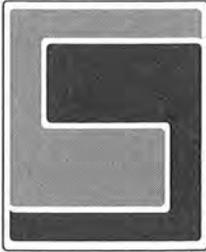


# FIGHTING 69TH INFANTRY DIVISION

## ★★★★ *Association, Inc.*



VOLUME 59, NO. 2

www.69th-infantry-division.com

JANUARY – FEBRUARY – MARCH – APRIL  
2006

“THE THREE B’S”  
BOLTE’S BIVOUACKING BASTARDS

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

# bulletin

## Company D, 1st Battalion, 271st Infantry

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*Gatterstadt, Germany, May 1945: In the quadrangle where we had all of our formations at that time and where our mess hall and motor pool were located.*



*Eilenberg,  
Germany  
April 1945  
Firing a  
mortar  
on Germans  
across the  
Mulde River.*

*See more  
photos on  
page 2.*

Photos Submitted By: **Merrill C. Embick**, P.O. Box 3053, Williamsport, PA 17701

# Co. D, 1st Battalion, 271st Infantry

Submitted By: **Merrill Embick**, P.O. Box 3053, Williamsport, Pennsylvania 17701-0053



*Bernstein, Pfc. Hadin (Ammo Bearer),  
Pfc. Hoback (Machine Gunner), Unknown*



*Corporal Leo Henricks, John Fleming, Stanley Ploszay,  
4th man unknown, Martin Timmerwilke, 6th man unknown*



*Camp Shelby: Captain Herman Gutowitz, Captain Doug  
Baird, Lieutenant Lumir J. Bocek, and "Wac" the dog.*



*Liberated Russians who were freed from Germans.  
They were only too glad to peel potatoes to get some food.*



*Russian Soldier & Lt. Joseph H. Herbert*



*Standing - Chester Stasiak*



*Waiting to board the Troop Ship*

# 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

E-Mail: danne345@aol.com

**Robert A. Heisler**, 1104 Chemawa Loop N.E., Keizer, Oregon 97303-3739 — 569yh Signal Co.: In the latest Bulletin, in the article "Trip Across the Atlantic" we learned about an airplane that banged into the Empire State Building. It was a B-25; not a B52. I doubt if many of your readers caught that and I don't know if it was your mistake or mine, but there is a lot of difference between the 2 "B's." The 25 was a 2 engine with a crew of 2, very small compared to the 52. The 52 had 4 engines and a crew of 11, three times the size of a 25 and was not built until many years later. The 52 is so big that fully loaded with fuel, it would probably have caused a 9-11 type situation. Anyway I'm not trying to make a "big" deal out of a "small" item.

*(EDITOR'S NOTE: Thanks for bringing the error to our attention. It is always appreciated.)*

**Gus Wiemann**, 7126 Canella Court, Tamarac, Florida 33321 — Co. L, 271st: Thanks so much for mailing the Bulletin so quickly when I wrote that it may have been lost in the mail. And thanks, too, for giving your time and energy to keeping our Bulletin alive. I will send my dues and bulletin donation to our treasurer today to do my part. Not long ago I met a young college student working toward a Ph.D. in History. I passed many stories on to him and he used a few in preparing a paper. He told me that his professor gave him an A, which resulted in an ego trip for me.

**John Mares**, 13947 Anchor Ranch Loop, Flatonia, Texas 78941-5305 — Co. M, 273rd: Keep the Bulletin coming. You're all doing a good job at it. I joined the Fighting 69th Division in Camp Shelby. I was in Co. M, 273rd as a gunner. I went overseas and stayed with Co. M until after the war. I was pulled out to go to the Pacific and got as far as Neumer, Belgium. I was getting my shots when the Japanese surrendered. I was sent back to Germany and stayed another year.

**Thomas H. Travis**, 1889 Brown Street, Napa, California 94559-1830 — H&S, 880th F.A.: I always look forward to receiving the Bulletin. I have been a member of the Association since 1948. My membership card is signed **E.F. Reinhardt**, President, January, 1950. I also have a 69th Infantry Division Association Directory dated 1949 showing me as a member of the 880th F.A. Battalion, Hq. Service.

**Amber Rishel Keene**, P.O. Box 52, Boalsbury, Pennsylvania 16827: Greetings from Central Pennsylvania. I have been enjoying the 69th Bulletin for over 10 years. So much of it fits into the 300 letters my late husband **Nestor Keene** wrote to his parents, our son and to me, between 15 July 1944 and 15 April 1946 when he was a member of the 272nd. Especially the most recent issues on Leipzig and Weissenfels as he was involved there and remained in Weissenfels until 1st July 1945.

**Joseph F. Huber**, 69th Division Secretary, 1341 Evergreen Street, West Bend, Wisconsin 53095-3815 — Anti-Tank Co., 272nd: **To Anna K. Walters**, Thank you for your welcome gift of \$20.00 in memory of your husband, **Earl**, and his buddy, **Robert Miller**.

**To Elmer Gordon: Judy Miller** forwarded the funds you sent her as a memorial to **Robert Miller**. Bob would be so proud that his friends thought so well of him.

**To Mrs. Margaret Schultz, and Mr. and Mrs. Rick Bohn and Family: Judy Miller** forwarded your \$25.00 contribution to the Bulletin Fund as a memorial to **Robert Miller**.

As per the request, the funds have been earmarked to the fund for the 69th Division Association Bulletin. In these days of ever-increasing postage and printing costs, these gifts are truly appreciated. Thank you once again to all.

**Don Connelly**, 4545 East Quivira Drive, Tucson, Arizona 85718 — Hq., 271st: Thank you for sending the additional copies of the bulletin so that I can share with my grandson. That was so thoughtful. I really appreciate the good work both you and Paul do. My grandson continues to talk about the trip that we made to Europe with the 69th. We are thinking about 2010. I was also in Company E, 271st under **Captain Magee** for a shore time!

**Jim Kennedy**, P.O. Box 2157, Gaithersburg, Maryland 20886, Telephone: 301/963-5050: My father was a member of the 271st Regiment, Company F, and I am interested in learning whatever I can about him from those days - perhaps there is even someone who served with him who remembers him! My father was **James J. Kennedy** - he died in 1985.

In looking at the photo on: [//www.69th-infantry-division.com/posed-photos/271reg/cof271.html](http://www.69th-infantry-division.com/posed-photos/271reg/cof271.html), I believe my father is in the front row, 3rd from the right. I would be most interested in seeing the original photo, or a high resolution scan of it to verify my impression. If you have any ideas or sources for that photo, please let me know, thank you. E-mail: [fight.69.pegskid@xoxy.net](mailto:fight.69.pegskid@xoxy.net).

**Merrill C. Embick**, P.O. Box 3053, Williamsport, Pennsylvania 17701-0053 — Co. D, 271st: I have sent you another group of pictures for the Bulletin. You are still doing a wonderful job in publishing the Bulletin. It is better than the history books!

*(See cover and page 2 for Merrill's photos.)*

# A Message from Paul and Dottie Shadle President and Editor

Paul Shadle, Company E, 271st Infantry  
P.O. Box 4069 • New Kensington, PA 15068-4069  
Telephone: 724/335-9980



*President Paul Shadle and Editor, Dottie Shadle*

The winter in Pennsylvania has been rather calm this year. We have had a few cold days and a bit of snow now and then. Spring fever is starting to sink in now.

Now is also the time to think about the reunion to be held in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania from August 13th to August 20th, 2006. We hope to see many of you there. We had a special surprise scheduled for the Early Birds, but due to circumstances beyond our control, we had to cancel it. We are working on a different type of entertainment for the Thursday event this year. Hope you will enjoy it.

The reunion this year will be handled by the Armed Forces Reunions, Inc. This is an organization that handles all the duties necessary to put together military reunions. You will notice a registration fee of \$10.00 on the registration form. This is to help defray costs for additional expenses we run into due to the hospitality room and entertainment.

Please do not hesitate to let us know if you have any suggestions where you would like the next reunion to be held. We will look into any suggestions that you may have.

As you may be aware, the cost of printing and mailing the bulletins has also increased. The bulletins are mailed out bulk rate. When we receive the bulletin back for **Address Changes, Temporarily Away, or Unable to Forward**, it costs the Division seventy-five cents. When we send out a bulletin first-class to your **New Address or Temporarily Away**, it costs \$1.11.

As you may know, we cannot send a bulletin out when we receive an **Unable to Forward**. Please check out the list of deleted names and notify us if you know their new address. We will appreciate any information you may be able to give us.

Dottie and I are looking forward to seeing you in August. Until then, stay well.

## Names Deleted for Bad Addresses

Harry Baldan	Patricia Kosmal
Ernesto Boisse	Donald F. Kramer
Douglas H. Carlson	B.R. Lash
Jack Fyock	Elco Machek
James J. Hall, Sr.	James W. May
Richard E. Hammitt	Dorothy Milstead
John L. Hatfield	Joseph R. O'Neil, Jr.
Alex M. Herrera	Mrs. F. E. Rieger
Charles Ivy	Anthony Torchio

\*\*\*\*\*

## New Men Relocated Since Our Last Bulletin

**Harlan A. Hiser** - Associate Member

1995 East Court St., #319, Kankakee, Illinois 60901

**James P. Kennedy** - Asc., Co. F, 271st Infantry

P.O. Box 2157, Gathersburg, Maryland 20886-2157

**Paul Lineberry** - Associate Member

6481 Troy Caveness Road  
Ramseur, North Carolina 27316-8637

**Mike McGivern** - Asc., Battery C, 880th F.A.

2635 East 61st Street, Tulsa, Oklahoma 74136

**Clyde Robbins** - Company G, 271st Infantry

P.O. Box 936, Madisonville, Tennessee 37354

**Howard R. Stahlman** - Company K, 272nd Infantry

358 Chips Road, Reynoldsville, Pennsylvania 15851

**George W. Wallis** - Battery A, 879th Field Artillery

2801 North Spring Drive, Richardson, Texas 75082

## 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.**

## A Message from Your Past President, Bernard H. Zaffern



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

I would like to thank all of you for giving me the privilege of serving as your President for these past two years. I enjoyed the office and I hope that you are satisfied with my efforts. I appreciate the strong help I received from my fellow officers, all of whom work hard to make our Association a success.

Those of you who could not attend our Louisville reunion missed a great one. It was my pleasure to host General Phil Bolté, Colonel Armstrong and our Russian Marine Colonel Alexander Dryagin. I think most of our attendees had the opportunity to talk with them after the dinner. It was a wonderful celebration of our link-up sixty years ago. The souvenir glasses designed by **Bob Pierce** memorializing the link-up were truly beautiful.

I want to thank all of the committee who helped make our reunion a success. And a special thanks goes to **Bob Pierce** for his tremendous accomplishment in planning the reunion. This was the last reunion Bob will plan; he has decided to retire from the job. I worked with him on a little part of this reunion and appreciate the unbelievable amount of work that he does in making all the arrangements. We presented Bob with a plaque which doesn't begin to settle the debt we owe him for his many years of labor on our behalf.

I congratulate Paul on his election as President and wish him the best. I know that all of us will support Paul and give him the help he may need.

## Fred Fenn writes . . .

**Fred H. Fenn, Jr.**  
18929 St. Clare Drive  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70810  
Telephone: 225/755-3208  
E-Mail: ffenn@comcaplending.com

I've enclosed two pictures that I am hoping you can use for the Bulletin.

**Note:** On the written description below the picture of the Link-Up group, the name of the commander of the Russian 58th Infantry Division was censored. It would be interesting to know if the Russians required this. Does anyone know?



The caption below the picture reads as follows:  
**FIRST PHOTOS OF RUSSIAN LINK-UP:** Drinking a toast to the Link-Up of Russian and American forces east of the Elbe are Yank and Russian officers at Torgau, Germany, where the union was made, east of the Elbe River between the U.S. 69th Infantry Division, commanded by Major General E.F. Reinhardt, and the Russian 58th Infantry Division under command of Major General (censored).

In addition, their names were on the backs of the photos. Left to right, Lt. Sloviacnko of the Russian Army, Major Lexinov (Russian), **Colonel C.L. Adams** from Pittsburgh, Pa., Captain Neda of the Russian Army, and **Lt. W.D. Robertson** of Los Angeles, California who commanded a four-man patrol.

This toast was being made in a facility at Trebsen, Germany to the "Victorious Allied Armies."

*Photo Right:*  
*Major General*  
*E. F. Reinhardt*



# A Message from Your Vice President, David J. Theobald



Neil Shields, Jeanne Theobald and VP Dave Theobald

**David J. Theobald**  
Company F, 272nd Infantry Regiment  
8401 Moravian Court  
Sacramento, California 95826  
Telephone: 916/398-6592  
E-Mail: davidjtheo@aol.com

When someone mentioned to me they were looking for candidates for Vice-President of this great organization, I said sure, I would be honored to run. In the first place, the position hardly ever calls for much work, and secondly, I was certain other better known individuals would get the nod. Unfortunately, the selection committee was tired and I ran unopposed.

Then a short time later, I recalled our current leader, **Paul Shadle**, had something to say in each issue of the "Bulletin." So there goes my first place assumption of "No Work." To introduce myself, let me give you a short bio as follows:

As a 18 year old engineering freshman at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois in January 1943, I signed on with the Army Air Corps and entered their Pre-meteorology Program at Hamilton College in Clinton, New York. After six days a week of college level math and physics for one solid year, I graduated to private in the 69th Infantry Division.

My service was as a first scout rifleman. I qualified "Expert" with the M-1, and BAR, and was sent to sniper school where I was issued a Springfield 03 with telescopic sights. I was assigned to Company F, 272nd Infantry. I have my share of "War" stories, some of which I'll relate in later editions.

After the war I returned to Northwestern during the years the Wildcats had great football teams including 1949 when they beat California in the Rose Bowl. I graduated that year and moved to California where I secured two licenses that eventually would shape the rest of my life. The first was a marriage

license with my wife Jeanne and the second, a California Civil Engineering license to practice in that state.

I went to work for The Division Of Highways. One of my assignments for Highways now called Caltrans, was with the Traffic Department. I headed a group that was assigned to reduce Wrong Way accidents that were occurring on California freeways. In 1963, 85 persons had died in wrong way accidents on California freeways. By 1968 with signing and design changes we made on off-ramps, and mostly the installation of the "WRONG WAY" signs, which I invented, the number fell to 45. Those WRONG WAY signs are a national standard sign now. I wish I had a nickel for every one of them. Ronald Reagan was governors of California then and he awarded three of us pen and pencils sets for the lives saved, resulting from our efforts.

I held several other positions with CALTRANS, retiring as head of the Department that qualified our construction projects for about one billion dollars worth of Federal Gas Tax reimbursement per year. That was far more than any other state because California has more cars, drives more miles, and pays more gas tax than any other state, all dubious distinctions.

I believe the association is in good hands with **Paul Shadle** at the helm. Paul and his wife are working hard to keep our ship afloat. All of us should support them whenever we are able.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Combat Action Copy of Signal Corps Film

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

Twenty five minute DVD disc or VHS (VCR) tape of the 69th in Germany, mostly in April, 1945. Made from actual Signal Corps 16mm and 35mm film. Scenes of flag raising ceremony at Fortress Ehrenbreitenstein, movements across Germany, actual scenes of entering and surrender ceremony of Leipzig, devastation of Eilenburg, climaxing with East Meets West at the Elbe River!

A DVD or VCR is available for a minimum donation of \$25.00, or more, to help maintain the 69th Infantry Website. The 69th Association will be sent \$1.00 for each bulletin inspired donation.

Make check payable to 69th Infantry Website and mail to Joe Lipsius at the address above. Send full name, postal mailing address, telephone number, e-mail address, if you have one, and your 69th Unit. Relatives send name of 69er and Unit, if known.

Be sure and specify VCR or DVD! Mailing could be 3 to 5 weeks or more. Get your donations in early.

# 69th Infantry Division Association 59th Annual Reunion KING OF PRUSSIA, PA

August 14th thru 20th, 2006

THE CROWNE PLAZA HOTEL

260 Mall Boulevard

King of Prussia, Pennsylvania 19406

## Armed Forces Reunions, Inc.

322 Madison Mews

Norfolk, Virginia 23510

This year, our reunion will be handled by the Armed Forces Reunions, Inc. Forms are on pages 10 and 11. Please read carefully and return to the address noted. The schedule is as follows:

### Monday, August 14th

#### Early Bird arrivals

1:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m. **Reunion Registration Open**  
7:00 p.m.-11:00 p.m. Hospitality Room Open

### Tuesday, August 15th

12:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m. Hospitality Room Open  
2:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m. **Reunion Registration Open**  
Dinner and evening on your own  
7:00 p.m.-11:00 p.m. Hospitality Room Open

### Wednesday, August 16th

7:30 a.m.-8:00 a.m. **Reunion Registration Open**  
8:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m. PENNSYLVANIA DUTCH  
COUNTRY (*description follows*)  
12:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m. Hospitality Room Open  
2:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m. **Reunion Registration Open**  
(additional hours will be posted  
at the reunion, if needed)  
Dinner and evening on your own

### Thursday, August 17th

9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Board of Directors' Meeting  
1:30 p.m.-4:30 p.m. HISTORIC VALLEY FORGE  
(*description follows*)  
12:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m. Hospitality Room Open  
6:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m. Hosted Reception  
7:00 p.m.-10:00 p.m. Dinner Buffet

### Friday, August 18th

9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. PHILADELPHIA CITY TOUR  
(*description follows*)  
12:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m. Hospitality Room Open  
Dinner on your own  
8:30 p.m.-11:30 p.m. PX Beer Party

### Saturday, August 19th

9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Membership Meeting  
9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Ladies' Auxiliary Meeting  
1:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m. Hospitality Room Open

6:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m. Cocktail Hour with Cash Bar  
7:00 p.m.-7:30 p.m. Memorial Service  
7:30 p.m. Banquet served,  
followed by music and dancing

### Sunday, August 20th

7:30 a.m.-9:00 a.m. Breakfast Buffet

Driver and guide gratuities are not included in the tour prices. Please plan to be at the bus boarding area at least five minutes prior to the scheduled time. *All tours must have a minimum of thirty people, unless otherwise stated.*

### CANCELLATION AND REFUND POLICY FOR ARMED FORCES REUNIONS, INC.

For attendees canceling reunion activities prior to the cut-off date, Armed Forces Reunions, Inc. (AFR) shall process a full refund less the non-refundable AFR registration fee (\$7 per person). Attendees canceling reunion activities after the cut-off date will be refunded to the fullest extent that AFR's vendor commitments and guarantees will allow, less the non-refundable AFR registration fee. **Cancellations will only be taken Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard time, excluding holidays.** Please call 757/625-6401 or e-mail [cancel@afri.com](mailto:cancel@afri.com) to cancel reunion activities and obtain a cancellation code. Refunds processed 4-6 weeks after reunion. Canceling your hotel reservation does not cancel your reunion activities.

\* \* \* \* \*

### TOUR DESCRIPTIONS

#### **PENNSYLVANIA DUTCH COUNTRY**

**Wednesday, August 16th**

Enjoy a guided tour of one of America's most important inland cities, the English City of Lancaster. Your guide will explain the lifestyles of the 'plain people,' the Old Order Amish, from the cradle to the grave. Among the many sites you will see are courting buggies, one room schoolhouses, grossdadi's, and graveyards. Then visit a working Amish Farm to chat with the family and take a tour of the farm with 'Granddaddy,' who loves to share his expertise with the 'fancy people.' Homemade root beer, cider, and cookies will be available for sale as you browse the handmade quilts and crafts. Enjoy an authentic Pennsylvania Dutch family-style lunch at Good 'n Plenty Restaurant including Country Baked Ham, Fried Chicken, Roast Beef with vegetables, dessert, and beverages. Then continue the Amish tour through the farmlands as you learn the history, religion, and culture that enable the Amish to lead a simpler life.

**8:30 a.m. - Board Bus**

**4:00 p.m. - Arrive back at the hotel**

**\$60/Person includes**

**bus, guide, admission and lunch**

(Continued on Page 8)

## HISTORIC VALLEY FORGE

Thursday, August 17th

After having an early lunch on your own, board bus for a guided tour of Valley Forge National Historic Park. Your first stop is at the Visitor Center for a fifteen-minute film on the surrounding park. Then begin a guided tour of the extensive remains and reconstructions of major forts and lines of earthworks, the Artillery Park, Washington's Headquarters, and the Grand Parade where General von Steuben rebuilt the army and news of the French alliance was announced in 1778. These, plus reconstructed huts, memorials, monuments, and markers, tell the story of the men at Valley Forge who wrote an imperishable chapter in the history of America's struggle for independence. Your last stop on the tour is at the chapel and museum, which contains artifacts relating to the Revolution.

1:30 p.m. - Board Bus

4:30 p.m. - Arrive back at the hotel

\$31/Person includes  
bus, guide, and admission

\* \* \* \* \*

## PHILADELPHIA CITY TOUR

Friday, August 18th

Board bus for the "City of Brotherly Love." En route your guide gives commentary on King of Prussia and Philadelphia's Main Line. In the city, history comes alive as we stroll along brick walkways and cobblestone streets walking in the footsteps of our Founding Fathers. Among the sites on the most historic square mile in America are Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell. Enjoy lunch on your own at the Reading Terminal, Philadelphia's Farmer's Market. Afterwards, drive by the Betsy Ross House; Elfreth's Alley, the oldest continuously occupied residential street in America; Society Hill; Benjamin Franklin Parkway; and Boat House Row, home of the Schuylkill Navy in Fairmount Park. There will be time to explore one of Philadelphia's newest attractions, the National Constitution Center. You will learn the story of the U.S. Constitution through more than 100 interactive and multimedia exhibits, photographs, sculpture, and artifacts.

*Note: The walking portion of the tour will cover approximately five blocks total. Please wear good walking shoes.*

9:00 a.m. - Board Bus

4:30 p.m. - Arrive back at the hotel

\$45/Person includes  
bus, guide, and admissions.

Lunch on your own.

***Please sign up early for this Reunion.  
It promises to be a good one!***

## The Rhine Revisited

Submitted By: **Cpl. Seymour Kuvin**  
(now **S. Kuvin, M.D.**)

Company H, 271st Infantry

49 Clarkson Drive

Toms River, New Jersey 08753-2605

Wow - what memories a trip down the Rhine brings! Here I was taking a river boat cruise from Amsterdam to Frankfurt to see the sights. We were at the only English-speaking table in the dining room - all the rest spoke German as their primary language. I had to say to myself that a mere 60 years ago, they all were the enemy, and the guys I was trying to kill - or they were trying to kill me. I was a mortar gunner at 18 and in the 271st Infantry, Company H - fit and trim - and not the 81-year-old decrepit mess I am now. Anyhow, it took effort to be cordial, and I did remember that 60 years had passed.



*Camp Wheeler  
Macon, Georgia*

When we passed by the cathedral at Cologne, we saw a sole worker on one of the spires. We were told that he was repairing some of the damage the Americans had done during World War II. We asked why it wasn't finished by now, and his reply was, "He's only one man."

The highlight of the trip for me was when we came to the bridge at Remagen. There it was - in all its glory - half destroyed, and half-sunk; with an American flag on one support and a German flag on the other. The pontoon bridge that carried our troops across the Rhine was no longer there. It was quiet and solemn - a monument to the horrors that transpired. The memories of digging in on the West Bank and then crossing the Rhine to meet the Russians at Leipzig were still there.



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intentionally.*

## 69<sup>th</sup> INFANTRY DIVISION ON ACTIVITY REGISTRATION FORM

Listed below are all registration, tour, and meal costs for the reunion. Please enter how many people will be participating in each event and total the amount. Send that amount payable to ARMED FORCES REUNIONS, INC. in the form of check or money order (no credit cards or phone reservations). Your cancelled check is your confirmation. Returned checks will be charged a \$20 fee. All registration forms and payments must be received by mail on or before 7/13/06. Please make a copy of this form. Please do not staple or tape your payment to this form.

**Armed Forces Reunions, Inc.**  
**322 Madison Mews**  
**Norfolk, VA 23510**  
**ATTN: 69<sup>th</sup> INFANTRY DIVISION**

OFFICE USE ONLY	
Check # _____	Date Received _____
Inputted _____	Nametag Completed _____

**CUT-OFF DATE IS 7/13/06**

	Price Per	# of People	Total
<b>TOURS</b>			
WEDNESDAY: PENNSYLVANIA DUTCH COUNTRY	\$ 60		\$
THURSDAY: HISTORIC VALLEY FORGE	\$ 31		\$
FRIDAY: PHILADELPHIA CITY TOUR	\$ 45		\$
<b>MEALS</b>			
THURSDAY: DINNER BUFFET	\$ 32		\$
FRIDAY: PX BEER PARTY	\$ 5		\$
SATURDAY: BANQUET <i>(Please select your entrée)</i>			
ROAST SIRLOIN	\$ 35		\$
HERB ROASTED CHICKEN	\$ 35		\$
BAKED SALMON	\$ 35		\$
SUNDAY: BREAKFAST BUFFET	\$ 14		\$
<b>MANDATORY PER PERSON REGISTRATION FEE</b>			
Includes Hospitality Room, entertainment, and administrative expenses.	\$ 10		\$
<b>Cost for Permanent badge (New or Replacement)</b>	\$ 4		\$
<b>DUES – NEW DUES YEAR – AUGUST 1, 2006 – JULY 31, 2007</b>			
REGULAR MEMBERSHIP	\$ 10		\$
LADIES AUXILIARY	\$ 5		\$
POSTAGE AND BULLETIN DONATION (UP TO YOU)			\$
<b>Total Amount Payable to <u>Armed Forces Reunions, Inc.</u></b>			<b>\$</b>

PLEASE PRINT NAME

FIRST \_\_\_\_\_ LAST \_\_\_\_\_ NICKNAME \_\_\_\_\_

UNIT \_\_\_\_\_ FIRST TIMER? (YES \_\_\_\_\_) OR (NO \_\_\_\_\_)

SPOUSE NAME (IF ATTENDING) \_\_\_\_\_

GUEST NAMES \_\_\_\_\_

MEMBER'S STREET ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY, ST, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ PH. NUMBER (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

DISABILITY/DIETARY RESTRICTIONS \_\_\_\_\_

*(Sleeping room requirements must be conveyed by attendee directly with hotel)*

MUST YOU BE LIFTED HYDRAULICALLY ONTO THE BUS WHILE SEATED IN YOUR WHEELCHAIR IN ORDER TO PARTICIPATE IN BUS TRIPS?  YES  NO (PLEASE NOTE THAT WE CANNOT GUARANTEE AVAILABILITY).

EMERGENCY CONTACT \_\_\_\_\_ PH. NUMBER (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

ARRIVAL DATE \_\_\_\_\_ DEPARTURE DATE \_\_\_\_\_

ARE YOU STAYING AT THE HOTEL? YES  NO  ARE YOU FLYING?  DRIVING?  RV?

For refunds and cancellations please refer to our policies outlined at the bottom of the reunion program. **CANCELLATIONS WILL ONLY BE TAKEN MONDAY-FRIDAY 9:00am-5:00pm EASTERN TIME (excluding holidays).** Call (757) 625-6401 or email [cancel@afri.com](mailto:cancel@afri.com) to cancel reunion activities and obtain a cancellation code. Refunds processed 4-6 weeks after reunion. Canceling your hotel reservation does not cancel your reunion activities.

**CROWNE PLAZA HOTEL – VALLEY FORGE, PA**  
**610-265-7500**

The Crowne Plaza Hotel is located at 260 Mall Boulevard, King of Prussia, PA 19406. The hotel is located near Valley Forge National Park and directly across from the King of Prussia Mall, which has over 400 shops and restaurants, including Neiman Marcus, Nordstrom and Bloomingdales. The Crowne Plaza offers spacious guest rooms, each with a coffee maker, iron and ironing board and complimentary high-speed internet access. Some of the other amenities include complimentary access to on site Bally Total Fitness, indoor pool, jacuzzi, an ATM machine, dry cleaning/laundry, and much more. The hotel offers handicapped accessible and non-smoking rooms, which are based on availability. Please request these special accommodations when making your reservation. Plenty of complimentary parking is available. Check-in time is 3:00pm and check-out time is 11:00am. Enjoy the hotel's restaurant, *Stirlings Restaurant*, serving breakfast lunch and dinner, in a relaxing atmosphere. Room Service is available.

The hotel is located twenty-five miles from the Philadelphia International Airport. Shuttle service is available through Tropiano at \$23 one-way pp and \$40 round trip pp. Proceed to the baggage claim area to collect your luggage; dial 19 on the courtesy phone to let Tropiano know you need the shuttle. Advance reservations for arrival and departure are highly recommended – (215) 616-5370 or (800) 559-2040.

The hotel has no parking available for RV's. For full hookup service, *Philadelphia/West Chester KOA* is approximately twenty-five miles from the hotel. Please call toll-free (800) 562-1726 for information, reservations, and directions. Please make your reservations as soon as possible due to limited space and availability.

Should you need a wheelchair while at the reunion, *ScotAround* rents both manual and power wheelchairs by the day and week. Please call their toll-free number at (888) 441-7575 for details. All prices quoted include delivery fees.

**Vendors, Schedules, and Prices are subject to change.**

\*\*\*\*\* CUT HERE AND MAIL TO THE HOTEL \*\*\*\*\*

**69th INFANTRY DIVISION HOTEL RESERVATION FORM**  
**REUNION DATES: AUGUST 14-20, 2006**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ SHARING ROOM W/ \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

TEL. NUMBER (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ PRIORITY CLUB# \_\_\_\_\_

ARRIVAL DATE \_\_\_\_\_ APPROX. TIME \_\_\_\_\_ DEP. DATE \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ # OF ROOMS NEEDED \_\_\_\_\_ # OF PEOPLE IN ROOM \_\_\_\_\_ HANDICAP ACCESS

\_\_\_\_ SMOKING \_\_\_\_\_ NON-SMOKING \_\_\_\_\_ KING BED \_\_\_\_\_ 2 DOUBLE BEDS

In the event room type requested is not available, nearest room type will be assigned.

**RATE:** \$89+ tax (currently 8%). Rate will be honored three days before and after reunion, based on availability.

**CUT OFF DATE:** 7/13/06. Late reservations will be processed based on space availability at a higher rate.

**CANCELLATION POLICY:** Deposit is refundable if reservation is canceled by 6:00pm the day before arrival. Adjustments to departure date after check-in, resulting in a shortened length of stay, will result in a \$50 early-departure fee. All reservations must be guaranteed by credit card or first night's deposit, enclosed.

\_\_\_\_ AMEX \_\_\_\_\_ DINERS \_\_\_\_\_ VISA \_\_\_\_\_ MASTER CARD \_\_\_\_\_ DISCOVER

CREDIT CARD NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_ EXP. DATE \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE (regardless of payment method) \_\_\_\_\_

MAIL TO: CROWNE PLAZA HOTEL \* ATTN: RESERVATIONS \* 260 MALL BOULEVARD, KING OF PRUSSIA, PA 19406

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intentionally.*

# 4th Platoon, Co. K, 273rd photos connect buddies

Submitted By: **Vito J. Narducci**  
84-39 153 Avenue, Apt. 42  
Howard Beach, New York 11414  
Telephone: 718/843-4248

Thank you for printing my comments and photos in the Bulletin issue of September to December 2005, Vol. 59, No.1, pages 36-37. Happily, I was contacted by my buddies **Jim Mynes, Bob Hoffman, Larry Smith, Wendell Meggs** (medic) and **Howard Gardner** who read the bulletin. As result I am enclosing copies of a letter received and sent.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Letter from Wendell Meggs to Vito Narducci*

**Wendell Meggs**

*4th Platoon, Company K, 273rd Infantry*  
205 Westgate Drive, Apt. 149  
Springfield, Tennessee 37172

Dear Fellow 69er,

Today I got the Sept.-Dec. '05 issue of the 69th Division Bulletin, which contained the pictures you sent in. And some of those sure brought back memories, and one gave me a big surprise.

I was the medic with the 2nd platoon of K Co., and knew **John Milazzo** (though he was called Johnny then). He was the first platoon medic, and there was another one named Freddie with the third platoon.

I also knew **Sgt. Beck**. He was in the second platoon. I'm not sure now if I was riding on the same tank with Beck or on the one behind him when we ran into that ambush on April 7, 1945. But as you know he stayed on the tank and fired the 50 cal. machine gun, and was killed. You probably remember also that **Platoon Sgt. Mahlum** was wounded in that ambush, and **Sgt. Audet** of the third platoon was wounded and died the next day.

That same night (April 7) I helped **John Milazzo** patch up a first platoon man who got his leg broken when a bridge blew up right in front of us.

At Colditz I got on the scene a couple of minutes after **John Milazzo** and some others had moved **Platoon Sgt. Miskovic** into a house by the bridge after **Miskovic** was shot in the head while on the bridge. First platoon had led the way as we went into the town.

The big surprise in your picture was the one of **John Milazzo** receiving the Silver Star, I had never heard of it. I know that K Co. got scattered after the war was over, especially after we moved back to the American zone of occupation. Also I was pulled out of the company in early August to go to the Pacific.

I am hoping you can tell me some of what, when and where of John's action which led him to receive the Silver Star. He was a nice guy and I liked him. I had heard that he became a doctor, but did not know that he had died.

I think I remember your name, but I did not really know 4th platoon men. However I have written and heard from **Snodgrass**. My son lives at Louisville, Kentucky, and when I was visiting him a few years ago I called **Snodgrass** and talked a few minutes. He has a muscular disease which makes it difficult for him to get around.

In 1994 I first learned about the 69th Association, and wrote an article about my memories of K. Company. Afterward I heard from several men like **Jim Mynes, Jim Telenko, Snodgrass, Cordova, Meadows, Sgt. Mahlum, and Sgt. Colpean's widow**.

Thanks for sending those pictures to the Bulletin. I hope you are doing well, and I look forward to hearing from you, especially about **John Milazzo**.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Vito Narducci's response to Wendell*

Hi Wendell,

Thank you for your letter. It gave me some information of which I was not aware.

About **Johnny Milazzo**, we were close even after the war. He came from the lower east side of Manhattan. His mom had a difficult time raising her family, but they were close and helpful to each other. Eventually they moved to a city project in Brooklyn.

John and I saw a lot of each other, double dating and such. He had one goal in mind, to become a doctor.

Finding it hard to get into a school here in the U.S. (finances) he went to Bologna, Italy for his degree. He interned at a hospital in Brooklyn. I lived near by and he would come to say hello often. After his training, he became the town doctor on a resort island off the coast of Cape Cod, but in the winter there were few people left and his practice was too small. So, with fifty dollars to his name, he took his wife, son and daughter and moved to Aurora, Maine where he had a good life and was well respected. Doc came to visit us shortly before he died. His heart was bad. He knew he was in trouble, because his many by-passes had failed.

John's Silver Star was earned on the Siegfried line. A captain and his non com went to a barn house on a ridge to use as a forward O.P. They were warned the place might be targeted, but they went anyway. Then the shelling began. The barn was the first thing hit. And Johnny, as was his way, with no thought of danger, ran through heavy shelling to give aid. I believe that was the first day we were on the line.

*(Continued on Page 14)*

**4th PLATOON, CO. K, 273rd PHOTOS**  
**CONNECT BUDDIES** (Continued from Page 13)

Vito Narducci also enclosed more photos for publication. He met with his buddy, **Robert Robbins** in California, June 2002, the first time they saw each other since the war ended.



*Robert Robbins, his wife Helen, my wife, Flo and myself, Vito Narducci*



*Company K Medics: Johnny Milazzo, Vito Narducci and two other medics.*



*Bob Robbins - 1946  
on Reenlistment leave*



*Bob and Vito  
in June of 2002*

\*\*\*\*\*

## 569th Signal Patch

**Submitted By: John H. Kastanakis**  
 Message Center, 569th Signal Company  
 7304 Martha Drive S.E.  
 Huntsville, Alabama 35802-2414  
 Telephone: 256/881-3788

Reference: Page 15, Vol. 59, No.1

War Shorts, Submitted by: **Robert A. Heisler**

In answer to the question about the mystery patch: My army Eisenhower Jacket hanging in my closet has a 69th Division shoulder patch on the upper right sleeve and the referenced round blue patch with a black handled and gray head tomahawk (2nd Signal Battalion, IX Corps attached to the 3rd Infantry Division during combat) on the upper left sleeve.

I departed the 69th Infantry Division, 569th Signal Company, Message Center, on 16 July, 1945. I was sent to the 2nd Signal Battalion, Company B, in Friedberg Germany (north of Frankfurt). That's where I wore the referenced round blue shoulder patch.

I was in the 2nd Signal Battalion from 16 July 1945 to 18 September 1945.

## Co. H, 271st Infantry

My father was **Norris "Cookie" Cook**. He was injured in March 1946 and came home a paraplegic. He died in the 1960s. The story I have heard of his injury and return to safety is pretty spectacular. I would like to know if anyone remembers him and the incident which injured him. Please write to me.

**Bonnie Barrett**

1546 E. Stanley Drive, Sandy, Utah 84093

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

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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).

\*\*\*\*\*

## Battery C 880th Field Artillery

**Lowell E. McFarlin**, *News Reporter*  
89 North High Street, P.O. Box 236  
Jeromesville, Ohio 44840-0236  
Telephone: 419/368-7363  
E-Mail: lowmarmcf@bright.net

### 26th Annual Reunion Report September 7, 8, 9, and 10, 2006 Dutch Host Inn, Sugarcreek Ohio

How wonderful to see and greet everyone as they arrived Wednesday afternoon for our 26th annual reunion. The weather was great and we felt very blessed to be able to enjoy yet another reunion, where friendships were started so many years ago during a war that sent us in many directions from our homes and families. Our evening meal was prepared for us by our "Charlie's Angel's," who brought enough food along to more than satisfy everyone. We spent the rest of the evening visiting and then it was off to our rooms for some rest. We remember when these evenings used to go on late into the night, but now we are happy to retire quite early. Is it our age showing?

Following our business meeting Thursday morning, we traveled to the Inn at Honey Run for our noon meal. The scenery along the way was awesome as we saw many large new homes with beautiful landscaping. The rest of the afternoon was spent visiting, shopping and working on a colorful puzzle titled, "The Way Home," also playing some dominoes, or sitting outside on the glider swings enjoying the beautiful weather. In the evening we once again enjoyed our "make it yourself sundaes." Then time was spent looking at pictures we had brought along of our younger years. Very interesting!

Friday morning many of us joined together and had breakfast [brunch] at the Dutch Valley Restaurant. The rest of the day was spent in various ways until getting ready for our banquet at the Dutch Valley. Pictures were taken upon returning to our hospitality room, followed by the playing of our game of "take away," which has become a tradition.

Saturday morning came all too soon again and of course, this means fond farewells until we meet again. Many of us enjoyed breakfast together again at the Dutch Valley before departing for home. And our

prayers were answered that all returned home safely. The only sad part of the reunion was missing those unable to attend.

#### Those attending were:

- Robert and Irene Williams** ..... Loraine, Ohio
- Frank and Marie Habay** .. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
- Marvin and Mary Reber** ..... Reading, Pennsylvania
- Lee and Betty Meyer** ..... St. Marys, Pennsylvania
- Lowell and Marjorie McFarlin** .. Jeromesville, Ohio
- Ralph Cowin** ..... Indianapolis, Indiana  
and *Guest*, nephew **Tracy Ellis**
- Vivian Kurtzman** ..... Wilmot, Ohio
- Enrico and Anne D'Angelo** . Saltsburg, Pennsylvania
- Lew and Fern Pugh** ..... Cadiz, Ohio



*Men, Front: Lee Meyer, Lew Pugh, Enrico D'Angelo. Middle: Lowell McFarlin, Marvin Reber. Back: Tracy Ellis, Frank Habay, Robert Williams, Ralph Cowin*



*Ladies, Front: Marjorie McFarlin, Mary Reber, Betty Meyer. Middle: Marie Habay, Fern Pugh, Irene Williams. Rear: Anne D'Angelo, Vivian Kurtzman*

## 661st Tank Destroyers

The Dawson Family, News Reporters

c/o Linda Puccio  
1355 Mount Oliver Raod  
Martinsville, Virginia 24112

### Committee:

Linda Dawson Puccio ..... 276/638-2486  
Bill and Margaret Dawson ..... 434/349-3028  
Tony Puccio ..... 434/836-8952

### Upcoming Reunion of the 661st Tank Destroyers

DANVILLE, VIRGINIA  
September 21st to 24th, 2006

Comfort Inn and Suites  
100 Tower Drive  
Danville, Virginia 24540  
Telephone: 434/793-2000

Reunion time is coming again! This year's reunion will be held in Danville, Virginia, September 21st through 24th, 2006 at the Comfort Inn and Suites. Reservations must be made by August 21st by calling 434/793-2000. As usual, specify the code "661" when making reservations in order to qualify for the group discount. Check-In time is after 2:00 p.m. The room rate is \$60.00 per night.

The Saturday Night Banquet will be \$28.00 per person, tax and tips included. Children 12 years of age and up will be the adult rate; 4-11 will be half price and ages 3 and under will be free. A Hospitality Room will be available to us from Thursday through Saturday night.

We are hoping for a large turnout of TD'ers and as many relatives, spouses, sons, daughters and grandchildren as possible to attend. Please encourage family members to come and support our veterans. They have a lot of history to share and some monkey business they love to tell on each other.

There is a small airport in Danville but Greensboro, North Carolina is the best. It is about an hour from Danville. Just call us to arrange your pick-up and we will accommodate you. If you are driving, call or write to Linda Puccio at the above address, and she will provide a map.

A tour of the Tank Museum is planned for Saturday. They have an M-18 Hellcat along with a lot of other interesting machinery. Also, Danville is full of history including the Sutherland Mansion, "The Last Confederate Capital" which is now a museum. We will do a tour on Friday. The hotel is proximate to a shopping mall and there are many fine restaurants in the vicinity.

As is customary with this get-together, we solicit donations to cover the Hospitality Room, postage, etc. Any gifts will be appreciated.

See you in September.

## Anyone Remember this member of the 724th F.A.?

Lawrence E. Weichmann

Battery A, 724th Field Artillery Battalion

c/o Michael C. Weichmann

P.O. Box 512, Pickerington, Ohio 43147-0512

My name is Michael C. Weichmann. My father is Lawrence E. Weichmann. He was born and raised in Lucasville, Ohio. He lives between Pickerington, Ohio, Port Mansfield, Texas or McGregor Bay, Ontario, Canada. He spends time with my wife and I most of the year in Pickerington or Canada and can be reached at the above address.



I know he was at Camp Shelby in 1943 or 1944. He was part of "A" Battery of the 724 Field Artillery. After Camp Shelby, he was sent to England then on to Germany. As I understand it, he was only in Germany for about three months toward the end of WW II. He drove the jeep for a forward observer. He was shot in the right shoulder and returned home to recover. By the time he recovered, the war was over and he was discharged. He was awarded a Purple Heart. After his discharge, he went to college (Ohio State University) on the GI bill and became a Pharmacist. He married in December, 1945 and has three children and four grandchildren. He loves to play bridge.

If anyone remembers him, please write to him at the above address.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Michael, we could not publish the other photos you e-mailed because they were very blurry. If you mail us the photos, we will publish them.)

## **NOTICE**

**If you are NOT interested in receiving the Bulletin in the future, please let us know.**

**If you are still interested in receiving the Bulletin, please make sure your dues are paid in full and are up to date.**

# THE AUXILIARY'S PAGE

By **Dottie (Witzleb) Shadle**

*Ladies Auxiliary Editor*

P.O. Box 4069

New Kensington, Pennsylvania 15068-4069

Home Telephone: 724/335-9980

E-Mail: danne345@aol.com



**Dottie (Witzleb) Shadle**



**Jane Matlach, President**

Post Office Box 474

West Islip, New York 11795-0474

Telephone: 631/669-8077

E-Mail: jmatlach@optonline.net



**Louise Hill, Vice President**

819 Main Street

Hamilton, Ohio 45013-2550

**Carmen Sanborn, Secretary**

333 Mechanic Street

Laconia, New Hampshire 03246



**Edith Zaffern, Sunshine Lady**

22555 Hallcroft Trail

Southfield, Michigan 48034-2011

Telephone: 248/357-4611

**Ellen McCann, Chaplain**

39 Mayflower Road

Woburn, Massachusetts 01801

\*\*\*\*\*

## A Message from your Auxiliary President, Jane Matlach

Dear Ladies of the 69th Ladies Auxiliary:

The Pennsylvania site of our 2006 August Reunion is part of our country's history. Valley Forge began as an iron forge on Valley Creek in the 1740's. A sawmill and gristmill were added by the time of the Revolutionary War, which made it an important supply center for the Colonists. However, the British destroyed the forge and mills in 1777. Only ruins marked the site when George Washington chose Valley Forge for his winter of 1777-78 encampment. From December 19, 1777 to June 19, 1778, George Washington and 12,000 soldiers kept the British Army bottled up in Philadelphia. Some 2,000 troops died during that terrible winter. During those six months the army was reorganized, and the Continental Army left Valley Forge a well-trained, efficient force.

There are many other historical areas surrounding Valley Forge, and I'm sure you will enjoy the trips that will be offered at the reunion.

Please remember that the local veteran's hospital will be grateful to receive the wonderful 36"x45" lap robes, booties, and toilet articles that are donated by the members.

Also, please note that I now have an e-mail address where I can be contacted.

### - In Memoriam -

#### "LADIES' TAPS"

#### MATHILDA "TILLIE" BORIS

wife of JAMES BORIS, 881st Field Artillery

#### WIDOWS

**BERTHA GRADEN**, 777th Tank Battalion

**HELEN JONES**, HS, 269th Engineers

**MABEL KING**, Battery A, 881st Field Artillery

**MARY E. LAUMANN**, 769th Ordnance

**MRS. STEVE MARTINI**

**MRS. T. MERICK**, Co. C, 273rd Regiment

**MRS. HOWARD SHEARIN, JR.**

Co. C, 272nd Regiment

Last May I was Grand Marshal in this parade. I was honored as a speaker at the local Rotary Club. This publication was produced through a telephone interview. I was actually on patrol April 26th, 1945 leaving Eilenberg in the morning and traveling to Torgau. Our mission was to clear the road so our **General Reinhardt** could come to Torgau and meet up with the Russian officers.

When we arrived in Torgau, we met **Lieutenant Robinson** and his patrol. There were all kinds of reporters there. The most famous reporter from the Stars and Stripes was Andy Rooney, who is one of the anchors on 60 Minutes. Then we left Torgau and brought back the German prisoners in the photo.

Me and my 1944 Willy's Jeep have been in many parades in the San Francisco Bay area.

## Parade Grand Marshal, John Tounger, tells of Life as a Soldier

Submitted By: **John S. Tounger**

*Company D, 271st Infantry*

1 Pine Hills Court

Oakland, California 94611-1530

From the **Castro Valley Forum** By **Martha Kennelly**

### Machine gunner was member of one of the units to encounter Russians during WWII

When John Tounger headed up last weekend's parade as Grand Marshal riding in a restored 1944 Willy's Jeep, it wasn't his first experience at being out front. Some 60 years ago when he was a machine gunner with the U.S. Army's 69th Infantry, Tounger recalls, "We were out in front; nobody was ahead of us."

Tounger was a member of one of the units to encounter an arm of the Russian forces in the midst of the fighting in Germany. They were 50 or 60 miles south of Berlin when Eisenhower stopped them. Even at the time the American soldiers knew the significance of this meeting - the German army had been cut in half.



*Germany - Tounger poses with his machine gun.*



*John Tounger shown with his 1944 Willy's Jeep that he rode in the parade as Grand Marshal.*

"Basically when we met the Russians, the war was over," says Tounger, who quotes General Eisenhower saying at the time that the meeting of forces "cut the war a week early."

"After the 25th of April there was no fighting for the Americans," he says. Russians were still involved in the battle for Berlin.

Tounger recalls with amusement that Patton and his forces were on one side of them and British General Montgomery on the other, both wanting to be the first to meet the Russian forces. That first contact of the 69th and the Russians took place in the evening; the next morning forces were deployed to clear a road free of snipers for a 20-mile stretch so the brass could reach the Russians.

What was Tounger's initial response when he saw the Russian forces? "When we met the Russians, we couldn't love people more - the war was over." Fifty years later, at a reunion for the 69th Infantry in Europe, Tounger met the same Russian veteran whom he had met on the historic occasion.

Tounger's memories of his war experiences are not all as fortunate as that memorable meeting up. Drafted at 18, six months from graduating from San Francisco's Commerce High School (he got his diploma six months early), Tounger was sent to the swamps of Mississippi for training, preparatory to being sent to the Pacific. The fighting in Europe was intensifying, however, so instead Tounger and his fellow soldiers were sent there. He recalls the troop ships fitted out to hold 2,500 men but loaded with 5,000. This meant two had to share a bunk in shifts. A bell rang after eight hours, and bunk occupants had to get up and go out on deck.

*(Continued on Page 19)*

**PARADE GRAND MARSHAL, JOHN TOUNGER, TELLS OF LIFE AS A SOLDIER**  
*(Continued from Page 18)*

A submarine attacked the convoy near Ireland. Tounger's ship made it to England but the one next to it went down.

The Battle of the Bulge was brewing, and riflemen and machine gunners (Tounger's classification) were soon shuttled by boat across the Channel. Once in France they were marched to a railroad station where German soldiers - prisoners of war - were unloading from boxcars, the old "40 and 8s" (40 men, 8 miles) variety of World War I. Tounger and the others loaded up, 50 to a car, to travel to a tent city.

Headed toward Belgium to relieve a battered division, Tounger saw a scene which he will never forget - frozen bodies of American soldiers, stacked six or seven high and a block long. Since the ground was also frozen, burial was impossible.

He recalls his unit landing in the foxholes of the 99th Division. "Where are the Germans?" he asked. All around you, in front of you and in back, he was told.

Scheduled to make an attack on the pillboxes of the Siegfried line, Tounger remembers an ammunition bearer saying that he wasn't going to go. The sergeant ordered him forward, but the man again refused, crushing his cigarette he was smoking into his eye and blinding himself. "But we made it to the Rhine," says Tounger.

Another memory is not taking his uniform off from Christmas Day until March 22, when they had a chance to bathe. He was given three pairs of socks, used in rotation. One pair on the feet, the second pair washed and still wet, dried by "packing around my belly," the third (dry) pair stored in his helmet.

Tounger has many other lasting memories of his experience. There was the three-day fight for Leipzig. "We fought house to house, floor to floor," says Tounger.

Tounger remembers encountering the concentration camp ovens near Buchenwald where bodies were burned for disposal, and their stench. And then there was the constant shelling, sometimes for 12 straight hours. The bombers (ours) were so thick, Tounger said, that "they would knock out the sun."

Out of all the death and misery Tounger cherishes one pleasant memory, after meeting with the Russians. The war for him had been over for three days, so when he asked the lieutenant if he could have some time off, the officer said, "Yes."

Tounger had heard that the 84th Division was nearby and he had a chum in the 84th, an engineering division. He started out, soon encountering a jeep



*Picture taken by Chuck Knebel, April 26th, 1945, about 5 miles out of Torgau going towards Eilenberg. I was in the Jeep behind my machine gun. I told Chuck to stop and grab his carbine and march alongside of the prisoners, estimated to be between 2 and 3 thousand Germans. This picture was on NBC News with the now deceased Peter Jennings.*

attached to the engineers. The driver gave him a ride to the headquarters area where he located his friend, Lester Nickles, and Nickles cooked him up a big dinner. Today, Nickles owns Val's Burgers in Hayward and Tounger frequently makes the trip from his Oakland home to sample again some of that good food.

\*\*\*\*\*

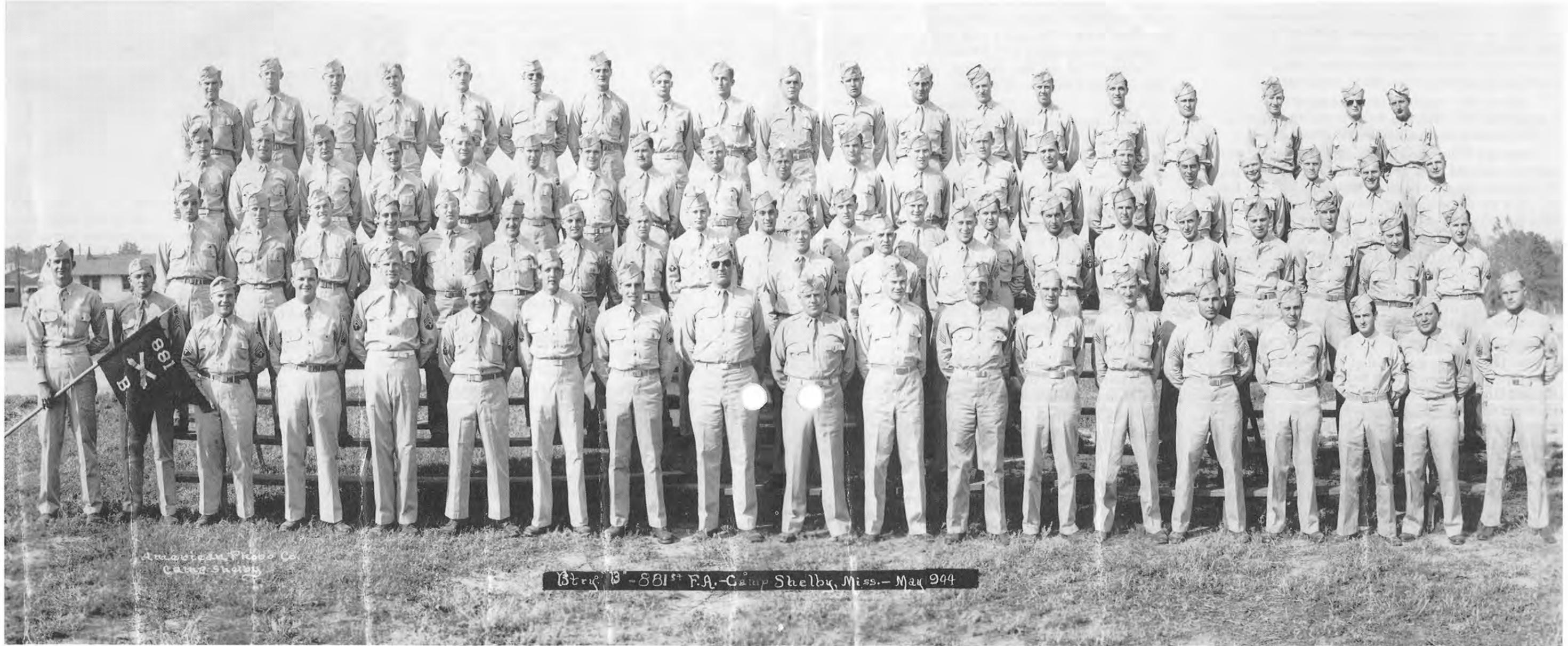
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**Battery B, 881st Field Artillery Battalion  
Camp Shelby, Mississippi – May 1944**

Submitted By: Lynn D. Farrar, 17516 92nd Avenue N.E., Bothwell, Washington 98011

# Buell Graves writes . . .

## Company M, 272nd

147 County Road 765  
Cullman, Alabama 35055

I enjoy the bulletin very much but I've also wondered why my old unit, Co. M, 272nd Infantry, is seldom mentioned. My daughter suggested that I send in some of my stories and that perhaps others from Company M, 272nd might be encouraged to do the same.

I served as a corporal in a transportation unit, responsible for 7 men. We drove jeeps with attached trailers hauling ammunition for the 80mm guns.

At the end of the war, I had to go to the hospital and so was separated from my company. Because of that, my picture does not appear in the group photo of Co. M, but I am listed under Former Members, Enlisted Men at the bottom of the company roster.

Several guys signed (and wrote down their home towns) in my copy of the History of the 272nd Infantry and my daughter was able to locate one: **Ernest Chauvin** of Louisiana. I am including the list and if anyone knows how I could locate any of them, I'd appreciate you getting in touch with me.

**T/Sgt. Lloyd A. Laughan** ..... Lynchburg, Virginia  
**Ernest Chauvin** ..... Houma, Louisiana  
(now in Loranger, Louisiana)

**Robert Highbaugh** ..... Alexandria, Indiana  
**Howard Gonsalves** ..... Hayward, California  
**John M. Sanft** ..... Baltimore, Maryland  
**Charles E. Shepard** ..... Knox, Indiana  
**Anthony Gallo** ..... Bronx, 67, NYC

I noticed that **Howard Gonsalves** was listed in the "Taps" section of the last Bulletin I received. My sympathies to his family.

I'd like to hear from anyone from Co. M, 272nd and encourage any of you out there to send in your stories to the bulletin.

### Memories of the War

At Camp Shelby we received small Spanish language books and we just knew we were going to the South Pacific. We got on trains and it seemed we went all over the country before we finally wound up at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey across the bay from New York.

After a few days, we were put on the boats and went to New York Harbor. I saw the Statue of Liberty. We loaded on the boats; a big troop ship, which though I can't recall, was probably the converted freighter MS Santa Maria.

The bunks were about one and a half feet apart, one on top of the other. You had to slide in, you couldn't climb in. This was in the winter and there was a storm all the way across. I got seasick, as did most of the other men. All I could eat was a little pat of butter

smear on a slice of bread. We were 13 days at sea and the whole time the ship would zigzag every five minutes. You threw up over the side or wherever you could get to.

It took three hours to feed us a meal; took that long to move through the line. The line wound down the stairs and back up again in the ship. By the time you got there, a lot of the guys would get seasick - all that steam and stuff coming up, and they would have to get out of line. The sea was so rough; the dishes would slide back and forth on the tables.

We landed in England but before we docked, we'd hear these big booms that would shake the whole ship. They must have been getting rid of the depth charges. I guess we weren't allowed to dock with those on the ship.

We went to Southhampton, England. We were sent to a camp south of London, in Winchester, England. The famous Winchester Cathedral is located there and I got to go in it. It was beautiful. We lived in arched metal huts that had dirt floors. They had stoves in the middle and shed latrines with 5 gallon buckets with stools on them. Every morning, an old farmer and his wife would come in and empty them. We used to call that old woman "Gravel Gertie" because she was so dirty looking.

It was very cold and foggy in England. Boy, it was cold. The fog was so thick, you couldn't see more than 40 feet and it didn't clear up until noon. We stayed there and trained.

It was at that time that the Battle of the Bulge was going on. On Christmas Day, we were called in and given a pep talk. Troops were needed to replace the ones killed in the Bulge and they were going to split our division and send half of us over. I wasn't chosen.

We had to wait there for more troops to fill our division. I got to go to London on a 3 day pass once. We stayed at the Royal Crown Hotel on Piccadilly Street. We mostly just walked around and did some sightseeing. They had a big party for us on New Year's Eve.

There were girls all around. At that time, I'd never heard of Mistletoe. Those girls were nice; they made you feel at home.

The English Red Cross was nice too. They would toast bread with cheese on it and hand it out. I thought that was the best thing I'd ever eaten. Sometimes I still make it.

When we crossed the English Channel, the Battle of the Ardennes Forest was in progress. We crossed in the middle of a blizzard and landed at Le Havre, France. There was big snow drifts piled up against the buildings. The snow was about two feet deep. It couldn't hide the fact that the city had been flattened. There were no buildings left standing.

*(Continued on Page 23)*

## MEMORIES OF THE WAR

BY BUELL GRAVES (Continued from Page 22)

We ate mostly K-rations. They were in a box like a popcorn box. They had a can of cheese, hard-tack crackers, and beef hash in a little can. Most of the time I swapped the beef hash for the cheese.

In camp, we had a mess hall. We had a kitchen out in the war. Sometimes we'd have breakfast for supper. Once, the Mess Sergeant was traveling up a mountain with a little trailer and three of his men. All of a sudden, they saw some German soldiers coming down the road. They unhooked that trailer, turned it around and got out of there in a hurry.

I was a corporal in charge of 7 jeeps with trailers that kept an 81mm mortar company supplied with shells. One of my drivers ran over a land mine and was killed.

It was cold and snowing. Once, we stayed in an old barn. The Germans had been slipping into our area wearing American overcoats. The order came down that anybody with an army overcoat on would be shot so we had to leave our overcoats there.

We went through Belgium, Rheims, France, and hit the Ardennes Forest where the fighting had been. I don't know how many miles of timber there was; every one of those trees was broken off 8-10 feet off the ground where they'd been shelled. There were dead Germans, shells and ammunition all around. We were moving up. When we got to Germany, up around the Siegfried Line, our division slipped in where the 99th Division 81mm mortars were and took their guns and they slipped out and took over ours. They got up and we got in their foxholes and gun emplacements and they came back up.

When we first moved up to get into battle, we crossed a small stream. There were some dead Germans at a crossroads there. One old guy propped up one of the dead Germans and struck a cigarette in his mouth.

Every time we stopped, we had to dig a foxhole. The ground was hard as rock. We'd have to camouflage our jeeps too. At night, the Germans would start shelling us. We never got hit. They might hit in front one time or over us to the rear the next time. We got strafed by a German plane one time. The German planes would come over and a few seconds later a P38 or P51 would be after them, chasing them away.

The worst time, we were moving pretty fast. We'd take 3-4 towns a day. The Germans were shelling us at one town. We were ordered to move back and they shelled that town to bits.

After the war, I returned home, married Nellie, a teacher, and raised three daughters. I farmed and eventually became a deputy sheriff. Later, I served 2 terms as sheriff of Cullman County in North Alabama. I'll never forget those days at Camp Shelby and in Germany with the 69th.

## The Army Shuffle

William Muldoon

Company E, 272nd Regiment

79 Elizabeth Drive

Bethpage, New York 11714-6434

I have been trying to sit down and write this letter for a long time. I was an original member of Co. E, 272nd Regiment since the Division started up in May of 1943. I was drafted and sent to Camp Shelby then and was just a civilian converted to army life.

After shuffling around, many of us were placed in Co. E, 272nd Regiment. At the time **Captain Guilford** was our Company Commander. We had all new officers just out of school from officers training in Georgia. Some names I can remember, **Lt. Hemingway, Lt. Weiner, Sgt. Vince DiLemma, Sgt. Henderson.**

At the time we started our Basic training, we were told by our Battalion Commander, **Colonel Lanham**, we would have a 13 week training period and if we passed all, we would get a 15 day furlough. We did everything we could and the furloughs started in September 1943. The second batch was called back and now the Division was selected for replacements.

There was a call up for about 1,000 replacements. Where they ended up was a mystery. We received some replacements. I think they were wounded men, ready for assignments, malaria, etc. Next in January early another call up for about 800 more men. Their destination unknown. In or about March 1943 was a big call up, about 1500 men. I know where this batch was going, I was one of them.

Co. E men whom I can remember are **Rex Kiser** from Kentucky, who was later hit by shrapnel in August 1944. Incidentally he is paralyzed from the hips down from this incident. **Eddie Netta** from New Jersey hit in August 1944 in The Hedge Rows, and myself, helping to close The Argentine-Falace Gap in France 1944. So you can gather from this writing so far, we started out in Normandy, sent to France, Belgium and Germany, crossed the border 9-14-44 into Germany (Hurtzgen Forest) then chased back by the Battle of the Bulge. Secured it later on, then into Germany, in action by the Remagen Bridge, held it until it collapsed on March 17, 1945. All this was done while in Co. L, 47th Reg, 9th Infantry Division.

So from this story we had good training at Camp Shelby, Mississippi. As young men of 18 years of age till the wars end May 1944, then about 20 years old.

It is an experience I will always remember from start to finish. Hope by reading this article someone will remember the good old days.

Dottie and crew, keep up the good work and keep the Bulletin coming to us. All of you do a very excellent job.

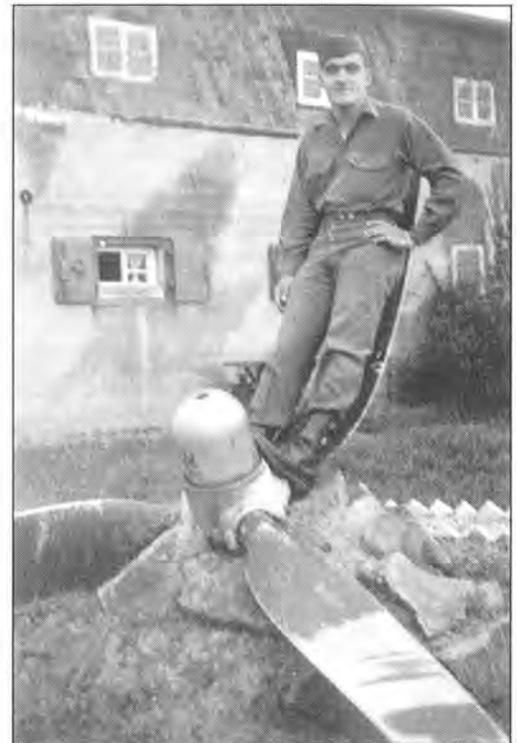
# Battery A, 880th Field Artillery

Submitted By: **Lloyd H. Gerth**

403 South 4th Street, Princeton, Minnesota 55371



*This photo was snapped just as we were ready to pull out of position after completing the firing problem. I am sitting on the left side of the truck second from the tail gate.*



*Taken by the pillbox that I lived in near Langwarden, Germany. August 1945. I am standing on a propeller from a U.S. plane that had been shot down.*



*Captain Barnett  
with his adopted dog.  
Merseburg, Germany  
June 1945*



*German Bomber  
with Piggy Back Fighter  
Merseburg, Germany  
June 1945*



*Pillbox in the camp near Langwarden, Germany  
Base was on the North Sea  
August 1945*

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# Bulletin prompts a look back

Submitted By: **Sam B. Lewis**

*Company B, 273rd Regiment*

717 West San Antonio, #11, Lockhart, Texas 78644

Telephone: 512/376-9412

I received the latest bulletin and was quite surprised and pleased to see the cover. Those, and others inside, are men in my platoon; 2nd platoon, Company B, 273rd Regiment. There are two names I don't remember; **James Gray**, and **Harold Sprang**. But from Harold's looks, he qualifies. Here is what I know about some of them. **Walegir** was my first squad leader. **Sokoloff** was my aid man, and he is standing by my four-man dugout. **Ruthoviski** led the second squad, **Threlkeld** had the third squad, and **Roth** was Bazooka ammo bearer and, I think, was in the third squad. And, **Corun** (I spelled it with an m), was my platoon sergeant. He must have been about 6'2" and strong enough to dig a deep foxhole on the hillside at Kamberg. I had to jump in on top of him when some shelling started.

I had a nice chat with **Fenn, Jr.** and told him what I knew. I suppose his father knew of those photos and that they were in the National Archives in Washington. That is where **Sheavly** found them. He told me he spent several days there.

The photographer, Maurice Levy, was a personal friend and we were in the same class of '43 at Texas A&M. (**Kotzebue** was in the class of '45).

There is a follow-up on the **Roth** story. It may be of particular interest to **Robert L. Pierce**, author of the "Who is this Guy" article in the 2005 summer issue of the Bulletin. After I received his book, I spoke with **Bill Sheavly** and I think I got **Roth's** address and telephone number from him. I called him and told him who I was. He had to ask me again who I was. He didn't remember my name, which is reasonable as there had been no occasions for us to speak with each other. I did most of the talking and he seemed to have little immediate recollections of wartime past. Later, I sent him some photos and printings of that time. Then, in early July last year, I received a four page hand written letter from him, and he was quite forthcoming in an account of post wartime life. If **Robert Pierce** and anyone else is interested, I will be happy to send them a copy.

My own reaction to this entire event about **Roth** is that he was a typical young man caught up in the war who did what he was told, and luckily survived it all. When it was over, he came home, got married, got a job and got on with his life, which is exactly what I did. There must be a million or more such stories.

On September 1st, 1939, Hitler went to Poland and I went to Texas A&M. Three years, seven months and about 23 days later, I was about 100 miles south of where he was, and I was a lot better off. What follows here, is most of the Foreword to my wartime memoirs.

This is a simple narrative of events, as I have been able to recall them, of the times from January 1943 until June 1946. And I suspect it is very much like what happened to thousands of young officers who answered their country's call. I was in a combat situation for just under three months where others were in much longer. Some were never in a life threatening situation. Most of us accomplished no great deeds of warfare. But as an army, we managed to bring about the defeat of two of the most evil and hated regimes in history.

"War is a terrible thing." I remember thinking when I finally returned home that I wouldn't take a million dollars for my experiences, but if I had that much, I would give it all not to have to go through it again. One day, one close call, is enough war for any man. And I though my own contribution was small by comparison to others. I was none the less proud of what I did during this time. I did what I was asked to do. I was shot at by sniper and machine gun, and endured shelling. But I never quit, never turned tail and ran, and I believe I had the respect of the 37 men under my command. They followed where I led and did what they had to do. In the final analysis, I can honestly say that I was an Officer and a Gentleman, and I was a good soldier.

All of these recent events have triggered a rush of memories of that time. In 1981 I wrote my wartime memoirs which I called, "**Sam, The War Years.**" Several stories were published in the bulletin. I'm sending another one.

My wife, and I have made ten trips to Europe. The first one was July 1966, and included our four daughters, ages 10 through 18. We landed in Brussels and the next day in a rented van, drove right back to the village of Miescheid. Our sixth trip came in March 1984. After two days visiting some wartime friends in Brussels, we two drove again to Miescheid. This time after we passed through Malmady we came to the top of a hill and before us we saw nothing but fields of snow. The scene was just like I remember on a similar trip in trucks in February 1945. We stopped and I drank it all in. It was an emotional time.

The photographs here were taken that day. (See page 27 for photos). The people living in the restored house (where our men died that night in February 1945) remembered us and invited us in for a nice visit. A young man there took us to Kamberg which I did not get to in 1966. In one, the telephoto shot, the dark spot on the horizon is of the infamous pillbox #17; the object of Lucci's patrol that night. It was obvious to me that it had been blown up. Finally, on the horizon beyond, is the town of Udenbreth. Miescheid is way off to the right. The other shot, taken from the same spot, is where **Sergeant Corun** and I were sniped at from the bunker. Following are my account of events that day, taken from my book.

*(Continued on Page 26)*

## BULLETIN PROMPTS A LOOK BACK

(Continued from Page 25)

### Chapter 4 Action

Our first "action" came February 27th in the taking of the village of Kamberg, which had been the objective of my patrol described earlier. We waited north of the village at dawn for an hour while our artillery shelled the town. As we went up the hill into the town, it became clear that the Germans had pulled out. I was ordered to have my platoon dig in on the slope of the hill east of town and facing the town of Rieschied which the Germans still held. I always had trouble digging as I was never very strong in my arms, and now we were subject to a possible counterattack or artillery fire and so I had to dig in. I picked a new shell hole to have a start and finally got deep enough to get my head below the top of my foxhole. It was still quiet so I decided to check my men who were scattered for 50 yards along the hillside. My Platoon Sergeant was **Willard Corun** from Tennessee. **Corun** was about 6'2" and a little older than I. I was at one end of the platoon area and he was at the other. When I got down to him, he was still digging. It was lucky for me that he was because just as I got there, here comes the shelling we had awaited. I jumped in beside him and we were both below the top of the hole. The shelling lasted about twenty minutes. Twice shells landed close enough to throw dirt in on us, but not a man was hit in our company during the shelling. We stayed on the hillside all day.

Earlier as we came up to the town, one man in another company was killed by a sniper firing from a pillbox which had been by-passed. Word got around to avoid a certain area under observation by the snipers. Later in the afternoon I was told to find places for my men to bed down for the night. It meant crossing that open area of about 100' or so. I started across at a slow run with my sergeant behind me. About half way across I heard that shot and saw a flash of red in front of my face. The sniper had fired a tracer bullet at me, but luckily he aimed a little ahead of me. I saw the dirt kick up to my right and one of our men waiting behind a house yelled out, "Watch out lieutenant, he almost got you." I ran on and got right by the body of the G.I. who had been shot earlier - right through the heart. I guess that would count as my closest call. After dark, two Germans soldiers from the pillbox came in and surrendered. I was there and from the way our Captain felt, I knew those two were lucky they weren't killed on the spot. But they were not.

While we were still dug in on the side of the hill, the town of Rieschied across the valley was attacked by another company. I knew the attack was to take place and when it started we could see our men going up to the town. And I was at one end of our platoon area and the company C.P. was near the other end. Word went to my men to open fire on the town itself, away from the attacking force just as a way of keeping the

Germans confused. Well, I never got the word about the support firing and I thought my own men were firing on American soldiers. I was yelling at the top of my lungs to cease fire - I really felt sick. Finally one of my nearby men came over to my foxhole and told me about the orders to fire on the town.

After the snipers surrendered and the other town was taken, I was told to lead a reconnaissance patrol on beyond that town to see how far back the German soldiers had withdrawn. I went over to that town and on past their last guard post and a couple of hundred yards down the road we finally could see a farm house just off the road. It was very dark and difficult to see. I remembered being scared and I finally decided since we hadn't seen anyone and no one had seen us that we should go back. I went back to the company C.P. of the company which took the town. The town was almost flattened and presented one of the most dismal scenes I remember seeing. I walked by a dead G.I. who had been there for hours. I later made a sketch of what I remembered.



Leading a recon patrol back thru Rieschied, Germany at midnight. Town was taken that afternoon - town was leveled. Dead GI still lies in street. Men bringing chow container back to "Weasel."

The next day we moved on to search the hill next to us. We were to just walk over the area and as we came to the wooded area, start firing into the woods - it was known as "marching fire." This was the first time I had actually fired my carbine. I fired a clip of bullets and we flushed out a couple of German soldiers from the woods. We dug in again on the bare part of the hill. It was cold again and some men hit water in their foxholes. We were all bone tired and cold. We found some straw nearby and most of us gathered enough to line our foxholes and make them bearable. We knew we

(Continued on Page 27)

## BULLETIN PROMPTS A LOOK BACK

*(Continued from Page 26)*

were subject to counter-attacks but I don't think anyone was worried enough to stay awake and watch. I think I left my gas mask at my foxhole on that hill near Schnorrenberg.

The next day I was back in the woods where the captain had a dugout covered with logs. We had received a few new men as replacements for those who had become sick. While I was there, we were subject to an attack of large mortar shell fire. They were called Nebulwafers, but we called them "screaming meemies." The shells were about 10" in diameter and had holes in the base which made a screaming sound as they rotated in the air. The first salvo hit the top of the trees and scattered shrapnel all over the woods. I took cover in the Captain's dugout, but two or three new men were hit. I left to go to the Battalion aid station to get help. About half way there another salvo started at us and I was still in the woods with no place to take cover. I know I turned around at least twice trying to decide which way to go. I hit the ground and tried to get under a fallen tree branch about 2" in diameter. It must have made a funny sight, but I didn't think it was funny at the time. I made it back to Battalion C.P. and got the medics started back. I stayed there a while and I remember being next to the Battalion Commander and I tried to be light-hearted about the whole thing and I said something like, "Well I've had about enough of this, I'd like to go home now." The Major said he would too but didn't think we should.

One of the new men was brought in. He had been hit in the leg with a piece of shell about the size of a man's hand. Almost severed his leg. I never knew his name or how he made out.

We were replaced at this time by another regiment, and allowed a few days rest back in the woods near Miescheid; right where we were unloaded a few weeks earlier. I had a dugout, a hole in the ground covered over with logs and dirt. Four of us used it. Me, my Sergeant, a runner and a medic. There is a picture in a magazine of **Private Sokoloff**, my Medic standing by the dugout. This picture is labeled "Aid Station" but it was my C.P. (Command Post).

Soon after we got settled, we enjoyed our first cooked meal in three weeks. We had turkey and dressing - like Thanksgiving. I sat out in the woods in the snow, after dark, with a misty rain falling in my food and it still tasted great.

After a couple of days off - including a trip back to the rear area to have our first shower in a month, we were alerted to move out. I was sent ahead to look over our new positions in the town

of Hellenthal. While I was there, an army photographer came to our company area to take pictures of typical G.I.'s who had just seen their first action. Those pictures were published in papers all across the country and won an award of some kind, for the photographer. Six of the pictures were of men in my platoon. I have a book published by the Reader's Digest for the Army Special Services and given out in Europe. It was written by Colonel Karl Detzer of the Army General Staff. These pictures are published in this book on page 101, 116, and 132. The one I mentioned above of Private Sokoloff is on page 132. I have copied and reproduced some of the pictures. It turned out the pictures were taken by Maurice Levy, a cameraman for N.B.C. who I knew at college. After I came home, Lorraine and I went to see him and his wife. There we were, surprised to see large blow-ups of these same pictures. Maurice had no idea they were of my men.



Kamberg, Gernay 1984: Large building in the center is a new one. Fence to the left is a new one but where the old one was. The junk cars weren't there in 1945 either. Sergeant Corun and I ran from the far right to the building on the far left of this photo.



A telephoto shot taken from the same place of the pillbox - bunker #17 looking back towards Udenbreath barely visible on the horizon. Miescheid is off to the right.

# Infantryman recalls 'Hell!'

**Harold Sprang**, *Company E, 273rd Infantry*  
192 State Route 603 W., Shiloh, Ohio 44878  
E-Mail: pegsprang@zoominternet.net

From the News Journal

By Ron Simon

When the men of the 69th Infantry Division cracked the Siegfried Line in the winter of 1945, the New York Times ran a page full of photos of weary, half-frozen soldiers with some of their comments about the battle. (Appeared in the last issue of the bulletin, cover and page 4 and 5. Harold's picture was on page 5.)

Among the photos was one of a weather-beaten young man peering at the camera from under his steel pot. His name was **Pvt. Harold Sprang**, Lucas, Ohio. His only comment: "Hell!"

At the age of 79, Sprang, a retired farmer, banker and factory hand, still thinks that was an accurate description of the hard fighting that closed out the Battle of the Bulge and advanced the war into Germany.

The friendly old fellow who moves around his home with the help of a walker is a far cry from the tough-looking kid in that New York Times photo.

He and his wife, Peggy, now married for nearly 56 years, live in a comfortable brick home on Ohio 603 west of Shenandoah. This is where they settled in 1949 so that he could farm when he wasn't working at Westinghouse or as a cashier at a Shiloh Bank.

Now he watches the History Channel "to see what all those guys in World War II went through," he said.

Sprang was one of them. A replacement sent at speed to Europe to help make up for the huge American losses during the Battle of the Bulge, he was dropped into the middle of a bitter war in the middle of winter.

"It's so hard to remember," Sprang said of those distant days. He can remember people with ease. Sequences of events and dates are harder.

- An Army dentist in a small office in a German town took out two of his teeth during a lull in the fighting.
- The German 88"s. "We called them the screaming meemies. Sure heard a lot of them."
- The day a truckload of soldiers overturned on a back road in Belgium. After the crash, a few moments of silence. Then the screams of pain. Sprang remembers trying to find a camera in his back-pack. A medic reached him. "Soldier, you're bleeding like a stuck pig." Sprang was 10 days in the hospital. Then his lieutenant showed up. "You're going back to your unit," he said. Sprang remembers his heart sinking. But the day he got back, the war ended. Beer instead of bullets.
- Riding Sherman tanks into battles. "I was on the first tank. The scout. My lieutenant told a sergeant on a rear tank to exchange places with me. Not long after that a German rocket hit that first tank and nearly everybody was killed."



*Harold Sprang of Shenandoah was a combat infantryman during World War II. He won the coveted Combat Infantry Badge and a Bronze Star. One of his house cats, Maggie, listens as he is interviewed.*

- Flushing German soldiers out of a barn and watching one German run down a hillside, shredding his steel helmet, his pack and even his weapon in a mad dash to reach trees before he could be shot. As far as Sprang knows, the man made it. He remembers everybody - including he - was firing at the fleeing man.
- Sleeping inside a pile of straw. The pleasure of that night remains sweet in his memory. Sleeping was done in houses, barns and sometimes in foxholes on bitter winter nights.
- Taking the Siegfried line with its rows of concrete dragons' teeth to keep tanks away. "One of our bulldozers took a row of them out. Somebody said it took 200,000 man years to build that line."

Not that it worries him much, but Sprang wonders why he never got a Purple Heart for that injury suffered in the truck accident. "I guess an injury has to be suffered in direct combat," he said. But there are other medals.

If the memories of combat are sporadic or misty, the results are solid. Sprang earned a handful of medals including the Combat Infantry Badge, several campaign ribbons and a Bronze Star that simply arrived in the mail one day in 1991. It was addressed to Technician Fifth Grade Harold R. Sprang, for meritorious achievement in ground combat against an armed enemy during World War II.

It was Harold Sprang's winter of pure hell.

Harold grew up in Lucas where his father, Howard, was a mail carrier. He was still in high school when his draft notice arrived in early 1944.

"I had just turned 18 and as quick as that happened you got grabbed," he said.

(Continued on Page 29)

## INFANTRYMAN RECALLS 'HELL!'

(Continued from Page 28)

He trained as an infantryman and replacement at Fort Joseph Robinson in Arkansas for 16 weeks.

He had one quick week of Christmas leave in Lucas and then headed for Camp Joyce Kilmer in New Jersey. He was part of a large shipment of soldiers who made a fast trip to Glasgow aboard the Queen Elizabeth. "All the fineries were gone. The ship was filled with bunks," he said.

From Glasgow the new soldiers rode in little boxcars on a train to Southampton. Then it was on to France by Tank Landing Ship, which made a night crossing of the English Channel.

From Le Harve it was more travel by boxcar to Belgium and then by foot to units that had been mauled during the Battle of the Bulge. From that point on, it was slug and slog to the Rhine River and into Germany.

His unit was one of the first to meet Russian soldiers on the Elbe River in central Germany. He never actually got to meet any Russians.

When the war ended, Sprang was far short of the needed points to go home. He became a member of the occupation army. His jobs ranged from driving trucks to typing. He was with the 29th Infantry in Bremen and later Frankfurt.

"Everything in Germany was kaput!" he said. "Just rubble everywhere."

He spent some time in England, taking a course in mechanics. He even gave piano lessons a brief try. His big adventure was taking a Red Cross-sponsored ride on a ship up and down the majestic Rhine River. He remembers the castles, the hillside vineyards and the fact that his ship was Adolph Hitler's former yacht. "It still had swastikas on it," he said.

Once home, Sprang worked as a dispatcher for the old CCC Freight Company and got a job at Westinghouse. He and Peggy moved to her family's farm near Shenandoah and he became a part-time dairy farmer.

They had three children and several grandchildren. One son, Robert, who died in an auto accident at the age of 32, was in the Army's 101st Airborne Division. A granddaughter, Gretchen, is an Army medic who served a tour of duty in Iraq.

In past years, Harold and Peggy have traveled to Europe to see the old battlefields and much more. They have also gone to several unit reunions and keep in touch with Harold's old army buddies.

Events may be fading in Harold Sprang's mind but the faces and names of his war-time buddies never do.

## Engineers Pig Roast

Submitted By: **Lloyd B. Roth**

*H & S Company, 269th Engineers*

108 Muskingum Drive

Marietta, Ohio 45750

Those of you who spent time at Camp Shelby surely remember one of our favorite Unit Training Grounds. Yes, the DeSoto National Forest. Thousands of acres of second growth pine, scrub oak and its flinty clay soil.

Now surprisingly the state of Mississippi had free grazing rights which allowed the owners of animals to let them roam free and live wherever they choose. Thus, the Desoto National was one vast grazing area, especially for swine, with its abundance of acorns which those pigs just loved.

I forget the exact date but it must have been in the late fall of 1943 when we Engineer troops went deep into the confines of the DeSoto National for a two day training exercise. We left Shelby late in the day and finally headed into our designated area of DeSoto after dark. This was also a tactical vehicle march under blackout conditions. Remember those tiny little blackout lights on our vehicles! Each one gave out about as much light as a kitchen match at 50 paces.

Finally the trucks grind to a halt, squad leaders, in low breath, tell us to get out, pair up and pitch tents. Late chow would be ready in thirty minutes.

The next few minutes was just short of utter confusion - name calling, mumbling, swearing, stumbling and falling. Unrolling our packs, pitching our tents, putting down blankets for beds was aided somewhat by one blackout flashlight issued to every other man.

Now to the kitchen truck for a late bit of chow. What a surprise. In the dim light from the kitchen we saw a dead pig lying nearby. To we old farm boys it appeared to weigh about 250 lbs.

What happened? On the way in, under blackout, the kitchen truck ran over the pig and killed it. The kitchen crew not knowing who owned the pig and not wanting to file a report, decided to butcher the animal, roast it over a low fire and serve it for breakfast.

We ate and went back to our tents with visions of roast pig dancing in our heads. Come morning we grabbed our mess kits and went drooling to the chow line.

Next the big surprise and what a shock. No cooks serving hot pork, but nearby was the remnant of a wooded spit, the resemblance of some burnt offering, that faintly resembled the pig of the night before.

We called the cooks all kinds of names and voted to have them reduced in rank.

It was dead serious then, but laughable now. Anybody still around from H & S Co. that remembers that one?

**59th Annual Reunion**  
**King of Prussia, PA**  
**August 14th thru 20th, 2006**

# Your Battery's War Battery B, 881st F.A.

As Recorded By: George N. Custis

85-59 87th Street, Woodhaven, New York 11421

## FOREWORD

Our combat days began at Mirfield, Belgium, and ended at Leipzig, Germany. To reach Leipzig, we have gone a long way together. We crashed the Siegfried Line at Ramscheid, Reischeid and Hellenthal, Germany. We have toured the Rhine from Cologne to Coblenz. We have seen ruined Cologne, Bonn, and Coblenz. We have seen the picture-card scenery of the beautiful Rhine; we have enjoyed the world-famous Rhine wine; we crossed the Rhine not far from the now historic Remagen bridgehead; we stayed near Ehrenbreitstein where the American flag flew until 1923 and where it flies again today. We saw ruined Kassel; we joined in the battle of the Weser and Fulda Crossings. We helped our doughboys into Hann Munden and Hede Munden; we joined in the battle for Leipzig's approaches and finally we fought in the climatic battle of our short career - the battle for Leipzig.

We have lived at times like kings, at others not so good. We have lived in ancient castles, in the homes of the Nazi wealthy as well as in the farmhouses of the poor. We have wine and dined on the best as well as the worst; we have seen the columns of liberated peoples of many nations streaming along the roads. We have seen the joy on the faces of the Allied POW's as they were liberated from Nazi tyranny; we have laughed at the feeble attempts of Goring's Luftwaffe as it tasted the sting of our 50's and the AA's 40mm; we have seen the seemingly endless streams of Hitler's supermen as they straggled by, in POW columns; we have seen the enemy dead still lying where they died for their "Fuhrer."

All this we have seen and experienced along with untold thousands of other experiences which will undoubtedly form topic for conversation for a lifetime.

**T/4 C. T. Jones**

Headquarters Battery

\* \* \* \* \*

**21st November 1944**

**We left Camp Shelby for Camp Kilmer, New Jersey**

Mississippi, with its snake infested swamps, innumerable insects and bugs, flimsy wooden huts, dusty road marches, long hikes, torrid weather, bitter cold days, and of course, Laurel and "Snatchburg" would only remain a fleeting memory after today. For eighteen long months, filled to capacity with tedious training schedules, arduous field exercises, we had been preparing for this day. Today, we were to begin the first leg of our overseas journey, by train to some clandestine port and from there-who knew!

The shrill sound of **Sgt. Hagg's** whistle seemed to herald the culmination of our stay at Shelby, as we awoke from a restless night's sleep. After carrying our mattresses from the huts to the kitchen, we ate a hurried breakfast outside.

Our duffel bags packed the day before, we were given a final check for military equipment and the few items of personal articles that we were permitted to carry. Seven pounds of personal belongings were all that we were authorized to carry and many hours of thought and packing went into our boodle - the constant touch a G.I. has with civilian life. Then our duffel bags were loaded onto trucks and taken to the rail spur.

The rest of the morning we spent in policing up the area, sweeping and cleaning huts, and prophesying the future.

The old Army story of "hurry up and wait" was apparent in the afternoon - we were waiting. Most of the men occupied the time by sleeping and writing, while others just talked.

Finally at 1700, the order came to move to the motor park. With our O.D.s and blouses on and carrying our musette bags and bedrolls, we marched in a straggling column to the trucks. After being checked and rechecked for our names, serial numbers and shipment number, we mounted on QM trucks and rode to the rail spur.

At 1800, with the 65th Division Band playing the Field Artillery March, and General Maraist solemnly looking on, we boarded the train. Within five minutes of the time the first truck reached the rail spur, we had our seats and were moving out. After removing our packs and arranging our equipment, we settled down for the ride.

"This is it," and "We're off now," were heard frequently, but most of the men were quietly thinking and looking at the countryside as the train moved along.

Chow was served late in the G.I. kitchen car, and about 2200 most of the men went to bed. Through the night, we went through Birmingham, and when the guard woke us in the morning, we had crossed the Georgia border.

Our second day aboard the train began with the guard walking down the aisle yelling, "Reveille," and thumping each individual wherever his hand or fist might land. After we had finished dressing and stowing away our equipment for the day, the porters came and folded up our berths for us. We were in our glory then. Paper plates, forks, spoons, and cups were issued to us for every meal. We ate in the customary G.I. troop train style.

Whistling at the girls seemed to be the fad when the train stopped as it did all too seldom. During the morning, the most industrious walked around the train visiting their friends and found that we had two cars and part of a third for the battery. One, a compartment car, housed all the officers and the Detail

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## **YOUR BATTERY'S WAR, BATTERY B, 881st F.A.**

*(Continued from Page 30)*

Section. The other, a Pullman, was occupied by the firing battery. Most of us spent the time in reading, playing cards, "shooting the breeze," and watching the outside world go by.

After lunch that day, **Sgt. Freda** gave a class on enemy map-reading in his compartment. It was attended by most of the drivers and Chiefs-of-Section. The rest of the afternoon was spent in reading and sleeping.

On the morning of the third day, most of us were getting train weary. However, there was a pleasant thought in our minds. This was Thanksgiving Day and we were thinking of the dinner that we were to have that day. If you don't know what an Army Thanksgiving Day Dinner is like - well, take my word for it, it is the best that can be had under the circumstances, and we were not disappointed this time.

The dinner consisted of roast turkey, cranberry sauce, creamy mashed potatoes, giblet gravy, green peas, yellow corn, celery, radishes, fruit cocktail, cookies, nuts, candy, cake, bread and butter, coffee, sugar, and cream.

After this sumptuous meal there was only one thing that we could possibly do, and we did it - sleep!

That night for supper, for those of us that could eat, we had another delicious meal of turkey hash.

About dusk that night we passed through Washington and we admired the beautiful monuments and soft shaded lights. At 2000 we passed through Baltimore and at 2200, through Philadelphia.

Finally at 0100, the next morning, Friday, 24 November, we arrived at our destination, Camp Kilmer, New Jersey.

### **"Ritter"**

\* \* \* \* \*

**24 November, 1944**

We arrived at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, as part of the New York Port of Embarkation (NYPE).

At about 0100, this morning the train pulled into Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, after a tiresome two and one-half day ride from Camp Shelby.

We dismounted and carrying all our equipment, except our duffle bags marched about a quarter of a mile to a row of large one hundred man, two story, barracks. The battery was to use two barracks between "A" and "C" batteries.

There was one large mess hall for that whole section of camp. A cafeteria style method of "Feeding out" was used. The mess hall seated many hundreds at one sitting, but even then it took over two hours to feed everyone.

While here, we were "processed," for the trip across. This consisted of several physical examinations, lectures and drills on lifeboat procedures, displays of equipment used on lifeboats, movies of life aboard a troop transport, checking service records, and making class E allotments.

We also had a final inspection of all our equipment for service ability, and were given new gear in exchange for anything that was defective. Our carbines were turned in to Ordnance and a new type sight was installed on them.

The PX had almost anything that we needed. Besides the telephones there, there was a tailor and a barber. They served sandwiches as well as hot dogs, cokes, ice cream sodas and milk shakes.

During most of our stay here at Kilmer, the telephones were restricted and we were not permitted to use them. However, on the Saturday and Sunday that we were there, the restriction was lifted and we could call anywhere. We were amazed at the speed in which long-distance calls were put through. You stepped into a phone booth, after waiting in line for several hours, gave the operator the number you wanted, and in a few moments you have your party, no matter where you were calling. Recalling the many hours, the writer spent waiting in Service Club No. 3, this was a pleasant contrast.

The night before we left, most of us saw the movie, "Meet Me In St. Louis," at the camp theatre, and the next night we boarded the train that was to take us to the pier and the ship.

One thing we all were hoping for, during our entire stay here, was a pass. We were told that we might get one if time permitted. We did get one twenty-four hour pass.

On Sunday afternoon, when our processing was finished, about one-half of the battery got passes. The men who lived within traveling distance or who had relatives living nearby, were given the first opportunity to leave camp. The rest of the battery got their passes on Monday evening.

Most of the men went to visit New York City, on their pass. For many, it was their first visit there. The consensus of opinion was that it is an amazing town. To many of us who lived there, that was no news, we knew it all the time.

### **"Custis"**

\* \* \* \* \*

**29 November, 1944**

**Lt. Wilson, Lt. Vitullo, and T/5 Hans** went to New York P.O.E. as loading detail for the ship.

This is my story and experiences that I encountered as part of the advanced party or work detail which forwarded the complete troop movement from Camp Kilmer to our ship.

On the morning of 28 November, 1944, as I was working in the kitchen at Camp Kilmer, an order came down from Battalion Headquarters requesting my presence at that office immediately. With a jump and a bustle, I was there only to find that we were to be taken to an engineer outfit briefing room in which we would receive all instructions. Upon arriving, we were told what our job would consist of, when we would leave, and what advantages these jobs had aboard ship.

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## **YOUR BATTERY'S WAR, BATTERY B, 881st F.A.** *(Continued from Page 31)*

I, being a baker, along with three other bakers from our battalion, were to do the baking one shift aboard ship. That was all fine but we knew very little about the ship's equipment, but later found it to be very excellent.

At 0430 of the morning of 29 November, we left Kilmer with everything we owned on our backs. It was a heck of a rough walk to the train with all of this duffel, but in true Army style, we boarded the train and were off to points unknown. In about one hour and forty-five minutes we got off the train and were loaded on a ferry boat. After about a thirty minute ride we pulled up along side our ship, and in very little time, we were loaded, for we of the work detail had all priority in loading. After assigning us to our bunks, which were very fine, we were then introduced to our respective jobs. Our shift went to work first, and in all my association with the baking business, I have never seen a better equipped bakery. There were three nine-shelf double peel ovens, two dough mixers, one large and one small cake mixer, three very fine work benches, one electric bread slicer, and four bread troughs. Our ship also had a cooling room and six proofing boxes. This, believe it or not, was the bakery aboard ship.

The first day, we produced three thousand pounds of bread and one hundred twenty-five sheet pans of peach pie and that was the usual amount of daily production for the entire trip.

To give the reader a picture of the amount of food needed for a trip such as this, let's look at a few figures.

We fed 4,500 men per day, two meals, and the work detail and crew of about 600 men ate three meals. That makes a total of 9600 meals per day. Our voyage lasted thirteen days, giving a grand total of meals for the voyage of 124,800 meals. To the best of my knowledge, the ship had provisions on board for twenty-five days, which means that they could have served one quarter of a million meals. These are the true figures, believe it or not.

Now to try to tell of some of the aggravating things that happened during the trip. In the first, the rough weather caused us considerable trouble, for all our troughs were on rollers, and if you ever forgot to lash them down, well, just get ready to do some fancy jumping when the boat listed from side to side. The worst thing that we had happen was for a full trough of sliced peaches to break loose, on one of our roughest days. Man! That bakery was splattered with peaches from top to deck and so were we trying to get it coralled.

There was just one time that I was scared on the whole voyage, and that was the morning of the tenth day out, when our fighter escort picked up a sub on their radar equipment. The destroyers began to drop depth charges. I was working that morning and believe it or not, those charges sounded like they were going off right beside our ship, and until we found out

what was happening, there was a pretty quiet lunch in that bake shop.

At the end of our voyage, we rejoined our respective batteries and thus ended a very nice ocean crossing.

**"Hans"**

\* \* \* \* \*

**30 November, 1944**

We left Camp Kilmer today.

At about 1930, we were marched to a train-yard about a half mile away. Our duffel bags had been sent on ahead and by the time we arrived at the train they had already been loaded.

Every man had been given a number which indicated the car and seat he was to occupy. His duffel bag had been placed on his seat and it was important that each man occupy his seat and only his seat.

We wore our heavy O.D.'s, sweaters, combat jackets, and overcoats. To add to all this, we had to carry full field packs with bed rolls strapped to them. Under all this weight, it was all a man could do to even stand up, yet somehow, we all managed to make the march to the train, or perhaps I should say, we all staggered to the train.

The men were in a formation that enabled everyone to get to his seat with the least amount of confusion and delay, so that the whole train was loaded and on its way in less than ten minutes after the men arrived.

The trip to the port took about an hour, during which we were most uncomfortable because of the excess clothing that we were wearing and the crowded conditions of the car. Finally the train did come to a halt in a pier in New York City. We got off the train and walked several hundred yards to a ferry boat that was waiting for us. After the whole trainload of men had gotten on, the boat pulled out. About halfway across the harbor we passed the Statue of Liberty. I guess I'll never forget that sight. I wondered, just as every man on that boat must have, if I would ever see that "Grand Old Lady," again. It was at that moment that I began to fully realize just what leaving America meant.

As the boat got closer to the opposite shore, we could see many large ocean liners loading up and we wondered just which one would be ours. We didn't have long to wait, or wonder about that, for soon our boat pulled into a pier besides a tremendous liner. We walked off the ferryboat and onto the next pier, where we lined up and waited our turn to get on the ship. While we waited a colored band played some lively tunes and this helped to jack up our spirits a trifle. The ever-present Red Cross was also there and they helped our morales by serving hot coffee and doughnuts.

Finally the big moment came. We stepped up to the foot of the gangplank, under some glaring floodlights. Someone yelled, "Custis," and I answered, "George N., C5054, and then up the walk and into the depths of the ship I went, another step nearer to the war.

**"Custis"**

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## YOUR BATTERY'S WAR, BATTERY B, 881st F.A.

(Continued from Page 32)

### 1 December, 1944

Boarded USS Lejune, bound for Europe

At about 0100 this morning we boarded the ship that was to take us to the war. After being assigned to bunks, we tried to get some sleep.

At about 0830, the ship slowly pulled away from the pier, and we were on our way. It had started so gently that most of us did not know that we had started to move.

The ship was a captured German luxury liner, and it had been converted to a troop transport by the Navy. It was the largest transport operated by the Navy, being over 550 feet long. It was powered by a steam turbine engine and had a diesel auxiliary motor.

There were about 4,500 men on board, consisting of Division Artillery and other attached units. Also aboard were Generals Rinehardt and Mariast. The sailors told us that this was the first time they had ever seen any commanders sailing with their troops. Usually, they flew over. It is a credit to both officers that they elected to share the risk of the voyage with their men.

Bunks had been fitted in the hold making it possible to use a single loading method instead of the double load that we expected.

We were served two meals a day, and they were both plentiful and good. We had also had fresh pastry every day. This was especially good as our own **Bob Hans** helped in most of this work.

The time was spent in reading, writing letters, playing cards or just plain or fancy sleeping. The third day out we had morning classes in gas mask drill, and exercises on deck. In the afternoon some boxing and variety shows were presented on deck.

Most of the men were sick the first day or so, but got over it quickly. Some however, just didn't get over it at all. **First Sergeant Haag** was one of the leaders of this group, with **Custis** and **Ritter** a close second. The officers held up surprisingly well. However, **Captain Mills** did look slightly green on several occasions.

We were well underway when our destination was announced as being Southampton, England. Most of us had expected that we would land somewhere in France.

The ship took what was known as the southern circle route which passes near Spain, and up the coast of France. Because of this, the weather became very mild the third day out and we were able to be up on deck with just our sweaters. This was a marked contrast to what we had expected. We had heard and read of the terrible cold Atlantic Crossings, but we didn't know that was so only on the Northern crossings.

We were in convoy which meant that we could go only as fast as the slowest ship. It was a large one, as convoys go. We were told by the sailors that there were about 60 ships, plus the naval escort. We could see two British flattops from our ship, and at one time, 16

destroyers and destroyer escorts. Besides that there were planes on patrol duty most of the time.

We had only one bit of action on the voyage. A submarine was picked up on the sound detecting apparatus. The ships scattered like flies and zig-zagged for hours after that, no trouble was encountered and the convoy reformed late that day.

The ninth day out land was sighted a great distance away, and we were told that it was a part of the Azores, placing our position near the coast of Spain. The next day we were in the Bay of Biscay. We passed near Brest, France, and finally on the morning of 12 December, at about 0730 we sighted the coast of England. We steamed slowly into the harbor and at 1430, tied up at a pier in Southampton, England.

We slept on board the ship that night. The longshoremen were unloading officers baggage from the holds all night long, making it impossible for us to get any sleep.

After we were all off and noses counted, we marched, or rather felt our way into a large freight railway shed. Somehow there was no fog in that building, but there was a Red Cross club-mobile serving hot coffee and doughnuts, and a very good British band playing some lively American numbers. This fine gesture, by our English hosts, was greatly appreciated by every one, as was evidenced by the tremendous applause that greeted every offering.

As all good things do, the concert had come to an end, for at 1115, a train pulled into the shed and we boarded it. It started up almost immediately and at 1545 we arrived at Reading, England. For lunch, on the train that day, we had a K-ration dinner. For most of us, that was our first contact with that type of food.

We dismounted from the train and walked to the street where we were met by a number of American Army trucks. These took us to Camp Renikhet, about one mile from the city, where we were to draw a lot of our equipment, and to spend the next few weeks.

### 13 January, 1945

Left for service practice at Imber Range, England

This morning, around 0800, we left on a motor march for a two day problem. This started out exactly as any problem did at Shelby. This day, however, it was cold and the roads were icy in places.

We went to the motor park, this morning and at the command, "Mount up," everyone got into their vehicles and got seated. At 0809, the convoy left Renikhet for Imber Range, about 62 miles away.

It was a very cold day and we almost froze on the trip. Along the way we could see signs that the 724th had been through that area the previous day. At one corner, one of their prime movers had slid into a house and had completely demolished it. At another point, a prime mover had slid backwards while trying to go up a hill. It had gone off the road and was mired in the mud. A crew of men were still trying to get it out.

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**YOUR BATTERY'S WAR, BATTERY B, 881st F.A.**  
(Continued from Page 33)

We finally arrived at the range at about 1150. The range was a lot of fields that were very muddy. The men had to dig in and the survey team had to run a survey.

The feeding was done by a battalion mess setup. It was about 3/4 of a mile away, and it took several hours to feed all the men. The battery was taken to chow in trucks, and by the time supper time rolled around, it was dark.

There were no roads to follow from the kitchen back to the battery - only the tracks we made on the way up. No lights were permitted so even the tracks we made were almost impossible to be seen. I don't know if I have ever seen a darker night. It was just plain black, period.

**Sgt. Freda** and **Barone** were on one of the trucks coming back from supper that night, and between the two of them they managed to get lost and finally wandered in two hours later. The instrument section had been alerted to go out and try to find them. At one point they were less than 200 yards from the battery, but Barone decided that it was the wrong one and had the driver turn around and go in the opposite direction.

We had just been issued our mountain heaters and the men used them for the first time. Thus began a long and beautiful friendship, for they provided us with hot meals and drinks many times when nothing else was obtainable.

It was necessary to keep an all-night radio watch, so **Matys** and **Starkey** were "it." They stayed up in their jeep. They had the top up, covered it with their shelter-halves, and blankets, and used the heaters inside of the jeep and still they froze. Some of the men kept warm by sleeping three to a pup-tent and using the nine woolen blankets that were issued to them.

Early the next morning, the instrument section was told that they would have to run the survey over again as they had mislocated the battery by several hundred yards and had made an error in the base angle of about 60 miles.

The survey was about 12,000 feet long and it had to be measured, every inch of the way. Several hours later, when we finally finished it, FDC sent up word that they had erred in their computations and that the original survey was correct, after all, which was following the Army tradition to the letter.

We had lunch and then began the motor march back to Renikhet. The return trip was uneventful and we reached home at 1650.

**"Custis"**

\* \* \* \* \*

**22 January, 1945**

On this day we left camp Renikhet on the first leg of our journey to the war. Our stay in England had been a merry one, but now, "this was it." No, we weren't off to hit the beach at H-hour on D-day but we were about to get into the game.

First call was at 0230, and breakfast immediately after for those who cared for any, but most of us were too sleepy to think of eating.

After breakfast and a final hut inspection, we struggled down to the motor park. It was then that most of us came to the conclusion that a Roman soldiers impedimenta had nothing on ours. Upon reaching our assigned vehicles, we mounted and tried to get as comfortable as twelve men and a howitzer section's equipment can be, in a two and one half ton prime mover. Some people were in luck - they had jeeps.

Finally we were loaded up, **Schaffer** and **Sparacino** were comfortable, and all we were waiting for was the immortal "Turn 'em over." It came and we were leaving for destinations unknown.

The motor march from Camp Renikhet to Weymouth was just like many we had before and have had since. The scenery was of typical English towns and countryside, but we were too cold to notice it. At regular intervals, we stopped and the men would come tumbling down off the vehicles. They made the roadside ditch look like a king size straddle trench. We didn't stop for dinner, but ate K and D-rations on the move. We have since learned that three meals a day consisting of canned ham and eggs, cheese and chopped pork loaf can be very tiring.

That afternoon our convoy lumbered into Weymouth. We were all cold and hungry. Now wouldn't a hot meal hit the spot. Well we got one and it didn't. Why? It doesn't make any difference, men, where or how you heat C-rations, they are still C-rations.

We bedded down for the night in eight man tents, but during the night, most of the fires went out. In all our lives, we spent only one colder night, and you will soon read about that.

Early the next morning **Sgt. Freda** came in, and read a list of names. The names read were the men who were to be left behind for a few days. The remainder of our group was to leave immediately. Oh, what a cold morning inside of the tent and outside it was much worse. With our gear haphazardly adjusted we moved out into the cold, gusty, rainy morning. And down to the trucks which would take us to Portland, a few miles away.

We reached the loading area and in accordance with Army efficiency proceeded to wait for most of the day. But that wasn't too bad. The Red Cross was there with coffee and doughnuts and always, the Army's C-rations.

Finally we moved up to the loading dock and the vehicles began filing into the LST. Driving into the open bow of the LST was not unlike Pinnocchio's entrance into the whale's mouth.

Aboard the LST we were taken to our assigned compartments, and most of the men prepared for the coming night's sleep.

Then, believe it or not, a HOT meal. After chow, we were all sorry we hadn't joined the Navy.

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## YOUR BATTERY'S WAR, BATTERY B, 881st F.A.

(Continued from Page 34)

The channel was rough, but all the men fared very well. The LST creaked and groaned every inch of the way, but we all had faith in the shipbuilders of America and their boys in blue. Of course, none of us expressed it until we rammed the beach the following afternoon.

We pulled into La Harve, France, a pile of rubble with a name. Then for the first time, we realized that we were on our way to the war.

In unloading, the loading procedure was just reversed. The vehicles came piling out of the LST like football players dashing out of a clubhouse onto a gridiron.

After a maximum delay, or rather, after our feet were thoroughly frozen, we began our trek across France. We didn't know where we were going and after three hours we didn't give a dam. The French countryside was scenic enough, but after several hours we even stopped whistling at the girls.

We drove on during the cold, clear night. The driving beams on all the trucks made the procession look like a firefly parade, but that didn't make it any warmer.

By this time, the marrow in our bones and the water on our knees was frozen. Tears dropped like hailstones. It was truly a cold night.

Suddenly the convoy stopped. We peered out and before our eyes, looming up against the sky, was the Chateau De Martainville, our destination. And what do you know, more HOT C-rations.

### "Tabacchi"

\* \* \* \* \*

### 2 February, 1945

We left the Chateau De Martainville, France, on a motor march, to an area southwest of Marchais, France. (Tent City)

This morning, at 0730, we left the chateau. We drove 147 miles and at 1630 we arrived at the area that was to be our camp. When we arrived, there was very little to be seen except a large grassy field. Soon, however, large fourteen man tents were springing up and before dark, we had shelter for the whole battery.

The whole battalion was camped in the immediate area. This was to be a temporary camp, and it was rumored that the next move would be up to the line.

On the whole, life wasn't too bad at Tent City. We had cots to sleep on. The tents had stoves in them, and besides pulling guard and taking care of material, there wasn't too much work to be done. We were taken to a nearby camp for showers. Most of the men had cogniac or champagne from the chateau left over and that helped to dispell all dissatisfaction with the Army, up to that point.

The men were kept busy going to classes, having precision drills, working on equipment and vehicles, and staying out of the way of the officers and especially, the first sergeant.

Everyday, hundreds of bombers passed overhead on their way to bomb some unfortunate target in Germany.

Sometimes, the parade of planes could be heard for hours, and then several hours later, we would hear them on the return trip. It was a wonderful sound, and when we could see them, a swell sight, for we knew that they were softening them up for us.

It was here that we were each issued 75 rounds of .30 cal. carbine ammo. We also got hand grenades, bazooka ammo, and our basic load of howitzer ammo.

It was here, too, that we were able to barter for French perfume. We exchanged cigarettes for the fragrant nectar. The usual deal was a pack for a bottle.

We left for Mirfield, Belgium, on 9 February, 1945.

### 11 February, 1945

Our FO party, consisting of **Lt. Redman**, **Cpl. Custis**, **T/5 Starkey** and **Cpl. Hobbs** relieved the FO section of the 99th Division today. The 69th is to relieve that division within the next three days. Our battalion will occupy their positions by tomorrow afternoon. The FO's were sent out a day ahead to be oriented on the situation by the time we were prepared to fire.

This is the very first contact we were to have with the enemy, and everyone was excited and nervous, to say the least.

It was a cold, dreary day, and to make matters worse, it began to snow around noon. We were led to the battery area where we talked to the officers and they gave us a lot of points which came in very handy later in combat. We had lunch (cold C-rations) and then we left for the OP, led by our Liaison officer, **Lt. Cross**. We had four in our jeep and we were pulling a trailer, loaded down with equipment.

After a short drive through the ever present slop, which they told us was mud, we turned onto a highway. We were told that this was the International Highway, and that along this sector, it formed the boundary between Belgium and Germany. We drove on this road for about two miles, passing wrecked equipment, both German and American, and many dead horses. It was near this point where the Germans began their breakthrough in December, and the Americans fought bitterly to defend their lines along this road.

After driving on this road for about two miles, we turned into Germany and the Siegfried line. It is hard to describe the feeling that the group must have felt. We had traveled thousands of miles and spent months of training for the moment when we would go into Germany and meet them on their home ground, and this was it. We passed through the first row of dragons teeth and then about 1000 yards further, the second row. This was the impregnable Siegfried line that we had heard so much about, and here we were driving through it with no one to stop us.

Several hundred yards further on we came to the wrecked town of Ramscheid. We parked the jeep behind some houses and walked to the OP. There we met the FO and he spent the rest of the day orienting us on the terrain and the situation.

(Continued on Page 36)

## YOUR BATTERY'S WAR, BATTERY B, 881st F.A.

(Continued from Page 35)

The OP was on the second floor of a house looking out into Heinieland. The east side of the house had been blown in by the concussion of a large shell that had been thrown at us by a railroad gun. The first shell landed just over the house and the second one about twenty-five yards in front of it. The blast knocked the second floor wall and sent all the furniture against the far wall, smashing it to bits.

Several days later, while we were up in the OP, we heard a sound that seemed like an approaching freight train. It got louder and louder and higher in pitch, until it sounded like a woman's scream. Suddenly, when it sounded like it couldn't get any louder or higher in pitch, there was a terrific crash and we hit the floor. Thus we were initiated to the sound of the famous "screaming meemies." We were to learn a lot about those for we were shelled several times a day with them during our entire stay here.

The Jerries seemed to shell us only during chow time and this puzzled the CO of the infantry company. He tried changing the times of serving chow, but still the barrage came over while the men were in the street lining up for their food. There were from one to five casualties every time we were shelled and the captain was getting desperate. It was decided to evacuate all the civilians out of town. One man and his wife were left behind to take care of the livestock, and they were guarded constantly to see that they could send no signals to the Germans. The mealtime was changed every day and the men were able to eat without getting shelled after that. Orders were issued that all dogs were to be shot, for it was thought that they were being used to carry messages to the Germans.

On the second day on the line, **Captain Mills** came up to visit us. **T/4 Boucher** drove the jeep and **Captain Hall** of HQ battery was along. **Lt. Redman** decided that we did not need the trailer and **Captain Mills** said that he would take it back with him.

**Custis** went down to the trailer and was helping hook it up to the jeep, when suddenly mortars began dropping right near us. **Captain Hall** was in the back seat of the jeep and **Captain Mills** was helping with the trailer at that moment. **Captain Hall's** classic remark just then was, "Let's get out of here, Lou. We've got ourselves into something." And with that, **Captain Mills** was in the jeep with one jump, and the next second, the jeep was yards away, the trailer swinging crazily back and forth as they sped down the road.

That night an attack was to be made on Geisheid, about a mile east of where we were. The jump-off time was 2300, but it was postponed at the last minute. After learning of the postponement, **Custis**, **Starkey**, and **Hobbs** went to the jeep to get their bedrolls. On the way back, they were halted by someone walking towards them. **Starkey** gave the password and the other person gave the countersign in a loud booming voice that could be heard in the next country. As he passed, **Custis** began bawling out the soldier for calling out so loudly when suddenly he noticed something

shiny pinned to his shoulder. A closer look revealed the insignia of a Lt. Col. He had been raising hell with the commanding officer of the infantry battalion, **Col. Lynch**. With a gulp and prayer that he would not be court-martialed, **Custis** faded into the darkness. He later said that a GI can bawl out a colonel. It's all in knowing how.

Six days later, this crew was relieved by **Lt. Wilson**, **Sgt. McGrea**, **T/5 Matys**, and **Pfc Derr**, and the original FO section went back to the battery for a well-earned rest.

"Custis"

\* \* \* \* \*

12 February, 1945

We left Mirfield, Belgium, at dawn on this day.

**S/Sgt. Kohl** had given us the details on what he had seen and heard the day before, when he had reconnoitered our gun position. We therefore, had a vague idea of what we were getting into. There was, nevertheless, an empty feeling in the pit of my stomach when **Lt. Bell** gave the command to load up.

The short trip was of immense interest to us. The carnage along the road seemed unbelievable. In one place, we noticed a pile of dead Germans covered with a tarp. There were occasional dead Germans lying on the roadside. Someone remarked that all he had seen were chaplains and ambulances, which didn't help our spirits very much.

Then we arrived at the hole in the woods which was to be our gun position. We put the guns in position, one at a time. It was so muddy that it took twenty men to even move a gun. It was half raining and half snowing and we were getting plenty miserable. Then Service battery came up with the ammo and we really worked for the next two hours, packing and lugging ammo.

Shortly after dinner, we had our first fire mission. Everyone wanted to be in on it, but **Sgt. DeStefano** and **Cpl. Pohlman** were caught, literally, with their pants down. **Pete Libardi** came running just in time to fire the first round into Germany while **Dan Dowling** gunned. **Captain Mills** fired the third round on number three piece and left smiling.

The by-word of the day was "Hitler, count your children now" after each round was fired. **DeStefano** and **Pohlman** were razed plenty about missing the first mission.

It was still raining and our bedrolls were soaked, but we were feeling a little better about the whole thing. We had an incoming round, once in awhile, but they were a safe distance away.

We finally found time to examine the dugouts which the 99th Division had left and did what we could to make them comfortable for the night. They were a long way from being comfortable, however. **Lt. Bell**, **Cpl. Stoddard**, and **T/5 Trimble** shared our dugouts that night, and there was little sleep done for the lack of room. We made up for it later, however.

So ended our first day in combat. We were tired, wet, and a little depressed, but we had taken the first step. The empty feeling in the pit of my stomach was gone.

"Dowling"

*To be continued in the next issue of the Bulletin*

# Onkel Otto

Written By: Gus R. Wiemann

Company L, 271st Infantry Regiment  
and Headquarters Division

7126 Canella Court  
Tamarac, Florida 33321

It was during my physical exam for the Army that the doctor asked me if I liked girls. As I was 18 years old and this was 1942, I didn't understand why he'd ask that, but I nodded yes, I liked girls.

Once the physical was over, a doctor asked another question: "Do you have relatives in Germany?" My answer was yes. "Are you willing to fight against them?" I again answered yes.

After I officially became a GI, I thought about that question of fighting against a German relative. Actually, the only one over there that I as a kid had heard about from my parents was an Onkel Otto, my father's brother.

From the little that my dad mentioned, he and his brother grew up together in East Prussia. Around 1912 my father said goodbye to his brother and worked his way across Europe to England. Then he boarded a ship, sailed to New York and never saw Onkel Otto again.

Once in a great while a letter arrived from him. It's stamp bore Hitler's picture and across the back of the envelope a tape read "OPENED BY CENSOR."

Occasionally in the envelope was a snapshot of a portly, middle-aged man resembling my dad and dressed in a conservative business suit. In the background was a small white house in a dark half-timbered style. A cobblestoned street ran alongside.

After Hitler became Chancellor in 1933 my uncle's letters described enthusiastically how he and his fellow factory workers enjoyed government-sponsored vacation trips. Unemployment decreased with public works like the superhighway Autobahn. Suddenly, when Hitler declared war on us, his letters stopped.

As our 69th Division crossed into Germany, I wondered if somewhere, sometime I would meet Onkel Otto. By coincidence, my unit, Military Government, on VE Day was in the Leipzig area, about 50 miles from my uncle's last address in the town of Zwickau.

Within days the 69th evacuated Germany as Russian soldiers, carrying submachine guns, watched us leaving in our convoy of two-and-a-half-ton trucks.

When the German mail began operating, my mother received the first postwar letter from Onkel Otto. She answered, writing that my dad had passed away and giving my address in Nuremberg, where I worked at the trial.

He was in his seventies then and by train traveled over a hundred miles to see me. At the east-west border Russian soldiers refused to allow him to cross into the American Zone.

He returned to his home and wrote a kind of diary for our family as to his life since he and my dad had parted. He wrote that he had worked as a civil engineer, raised a family and became a grandfather. A grandson, who served in the German army, was killed in Russia. He added that the Nazi leaders, after betraying the people, disappeared and refused to accept responsibility for their crimes.

This was our last letter from Onkel Otto. I can thank my dad for his foresight in 1912 to take a different path from his brother's.

\* \* \* \* \*

## The Reds, Blues and Me

In the early 1940's, I was roughly 17 or 18 years old and couldn't wait to join the Army. In fact, I even bought a khaki shirt at an Army and Navy store, looked at myself wearing it in front of a mirror and pictured how I'd look with the complete uniform. I saw Gary Cooper in "Sergeant York," and John Wayne in "The Sands of Iwo Jima" and wanted to join them in charging the enemy.

Before long I joined up and found myself in basic training at Camp Wood, New Jersey. I was so tired that when my folks came to visit me, I fell asleep talking to them.

Fortunately, basic training came to an end except for what was known as full-scale maneuvers. This meant that after a full day of marching through the New Jersey woods, we would be divided into a Red Army and a Blue Army. The Red Army would perhaps infiltrate our Blue Army lines sometime between midnight and dawn. We, the Blue Army, were to be watchful and report any sign of attempted infiltration.

For some reason, our company commander chose me to dig a fox hole close to the Red Army and report immediately the slightest sign of enemy troops approaching our position. My line of communication was a field phone which had to be cranked before use. If I reported any sign of attempted attack, our company commander immediately would notify battalion headquarters, which would alert all companies in the battalion to repel the invaders.

Dusk had turned to night before I finished digging my foxhole. I munched on a K-ration and began staring at the trees about a hundred yards away. A slight breeze began to sway them and the surrounding shrubbery. Sometimes I could swear that I heard voices.

Finally, I decided to call our company commander. Cranking up the phone, I reported, "Sir, I can see movement directly ahead of us and I think that I hear voices."

In a few moments I heard whistles and saw men wearing blue armbands charging with rifles into the woods directly ahead of me. A little while later they straggled back and passed me in my foxhole. One of them muttered, "Some damn fool gave a false alarm."

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## THE REDS, BLUES AND ME

(Continued from Page 37)

Soon after the sun began to seep through the trees. Noncoms started blowing whistles and shouting, "Everybody get into the trucks."

When we arrived at our barracks our squad sergeant said, "Okay, guys, clean yourselves up, chow will be in a half hour. When you come back from chow, you'll get three-day passes."

This ended our basic training. Later in the morning, still light-headed from a sleepless night, I boarded a train headed for New York City and home. GIs from our battalion filled nearly all seats. Finally, I found one on the aisle to share with a GI who sat next to the window.

As I put my bag into the rack above the seat, the fellow by the window turned to me. "How ya doin'?" Without waiting for a reply, he continued. "Man, I'm beat. I never got any sleep. We were on maneuvers last night and some jerk sentry said we were being attacked when we weren't. I tell you, man, if I ever catch that guy..." He hesitated, his face flushed, he made a fist and looked out the window.

"Yeah," I said. "I didn't get any sleep either."

\* \* \* \* \*

## Obergefreiter Describes Other Era In Interview

When the war ended many of us in the 69th were sent to the 29th Infantry Division stationed near Bremen. Here we were quartered in concrete permanent barracks once used by German naval personnel. Actually we were expecting to be deployed to the states whenever a transport became available.

While waiting for our ship to come in I wrote a short satirizing of our life in the occupation titled "*Obergefreiter Describes Other Life in Interview*." Recently I found it in our Division's paper dated September 29th, 1945.

Alongside my story were ads for movies like "*The Thin Man Goes Home*" starring William Powell and Myrna Loy, "*A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*" with Dorothy McGuire and the source of many Jack Benny Jokes, "*The Horn Blows at Midnight*."

Radio offered "*Hymns from Home*," "*Hit Parade*," "*Yank Bandstand*" and "*Guy Lombardo*."

My short piece follows:

"This morning we watched a detail of German prisoners tidying up our quarters. One of the laborers appeared especially disconsolate and this disposition was reflected in his work. We knew this character spoke English quite well, so we decided to make with a psychoanalysis."

"Was ist los" we queried.

The haggard figure in the seedy Wehrmacht uniform emblazoned with an Obergefreiter (Corporal) emblem looked at us through watery eyes. He leaned the broom against the wall and tried to get out of his stooped position.

"Ach," Obergefreiter Schnuddle sighed. (He had answered to that when the sergeant in charge of the detail read the roster.) Once this camp was a good deal.

"I used to be mail orderly with Kompanie Fritzelknack (German Army phonetic name for "F") and had a good life. We could always go down to the Capitol Theater here in Grohn for the latest UFA Wochenschau (German Pathe News) and see how our troops were hurtling back Russians on the Eastern Front and Americans, English, Canadians, French, Dutch and everybody else on the Western Front.

### Club For Every Rank

Then after the show, we would visit the Soldaten (Pvt.), Gefreiten (Pfc), Obergefreiten (Cpl), Unteroffizier (Sgt.), Feldwebel (S/Sgt), or the Stabsfeldwebel (Tech Sgt) Klubs depending of course on your grade. An excited gleam entered Obergefreiter Schnuddle's languid eyes.

"Once a Gefreiter tried to crash our Obergefreitern Klub. Our Obergefreiter took him to an Unteroffizier and we never saw that little Gefreiter since. There was a rumor that he was listed on his company's morning report as being on temporary duty with an outfit stationed at Dachau, but nobody knows for sure.

"Some nights we'd hitch-hike into Bremen to visit the German 'Achtung' Red Cross Club. But usually our company would send all its vehicles to Mannschaft (EM) Klubs and so we'd have to walk back to camp, usually arriving in time for reveille."

We noticed the sergeant in charge of the detail coming toward us, thanked Obergefreiter Schnuddle and left. As we looked back, we could see the sergeant waving his arms in the air, yelling and Obergefreiter Schnuddle picking up a good-sized butt.

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

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



# "Taps"

The melody of TAPS was composed by a non-musical (musician with no formal knowledge) nor the technical names of any of the notes. Union General Daniel Butterfield whistled it for Brigadier General Oliver Norton who wrote the notes on the back of an envelope July 2, 1862. The plaintive bugle notes that bring an involuntary lump to the throat typifies our loss and feelings of these two great buglers.

## THE WORDS TO "TAPS" SAY IT ALL

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

**Lloyd L. Barr**  
Corrolton, Texas  
Co. B - 272nd

**Lumir J. Bocek**  
8421 Navajo Trail  
Lincoln, Nebraska  
68520-1131  
Co. B - 271st

**Arthur H. Burkman**  
2517 Deborah Lane  
McHenry, Illinois  
60050-4521  
Co. D - 272nd

**Gustav Cohan**  
1207 East Main Street  
Bradford, Pennsylvania  
16701-3223  
Co. D - 777th T.B.

**Amos Fox**  
217 Charyridge Drive  
Kent City, Michigan  
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Hq. 3 - 272nd

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7749 Infirmary Road, #38  
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Millersburg, Pennsylvania  
17061-1449  
Medic - 273rd

**George Hinant**  
13837 North 33rd Avenue  
Phoenix, Arizona 85053  
Co. C - 271st

**Charles E. Hoffman, Jr.**  
3334 M W, 68th Court  
Ft. Lauderdale, Florida 33309  
Co. F - 272nd

**Richard J. Hopkins, Jr.**  
1428 Periwinkle Lane  
Lincoln, California  
95648-8163  
Co. F - 273rd

**Kenneth D. Hull**  
2607 Albert Pike Road, #316  
Hot Springs, Arizona  
71901-7794  
Co. I - 272nd

**Colonel James P. Irvine**  
14 West 5th Street  
Columbus, Georgia  
31901-3153  
Division Headquarters

**Harold R. James**  
7603 129th Road  
Live Oak, Florida 32060-9014  
Anti-Tank - 272nd

**Donald R. Johnson**  
1281 West Losey Street  
Galesburg, Illinois 61401  
Btry. C - 880th F.A.

**Herman F. Lumpkin**  
P.O. Box 301  
Midland, Georgia 31802-0301  
Btry. B - 880th F.A.

**Henry D. Milner**  
14855 North Outer Road  
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Co. B - 271st

**Donald B. Norville**  
206 North 3rd Avenue  
Canton, Illinois 61520

**Ralph G. Nuckolls**  
511 Vera Street  
Ridgecrest, California 93555  
Btry. B - 724th F.A.

**George E. Palmer**  
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**Arthur H. Pfeifer**  
18 Pilgrim Drive  
Northampton, Massachusetts  
01060-1509  
Co. A - 273rd

**Delbert E. Philpott**  
1602 Kamsack Drive  
Sunnyvale, California 94087  
Co. A - 271st

**John H. Pilot**  
3621 Camino Alameda S.W.  
Albuquerque, New Mexico  
87105-6116  
Btry. A - 880th F.A.

**Richard R. Plum**  
1036 Timberidge Trail  
Kingsport, Tennessee  
37660-1082  
Hq. 3 - 271st

**Harry Prokop**  
R.R. #1, Box 209  
Emerson, Nebraska 68733-9561  
Co. I - 273rd

**John Purdie**  
325 N. Cool Springs St., #309  
Fayetteville, North Carolina  
28301-5137  
Hq. - 271st

**Blake Reep, Sr.**  
116 Chatfield Loop  
Statesville, North Carolina 28677  
Co. G - 271st

**Earl G. Richardson**  
P.O. Box 1101  
Niagara Falls, New York  
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Co. K - 273rd

**John Robinson**  
411 Winwood Drive  
Lebanon, Tennessee 37807  
Co. A - 272nd

**Henry Rosenberg**  
56 Bern Drive, Swiss Village  
Winter Haven, Florida 33881  
Co. B - 269th Engineers

**Sumner Russman**  
2512 Lynn Lane  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma  
73120  
Division Headquarters

**Murry Schneider**  
144-24 37th Avenue, Apt. 6M  
Flushing, New York 11354  
69th Recon

**Joseph P. Shepherd, Sr.**  
890 Maryland Court  
Whitehall, Pennsylvania  
18502-6435  
Co. G - 273rd

**Roy C. Smith**  
103 High Street  
Eatonton, Georgia  
31024-1331  
Btry. C - 8t9th F.A.

**James H. Stewart**  
140 Lookout Road  
Asheville, North Carolina  
28804  
Co. C - 461st AAA

**Andrew Sundell**  
90 Sherwood Avenue  
Trenton, New Jersey 08619  
Co. C - 271st

**Donald L. Thompson**  
14 Winchester Court  
Bordentown, New Jersey  
08505-3141  
Co. H - 271st

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*Germany - 1945*

**Sergeant Anthony F. Kasmarsik, Squad Leader**

*Company D, 2nd Squad, 1st Section, 2nd Platoon, 271st Infantry Regiment*

Submitted By: **Merrill Embick**

P.O. Box 3053, Williamsport, Pennsylvania 17701

**BULLETIN STAFF**

**Dottie (Witzleb) Shadle**  
*Editor*

P.O. Box 4069  
 New Kensington, PA 15068  
 Telephone: 724/335-9980  
**Send Articles, Pictures,  
 and Material**

**John Barrette**  
*Treasurer*

P.O. Box 215  
 Wisconsin Rapids,  
 Wisconsin 54495-0215  
 Telephone: 715/423-4921  
**Send Dues to John**

**Paul Shadle**  
*Membership Chairman*

P.O. Box 4069  
 New Kensington, PA 15068  
 Telephone: 724/335-9980  
**Send Address Changes,  
 New Members  
 and Deaths to Paul**

**Dottie (Witzleb) Shadle**  
*Ladies' Auxiliary Editor*

P.O. Box 4069  
 New Kensington, PA 15068  
 Telephone: 724/335-9980  
**Send Ladies' Auxiliary  
 Material to Dottie**

4/20/06

**For more information, contact:**



**Joe Lipsius**, 69<sup>th</sup> Inf Div Regtl HQ & Cn Co 272<sup>nd</sup> Inf Rgt , Webmaster

**The Fighting 69<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division Website**

Email: [annejoelip@bellsouth.net](mailto:annejoelip@bellsouth.net)

Website: <http://www.69th-infantry-division.com>

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**Michael T. McKibben**, Chairman & Founder

Son-in-law of Jerry Hoovler, 69<sup>th</sup> Inf Div Co K 272<sup>nd</sup> Inf Rgt, and

Son of James A. McKibben, 41<sup>st</sup> Inf Div Bat C 218<sup>th</sup> FAB