, visiting and getting reacquainted with old friends and making new friends. Many enjoyed a tour of Hearst Castle and other sights of this beautiful coastal area.

One of the highlights of the trip was the open house at the home of **Bob and Peggy Shaw** in Arroyo Grande. This was prior to the Memorial Service and the Banquet. **Bob Shaw**, the Cite Chairman, put on a heck of a meeting.

#### **In attendance were:**

**Harold and Nancy Faulkner** .. (2 guests) California  
**Thomas and Lou Gallagher** ..... California  
**Eddie Gildner** ..... (2 guests) California  
**Allan and Bobbi Gwynne** ..... California  
**Walter Haag and Dorothy Vasiloudis** ... California  
**Thomas and Ruth Ellen Elliot** ..... Washington  
**Walter and Shirley Harpain** ..... California  
**Stan and Lois Hawk** ..... California  
**Homer and Pat Lind** ..... California  
**Delbert and Donna Philpott** ..... California  
**Robert and Theresa Pierce** ..... California  
**Jean Ross** ..... Massachusetts  
**Bill Ruebsamen** ..... California  
**Erwin and Carmen Sanborn** ..... New Hampshire  
**Orville and Beaulah Schultz** ..... California  
**Robert and Peggy Shaw** ..... California  
**David and Jeanne Theobald** ..... California  
**John and Dena Tounger** ..... California  
**Lee Wilson and Jan Kremetz** ..... California



#### **California Western Chapter Officers**

**Bob Shaw**-Chaplain, **Homer Lind**-Secretary, **Harold Faulkner**-President, **Stan Hawk**-Vice President and **Lee Wilson**-Treasurer

\*\*\*\*\*

## **Hq. and Hq. Battery** **69th Division Artillery**

Submitted By: **Charles Chapman**  
12223 Seaford Court  
Woodbridge, Virginia 22192-2356  
E-Mail: CCEAGWU@aol.com



*Left to right are: Charles McGuire, Charlie Chapman, Phil Marinowitz, Page and Dan Finn*



# 69th Member Struggles to get Combat Infantry Badge

Submitted By: **Leonard C. Campbell**

*Company C, 1st Battalion, 273rd Regiment*

1112 93rd Street

Niagara Falls, New York 14304-2804

*Leonard Campbell wrote to his congresswoman in an attempt to receive his Combat Infantry Badge, which is much deserved. We thought this letter was worth publishing.*

Dear Congresswoman Louise Slaughter,

Shortly after turning 18, in March of 1943, I was called to serve my country in the U.S. Army during World War II. This I did most willingly, until honorably discharged in March 1946. The last year and four months were overseas, in the European Theater of Operations, in the Infantry.

Over the years, and like so many other veterans, I very rarely related my experiences to my family, especially that period of time in actual combat with the enemy. Finally, about a year ago and approaching 80 years young, I agreed to document these three years and begin my "memoirs." I felt it was important for them to know the pride and dedication with which I served my beloved country.

Since this devotion would be exemplified by any awards I was entitled, I contacted Mr. Don Thompson, Niagara County Veterans Service Agency for assistance in securing my combat awards and battle ribbons. My American Legion Post Commander who could not help me and had recommended him.

To my complete surprise and shock, Mr. Thompson advised I was not entitled to the Combat Infantry Badge, the most treasured award of all Infantry soldiers! Yet, from February 1945 until May 1945, I was in a front line Rifle Company, was fired at, and fired against the enemy. Other than kitchen and supply personnel, all other men in my rifle company received this honor.

According to Mr. Thompson, what may have initiated this mistake, is the information typed on my discharge, (copy enclosed), under No. 30 - Military Occupational Specialty and No. as Bugler 803. This is correct but "Bugler" apparently implies I was a musician to whoever prepared my discharge. Yes, I was the Company Bugler for Company C, 1st Battalion, 273rd Regiment, 69th Infantry Division, who was the first American Unit to meet the Russians, south of Berlin. However, in combat, I carried a 40-pound radio on my back, along with my weapons. My duties in combat action were to be with my Company Captain and/or Platoon Leaders and to relay their orders for other units and supporting units - i.e. Artillery, tanks, etc. Also, I was involved in night reconnaissance patrols behind the German Siegfried Line while in Belgium.

For a year now, Mr. Thompson has been attempting to have my records corrected or amended at the Army Records Bureau in St. Louis but to no avail. Apparently, the information, or lack thereof, is "etched in stone" and as we often heard in the Army - T.S. Well, I don't accept this. Just as I fought for my country, I am going to fight for this one honor that is due me. But time is running out.

As my representative to our Federal Government, I am respectfully asking you to intercede with the Army in my quest. I stand ready to provide whatever materials and documents necessary to solidify my case. I can also send my now completed memoirs, part of which covers my combat activities.

*(EDITOR'S NOTE: Leonard, keep us posted on what happens with this and good luck.)*

\*\*\*\*\*

## Who Wears This Badge?

A SOLDIER WHO REMEMBERS -

He remembers the wet, rough feet and the dusty sour smell of war. He remembers a special hill or stream or village and wonders if it looks the same now. He remembers fear and he remembers relief. He remembers Combat.

A SOLDIER WHO IS PROUD -

He's proud of having done a job well, of having proved himself when it counted. He knows what dependability and responsibility mean, and he takes pride in that knowledge. He is proud of the past, confident of the future.

A SOLDIER WHO KNOWS -

The cost of war and the price of peace and knows which is the better buy. He knows now is a time when you can't let down. He knows what defense means, it means him, standing alert and ready.

A SOLDIER'S SOLDIER -

His badge is the symbol of a great group of men, his fellows may be tall or short, Texans or New Englanders, it doesn't matter. Whenever he meets a soldier wearing the badge, he knows he meets a buddy.

ABOVE ALL ... AN INFANTRYMAN

He's heard all the jokes and told a few himself, he's heard all the gripes and griped some himself and he's heard all the boasts and boasted himself. It's all part of being Infantry and when the chips are down, he wouldn't feel right not being with his buddies.

THE COMBAT INFANTRY BADGE

**57th Annual Reunion  
Stamford, Connecticut  
August 22nd thru 29th, 2004**

*Further information elsewhere in this bulletin.*

# City on the Brink

Submitted By: **Douglas George**

*Headquarters, 273rd Infantry*

1012 Jay Court, Loveland, Colorado 80537

By DON WHITEHEAD AND HAL BOYLE

*(Associated Press Staff Correspondents)*

Leipzig, Germany, April 18. Capture of Leipzig was only hours away tonight as troops of the U.S. First army pounded through the streets.

Thousands of German civilians, apparently unmindful of the battle, poured from basements and air raid shelters to watch.

Some Germans laughed and waved in a genuine display of relief that the Americans had arrived. They gave little heed to the rattle of machine-gun fire and the crashing of shells at the Elster river, which runs through the city's center, where tired, muddy American doughboys battled the Germans after advancing block by block through the city.

## Hit From Two Sides.

American forces moving against the heart of Leipzig and attacking from the south and west were putting the squeeze on an estimated 40,000 Germans inside the industrial and art center, fifth city of the Nazi Reich.

Troops of the 69th Infantry Division battled at the south, 2nd Infantry troops hit from the west, and the 9th Armored Division advanced from the south and west.

Doughboys moved into the outskirts last night on the sixth day of the siege. Entrance into the war-crowded city of 1 million came after an eerie march through the rain. Brilliant lighting, coupled with flaming artillery bursts to guide the long, dark columns to their objective.

Enemy rifles made brief stabs of flame along the route but these small strongpoints were quickly knocked out. No Nazi artillery shells fell as the Americans plodded along, covered by their own artillery, the explosions of which were lost in the noise of thunderclaps.

Maj. Robert Rashid of Berlin, Wis., said "There was resistance along the way. The Germans were dug in along some railroad tracks on the western edge of the city and fought hard with rifles and panzerfausts (bazookas). Flak gunfire has about ceased. We have captured or destroyed practically every gun in the batteries they had rimming the city."

## Meet Light Resistance.

Capt. Edward L. Callahan of Philadelphia led the first company of troops into Leipzig and his men were the first to reach the river, moving in last night against light resistance.

"We just barreled in and shot 'em up," Callahan said, as he waited in a hastily-evacuated Nazi SS (Elite Guard) headquarters for time to attack across the river.

Civilians in Leipzig reported that some 1,200 picked German troops left the city two days ago for the mountainous "national redoubt" in the Bavarian Alps.

American troops fighting for possession of the city have encountered various resistance, including grounded luftwaffe pilots, boyish Hitler youth soldiers - some of whom became hysterical at the sight of their comrades' blood. Nazi prisoners said the Germans had been planning to use women as anti-aircraft gun crews at the more than 1,200 weapons ringing the city.

This latter scheme was called off by the Nazi high command after 169 women were brought in for training and were bombed by American planes. The women were going through the motions of operating guns in "dummy" practice, prisoners said, when American planes attacking the regular gun emplacements overshoot their targets and dumped their bombs squarely in the middle of the women's detachment. It was slaughter. The remaining women became so hysterical that the experiment was called off. Forty of these women have been captured by American forces.

## Youth Bar Way.

East of Leipzig the enemy resistance consisted almost solely of Hitler youth, driven to sacrifice by propaganda appeals to "stand and die."

In almost every village 9th Armored Division tanks had to crack through a thin wall of these boy fanatics, who usually run in terror after firing a few rounds from Panzerfausts. Eight miles northeast of the city forty boys fought stubbornly for several minutes to hold up an armored column. The tanks blasted the Nazi positions with high-velocity guns, killing ten of the juvenile "supermen" with the first blast. The others threw away their guns and either ran or stood waiting for capture.

Leipzig itself is a heap of wreckage. Approximately 75 per cent of all the buildings and homes have been destroyed or severely damaged by bombs. Entering troops found the city in military disorder and civilian chaos. There was no water and no electricity, and hundreds of thousands of regular residents and refugees hugged the walls in basements where they had been living in fear of bombings and artillery shells. Hospitals were filled to overflowing.

Civilians and soldiers stragglers, taking advantage of the confusion, prowled through the ruins and broke into stores and supply depots, trying to grab all available food. Civilians have been hoarding food for weeks.

Road blocks and rubble barriers were found by American troops pushing toward the center of the city. These barriers were built by volkssturmers and forced laborers after Leipzig's burgomeister overrode the city's commander who wanted to hang up white flags and surrender the city without useless sacrifice.

White flags fluttered from almost every building, and the civilians appeared docile and meek, and many of them were obviously happy that the war, for them, was ending.

"The situation in Leipzig was so screwy," said the regimental executive officer, Lieut. Col. John H. Chiles of Independence, Mo., "that one of our German-speaking soldiers found a commercial telephone line still working. With the aid of a civilian we called the German commandant at headquarters but the sergeant who answered said he was out and hung up the receiver."

**69th INFANTRY DIVISION ASSOCIATION 2004  
57th ANNUAL REUNION  
461st AAA BN. - 661st T.D. BN. - 777th TANK BN.  
Sheraton Stamford Hotel • Stamford, Connecticut  
AUGUST 22nd thru AUGUST 29th, 2004**

**SEND THIS RESERVATION FORM TO:**

**ATTENTION: RESERVATIONS**

**SHERATON STAMFORD HOTEL**

2701 Summer Street, Stamford, CT 06905

Telephone: 203/359-1300 • Fax: 203/978-5606

**SHERATON CENTRAL RESERVATION: 1-800-325-3535**

**Please reserve one of the following:**

Single \_\_\_\_\_ Double \_\_\_\_\_ Price Single or Double - \$74.00 per night plus 12% Tax

Print full names of ALL persons sharing room: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**NOTE: Special accommodations required: (if available)**

HANDICAPPED EQUIPPED \_\_\_\_\_ NON-SMOKING \_\_\_\_\_

ONE KING SIZE BED \_\_\_\_\_ or TWO QUEEN SIZE BEDS \_\_\_\_\_

I / We plan to arrive (day) \_\_\_\_\_, August \_\_\_\_\_, 2004. (Check in after 3:00 p.m.)

I / We plan to depart (day) \_\_\_\_\_, August \_\_\_\_\_, 2004. (Check out by 12:00 noon)

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_

**Send Confirmation to: (Please Type or Print)**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street / R.D. / P.O. Box: \_\_\_\_\_

City / State / Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone / Area Code: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Check or Money Order (one night's lodging plus tax) payable to the SHERATON STAMFORD HOTEL, 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 Sheraton Stamford Hotel

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 8, 2004**. 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 only on 48-hour cancellation notice prior to your arrival date.



# 69th INFANTRY DIVISION ASSOCIATION

## 57th ANNUAL REUNION

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

### Sheraton Stamford Hotel • Stamford, Connecticut

### AUGUST 22nd thru AUGUST 29th, 2004

Registration form to be mailed to: **William Ruebsamen, Treasurer**

P.O. Box 146, Sun City, CA 92586-0146 • Telephone: 951/301-9360

I/we will attend the 69th Infantry Division Association Reunion in Stamford, Connecticut during the week of August 22nd thru August 29th, 2004 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: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>ALL PRICED EVENTS REQUIRE A TICKET</b>			
<b>Daily Events</b>	<b>Per Person</b>	<b>Number Persons</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Registration: <b>Monday thru Friday</b> , 9:00 a.m. to Noon and 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. Saturday, 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.			
<b>Sunday, August 22nd</b> — Early Arrivals on your own.			
<b>Monday, August 23rd</b> — Registration and Hospitality Room Open			
<b>Tuesday, August 24th</b> — <b>BRIDGEPORT TOUR</b> , 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. ....	\$ 39.00	_____	\$ _____
<b>Wednesday, August 25th</b> — <b>WEST POINT MILITARY ACADEMY</b> , 9 to 4 p.m. ....	\$ 39.00	_____	\$ _____
<b>IMPORTANT: Type of Photo ID and Birth Date required 10 days prior - See Page 7</b>			
<b>Thursday, August 26th</b>			
<b>BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING</b> — 8:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.			
<b>NORWALK/NEW CANAAN TOUR</b> , 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. ....	\$ 39.00	_____	\$ _____
<b>EARLY BIRD BUFFET</b> , Cash Bar 6:00 p.m.; Dinner 7:00-9:00 p.m. ....	\$ 30.00	_____	\$ _____
<b>Friday, August 27th</b>			
<b>NEW YORK CITY TOUR</b> , 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. ....	\$ 45.00	_____	\$ _____
<b>PX BEER PARTY</b> — 8:30 p.m. to 11:30 p.m. ....	\$ 5.00	_____	\$ _____
<b>Saturday, August 28th</b> — <b>COFFEE AND DANISH</b> - 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.			
<b>GENERAL MEMBERSHIP</b> and <b>LADIES AUXILIARY MEETING</b> 9:00 a.m. to Noon			
<b>BANQUET</b> : Cocktail Hour 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.			
<b>MEMORIAL SERVICE</b> — 7:00 to 7:30 p.m.			
<b>DINNER DANCE</b> - 7:30 p.m. to 12:00 Midnight .....	\$ 32.00	_____	\$ _____
Entrée Choices: Prime Rib _____ or Chicken Marsala _____			
<b>Sunday, August 29th - Farewell Buffet Breakfast</b> - 7:30-9:00 a.m. ....	\$ 12.00	_____	\$ _____
Replacement Cost for Lost or Broken Permanent Badges .....	\$ 4.00	_____	\$ _____
<b>SUPPORT YOUR HOSPITALITY ROOM: DONATIONS PLEASE!!!</b> .....			\$ _____
			<b>Reunion Sub-Total</b> \$ _____
<b>DUES — New Dues Year - August 1, 2004 to July 31, 2005</b>			
Regular Membership .....	\$ 10.00	_____	\$ _____
Ladies Auxiliary .....	\$ 5.00	_____	\$ _____
Postage and Bulletin Donation (up to you) .....			\$ _____
			<b>Total Amount Paid</b> \$ _____

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 JULY 24th, 2004.**

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.

## On the Lighter Side

Submitted By: **Edward L. Smaldone, Sr.**  
*Company K, 3rd Battalion, 272nd Regiment*  
508 White Springs Road  
Geneva, New York 14456



*Ed Smaldone - Camp Wheeler, Georgia, 1944*

In the past, I have written articles for the 69th Bulletin, concerning the humorous experiences that I remember happening along the way through Europe. I seldom mentioned the serious and dangerous episodes of WWII and thought that I would like to break away from those memories and dwell on some happy and humorous times in our Infantry, Platoon and Company.

Most of us in combat zones suffered some indignities pertaining to personal hygiene. If we had to take a leak during the night, we usually used our helmet and then emptied it out the next morning. We usually tried to make sure it was completely empty but lo and behold, when we put our helmet on, one drop would drip down. I would imagine that this will bring back some memories.

Then there were the times (practically always) we'd be marching single file on both sides of the road and after some time we would take a break, if possible. We always designated the tallest guy in the platoon to be the "toilet paper holder." He would be easy to spot for he always had the roll of toilet paper inside his helmet. That made his helmet stick up so high we could spot him with no problem.

I have one more occurrence that still sticks out in my mind, that I would like to share with you. We were given a few days off for R&R and were just lying around cleaning our weapons and shooting the breeze. One of the guys said that he had found a good size pond and claimed that there were a lot of large trout

in this pond. We muttered, "So what, we didn't have anything to catch them with." He immediately said that we all have grenades and that we could use those. To refresh your memories we were issued concussion and shrapnel grenades to use under different circumstances. Well you guessed it, this guy tossed in a shrapnel instead of a concussion grenade. No need to tell you that there were small bits and pieces of fish in the trees and around the pond. We went back to C&D rations.

I hope that the readers enjoy these lighter moments and possibly could relate some of their happier events.

Once again, I would like to thank your dedicated staff for maintaining your great website.

\*\*\*\*\*

## After the Battle

*The British Magazine*

### East Meets West Linkup - Then and Now

Submitted By: **Joe Lipsius**  
*Headquarters, 272nd Infantry Regiment*  
6314 Deerings Hollow  
Norcross, GA 30092-1800  
Telephone: 770/416 -7725  
annejoelip@earthlink.net

AFTER THE BATTLE is a British magazine which specializes in telling the history of the Second World War through then and now comparison photographs. It contacted me seeking pictures of the fighting and destruction in The City of Leipzig for a forthcoming magazine issue.

Editor Karel Margry, of the LINKUP magazine issue No. 88, retraces the events preceeding the meetings of the armies of the East and West at Torgau, and the role of the 69th Division is illustrated with a fine selection of contemporary photographs with matching photographs showing all the relevant locations as they are today.

This No 88 issue is a 'must' for 69th vets, families or friends. It is available in the States from:

#### **RZM Imports**

P.O. Box 995, Southbury, CT 06488

RZM Imports may be contacted by telephone at (203) 264-0774 or Toll free at 1-(800) 562-7308 or E-mail at rzm@rzm.com for full information as to price etc.

Margry is seeking photographs taken in 1945 during and shortly after the Leipzig fighting for a new AFTER THE BATTLE magazine. If you have photographs of interest, go to the nearest CVS, Eckerd's, Walgreen or the like, and have copies made for a few cents and mail to **Joe Lipsius** with accompanying description as you recall. He will transmit the photo(s) and information to Karel Margry for possible use in the Leipzig AFTER THE BATTLE magazine issue.

# Germany

*(Continued from Last Bulletin, The First Time I Saw Paris)*

Written By: **Gus R. Wiemann**

*Company L, 271st Infantry*

7126 Canella Court, Tamarac, Florida 33321

Just as on my trip from Germany to Paris, no precise time schedule could be given to passengers. Before boarding I stopped at the bread-cheese stand, bought three half-loaves with cheese, wrapped them and stuffed them into the top of my bag.

The train had relatively few passengers and I found a compartment where I was alone. Not feeling very tired, I decided to pull out the three Signal magazines and see what "the other side" had printed during the war.

One correspondent named Hanns Hubmann had bylines over several stories ranging from military campaigns in Russia and North Africa of the life of an air-raid warden during an attack on his town, all well illustrated by Hubmann's photographs.

One item followed the life of a young cabaret dancer in Berlin who had planned to marry her soldier sweetheart, but his commanding officer refused to grant him a furlough for the ceremony. A final picture in the story shows the dancer smiling as she is being married by proxy and the dashing photographer-reporter Hubmann standing in for the groom.

By the time I had finished reading most of the articles in Signal, I began feeling drowsy and slumped back against the headrest. Just as I relaxed, I noticed through the window that evening had become night.

It was only by someone opening and closing the compartment door that I slowly awakened. Apparently, I had slept several hours as early morning light filtered through the window. As I straightened up in my seat and rubbed my eyes, I noticed a faint outline of someone sitting opposite me. Trying to focus, I could see a tall man in a uniform observing me. "Good morning," he greeted with a slight chuckle. "Sleep good?"

In the few words that he spoke I detected an accent and wondered what his nationality was. Trying to play detective by examining his uniform, I noticed that on his peaked cap was an insignia of the German railway.

My mouth was dry from the long sleep, but I managed to smile slightly and answered, "Yes, thanks." I remembered then that often when a train crosses a border into another country the railway personnel are changed.

Pointing to the Signal magazines that were lying next to me, he continued, "I see that you have been reading Signal. It was a very good magazine and I read it when I was in the Army. If I may ask, how is it that you read German?"

Through the many months in Germany my explanation of how I had learned to speak and read the language became rote. However, one advantage I noticed was that aside from creating a kind of wave

length with someone, many times the person would divulge confidences. It might almost be compared to sitting down for "a drink" and the person relaxes, revealing intimacies of all kinds.

As the man leaned back on the headrest, he took off his cap, showing that he was balding with iron-gray hair at the temples. In the now brighter morning light, I could see that his face was lined and tired.

"Those Signal magazines reminded me of a time long ago. When I was a boy I lived with my family in East Prussia, not far from the Russian border. Our town had many Russians and, you know, as a child you pick up a language so much faster than when you are older.

"When I was drafted into the Army they sent me to Russia because I could speak the language. My company was stationed in a small village and I learned to know many of the people. Sometimes we would trade things secretly because we were not allowed to become friendly with the Russians.

"One day a Russian woman told me that her daughter was to be married and would I like to come to the wedding. Well, maybe you know, when you are in the army, you just wish that once in a while you can be with civilians again.

"So on the day of the wedding I was able to get away from duty and I went to the house where the woman said her daughter would be married. There were about twenty people there and, you know, lots of drinks, lots of vodka.

"I guess I had too much vodka and fell asleep. In the morning I woke up and I was in a bed and I had no clothes on. All of a sudden, the woman came into the room and put her finger to her lips so that I wouldn't talk loud.

"I asked, 'Where are my clothes?'

"She said, 'You were drunk and fell asleep. We took off your uniform and put you into the bed. You know, if the MPs came and found you in your uniform and drunk, maybe you would be shot.'

He looked out the window for a moment, then put on his cap. "I must go, he said as he stood up and opened the compartment door. Turning to me as he left, he said, "Mach's gut," the German equivalent of Monsieur Henri's, "Bon Chance."

Within an hour our train chugged into the Nuremberg station. Again I lifted my duffel bag onto my shoulder, stepped down onto the platform and looked for the street exit. Finally, as I walked through the exit, I noticed a booth with an MP directly outside the station. After I showed him my travel orders, he let me use his telephone to call the Stripes motor pool for a ride to Altdorf.

About forty-five minutes later a jeep with a corporal at the wheel pulled up to the booth. "Are you Wiemann?" When I nodded, he extended his hand.

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"I'm Mike. How ya doin'?" Somehow I sensed it would not be a good idea to use "Robare." I replied, "Hi, Mike. I'm Bob." Throwing my bag into the back of the jeep, I climbed in beside him. Mike gunned the engine and we headed toward the Bavarian hills.

Passing through the city with the shells of buildings along the way revived what I had forgotten while in Paris. Every time there was a breeze, the dust from the ruins would sweep into your face.

As we passed one large, sprawling building I noticed a red-and-white striped guardhouse in front with white-helmeted MPs checking papers of people on a long line. Mike glanced at the building and commented, "There's the courthouse where they'll have the trial. Right now there's a guy sitting in a cell who owns the plant where we're printing the Stripes. He put out some Nazi rag and was the chief Nazi in Bavaria.

"Anyway, we've got a pretty good set-up in Altdorf. We've taken over about six houses for editorial, printing, administration, motor pool and living quarters. I'll drop you off at the place where you're going to stay. It's called the Eisenhower House and they have their own dining room. There's a gal who runs it named Katie. She grew up in the States and when the war broke out, her folks took her back here."

As we drove into Altdorf we passed through an old stone arch and streets that apparently had escaped any war damage. "Here we are," said Mike as we pulled into a graveled driveway of a white, three-story house with black open shutters and a half-timber style.

Mike honked the horn and within seconds a blond, teenage boy wearing short leather pants came out of the front door and ran down the steps toward us. Taking my bags from the back seat, Mike handed it to the youngster. Again gunning the engine, he waved good-bye and sped away as I yelled out, "Thanks, Mike."

"I'm Eric," said the teenager as he put the bag onto his shoulder. "I'll show you your room, sir." As we walked into the house I saw that we were in the dining area with only two uniformed men sitting at a table.

A waitress wearing a black gathered skirt, embroidered with floral design, and a white bodice entered the room. As she headed to the two men seated at a table she looked at me and said, "Hello, you must be Mr. Wiemann. We've been expecting you. You can have lunch whenever you're ready. I'm Katie."

"Thanks, Katie," I answered. "See you soon."

Eric led the way up the stairs to a second story room near the stairs. As he put the bag down I noticed there was a single bed next to a window, a small chest of drawers and a desk. A bath towel and face cloth hung from a rack next to a small sink. Pointing down the hall, Eric said, "The bath is just two doors down." I gave him two marks in our occupation script, thanked him and he left.

After washing and changing my clothes, I headed for the dining room and found a table overlooking the hilly scenery. Katie had just finished serving the two men at a nearby table and came over to me. She was an attractive lady, probably in her late twenties.

"Today we have a German dish of beef cooked with onions and tied with string. With that we have noodles and string beans. For dessert we have apple strudel with coffee or tea."

That French bread and cheese from Paris were consumed long ago somewhere between Paris and Altdorf. "Katie," I said, "I'll take three of everything." She laughed, walked back to the kitchen and a few minutes later I enjoyed a type of dish unknown in Monsieur Henri's kitchen.

After the meal I introduced myself to a group of civilians who had begun their meals a little later. They said that they were copyreaders and pointed to a single-story cement building visible from the dining room, as the sight of the newsroom. "We begin at about eight in the morning," added one of the group. I thanked them, decided to go back to my room, unpack and rest up before reporting the next day.

Following a hurried breakfast and knowing that my job would be to get the news stories ready for editing, at seven a.m. I walked to the newsroom and found a man sitting at a table reading what probably had come over the wires during the night. I recognized a horseshoe-shaped table near him as where the copyreaders, sometimes called rim rats, sit at the edge. Within the so-called horseshoe and facing the copyreaders is the slotman who doles out the stories selected by the managing editor. After the copyreaders review the stories for accuracy in content and writing, they prepare the "heads" over the items to describe them briefly. Upon approval by the slotman, the items then are sent to the printers.

As I entered the room and approached the man at the table, I said, "Hi, I'm Bob from the Paris office."

He looked up, said, "Hi, I'm Ken, Managing Editor. Welcome aboard. I guess you know what to do." He showed me a pile of teletypes that had come in overnight. "Bob, just sort them out for me and if I find something for rewrite, I'll give it to you."

In about an hour the copyreaders and the slotman came in and took their places at the horseshoe-shaped table. As the morning wore on, an item was held up by the slotman. "Hey guys, look at this. It's an A.P. about Hitler being impotent. How's this for a head? 'Fuehrer No Furor in Bedroom.'" A few snickers followed and their heads bent over their stories, the rim rats returned to their work. By midafternoon Ken turned to me and said, "Bob, you can take off. See you in the morning."

One day I noticed children playing near our house and occasionally some of the paper's staffers would throw them chewing gum or a couple of chocolate bars,

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## GERMANY (Continued from Page 24)

a luxury at that time. In my high-school German class we read a children's story entitled "Emil and the Detectives." It concerned a German boy about ten years old being sent to visit his grandmother in Berlin. His mother pins a present of money in the form of bills to the inside of his jacket for a safe delivery to the grandmother. As Emil is on a streetcar in Berlin en route to the grandmother, a pickpocket manages to steal the money from Emil. However, Emil senses the thief taking the bills, and follows him as he jumps off the streetcar. In a short time Emil has a huge crowd of children helping him to track down the pickpocket, who finally is arrested by the police.

During the Hitler era the author of this and other children's stories did not join the Nazi Party and so his work was never published. Thinking that our neighborhood children would enjoy this and similar stories, one afternoon after work I gathered about six of them, brought candy, chewing gum and a copy of "Emil and the Detectives." We couldn't finish reading the book in one day and so we read in installments, having a kind of party not only with this book, but with others.

One day as the children and I were sitting outside the Eisenhower House, a man in civilian clothes who appeared to be about forty years old, strolled by. He had a small camera on a leather strap hanging around his neck.

"Hello," he called out. The children and I smiled and waved. Suddenly he put the camera to his eye, focused and started photographing us. "How about the children and I having a race?" I suggested to him. "Fine," he replied. In the next moment the children with me leading them were racing toward him as he rapidly clicked off his shots.

The next afternoon as I was reading another story to them, he stopped by. "Here are your pictures," he said, handing us about a half-dozen glossy black-and-white shots. I pulled out one of me racing with the children right behind me.

"This is my favorite of the kids," I said.

"And this," he replied, pointing to me in the picture, "is the biggest kid of all."

The following morning when I began working with Ken I showed him the shots. "Yeah," he's good," Ken said. "He works for us. When he was in the German army he worked for a magazine called Signal. His name is Hanns Hubmann."

One day a telegram arrived from my mother with the news that my father was extremely ill asking if it would be possible that I could get a leave. My commanding officer said, "I can cut you orders to take a train to Bremerhaven and a return train trip, but I can't give you orders for passage on a troop ship to the States. If you want to go to the port, you can."

In the morning the next day I was on a train bound for Bremerhaven. On arrival at the port, I discovered a troop ship scheduled to leave shortly for New York. A lieutenant was standing at a gangplank. As the GIs carrying their duffel bags marched past him, they gave him their names and serial number. He checked them off by calling out "Okay" and they continued climbing up to the deck.

When I saw a break in the line, I hoisted my bag to my shoulder, went up to him and showed him my orders for rail passage. "Soldier," he said, "these orders are not for the ship."

I put my bag down, showed him the telegram and explained the problem. As I talked to him I noticed that he wore a combat infantry badge, the same kind that I wore on my uniform.

He squinted at me for a moment, looked at my badge, then at his clipboard. Then he muttered in a low voice, "All right, soldier, go ahead, but make yourself scarce. Don't talk to anybody."

"Yes, sir," I replied, lifted my bag to my shoulder and climbed to the deck. To this day I believe that the only reason that the lieutenant let me board was because of the badge. It was almost the emblem of a military fraternity. Although the combat infantryman was referred to by some as an "expendable dogface," we who wore that badge felt a bond with one another.

My father, twenty years my mother's senior, passed away shortly after my return. I was glad to spend time with my mother as she was quite tired from helping him during his illness. All kind of paperwork regarding my dad's estate had to be done and in the back of my mind I thought of that lieutenant with his clipboard who made it possible for me to be there.

Toward the end of my leave a few school buddies who had been discharged from the Army called and we enjoyed a reunion. One of the fellows suggested seeing a new Italian film premiering in New York. Its name was Open City and was at that time unique as all the actors were nonprofessionals, creating an atmosphere of realism. Its story was of Rome under the German occupation. The producer was a GI who happened to be stationed in Rome when a director named Roberto Rossellini proposed making the picture. Promotional literature at the theatre described how the GI carried the film following its completion in his duffel bag aboard a troop transport to New York.

Certainly, I thought, this would be a likely feature for the Sunday magazine of the Stripes. The promotional material given at the theatre gave information as to the name and office address of the man, now a civilian, who introduced the film in the States. I called him, identified myself as a Stripper, and asked for an interview. In a few days I had the interview with details as to how he had met the director, how the story had evolved and several eight-by-ten glossies for illustration.

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## GERMANY (Continued from Page 25)

My leave time was to expire shortly and I had to find a way to return to Altdorf. I reported to the Army's military transport service at the Brooklyn Navy Yard and explained my problem to the officer in charge, again producing my mother's telegram and my railway travel orders.

"Soldier," he said, "I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll give you orders for passage on a ship leaving tomorrow, but you'll have to pay for your food. That's ten dollars a day or a hundred dollars for the trip."

"Yes, sir," I replied, laying out ten ten-dollar bills. He called a sergeant, gave him the money and told him to cut my orders for passage.

On the morning I returned to the newsroom Ken greeted me with, "Bob, while you were gone something came up. Circulation has dropped because of troop redeployment and the Army has cut our budget. We've lost a few slots, including yours. I'm afraid you've got only thirty days to look for another job."

One consolation was that Ken liked my Open City story and I found it in our Sunday features section with my first byline. Another joyous moment was on that same day when I received a call from the office of our commanding officer that I was eligible now for discharge.

Ken gave me the day off to sign the necessary papers at our area headquarters. In twenty-four hours I was wearing a white shirt and a dark blue suit for the first time in years.

A friend who had been dropped from the payroll earlier told me that the United States Government Printing Office was hiring editorial personnel to prepare the record of the Nuremberg Trial in book form.

I applied for work, was approved and after saying good-bye to Ken and various friends in Altdorf, I moved to Stein, a suburb of Nuremberg. My room was in Stein Castle, built in 1850 by Baron Lothar Faber, patriarch of the Faber pencil family.

Editorial offices in the Nuremberg Courthouse employed approximately ten employees. Across the hall was a German group charged with producing the record in German and headed by Dr. Sigismund von Braun. In the final days of the war Dr. Von Braun was a diplomat in the German Embassy within the Vatican. When the war ended the Americans extradited him from Rome to Germany, but permitted his family to remain in their Vatican apartment.

Over the Christmas holidays in 1947 several friends in the editorial offices and I signed up for a Mediterranean cruise on the Sobieski, a Polish liner. Our itinerary included leaving Genoa for an overnight stay in Cannes, then across the Mediterranean to Tunis, Tripoli and Naples. From Naples we were to travel by train to Rome for two days of sightseeing before returning to Nuremberg.

Our exploration of the North African coast was uneventful with the exception of a time when I attempted to photograph an Arab mother sitting at the entrance to a cave with her two children. As I was focusing my camera on her smiling face, I heard a yell behind me. Turning around, I saw someone I assumed was her husband charging at me with a club. Luckily, I could run faster than he.

Coincidentally, Dr. Von Braun was allowed by the American Military Government to visit his family in the Vatican over these holiday. When he learned that we expected to be in Rome also, he invited us to meet him there. Fortunately, we arrived in Rome while he was there and we met his wife and two children at their apartment.

"Would you like to meet the Pope?" he asked. "I know that at about this time he takes his daily walk in the garden." Of course we wanted to meet the Pope and we headed along the paths in the lush gardens. All of a sudden a small man in civilian clothes stepped from behind a tree and stood in front of us.

"Where are you going?" he asked Dr. von Braun.

"Well, I was a diplomat here," replied Dr. von Braun, "and met the Pope several times. I'd like to introduce my friends to him."

"The Pope is rather tired and is not seeing any visitors at the moment. You will have to turn around."

All of us promptly made an about-face and headed back to the apartment. Shortly after we had returned to the apartment and I took a few family snapshots, we thanked Dr. and Mrs. von Braun for their hospitality and headed for the door. Just as we reached it, there was a knock.

As Dr. von Braun opened the door, we saw a tall gentleman in a black suit, white shirt and black tie standing there. He wore rimless glasses and was in the process of removing a black fedora.

"Dr. von Braun," I presume. I'm Nigel Wilson."

For a moment the Doctor appeared puzzled. Then he smiled and answered, "Oh, yes. I remember you. Please come in."

"I didn't know whether you would remember me. I was with the English Embassy here in the Vatican."

"Why, certainly," replied the Doctor. "We were not allowed to speak to one another. You were under surveillance by the British secret service and behind me was the Gestapo. Come in and have a seat."

"I just wanted to stop by when I heard that you would be here. I'm no longer with the British Embassy. I'm studying for the priesthood."

My friends and I started again to leave, said our good-byes once more and headed out to the Vatican gardens and to our hotel. It was nearly thirteen years later that I noticed a story in our paper at home that President John F. Kennedy had invited a Dr. Wernher

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**GERMANY** (Continued from Page 26)

von Braun, Hitler's former rocket scientist, to the White House to discuss the possible moon explorations. I learned then that the two von Brauns were brothers. I forwarded my snapshots of that day in the Vatican apartment to Dr. Wernher von Braun. He answered with a friendly letter, thanking me for the pictures, adding that he was sending them to his brother, who was now Chief of Protocol for the West German Government in Bonn.

Just as a casual reflection, this was the first time that someone who had aimed bombs at me in London sent me a friendly letter.

Within a week all of us were at work again in Nuremberg. One peak in working for the United States government was the liberal leave time. Every so often a three-or four-day weekend gave us an escape from Nuremberg's bleak ruins into the countryside.

It was on one of these mini-vacations that I packed a small overnight bag and headed toward the nearby Autobahn or highway. As I walked along the roadside and saw an Army vehicle heading my way I'd raise my thumb, hoping for a ride.

All of a sudden a GI in a two-and-a-half-ton Army truck pulled onto the side for me. As I climbed in he said, "Buddy, I'm only going as far as Ingolstadt." "Thanks," I answered, not really knowing or caring where that was. "I just want to get out of the city."

After about an hour of driving the sun was beginning to set and we pulled off the road at a signpost pointing to Ingolstadt. "Thanks a lot," I said as I jumped onto the road. He waved and I started to walk in the direction of a town I could see in the distance.

Only a few minutes passed when I saw a tall figure of a man coming from the opposite direction. By now it was almost dark and Americans had to be wary of strangers in isolated areas. As we were only a few yards from each other I asked in German if there was a hotel nearby.

"Oh yes," he answered in German. "It's only about half a mile ahead on your right."

Thanking him, I began walking, but he continued speaking. "Wait a minute. You have an accent. Where are you from?"

"Braunsberg in East Prussia," I replied, giving my father's birthplace.

In the near darkness I could see surprise in his face. "That's where I'm from," he gasped. I smiled and started to walk away.

He grabbed my hand, shook it excitedly and said, "I guess you could call us 'brothers in suffering.'"

I nodded, pulled my hand away and headed down the road again.

Finally, I saw the hotel on the right. A room was available and as I was too tired for a supper, I went into the room, closed the door, undressed, crawled into bed and slept.

Noises of people talking, opening and closing doors woke me. Blackout curtains from the war years still hung over the windows so that you couldn't tell whether it was dark or light outside. Pulling back the curtains, I blinked as bright sunlight flooded the room. I used the sink opposite my bed to get rid of the previous day's grime, put on a clean shirt, packed my bag and headed for the check-out desk. After paying my bill I noticed a small restaurant just off the hotel lobby. The scrambled eggs and toast were fine, but the coffee was what the Germans called "ersatz" or substitute because real coffee was scarce after the war.

Anyway, on my way out of the restaurant I noticed a bulletin board in the lobby. What caught my eye on the board was a notice: Hollywood movie company on location at the train station. Will film a scene at ten-thirty this morning."

My watch showed ten o'clock. After getting directions to the train station from the desk clerk, I found a streetcar just outside the hotel that passed the station. I jumped on board, found a seat as the conductor came down the aisle calling out, "Tickets. Tickets, please." In those days Americans didn't have to pay fares on streetcars or trains and when the conductor came to my seat, I handed him my American identification. As I looked up at him I noticed that this was the man in uniform the evening before who called me his "brother in suffering." It was only a moment that our eyes met, but I could see his brow wrinkle in a slight frown. Then as he turned away he continued down the aisle, calling, "Tickets. Tickets, please."

Ten minutes passed and again I heard the conductor's voice. This time he called, "Railroad station. Railroad station." As soon as we stopped I picked up my bag and hopped onto the street. About a block ahead of me in front of the station I saw a group of people clustered around several lights on poles over their heads. In the center were two men at a large camera. A woman in uniform ran toward the camera, suddenly stopped, and excitedly looked to the left and right. One of the men alongside the camera yelled, "Cut," the woman relaxed, walked to a small canvas chair and sat down.

I recognized the woman as the American actress Aline MacMahon who had played supporting roles in many films. Walking over to her, I introduced myself and told her how much I had enjoyed her work. She thanked me and in a few minutes when director, Fred Zinneman, came to her, she introduced me to him. I mentioned my interest in films and he asked, "Do you want to come with me? I'm going to set up the next shot."

As soon as I said, "That would be great, thanks," we headed to a bridge overlooking railroad tracks. He put his viewer to his eye and in a few minutes he and his

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## GERMANY

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cameraman began to set up the camera for the next scene. As soon as they were ready, I thanked him. Then I said good-bye to Ms. MacMahon and hitchhiked my way back to Nuremberg.

Within a year the film titled "The Search" was released in the States. It was a story of a Czech boy about nine years old, separated from his mother through the war. Ms. MacMahon played a United Nations relief worker who finally reunited them. After "The Search" Mr. Zinneman, a relatively unknown director, achieved high respect in the film industry for his work in many pictures including "High Noon" and "From Here to Eternity," which captured eight Oscars.

In the spring of 1948 our work in producing a record of the Nuremberg Trial ended. Beginning in November 1946 and ending in October 1947, the record comprised 42 volumes of testimony and evidentiary exhibits. Just as an aside, each of us worked in the editorial offices was awarded a complete set of the record.

In May 1948 I packed my duffel bag for the last time and headed for Bremerhaven. This time I had travel orders for ocean passage. Six years after I returned to the States I met Eadie Gagl. We married and had two sons, Bob and Roy, who, respectively, married Mary Mulrean and Rose Carrano. And, finally, from their unions came three special people: Tess and Sarah Mulrean Wiemann and Raphael Carrano Wiemann. I wonder if Eadie and I will be able to attend their weddings.

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## Famous Ivan and Joe Photo . . . Proud Daughter

**Nancy Scully Lorenzen**

12190 Anchor Lane S.W.

Moore Haven, Florida 33471

I am the proud daughter of a courageous 69er who passed away in 1990. I read with interest the article in the January to April 2004 issue of the Bulletin about the planned commemoration of the meeting at Torgau, Germany of the 69th Infantry Division with the Russian forces.

I have enclosed a copy of an often used photo of the US GIs meeting the Russians at the Elbe originally published by Time-Life. I can identify two of the men in the photo.

Third from left, wearing the mesh-covered helmet and his characteristic wide smile, is my father's closest buddy, **Charles Potent** from Trenton, New Jersey. Fourth from left, in the helmet with the distinct 69th insignia, is my father, **T/Sgt Edward G. Scully** from Monaca, Pennsylvania. Both men were in 769th Ordnance Co. (LM). My father's specialty was small arms and weapons mechanic.

When I was studying WWII in high school (in the '60s) and began asking my father questions about his role, he told me about his Company's travels from New York City by ship to La Rochelle, France, then by foot and truck thru the "Bulge," and finally to the Elbe River where they met the Russians.

Neither spoke the other's language, but arms were a common language to all soldiers. They spent considerable time taking apart each other's weapons and "discussing"

in sign language their complaints about the short-falls in the field of their various arms.

That evening the US GIs were invited to be the guests of the Russians for some celebrating. They sat at long tables topped by large tumblers filled with clear liquid, which a very thirsty Chuck Potent gulped down, mistaking it for water. This delighted the Russian hosts and his glass was immediately and joyously refilled with the vodka! Although my father poured several glasses of vodka into a potted plant, he and Chuck both had painfully large heads the next day! Over the ensuing decades he often mentioned the Russians' amazing capacity for vodka!



## Co. A, 269th Engineers

Submitted By: **Orlando DePascale, Sr.**

368 South Main Street, Wharton, New Jersey 07885

When the 69th met the Russians at the Elbe River, three of us went by jeep. Our lieutenant, jeep driver **Schoonover**, he was from either Newton, New Jersey or Hackettstown, New Jersey, and myself, the lieutenant's choice. We drove all night seeing many thousands of German soldiers marching 4 to 6 wide for hours, all night long. When the three of us arrived, the Russians were shooting all over the place, it was a happy sight.

Why we were sent up the Elbe River, I was never told - only the lieutenant knew.



General Reinhart pinned a Medal on (I can't remember his name), Shuman, Schuler? He was from West Orange or East Orange, New Jersey. He killed a German soldier in hand to hand combat with his bayonet. At Wissenfel, Germany.



Drinking German beer in Germany somewhere. Do not remember his name on left, (me), Orlando, on right.



On left, my best friend (Red) Mehegan and (me), Orlando on right. Red had his leg shot off taking infantry across river in Wissenfel, Germany early in 1945. He came from New York State and worked at Nestles Candy Company.

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# The Last Encampment

Submitted By: **Lynn D. Farrar**

*Battery C, 881st Field Artillery*

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Bothell, Washington 98011-3602

The other day I ran across the enclosed article on The Last Encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic. While I don't want to be a crepe hanger, I have to realize that many of us are "getting up there" in age and so might be interested in what our predecessors did many long years ago. Every issue of the Bulletin carries the sad news of those who have left us. And I just learned from an old Battery pal that 3 more members of Battery C, 881st F.A. Battalion have passed away recently. Hopefully, others will find this as interesting as I did.

I enjoy reading through the Bulletin, especially where towns and cities where we went through are mentioned. I have the German equivalent of our AAA atlas which shows every little Dorf (town) that we passed through or around. I have sent copies of the map pages to several old comrades.

\* \* \* \* \*

## THE LAST ENCAMPMENT

*By David E. Schenkman*

*Medals, badges and ribbons are collectable remembrances of reunions of Union veterans.*

The Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) was founded in 1866 by B. F. Stephensen when he established a post in Decatur, Illinois. The first encampment of the Department of Illinois was attended by veterans from the surrounding states. Shortly thereafter, posts were formed throughout the country, and the first National Encampment was held that same year in Indianapolis, Indiana, with Stephensen serving as its commander.

In 1869 the GAR's national headquarters was relocated to Washington, D.C., by General Logan, who had been elected commander-in-chief of the organization. The GAR experienced hard times during that period, and many departments closed their doors. By the late 1870s, however, there was a tremendous surge in growth. In 1890 membership peaked, with nearly half a million members.

During its many years in existence, the GAR was a very influential organization. Five elected U.S. presidents were members, as were the governors of most northern states. As a result of their efforts, during one period more than 20 percent of our country's national budget was devoted to veterans' pensions.

For active GAR members, the highlight of each year was the National Encampment. During the early 1890s, more than 25,000 veterans attended the events. Numerous numismatically related souvenirs were available for purchase as mementos, including ribbons, badges, medals and pinbacks. And, of course,

there were the official badges, the first of which was issued in 1883 for the encampment in Denver, Colorado. This badge was made from silver that was donated by a local resident. Badges were not offered the following year, but the practice was resumed in 1885 and continued thereafter.

Naturally, during the years when attendance at National Encampments was high, the quantity of unofficial souvenirs also was high. My own collection is restricted to the four encampments held in Washington, D.C., the first of which took place in 1892. From this encampment, I have about 30 medals and badges, as well as 20 ribbons. For the most part, these items are not very expensive; the difficult part of collecting is locating them, not paying for them.

My collection from the 1902 encampment is somewhat smaller, consisting of 19 medals and badges plus 11 ribbons. The third encampment was held in 1915, and I have only six medals and badges plus three ribbons from this event. And, for the fourth and final encampment in the nation's capital, which was held in 1936, my collection consists of merely five items. By that time, the war had been over for more than 70 years, and attendance had greatly diminished for good reason; few veterans still were alive.

The Grand Army of the Republic convened for its 83rd and final national encampment on August 29th, 1949. The location was Indianapolis, site of the first encampment. Only six veterans were in attendance.

The official badge from the 1949 encampment consists of three brass sections, with a yellow ribbon suspended behind them. The top piece include a pin and is shaped like an eagle with wings spread; below are two crossed cannons. The center piece depicts a monument and is inscribed, in five lines: FIRST ENCAMPMENT / NOV 20 1866 / INDIANAPOLIS / FINAL ENCAMPMENT / AUG 28 1949. Attached to that is a round medal with a bust at the center. Above are the words COMMANDER IN CHIEF; below is THEODORE A. PENLAND. The badge was manufactured by Metal Arts Company of Rochester, New York; the firms name is found on the back of the medal.

You might assume that since there were only six veterans at the 1949 encampment, that a correspondingly small number of badges would have been made. While it is true that the badge is quite scarce, I would guess that the mintage was at least in the hundreds. It is my understanding that the badge was distributed to all those in attendance, including the many guests.

Collectors should be forewarned that assembling a complete set of the official National Encampment badges is a formidable undertaking. Badges from the first three years, as well as those from the late 1930s and 1940s, are very difficult to obtain.

# Personal History of WWII

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Prior to the beginning of WWII, I was employed as a Colorist at the Pontiac R.I. Finishing Plant for cotton cloth made under the Fruit of the Loom label. The work was clerical in nature and highly specialized, and paid very well. While attending high school I had run a modestly successful trap line and was an avid hunter and outdoorsman. I was a pretty good shot with both rifle and shotgun. I was also active with the Boy Scouts having been a member since I was a 12. By early 1940, my friends and I were convinced that the U.S. would eventually enter the war. My best friend joined the National Guard. I considered joining but never did. Shortly thereafter the National Guard was called to active service.

On Sunday December 7th, our family had returned from church and Dad had turned on the radio when the news came. The Japs had attacked Pearl Harbor and the damage to our fleet was tremendous. I wanted to enlist immediately but I was under age, and my parents would not sign for me, counseling that I should wait for the draft. By late summer of 1942, having passed my 21st Birthday, I decided to enlist. I quit my job, and gave myself a month's vacation. On November 2nd, 1942, I took the bus to Providence and walked into the Army Recruiting Office. About 6 hours later I walked out, a private in the United States Army.

Two days later I found myself in Fort Devens, Massachusetts. For another two days I shuffled along in long lines of thoroughly confused people like myself. We got an overall physical exam, then came eye exam, dental exams, reflex and coordination exams; finally we were stripped naked for the umpteenth time and given shots against every disease known to mankind. In the last line we had an entire wardrobe of clothes thrown at us. Amazingly enough they were pretty good fits. From the care that went into fitting our shoes, we should have known we were destined for the Infantry. The one bright spot in our existence was chow time. The food, although sometimes a bit foreign to us, was good, hot and plentiful. We were assigned to a barracks and a cot. The mattress was O.K. but we spent very little time on it. It was here that I learned my first lesson. Keep a close watch over your property! My brand new field jacket was stolen before I even had a chance to try it on. It took me two hours before I had the opportunity to steal one from someone else.

It rained during most of my stay at Devens. Nearly everyone came down with a cold. Coughing, sneezing and snuffling, we shuffled the numbing routine. Finally came the big day, I should say the night: At around 3:00 a.m. the barracks lights came on, everyone up and get dressed. Dress was to be fatigues, except for overcoats which were to be worn, everything else went into the Barracks Bag. Once outside we lined up for a trip to the mess hall. There we waited at least a half

hour before being admitted. After breakfast, we went back to the barrack, collected our bags and fell in for Roll Call. We then climbed into waiting trucks for the short ride to the Railway Station. There we milled around for a while. After another headcount we boarded a long line of day coaches, some of which appeared to be of WWI vintage. On board, a minor miracle took place: Everyone was able to find a seat.

On board we received the usual number of Don'ts: The only one I remember was the prohibition against raising the curtains over the windows. How many days we were on that train I do not remember but it was for more than two nights. En route we spent long waits on sidings while other trains roared past. Some men who claimed to have recognized some station or other swore that we passed through the same station twice. Even I couldn't swallow that one. We did disembark at certain points where we were fed. It felt good to walk around a bit after sleeping all night in our seats fully dressed. Other than that, life was pretty dull and miserable. Our colds grew progressively worse; a few people were even taken off the train for hospitalization. A few card games started up but there was little money around and no one trusted anyone else anyway. We spent most of our time dozing or endlessly speculating as to our destination. All bad as well as good things eventually come to an end. We arrived at our destination, Camp Breckenridge, Kentucky.

At that time Camp Breckenridge was one glorious big mud hole. Many of the buildings were still under construction. Troops were being moved into barracks where the paint was not yet fully dry. The roads and streets were paved, but the grounds around the Barracks, Mess Hall and other buildings were a sea of mud. The other part of the Camp was occupied by another Division which had apparently arrived much earlier and there, conditions were much better. For a while we even had to use their PX. I give credit to the construction crews, they worked like beavers, and it was not long before conditions became significantly improved: Except, of course, for that sticky yellow clay mud and that miserable rain.

I found myself assigned to an Anti-Tank Company (forgot which Regiment) of the 98th Infantry Division. Our Basic Training would begin immediately. Our Instructors were a Cadre composed of a normal complement of Company Grade Officers (second Lieutenants) and 1st. Three Grade Non Coms. The concept was to fill the TOE later, by promoting selected trainees to the lower non-commissioned grades after the completion of basic training.

The Lieutenant Platoon Leaders were an assortment of graduates from VMI, ROTC and Ft. Benning. The only thing they had in common was a college degree. As a group they were the first three graders; who were all regular Army people with four to 12 years of service. They were the only ones who appeared to know what they were doing.

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I would like to add an interesting note here about my status as the only non-draftee in the Company. At this time, to mollify the old Regular Army personnel who complained about the rapid promotions being given to relative newcomers while in pre-war days it was not uncommon for a man to be in his third enlistment before making Corporal. A ruling was made that at war's end, all R.A.s would retain their rank permanently. Draftees who might elect to remain in service at war's end would be reduced to some grade less than that held during the war. In effect two Armies were created: The United States Army (R.A.s) and the Army of the United States (draftees). R.A.s being more senior than draftees also had another small perk. They stood first in the pay line according to rank and time in grade, followed by the Draftees also in order of rank and time in grade. The only recognizable distinction between R.A.s and Draftees were their serial numbers. Having enlisted, I had received a serial number coded with a 1, which classified me as Regular Army. Draftees were identified by the number 3. On our first pay day, there was a bit of consternation amongst my peers: Although a lowly private, still in Basic, I was placed somewhere around 15th in the pay line. This situation did not enhance my popularity. This state of affairs continued for another year or so until Congress corrected the problem.

Our basic training went pretty much according to the book, with the exception of our weapons and equipment. Only about half of the Company was issued an M-1 rifle, the rest of us were issued Springfield 03's, and there were even a couple of Lee-Enfields. We still wore WWI vintage canvas leggings and ordinary work shoes (called GIs) and we wore our overseas caps every day. Later we were issued Helmet Liners, which became the hat of the day. Instead of the standard 57mm Anti-Tank Gun we were equipped with its puny 37mm predecessor. Our Communication Equipment, (my forte) were old SCR 211 Cavalry Transceivers, designed to be carried and operated by a mounted trooper at full gallop. It somewhat resembled a medieval lance. Communication with our next higher echelon was by Morse Code via an SCR 245 Radio Set, which was composed of a 150 Watt Transmitter, a set of Tuning Coils and a Multi-Band Receiver. The entire unit was mounted in and occupied a cabinet the entire width of half ton Command Car, whose motor had to be kept running whenever the transmitter was in even moderate use, otherwise the truck battery went dead. We did have a few 50 Cal and I think a 30 Cal machine gun. Ammunition of all calibers was rationed, even the 37s were firing 30 Cal sub caliber ammo. We did a lot of dry firing before getting to spend our two days on the rifle range.

Some time, well after completing our basic training, we turned in our canvas leggings and received Combat Boots. We also got the steel part of our helmets, back packs, shelter halves, entrenching tools and a gas mask. About that time we also received new 57mm

guns with 3/4 ton trucks to tow them. Everyone got a brand new cosmoline coated M-1. It had to be soaked in gasoline to get the grease off. The officers received Carbines, and a few even received the cherished 45. Cal. pistol. We were beginning to look like soldiers.

Somewhere in that myriad of tests which we had been subjected to at Ft. Devens was one containing Dots and Dashes of Morse Code. This test identifies those supposedly having a special knack for converting them into intelligible language. I had passed that test so was destined to become one of the Company's two radio operators. I have forgotten the other operator's name. His last name was Ford. Immediately after completing Basic, he and I were sent to a Signal Corp School at Division Headquarters. Later, we would attend a more advanced school at Ft. Benning, Georgia.

Weighing only 140 lbs. and of slight build, I had no business on a football team. It has already been established that I had a tendency toward recklessness, so it was no surprise that I joined the team. I will skip the details but in an attempt to intercept a forward pass, I got creamed. I spent nearly 3 months in the base hospital with broken ribs and a ruptured kidney. At one point I understand I was near death. This got my parents pretty upset as you can imagine. Eventually I got better and after a 2 week furlough I went back to full duty status.

As soon as I returned from the hospital, Ford was promoted to T-4 and went off to Ft. Benning. By the time he returned we were in Tennessee on maneuvers. Not having much to do, I rode around from one place to another in the Radio Car dodging KP and Guard Duty. On one of these excursions, my driver and I did manage to make the acquaintance of a bootlegger: With a modest investment we went into business and made a little side money for ourselves. We even had a Major from Regimental Hq. as a regular customer.

After the maneuvers, the Division marched leapfrog fashion all the way to Camp Rucker Alabama: (we walked one day and rode on the next). Our new home was known as the cockroach capitol of the world. It was so bad that we were actually moved into tents for a week while the barracks were fumigated. The woods were also full of chiggers and ticks, not to mention an occasional rattlesnake. We really suffered while on Bivouac. All in all Camp Rucker was the "Pits."

As someone at Division Hq. had a thing about water discipline; we were limited to one canteen of water per day while in the field, which was most of the time. My driver and I soon located a small farmer who had a field full of watermelon and a need for cash. We were in business again. Unfortunately, watermelon rinds are pretty hard to hide, so the Brass soon got wise: On the advice of one of our best customers, our Platoon Leader; we quickly closed up shop. Right after Christmas, our CO gave me my Christmas present: The long awaited T-5 stripes, along with orders to report to Radio School in Ft. Benning. That was the last I ever saw of the 98th Division.

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At Ft. Benning, there was no fooling around. If a student could not keep up with the class, it was out the door. We were quartered in one of the old Quadrangles. The food was excellent and there were no duties. We got up, made up our bunks and fell out for Reveille and Roll Call, then marched off to class. At the end of the day the order was reversed. After Roll Call and Retreat Parade, we were free until the following morning. Many of the people in my barracks were Paratroopers and I became quite friendly with a few of them. They could be a pretty wild bunch over the weekend but during school days you couldn't find a more dedicated group anywhere. They also tried their best to convince me that I should join them. I even got a tour of their jump school on the other side of the base.

Besides having to achieve a certain level of proficiency in Morse Code and traffic handling procedures, we received training in Telephone line laying and Switchboard operation as well as Message Center and Crypto operation. By graduation we were thoroughly familiar with and had received hands-on experience with every communications medium in use from Division down to Company level.

Out of about 100 students who completed the course, I graduated close to the top of my class. While I was at school, the 98th Division went overseas. Rather than go through a Replacement Depot I tried to join the Paratroopers, but because I was only there on temporary duty the school had no authority to transfer me. By pulling a few strings in the RA network (it still existed) combined with my high grades in the Operators Course, I was enrolled in an advanced Course in Electronic Maintenance and Repair. This would give me three more months of training. This Course was strictly technical in nature: Covering repair and maintenance of electronic equipment. Although I received passing grades throughout, I graduated in the lower middle of the class. After a weekend Graduation Binge in Phenix City, Alabama with some of my Paratrooper friends, I received my train ticket and Orders to report to the 69th Infantry Division in Camp Shelby Mississippi. With two scarce MOS, (Military Occupational Specialty) Numbers, I would have it made, or so I thought. I did not yet know the Army.

Arriving at the Hattiesburg, Mississippi train depot I made the obligatory telephone call to Division Headquarters and a short while later, a jeep and driver picked me up. My soon to be deflated ego was flying high: Here I was one of the best trained communications people in the whole Army about to take on a very important assignment, maybe even with a promotion. I reported to the Division Personnel Office. A buck sergeant took my papers, glanced at them, and made a phone call. No Division level assignment for me. I was being sent to a Regiment. At Regimental Headquarters the routine repeated itself and off I went to Battalion. At Battalion Headquarters, a T-5 Cpl. took my papers and went into an adjoining room: A voice said, "Send

him down to L Company." The little T-5 said OK but it's a shame, this guy just finished 6 months training in Com. School: It sure seems a waste sending him to a Rifle Company. (Thank you **Corporal Groom**, I will never forget you as long as I live). After some more discussion, it was decided to keep me in Battalion Headquarters to fill an anticipated opening as a Radio Operator. I was told to report to **S/Sgt Hall** in the Radio Section. I was assigned as one of four CW Operators and would back up the Maintenance Tech. Headquarters Company of the 3rd Battalion, 273rd Regiment, 69th Infantry Division would be my home for the duration of the War.

It did not take me long to fit into the group. **Sgt. Hall** was pretty laid back and the guys were all easy to get along with. Acceptance by the Section was made easier, as **Sgt. Biller**, the Radio Maintenance Tech and I had met and become good friends at Ft. Benning some three months earlier. He was in the class which preceded mine; we had met by chance and hit it off well together. We remained lifelong friends and visited each other in Cumberland Md. until Jim's death sometime in the 80's. Little did we imagine when we said goodbye after his graduation, that a month later we would find ourselves in the same Company and Platoon. In fact we occupied adjoining bunks.

The 69th Division had just completed its final field training, and it was accepted fact that we would soon be going overseas. We were issued the latest in equipment. For communication with Regiment and upward, our old SCR 284 was replaced by the smaller lighter and generally better, SCR 694. For communications with the line companies we were issued the brand new FM model, SCR 300, a back pack model, which weighed 32 lbs. At the Company level they continued to use the old and not so reliable hand held SCR 536. All radio equipment except the SCR 694, were battery operated. In some cases the battery outweighed the instrument. Batteries were also notoriously short lived and it was considered wise to carry at least one spare.

After 3 short months and one last furlough home, we were ready to go. Twice we marched down to the Railroad Siding and marched back to our Huts an hour later. (At Camp Shelby we did not live in conventional barracks, but in tar paper shacks called Huts). The Huts had screened openings on all sides and doors but no glass windows. A Hut typically housed about 20 men. On the 3rd try, we were off for New Jersey. Two days later, after a final physical we were bussed to New York and the gang plank of the S.S. Santa Maria, a converted Liberty Ship. I wish to note that during his final physical, my friend **Jim Biller**, then nearly 39 years old was offered, even urged to take a transfer to a non combatant organization and remain Stateside. Jim adamantly refused to leave his outfit and remained with the Company until the end of the war.

I have little comment concerning the voyage. The ship was over-crowded. We were fed only two mediocre meals per day. Many were seasick, and the bunk area was foul with the mixed odors of cigarette smoke stale

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sweat and vomit. There were a few card and crap games: As few of us had any money and only suckers gave credit or loaned money, the stakes were very small. There was only one break in the monotony: One night, a Destroyer dropped a number of depth charges somewhere nearby. We were all relieved to hear that it was a false alarm.

England gave us a look at the war a bit closer at hand. Those people really suffered. Everything but the air was rationed. The fortitude exhibited by those people was unbelievable. I got to visit London a couple times. A couple of Buzz Bombs exploded in the city while I was there, but none were anywhere close to my location. I did become familiar with Air Raid Sirens and got to see a shelter first hand. I also got to visit the town of Winchester and its old castles. One proudly displaying what they claimed was King Arthur's Round Table. The weather was either bad or worse, consisting mainly of cold drizzling rain mixed occasionally with wet snow. Just before Christmas the Germans began their big push and breakthrough. During this time I had occasion to go to the hospital for a treatment of a minor ailment. Instead of receiving treatment, I and several others were drafted as stretcher bearers, taking the wounded from DC-3s to ambulances. Every other patient appeared to suffer from frostbite along with other wounds. For anyone who has never seen frozen gangrenous feet, one experience is good for a lifetime. From that day on I vowed to take care of my feet: Massaging them and a change of socks became a daily ritual.

In Belgium the casualties were running very high: Ten percent of our Division, selected by lot, received orders to report to Replacement Depots for immediate assignment to Combat Divisions. A short while later we were brought back up to strength with fresh replacements from Stateside. Unfortunately many of these men had been rushed through Replacement Depots with little or no Infantry training, they would have to learn the hard way. Right after Christmas our Division moved out. We were loaded onto an odd assortment of ships, arriving the next afternoon at Le Harve. Our ship was too large to dock so we disembarked the hard way, via cargo nets over the side, and a ride in an LCI. The tide being out, we even got to wade ashore in water up to our knees. At least no one was shooting at us.

The next 10 days consisted of a confused succession of truck rides, mostly at night: Followed by a day or two spent in a tent city, a couple of rides in a 40 and 8, an overnight stay in an empty French Chateau, and then another tent city. Here we were issued ammunition and encouraged to test and sight our weapons. Our targets were mainly wrecked and burnt out vehicles, of which there was no shortage. Finally, another truck ride: This time we could see flashes on the horizon and hear the grumble of distant artillery. It took us another day after that to regroup. When we were moved again it was at night, this time the blackout was strictly

adhered to. For the first time in quite a while we were traveling in our own vehicles driven by our own people. The grumbling up ahead was much louder and the flashes much brighter.

We stopped in an empty village for the night: Not a single building was intact. It was understood that we would be moving into the lines on the following day to relieve another Division, the 99th. A party of Officers from Regimental and Battalion Hq. was going up that day to assure a smooth transition. The Battalion Communications Officer, our Platoon Leader, was to go along to familiarize himself with the existing telephone network and other matters. Here I must backtrack a bit.

Back in Shelby, our Communications Officer, **Lt. Nagy**, was promoted to Captain and took over command of Cannon Company, just prior to our going overseas. His replacement was with us only a few weeks before we shipped out and although he seemed to be a pretty good guy, we never really got to know him. Regretfully I cannot even recall his name. Although always pleasant, he appeared to be somewhat detached: almost as though he was observing and evaluating us. Anyways, on that afternoon he brought Jim and I a copy of the SOI (signals operation instructions) and told us that we were to check out every fixed frequency radio in the Battalion. Each radio was to be tuned to a specifically assigned frequency and given a final operational test. We built a makeshift workbench in an abandoned house and covered the holes in the walls with pup tents and blankets. With a gas lantern for illumination we went to work.

We had a blow torch under the bench to help keep our feet warm. It was understood that even with two of us working and everything going well, it would be daybreak before we could finish. The last thing the Lieutenant told us was to stay in place until finished and then to take the jeep and rejoin the Company at the new C.P. This was the last we ever saw of our Boss. He was killed during a mortar attack a few hours after leaving us.

After a K-ration and a cup of hot coffee, (thanks to that blowtorch) and with only sketchy directions, Jim and I struck out in the jeep to find the new Battalion Command Post. The road was covered with a mixture of snow and mud, with deep ruts. I had to use 4 wheel drive, and low range for most of the way. Our directions were good and we had no trouble finding the CP. Along the way we saw our first body. He was a German. He lay on his back in some snow near a wrecked truck. He had appeared to have been burned and had only stumps for arms. We did not talk very much after that.

The C.P. was in a grove of pine trees just off the road. The troops that we relieved had apparently been in that area for some time as they were well dug in. They crawled out of their holes and we crawled in. The Radio Station was in a 8x10 hole in the ground with log sides and a log roof covered with some sort of metal sheet about an inch thick. The only heat was from a gas lantern. All six of us slept on a pile of pine branches

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covered with G.I. blankets. Two men were awake at all times. One man operated the SCR 694 Radio; the other man cranked the hand generator to power it. This Set connected the three Battalions with Regimental Hq. and a few other units. A smaller battery operated SCR 300, connected with the Rifle Companies, and a forward C.P. Other units were sometimes made part of the net as the situation might dictate.

The Battalion Commander wanted a radio with operator up at the forward C.P. Lucky me, I won the lottery. So off I went on foot with my radio, a spare battery, my field pack, containing three blankets, (dissatisfied with the two Issue G.I. Blankets, I had borrowed and conveniently forgot to return a British army blanket, while back in England) and other things, such as a days supply of K-rations, a carton of cigarettes, spare socks, underwear, toothbrush, etc. Externally I had a cartridge belt, canteen, first aid pack, bayonet and a trench knife which I carried in my left boot. I was clothed as follows: 2 pairs of wool socks, combat boots and goulashes. I wore a cotton T-shirt and shorts, under a set of long johns, next came a pair of woolen pants, covered by a set of baggy nylon snow pants. Above, I wore a woolen shirt, woolen sweater, field jacket and overcoat. On my head was a woolen knit cap, helmet liner and helmet. I also wore gloves under long mittens. With a load like that I could barely move. First to go was the gas mask and bayonet, then the overcoat and mittens followed by the goulashes, next went the shelter half and tent poles. Now down to about a hundred pounds I was ready to go to work. A message center jeep took me, my precious SCR 300 and some spare batteries to the forward C.P.

The forward C.P. was in a captured German bunker near the village of Udenbreth. The bunker had 6 foot reinforced concrete walls and roof and was covered with 6 feet or so of dirt. It was one of the countless number of similar structures, part of the famed German Siegfried Line. These bunkers were all located in a maze of dragon's teeth, tank traps and mine fields. Because they were originally built as defensive fortifications, all doors and openings faced toward Germany. Entrance was through steel doors 3 or 4 inches thick. The main problem with these things was the Germans knew to within a meter, exactly where every one of them was located. This assured that their artillery and mortar fire would be dead on the mark whenever they chose to honor us with their attention.

As soon as I reported in, I set up the radio. Because of poor reception inside of the bunker, the radio was left outside, with handset and earphone cords passing through an access hole in a steel door along with a number of telephone lines. Next I claimed a bunk and made up my bed. The interior of the bunker was cold and very damp. There no lights other than gasoline lanterns. The ventilating system did not work, so the interior was stuffy and pretty smelly. Within an hour of my arrival we were treated to an artillery barrage. Other than being somewhat unnerving to us green

troops, it did nothing but rearrange the landscape outside. After a day or two, unless it was particularly severe, we paid little or no attention to it.

Every morning around sun-up, in an apparent attempt to catch us at breakfast, the Germans would hit us with a few salvos from rockets, (screaming Meemis). Although we appeared to be under constant observation by the Germans, we were fortunately too far away for effective small arms fire. The Germans did occasionally fire mortars into our area, but only against vehicles or when we bunched up. Although the forward and rear Command Posts were relatively safe, the remainder of the Battalion did not fare as well: In less than a week, the Communications Platoon had lost its Communications Officer, and a wireman, was wounded: The I&R platoon lost one man and the Anti-Tank platoon lost five men including the Platoon Leader and two guns. I lost my radio set, to a stray artillery round, the 3rd day up. The Rifle Companies obviously fared much worse.

Every morning just before daybreak a Jeep would come up with hot breakfast in Thermos cans. Sometimes they brought an evening meal around dusk. Some days they did not come at all and we had to make do with a combination of K and C-rations. In making their deliveries, the cooks understandably, did not care to linger, and we too, were in a hurry to get back into the bunker: This haste on our part began to generate a problem. We apparently, were not adequately washing our mess kits as an epidemic of dysentery began to set in. There was no Latrine, so by an unspoken agreement we did what we had to do in the open, about 75 yards from the bunker entrance. It was an area where one walked with extreme care. Once one found a clear spot, he had to struggle with the several layers of clothing before getting down to basic. When finished he was faced with the reverse process. Normally one did not go out there until it became absolutely necessary; but when the cramps began to come, one had little choice. A number of people had close calls with incoming artillery while out there, including myself.

In my case I had just attained the squatting position when I heard the screaming moan of incoming Meemies. I threw my cartridge belt over my shoulder, grabbed all my lower garments into a bunch, pulling them as high as possible between my kness and crotch: Holding them with my right hand, and grabbing my rifle with my left, I began to run toward the bunker entrance. (It may sound comical now, but at that moment I was definitely not amused). In fact, I was scared silly and concentrating only on that distant doorway. I managed to hit the dirt just before the first salvo struck well behind me. Despite the rising pitch from the second salvo I scrambled to my feet and ran a few more yards before hitting the dirt again. This salvo also fell behind me but much closer. Again I took off, but this time I was in mid air when the salvo struck, on either side of me. My next scramble got me into the entrance of the bunker. Calming down I began to rearrange my clothes, when I noticed I was bleeding from the right

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wrist. It turned out to be a deep scratch: Whether from contact with trash during one of my mad dives, or from shrapnel I do not know. A Medic stopped the bleeding, and bandaged my wrist. He was afraid of infection from the foul ground so I went back to the Battalion Aid Station. There, they essentially repeated what the medic had done, cleaned and disinfected the area, put on a fresh bandage and told me to keep the wound clean. (There are comics even in the Medical Corps). No: I did not apply for or ever receive a Purple Heart.

Initially, our activities were restricted to patrols and artillery exchanges, but the tempo soon picked up. In preparing for an assault on a German Pill Box, K Company suffered an unfortunate accident and some 40 men were killed in an explosion during the mission briefing.

A few days later, another assault was planned: To be preceded by a Night Patrol. This one was a bit unusual because an artillery observer was to accompany the team. This brought me into the picture. Normally a combat patrol of this type would use an SCR 300 to communicate with the rear area. This time it was anticipated that the Forward Observer would be calling fire missions and would need direct communication with the firing batteries. The SCR 300 was not capable of tuning to artillery frequencies and the artillery's SCR 609 was a cumbersome two man load not designed for quick moves. It was decided that I would set up a relay link at the forward CP. I would communicate with the Patrol via the 300 and relay to Div Arty via a 609. I would also be connected with the CP by telephone.

For better communication I was to set up in an abandoned trench on a small hill about 50 yards to the rear of the CP. Late that afternoon, I ran the telephone line and carried the two radio sets up to the end of the trench. Because the knoll was visible to enemy observation, I delayed installing the Antennas until dusk. The antenna for the 300 was a long slender green whip, not readily visible, while the 609 antenna was a telescoping aluminum pole about 1 inch thick at its base, which screwed directly onto the set's case. (I think it was that nice shiny aluminum which almost did me in). I placed both sets on the rim of the excavation. Because I was less familiar with its controls, I placed the 609 directly in front of my face with the 300 at my left and the telephone to my right. Turning both sets on, I checked in with all stations and sat down to wait.

About an hour later, I heard the familiar scream of an incoming artillery shell. It was not a meemie, but big stuff. The first shell exploded about 50 yards away. It was followed by a rapid succession by a dozen or more shells all falling in my immediate area. One fell directly in front of my hole and the SCR 609 was totally destroyed, probably saving my life. All I could do was to cower in my hole and pray. When the barrage finally lifted I found that the telephone line had also been cut, and that only the 300 was in working order.

Contacting the Patrol I made them aware of the situation. If they needed artillery I would have to run down the trench to the CP and use the telephone there to give firing directions. Luckily the Patrol completed its mission without requiring artillery support. I had scraped through another one, but I was sure getting hard on the equipment.

After that little incident, my life became relatively dull. The Regiment moved forward in a successful well coordinated attack. The enemy began a withdrawal and the Regiment was pinched out by flanking units. We went back into what was essentially a reserve status: We got to a shower point, cleaned up, and even got fresh clothes. I volunteered for a patrol sent into some woods to look for Germans wanting to surrender. We brought back a dozen or so. I managed to acquire a Luger pistol from one of the officer prisoners.

We were billeted in a small village during Easter week. Jim, **George Read** and I raided the chicken coop behind a house occupied by our company officers. We stole, killed and cooked a half dozen chickens. The Com. Platoon sure had a feast. The best part was the officers got the blame. On Holy Thursday one of the wiremen shot a small deer. Because we Catholics did not eat meat on Friday, particularly on Good Friday, I had a terrible struggle with my conscience about whether or not to eat those steaks. The day after Easter we loaded onto trucks and were off to the Remagen Bridgehead and wait for our turn to cross.

While waiting to cross over, there was little to do. Some of us visited the famous baths. Others lay around watching the overhead dogfights: Most of the time the planes were too high for us to determine who was who. Convinced that our pilots were always victorious, we cheered every time a plane was shot down. Jim and I were busily engaged in tracking down wineries, whose cellars we raided with impunity. (We and about a couple hundred other guys). Our canteens were always full of Germany's finest. We even stole 5 gallon water cans from the back of idle vehicles and filled them with wine: Stashing them away for a time when things would not be so pleasant. Eventually we crossed the Rhine. It seems that I have always had a penchant for doing things the hard way: I am one of a select few that crossed the Rhine River in an assault boat instead of using the famous bridge. There was no one to greet us on the other side, so we got a good night's sleep in some woods. In fact it would be around the first of April before we would see any further action.

It was not until the Fulda River crossing that the Regiment returned to action. Fighting was especially fierce in and around the city of Hann Munden. At about this time a new tactical unit was formed. Our Battalion was detached and combined with an Armored Unit, some Tank Destroyers and Mobile Artillery. There were even some Engineers and Anti Aircraft thrown into the mix. We were designated as "Combat Command R." Sometimes, we moved as much as 40 miles in a given day, with the Infantry riding on top of tanks and other

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## PERSONAL HISTORY OF WWII

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armored vehicles. After breaking through the outer German defense lines, we continued on into central Germany on a mission reminiscent of Sherman's march through Georgia. The entire force was constantly on the move, stopping only at night for rest and maintenance.

In this new configuration, the role of the Battalion's Communication Platoon was radically altered. The Message Center continued to function pretty much as it always had. But with telephone communication impossible from moving vehicles, the Wire Section became essentially redundant. Furthermore, due to the organizational structure of the Command, the radio section's role was usurped by one of the higher echelon. It's only remaining function was limited to maintaining communications with its own line companies and its own staff units. **Sgt. George Read** and I were designated by **Lt. Col. Shaughnessy** as his operators, to work on alternate days. We very soon learned that some shifts might last as little as 12 hours, while others might stretch out to 48 hours or even longer. Basically we were to stay close to him, prepared to send or receive any message directed to or by him. When were moving, we sat on the rear seat of the Jeep behind the driver. When at halt, we remained in the jeep, waiting. If the Colonel decided to walk, we walked about 3 paces behind him with the radio strapped to our backs. The 300, with spare battery, weighed about 40 lbs. Add to that our M-1, ammunition, a grenade or two, some K-rations, raincoat, a blanket and misc. personel items, we carried a pretty good load. Being forced to hit the dirt could be pretty painful. Diving to the ground and landing on one's stomach was bad enough but that 40 lb. Radio hitting you on the back - it really hurt.

**Col. Shaughnessy** was a big man and he took long steps. Furthermore he was impeded with little more than a map case and a pistol. Besides being 4 inches shorter, I had to carry the 40 lb. radio plus my rifle and other junk. Poor **Sgt. Read**: He was even shorter than I. Whenever the Colonel remained in one area, we usually sat down and leaned back to take the weight off of our shoulders. My memory of the next 2 weeks is pretty much a blur, except for a few events which for one reason or another have stayed in my memory.

Our days soon fell into a routine. We awoke around daybreak. Ate breakfast and we were ready to roll by 7:00 a.m. or earlier. We could expect to be strafed at least once during the day, mostly by Germans but once in a while our Air Force got its signals mixed and made a pass or two before discovering their mistake. Losses from strafing were generally light. Those Quad - Fours of our AA Unit were big deterrents. (During one of these attacks, we got a fleeting look at an entirely different German fighter: I had no propeller, went like hell and scared us half to death).

We usually had two objectives planned for a day. Cities with significant manufacturing facilities were high on our list of targets; as were airports and transportation hubs. Some were well defended, others were

not. Our progress was frequently interrupted by road blocks. Stopping the column along a narrow road passing through a forested area could be a nightmare. The entire column was then most vulnerable. Hardly a day passed without some sort of action at the head of the column. Occasionally we came up against determined and well organized defenses: These could not be overcome only at the cost of manpower. One such incident is described below.

Word reached us that a force of Infantry, was blocking our path. They were well dug in an area of dense brush and small trees straddling an unpaved road which passed through a dense forest. I Company was given the task of clearing the path. As soon as they entered the area they came under heavy 88 fire from two tanks supporting the German infantry. With the two tanks in the lead, the Germans attacked and drove I Company back into the shelter of heavy woods where they sustained heavy casualties.

Colonel Shaughnessy first became aware of this situation because of the high volume of radio traffic requesting Medics and evacuation vehicles. After a brief conversation with the Commander of I Company, he decided to move closer to the action. Along the way in, we encountered a wrecked Jeep and a burning M-8 Recon Vehicle: Both vehicles bore the markings of the Divisions Recon Company. Their occupants were just being evacuated- more victims of the two tanks. Dismounting, we proceeded on foot in the direction of the firing. Arriving at the I Company CP we found conditions bad. With matters at a stalemate, the Colonel suddenly took it upon himself to see the tanks. Taking his S-3 and myself with him, we cautiously moved through the brush towards the sound of idling engines. At one point, we had to cross a road covered by a German MG. We stopped long enough for the Colonel and I to swap weapons: He felt that I could maneuver better unencumbered by the heavy rifle. Nice of him! We managed to cross without drawing any fire. Suddenly through a gap in the brush we could see the two tanks: One was a monstrous Tiger, the other older and smaller. At his request I tried to contact both of our armored units with no success. He and the S-3 consulted over their maps. The Colonel said, "I want those Bastards, those were my boys." With that we moved slowly back about a couple hundred yards and he had me call up Div. Arty. He gave them the coordinates and fire order himself. Moments later the area around those two tanks erupted. We had occasion to pass that area later in the day. One tank was minus its turret, the other was nothing but a smoking hulk. I tried not to look at the three bodies on the ground. During our next engagement, I earned my first Bronze Star. At the time I did not think it was such a big deal, I was just doing my job the way I had been taught.

The next engagement in which I was involved was the battle for the heavily fortified town of Altenroitzsch situated just off the main autobahn between Hedemunden and Leipzig. As the CC R approached the

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village of Gertenbach on the outskirts of Altengroitzch, it was met with heavy small arms fire and air bursts from 88mm guns. The area was Agricultural, with a few scattered farm buildings surrounded by open fields. With the Infantry dismounted the Armor made short work of the enemy in and around the farm buildings. The Battalion moved up to gradual rise in the ground upon which a number of houses sat. L Company moving across open ground towards the now visible Altengroitzch, became pinned down by small arms and MG fire. The area behind the low hill was under Anti-Aircraft fire from horizontally depressed 88s. There were also a few snipers operating from positions among previously cleared farm buildings.

The Colonel decided to go up in two jeeps. He and his S-3 went in the first jeep and I and another officer trailed behind in the Colonel's jeep. Waiting for a slight lull in the Artillery fire, we drove across the open fields at breakneck speed. A few rounds of rifle fire struck the Jeep, but we managed to reach cover behind the hill unscathed. There were several futile attempts made to relieve the pinned down platoon from L Company. As long as they stayed down they were reasonably safe from the MGs. The remainder of the Battalion dispersed along the ridge, continued to take some casualties, however the random nature of the enemy fire greatly reduced its effectiveness.

For whatever reason, the Colonel decided to go back in the direction of Hedemunden. This meant we had to run the previous gauntlet once again. As we raced, zig zagging, across the open plain, the 88 fire became so heavy that it was decided to abandon the vehicles and seek shelter amongst some ruins. Rather than abandon the Radio, I elected to remain in the open, crouching on the ground behind and partially under the rear of the jeep. Looking up, over my head I saw a 5 gallon can full of gasoline. This added greatly to my discomfort. The barrage continued, and occasionally a piece of shrapnel would strike the jeep. In the midst of all this, a message for the Colonel came in. With a very shaky hand I copied the message and then did a really dumb thing: Leaving the partial cover of the vehicle, I stood up and simply walked to the Colonel's position in the ruins, some distance away, and handed him the message. Then, still standing, I said, "Is there any reply, Sir?" There was: A short one. I stood there while he composed it and then turned around and walked back to the jeep and transmitted his reply. This time I shouted over the acknowledgment. Twenty or so minutes later three American fighter planes arrived, bombing and strafing the 88 positions. We later learned that there had been 27 88mm Anti-Aircraft Guns in that town and they had all been depressed to fire horizontally. No wonder the sky was full of black puff balls.

Many years later I discovered why there had been so little effort expended in resolving the situation earlier: (there was Armor and Artillery available). Our mission had been to screen the movement of two Armored Divisions crossing behind us on the Autobahn.

A few days later, three of us got caught in a situation, which a few months earlier we would probably never have survived. Being off duty so as to speak, **Jim Biller, Francis Klink** and myself were near the end of the column, riding in a jeep. I was in the front passenger side, with a light 30 MG, mounted over the lowered windshield. Somehow or other we lagged behind and lost sight of the column ahead. As our target was a village only a mile or so ahead, this was not a matter of great concern. As a result we took the wrong turn at a fork in the road. Going down hill through a patch of woods we suddenly broke out into a cleared area, a couple hundred yards from the first house of a village. There were a few civilians in sight but they all disappeared into the houses when they saw us. There was no sign of our forces. To make matters worse, on the other side of a canal or small river to our right, we could see a number of German soldiers going about their business. Either they did not see us or chose to ignore us, as they continued to move about. Being considerably outnumbered and caught out in the open, I did not want to start anything with the folks across the Canal. So like dummies we just sat there doing nothing.

After a few minutes, a German soldier came out of one of the houses with his hands in the air. We motioned him to come toward us. Immediately other Germans came out, some with hands up, one or two carried shoulder bags. Then some women came out. Some hugged their women folks and after the goodbye ceremonies, they all came toward us. I kept the MG pointing at them and we directed them into a small field on our left. There were about twenty of them. Across the canal, the others had disappeared. Now we had prisoners, but no place to take them to and nobody to tell us what to do. To further confuse matters, a number of ragged civilians, who seemed to appear from nowhere, surrounded our vehicle. There were a couple men but they were mostly women even one or two children. Klink thought they spoke some Slavic language. They were begging food. We finally gave the woman with the child a package of K-rations and they eventually left. All the while our prisoners, in their little pasture, were taking this all in. It seemed like hours later when we saw a couple of figures in classic formation coming up the street from the opposite direction. Pretty soon we were relieved of our prisoners and on our way. I don't think Cpl Klink ever lost track of the vehicle in front of him again.

Once more, I was relegated to trying to catch up on lost sleep in a moving vehicle dully watching the German landscape roll past.

*(To be continued on the next issue of the Bulletin)*





## “Taps”

The melody of TAPS was composed by a non-musical (musician with no formal knowledge) who did not know the technical names of any of the notes. Union General Daniel Butterfield whistled it for Brigadier General Oliver Norton who wrote the notes on the back of an envelope July 2, 1862. The plaintive bugle notes that bring an involuntary lump to the throat typifies our loss and feelings of these two great buglers.

## THE WORDS TO “TAPS” SAY IT ALL

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

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## Crossing the Elbe, Russian Style



No, as far as we know, there were no infants crossing the Elbe. This baby carriage belonged to the Russian boatman. It contained loot that Mrs. Russian wanted on the other side. But we would not be surprised if the Russians did include infants in the crossing. (Photo from our Archives)

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