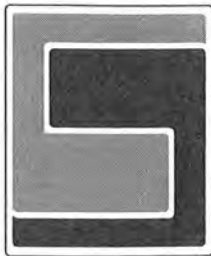


FIGHTING 69TH INFANTRY DIVISION

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2006

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

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bulletin

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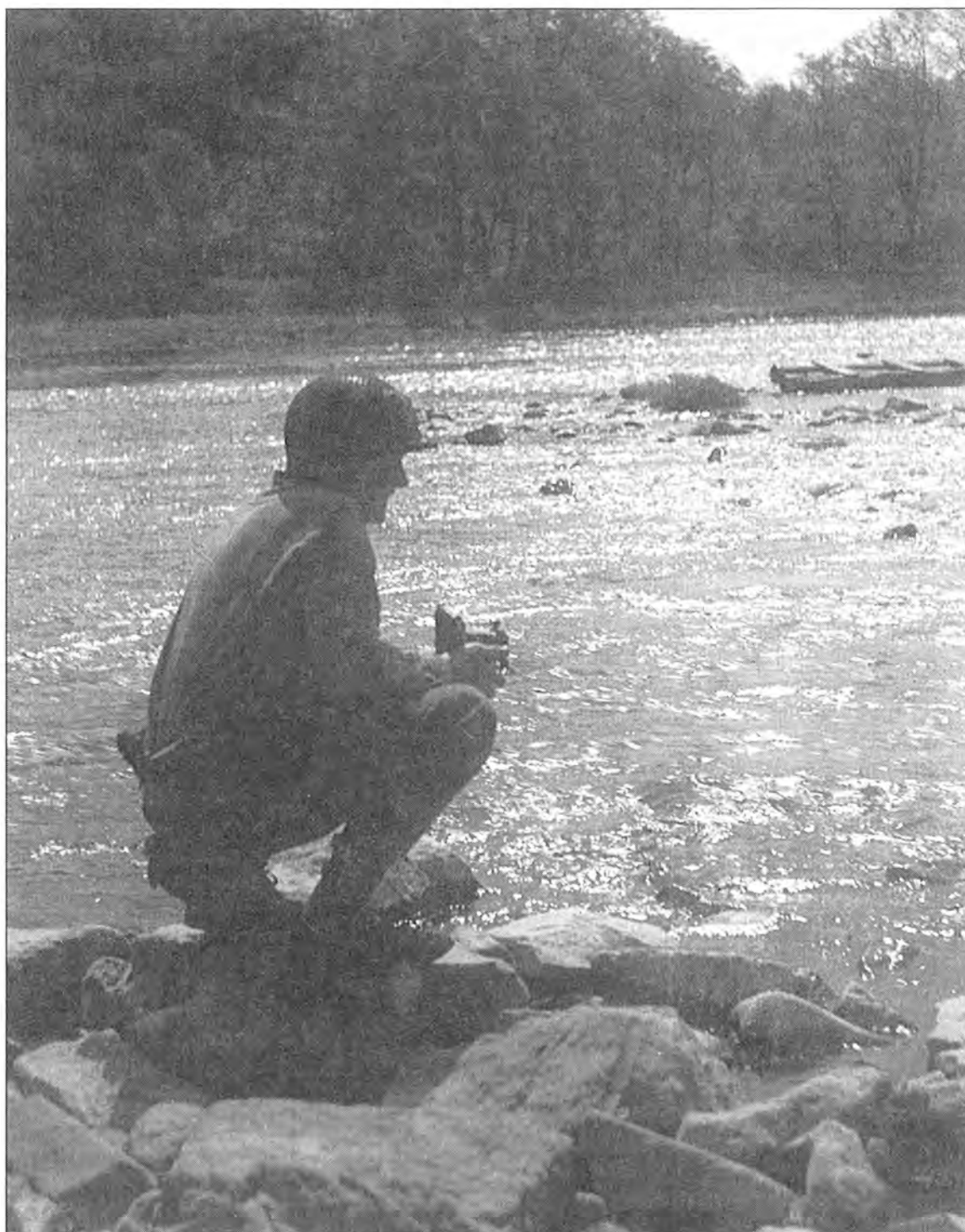
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Pfc John Durst on the banks of the Mulde River

(See John's memoirs on page 29)

THE MAIL BOX

By **Dottie (Witzleb) Shadle**
Editor



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William E. MacLauchlin, 1713 Sunset Drive, Clermont, Florida 34711 — Co. G, 273rd: I just had to send this in while there are a few left to read it.

My Company G, 273rd, Second Battalion, was part of the troops that captured Hann Munden, a beautiful little German town. However, the Germans promptly tried to re-take the town, and threw a lot of bullets, mortars and artillery at us. Our greatest loss of life in a single day was in this battle.

While I was hugging the ground, (my belt buckle kept me from getting closer) along comes "Half-Track," a member of our all Black platoon, as wide as he was tall and a great target for all the stuff being thrown at us. With pencil and paper, he was taking orders for southern fried chicken, Alabama style. He had liberated some chickens, and in a few minutes he returned with one of the finest meals I had had in weeks!

I don't remember his name, and I'll never understand why he wasn't at least wounded, because he was the largest target our company had!

S. Ray Strauss, 8 Foxridge Road, Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27514 — 272nd Infantry: I wish to thank you for keeping us alive. At one time I attended all the reunions. Now my wife does not like to travel. At one time I would manage to inspect near the reunion site - in uniform and displaying the 69th patch on my right sleeve. The "guys" enjoyed that. S.R. Strauss. (The "S" is for Silvario.)

Walter Haag, 420 Paramount Drive, Millbrae, California 94030 — Btry. B, 881st F.A.: I would like to again, compliment and thank our "Sunshine Lady," **Edith Zaffern**, for remembering our birthdays over the years. I see you ran the Battery B history in the last two issues. Thank you. See you in August.

John A. Nelson, 211 West Garfield, Lindsburg, Kansas 67456-1501 — Btry. B, 881st F.A.: Thank you from the bottom of my old black heart! You do so much for we 69th vets. I was with the 881 FA, Battery B and was thrilled with George Custis' report on our German experiences in the May-August 2006 issue. I think I saw part 1 in the previous issue.

Bill Drugg, 211 North 14th Avenue, Altoona, Pennsylvania 16601 — Co. K, 272nd: In the winter of 1944, I was stationed at Camp Wheeler in Macon, Georgia as a private in basic training for Army infantrymen. The month was November and the war in Europe was pretty much at a standstill. The Allies were poised for an assault on the mainland of France. When the invasion came, many men would be needed. How many was anybody's guess. It looked to me like everyone would be needed to win this war. The well trained, nearly trained and close to trained could be called upon. Somewhere in that mix were the nearly trained, almost out of basic training - dogfaced, smooth skinned boys, soon to be men.

The rumors start flying that our basic training is going to be a little shorter than the usual 17 weeks - about 3 weeks shorter. Bad news travels fast and we heard it almost as fast as the generals. One non-com, one of the regular staff, told us, "What you don't know, you will learn from experience." This man knew the facts of life. Now the bad news we knew. Our training period was shortened as was our furlough, but to show us that the Army had a heart, the good news was saved for last.

An Army Air Force base was just a few miles outside of town where the paratroopers were taught to holler "Geronimo" as they exited the plane. To show us that the Army big shots had a heart, the idle aircraft was offered to anybody that lived near a large city. My hometown of Altoona, Pennsylvania was 100 miles from Pittsburgh, one of the chosen towns. So we lucky ones packed our duffel bags and prepared to fly away from Georgia. The airplanes were not very fancy. The seats consisted of benches along both sides and the latrine was an uncovered funnel in the back, but no one complained. "Absolutely No One."

So 1944 turned out to be a big year for me - an airplane ride on an Army plane and a ride on the fifth largest ship, The Ill De France.

MOVING

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A Message from Paul and Dottie Shadle President and Editor

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Telephone: 724/335-9980



President Paul Shadle and Editor, Dottie Shadle

The 60th annual reunion was planned to be held in Branson, Missouri in 2007, but due to increased costs of travel between Springfield Airport and Branson, we felt it best to change the site. After taking a trip to Salt Lake City, Utah, we feel it would be a good place to hold the 2007 reunion. There is a lot to see and do there. They have a trolley that will take you to the big mall and other interesting stops in the city.

The Red Lion Hotel has a shuttle from the airport that is in operation 24 hours a day. The staff was very courteous, friendly and helpful. There are two restaurants on site, and the food is very good and affordable.

We are looking forward to seeing you in Salt Lake City, Utah during the week of August 19th through August 27th, 2007.

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.

69th Infantry Division Association 60th Annual Reunion SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

August 19th thru 27th, 2007

THE RED LION HOTEL

Downtown Salt Lake City

*We will have more information
on this in the next bulletin.*

The planned events are as follows:

Wednesday

Hill Air Force Base Aerospace Museum
Antelope Island

EARLY BIRD DINNER (note change of night)

Thursday

Kennecott Copper Mine
Board of Directors' Meeting
Mormon Tabernacle Choir Rehearsal

Friday

City Tour - Gardner Historic Village
PX Beer Party

Saturday

Membership Meeting
Ladies' Auxiliary Meeting
BANQUET - DINNER DANCE

Sunday

Breakfast
Goodbyes

Please plan to join us on our 60th Anniversary.
Extra special arrangements are made for
handicapped individuals. You can do it.
We'd love to see you there.

Members Removed from Roster for Various Reasons

Tilden Ash	Walter J. Keane
Beulah H. Bayless	Philip Kesselman
George O. Bramlette	Fred H. Koeth
Mrs. James L. Buie	Gertrude R. McCollough
Al Collins	Col. Donald B. Miller
Robert M. Croxton	Bruce Olden
Sam Crupi	William Osofsky
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Erdis Hull	

Co. D, 271st Infantry

Edward L. Pugel

Company D, 271st Infantry

3430 W. Viewmont Way West

Seattle, Washington 98199-1850

Telephone: 206/284-6338



*Ed Pugel - Heavy Weapons Recon Sergeant
Germany, 1945*

Thank you for your years of service in making the Fighting 69th Infantry Division Bulletin the one to receive to read and learn our part in defeating Hitler.

The Bulletin Volume 59, Number 2, with its photos submitted by **Captain Embick** was a great recall for me regarding my unit, Company D, 1st Battalion, 271st Regiment. The photo that was on the cover shot in Gatterstadt, Germany was the site of our entire motor pool. I am enclosing the photo of the Grand Home that served as our entire Company Quarters. The owner of the home had a large number of workers maintaining his huge farm land, animals and home.

I enlisted in the Army when I was in my 3rd year of college and was sent to Camp Roberts, California in 1943 for basic training. Then I was transferred to City College of New York City to study German (Army Special Training Program). June 1943 was the start of our five hour classroom studies. We had one hour of Physical Ed, one hour Military, two hours of study daily, and four hours on Saturdays learning German songs.

At times our Professor would take us to a German movie and then to a German Beer Tavern to practice our German. We traveled by subway to and from.

After three months of classroom work, twenty-five fluent members were selected for their command of the German language (sons of German parents). We were not told where these soldiers were sent.

Eight months of studies for the rest of us before we were sent to Camp Shelby to be members of the 69th Infantry Division AL training. From Camp Shelby we were sent to Winchester, England in November 1944. Our Company supplied much of the lost equipment and a few soldiers for the Battle Bulge.



Officers of Company D, 271st: Left row - top to bottom, Lt. Joseph H. Herbert, Lt. A.L. Chandler, Lt. Harold Knapke. Right row - top to bottom: Lt. Millard York, Lt. Walter Piez, Lt. Robert Austin, Captain Merrill C. Embick

We were sent to the border of Germany (Siegfried Line) and on February 27th our Company went into the attack from a village called Hollerath along with thousands of soldiers from other Divisions and other countries. My position with Company D was Recon. **Sgt. Captain Embick** told me to prepare a foxhole for two for our night's protection. I dug a hole on the side of a hill. It was difficult to dig into part shale rock - much like a dessert called Napoleon. Layers of dirt and small layers of rock. An hour and a half later, **Captain Embick** arrived with a third party, **Lt. Pietz**, who had lost his platoon. So the hole for two became a hole for three. We put a poncho on the ground, weapons along the side and a poncho for our cover. We were like sardines, fully clothed and with snow water trickling through our hole. When people tell me it is cold now, I tell them this winter story that I had in 1945 in Germany.

The next morning our Company moved some 300 yards, a fortunate move because our previous location was fired upon.

In two weeks we advanced to the Rhine River. After crossing the Rhine River, on a bridge built by our engineers in eleven hours, our fighting varied from day to day. Leipzig was difficult. Eilenburg was a tough fight with the power of our Artillery. The town was leveled.

(Continued on Page 5)

COMPANY D, 271st INFANTRY REGIMENT

(Continued from Page 4)

The city of Eilenburg was destroyed by ten thousand rounds of white phosphorous shells because the German soldiers produced white flags but the SS Officers ordered them to fire on our tanks.

April 25, 1945 was an end to our battles because The 69th Infantry Division had met the Russians on the river Elbe. In May I had a visit to the V-1 and V-2 Rocket Manufacturing Plant in Nordhausen, Germany. Twenty-five thousand slave workers were captured from countries that Germany had overcome. Twenty-five thousand workers died and were cremated.

Bremen was my next assignment with the 29th Infantry Division (A D-Day Unit) in Special Service. This included playing baseball and basketball. Four months later I was sent to 7th Army Headquarters in Bremen. A German High School Building had been converted into a Political Prison for those deported from the United States as German Sympathizers. My duties with the Political Prison were to supervise a German Secretary who did the paperwork when new prisoners were admitted or releasing prisoners with minor crimes. Three other Non-Coms assisted the German Police Force; observing meals, medical aid, janitorial and other services. Other Germans who committed serious crimes were sent to Nuremberg for trials.

My Christmas card list of service friends has diminished from 36 in 1946 to 4 in 2005. I corresponded with **Captain Embick** until 2004 when communication ceased from him. I have called and was told his telephone had been disconnected. I'd like to know what happened to **Captain Embick**. If anyone can help, please write or call me.

Do you recognize this 69th soldier?

I was with the army stationed in Mannheim, Germany in 1945 and 1946. Sometime in 1946, a staff sergeant from the 69th was assigned to our unit, the 558th Quartermaster Group. He became a close friend of a good friend of mine who was part of our unit. The Staff Sergeant had reenlisted. For the life of me, I cannot remember his name. I recently got a picture of him from the son of my friend. We are both anxious to identify him because my friend has since passed away. The Staff Sergeant was KIA in Korea. If any reader recognizes him please contact me. Thanks.

William McWeeney

7171 Buffalo Speedway #1612

Houston, Texas 77025

Telephone: 713/ 838-2343

E-Mail: wilmac6@sbcglobal.net





Company D 271st Infantry

This was our quarters after the war ended. This was the best home in the area.

It was located in the town of Gatterstadt which was in the central part of Germany in the Russian Section, when we moved back to the U.S.A.

2006 Reunion Report King of Prussia, PA

By 69th Division President, Paul Shadle

The 2006 reunion in King of Prussia was a success. This year the reunion was handled by the Armed Forces Reunions. Dottie and I feel that it was handled well even though it was different than usual. The people that usually handled the registrations were free this year to enjoy themselves. The tours were very informative as to the area. We both feel the lunch served in the Amish area was outstanding.

The persons that ordered permanent badges will receive them in the mail. The Armed Forces Reunions supplied temporary badges for the reunion. This is the set-up for the 2007 reunion to be held in Salt Lake City, Utah. We are looking forward to seeing you in Salt Lake City during the week of August 19th through August 26th, 2007.

May you have a Happy Holiday Season and best wishes for the New Year.



*Bud Parsons Co. A-272, Ed Lucci Co. A-273,
and Chet Yastrzemski Co. E-272*



Mark and Bill Sheavly, Jr., Co. M, 271st



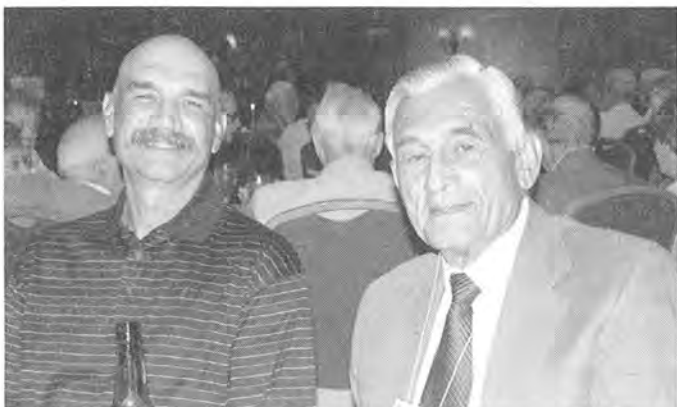
Mary Wilmot, mother Jean Ross, Warren Wilmot A271



69TH OFFICERS

*Front: Secretary Joe Huber, Anti-Tank, 272nd
President Paul Shadle, Co. E, 271st*

*Rear: Vice President Dave Theobald, Co. F, 272nd
Treasurer John Barrette, Hq., 271st*



Son Dan and Raul Nava, Co. M, 273rd



Daughter Pat Woody, Bill & Ellen Snidow 661st TD



*Bing Poon Co. E-271, Captain Kevin Sullivan Co. E-272
and Bob Pierce Co. I-273*



*Chet and Barbara Yastrzemski
Fuzzy and Lila Mae Spangler, Co. E-272nd*



Elaine and Paul Eagon and Janet Housel, Co. I-273rd



Jane Matlach and Gloria Czyzyk, Co. C-273rd



Connie Brough M-271st, Barbara Brooks A-273rd



Janet Atkinson and Pat Avery, Div. Headquarters



*Front Row:
Chet and Barb Yastrzemski,
Lila Mae and Fuzzy Spangler*

*Back Row:
Thad and Tammy Sullivan
Denise and Kit Sullivan
Lori and Kevin Sullivan,
sons and grandsons*

Company E, 272nd

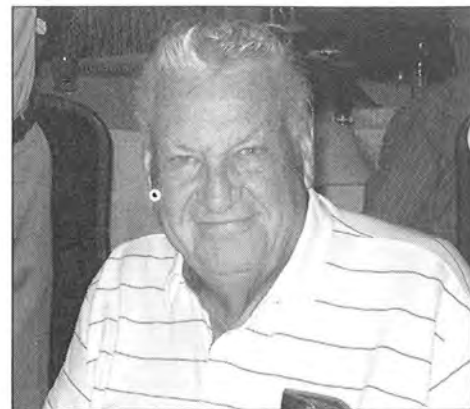
*Photos by
Chet Yastrzemski*



Jerry Gilgenbach: Co. I, 271st



Bob Crowe: Co. E, 273rd



Gene Mischke: Co. B, 273rd



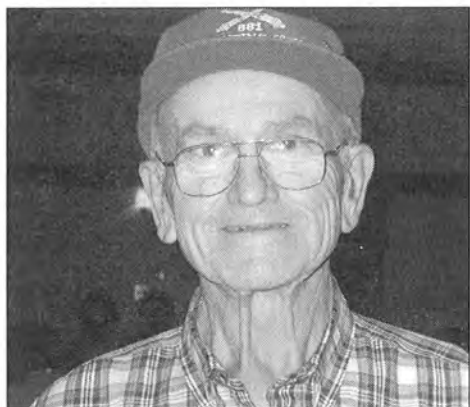
Lina West and John Mason, 272nd



Bill and Reba Sheavly: Co. M, 271st



Art Holgate: Anti-Tank, 271st



Jim Boris: Battery B, 881st F.A.



Jo and Bill Sheehan: Co. B, 271st



Frank Tomczuk: Anti-Tank, 271st



Mr. and Mrs. Lynn Jones



John Barrette, Bill & Dorothea Duncan



Bernard & Edith Zaffern: Co L, 272

This page of reunion photos submitted by George West

"Tell my mom I died for my country!"

By: **Charles H. Griffith**

Company C, 661st Tank Destroyers

944 Somerset Street

Gloucester City, New Jersey 08030-1857

We were stationed in the main part of Camp Hood, at 100 and something street. I was in the barracks, happily minding my own business, when **Lt. Alan Cameron**, our Platoon Leader came in. After the usual ritual, getting off my butt and calling me to attention, **Scotty Cameron** says, "At ease, Let's go **Griffith**, outside, your going to play football." I said, "But sir, I don't want to play football." **Scotty** says, "You don't get a choice, just go." So I go, they chose sides - guess who was picked last?

I get positioned next to a character, named **Donald Klump**. Now his last name was appropriate for this game because the dust was now mud. The mud stuck to our boots and piled up in layers, one clump after another. We all stood tall that day. Talk about rising to the occasion - the two teams excelled in that category. Let's get to the plot of this historic saga. Through devious means, (or we got lucky) we held the enemy to where they had to punt. Now the word was "block that kick." By now I was Gung Ho, fired up to the ninth degree. At the proper moment I took off like a bat out of hell, but only for a brief moment. Something hit me in the head and knocked me out. (Probably when I was at my best.)

I came out of it in a ambulance on the way to the hospital. Inside going down a hall on a gurney we passed two females, they looked at me and gasped. We get to the latrine, or where ever they stitch up rookie privates. My eyes were covered with a cloth and I felt something running down over my face. I holler, "Hey what the hell is that?" And this voice says, "Shut up, it's saline solution, and I'm a major." I thought that was good advice, so I kept my mouth shut. Sutures over, I get wheeled to a private room with about twenty other privates.

Well I made it through the first night. Woke up, opened my eyes and saw this very pretty blonde babe. I say hello and reach for her. "Lay down and be quite, I'm a second lieutenant," Damn, they are ganging up on me - everyone is an officer.

They brought me breakfast, all liquids. After polishing that off, I laid back down. Here comes a ward boy with a urinal. I shake my head - don't need it. I dozed off and woke when I heard two guys talking quietly. I lifted one eyelid, and saw an officer and a sergeant. The sergeant was a guy named **Turle**. The officer I didn't know. But I caught this beautiful part of their

conversation, "He's going to die." They leave, I thought damn! I should have emulated John Wilkes Boothe and said, "Tell mom I died for my country!"

About a week of the liquid diet and I was getting hungry. A guy from our company, also a private, came in to see me. It was **Leonard Merchant**. We talked and he got ready to leave, said he was going to the PX. I said, "They got one here? How about picking me up a ham and cheese sandwich." "Sure," he says. Off he goes and comes back with it. I tried one bite, wow pain, big time. So **Merchant** ate the sandwich. The next morning my breakfast tray had bacon and eggs and homefries. Wow. I sat up, posed the knife and fork to attack that meal, only to hear the second Louie Nurse holler, "That's not yours," and she took off with it and got me a watery meal. A couple of days later, Blondie stopped by my bed and says, "This ward is being quarantined, do you want to stay?" Wait, I think I get a choice? So I say, "No mam, I'll go."

I got dressed, the ward boy shows up, no urinal, but he had a cutter and tweezers. He was going to take the stitches out. I'm standing up, he cuts and yanks, I get woozy and have to sit down. He gets most of them out, the ones that you could see. Stitches in 1943 were different than today. They were made of heavy black cord. O.K., the ward boy says I can go. Yeah, where's my boots? They go nuts running around looking for my boots. They finally found them outside still covered with mud. They banged them on the boardwalk outside the ward door. I had to go outside to put them on.

I took off walking down the main street, got to 144th street when a jeep comes flying up to me. The corporal in it says, "Get in, the Company Medical Officer wants to see you," and he takes me to the Company Medical Office. I go in to see the Officer, saluted, and he says to the corporal, "Whose this?" The corporal says, "He's the guy that got hit in the head." "Get him to the hospital quick!" I say, "Sir, I've been to the hospital." "Well then report to your unit." Officers, Corporals, wow!

I got to C Company. I was walking by the kitchen, the door opens up, and a guy comes out. **Sergeant (Mess) Shearer** grins and says, "You were scheduled to be on K.P. the day after you were hurt. I'm putting you on it tomorrow." "Gee, thanks." There was no end to my good fortune! To **Shearer**, I was no longer **Griffith**, he called me Soft Head.

It ain't the end yet. A couple of years later, I'm working on some job, and the boss looks at me and says, "Hey Griff, there's something hanging out over your eye." It was one of the black stitches. I pulled it out and it bled a bit.

End of story, couldn't happen to a nicer guy!

And thanks Dottie, for exposing my twisted tale to an unsuspecting public!!

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Arlington Cemetery

Submitted By: Paul N. Shadle, President

Company E, 271st Infantry
P.O. Box 4069

New Kensington, Pennsylvania 15068-4069

On Jeopardy the other night, the final question was How many steps does the guard take during his walk across the tomb of the Unknowns? All three missed it.

This is really an awesome sight to watch if you've never had the chance. Very fascinating.

Tomb of the Unknown Soldier

1. How many steps does the guard take during his walk across the tomb of the Unknowns and why?

Answer: 21 steps. It alludes to the twenty-one gun salute, which is the highest honor given any military or foreign dignitary.

2. How long does he hesitate after his about face to begin his return walk and why?

Answer: 21 seconds for the same reason as answer number 1.

3. Why are his gloves wet?

Answer: His gloves are moistened to prevent him from losing grip on the rifle.

4. Does he carry his rifle on the same shoulder all the time and if not, why not?

Answer: He carries the rifle on the shoulder away from the tomb. After his march across the path, he executes an about face and moves the rifle to the outside shoulder.

5. How often are the guards changed?

Answer: Guards are changed every thirty minutes, twenty-four hours a day, 365 days a year.

6. What are the physical traits of the guard limited to?

Answer: For a person to apply for guard duty at the tomb, he must be between 5'10" and 6'2" tall and his waist size cannot exceed 30." Other requirements of the Guard: They must commit 2 years of life to guard the tomb, live in a barracks under the tomb, and cannot drink any alcohol on or off duty for the rest of their lives.

They cannot swear in public for the rest of their lives and cannot disgrace the uniform (fighting) or the tomb in any way. After two years, the guard is given a wreath pin that is worn on their lapel signifying they served as guard of the tomb. There are only 400 presently worn. The guard must obey these rules for the rest of their lives or give up the wreath pin.

The shoes are specially made with very thick soles to keep the heat and cold from their feet. There are metal heel plates that extend to the top of the shoe in order to make the loud click as they come to a halt. There are no wrinkles, folds or lint on the uniform. Guards dress for duty in front of a full-length mirror. The first six months of duty a guard cannot talk to anyone, nor watch TV. All off duty time is spent studying the 175 notable people laid to rest in Arlington National Cemetery. A guard must memorize who they are and where they are interred. Among the notables are: President Taft, Joe E. Lewis (the boxer) and Medal of Honor winner Audie Murphy, (the most decorated soldier of WWII) of Hollywood fame. Every guard spends five hours a day getting his uniforms ready for guard duty.

In 2003 as Hurricane Isabelle was approaching Washington, DC, our US Senate/House took 2 days off with anticipation of the storm. On the ABC evening news, it was reported that because of the dangers from the hurricane, the military members assigned the duty of guarding the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier were given permission to suspend the assignment.

They respectfully declined the offer, "No way, Sir!" Soaked to the skin, marching in the pelting rain of a tropical storm, they said that guarding the Tomb was not just an assignment, it was the highest honor that can be afforded to a service person. The tomb has been patrolled continuously, 24/7, since 1930.

Tanker Stories

By: **Charles Ray, Jr. (Billy Ray)**

Honorary Member, 777th Tank Battalion

15700 Lexington Boulevard, #416

Sugar Land, Texas 77478

Dear Dottie,

As you know, since I first called **Clarence Marshall** back in 1994, I have devoted myself to learning about what my Dad did in WWII. In August 1994, I began writing the History of the 777th Tank Battalion. Over the past almost 12 years, I have collected memorabilia, photos and company group photos. I have attended reunions and I even participated in setting up the reunion here in Houston. I drove the 69th memorabilia to **Ken Sawyer** for the following reunion in Florida.

I have interviewed tankers and soldiers. I made a trip to the Archives in College Park, Maryland and copied 300 pages of the 777th Tank Battalion after action reports and other information. I even went to Ft. Benning, Camp Gordon, Fort Knox, to do research. I went to LeHavre, France and drove the entire route that my Dad drove his tank on, all the way to Torgau.

Bill Matlach gave me information I needed to get the Holzhausen Mayor to rewrite the history of the town for that one tragic day in April. We Americans had been accused of killing 75 Germans in a barn in that town on 4 April 1945. The Mayor and I went out to the spot where everything happened. There was no barn involved here. History has been corrected. The truth now says: "25 Waffen SS soldiers being evacuated in a truck driven by Herr Schinderwolf, were killed just after the SS Lieutenant in charge of the 105 SS troops blew up the lead tank as it was turning the corner to leave the town. The second tank in the convoy saw the truck heading off in the distance and fired on it, killing 25 of the Waffen SS troops inside. 80 SS troops were captured." I also spoke to a man who was but 7 years old on that day. He was accidentally shot through his left eye at his home when the SS Lieutenant took shelter there. This young kid was the son of the driver of the truck that was evacuating the troops. It is unclear as to whether he was shot by the SS Germans or the Americans trying to get to the Lieutenant. The regrettable mistake in the town's history was made by the German who went to the Archives and found the same document I found. He misread what was on the document. You see, Germans cross their 7s and the hand written document, he read at the National Archives, shows a written "2" which sort of looks like a "crossed 7." We were falsely accused of an atrocity and I showed the Mayor the original handwritten document and now that terrible error has been fixed.

I stopped in many other towns along the way and sat with the citizens who remember the tankers and soldiers coming through and got their perspectives of the events of the day.

Along the way, I duplicated photos the men took in 1945 with photos that I personally took between 2001-2004. Now I have come to a stopping point with the history.

The History is 500 pages long without photos and I have at least 800 photos. I have come this far but since I no longer work, I no longer have the finances to publish the book. When I was working, I had big dreams of publishing the book and giving every tanker a copy of the book. Now that I am not working, I hope I can survive on the savings I have until Social Security kicks in, in November 2006.

I have found a publisher but he wants \$2,000 up front to print paperbacks on demand. I just don't have the money and I want the books to be hard bound like the 69th History Book. Turner Publishing turned me down once.

Please post these stories in the bulletin. I hope the men who have been patiently waiting for the book will forgive me for taking so long to get the book completed.

I am making decisions at this time as to whether or not to attend the Reunion in August. If I do come up with the funds for the trip, I will bring the book and photos and memorabilia to place in the Hospitality Room for everyone's enjoyment.

* * * * *

Here are three excerpts from the book and more will follow if it is okay.

Note: The source from which I extracted the following data about Heiligenstadt was found in the National Archives. Although unsigned, I attribute the information to 1st Lt. **White** because the other written "After Action Reports" that I reviewed were all appropriately signed indicating the name of the author. Lt. **White** never signed his reports.

The Battle at Heiligenstadt

9 April 1945: Shortly after the tankers were back on course for Heiligenstadt, they were "fired upon by Jerries in ditches to our front. Reconnaissance located the enemy in ditches out in the open terrain in a field two miles west of Heiligenstadt. 1st Platoon went in, in wedge formation off the right side of the road. 2nd Platoon and 3 tanks from Headquarters went in line on the left side of the road. 3rd Platoon followed 2nd Platoon in wedge formation."

9 April 1945: Headquarters, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Platoons, A Company, 777th Tank Battalion with Company B, 1st Battalion, 271st Infantry Regiment circled around to the west so they could approach Heiligenstadt from the west. (Probably keeping the sun at their backs while keeping the sun in the eyes of the enemy?)

The Infantry of 1st Battalion, B Company, 271st Infantry Regiment dismounted from the tanks.

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TANKER STORIES

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As the battle unfolded, the tankers led the assault with marching fire. One enemy soldier was killed and one enemy soldier was wounded. The rest of the enemy soldiers in the field quickly surrendered. The tankers captured and turned 40 enemy soldiers over to the infantry. According to the After Action Report, "the operation went smooth ... just like OP6."

Having completed their mission at Heiligenstadt, 1st and 3rd Platoons, A Company, 777th Tank Battalion moved through Heiligenstadt and East toward the town of Westhausen.

* * * * *

The Battle at Gruna/Espenheim

16 April 1945: After passing through Gruna to about one mile South of the town, 1st and 2nd Platoons, A Company, 777th Tank Battalion were attacked by the Germans. The enemy attacked the leading tanks with heavy concentrations of all caliber weapons, ranging from small arms to 88mm Mortar.

16 April 1945: At some point between Gruna and Espenheim, the enemy fired a panzerfaust rocket grenade at **Bill Fannucci's** tank, "Avenger" of 2nd Platoon. The round exploded on the turret. The tank was knocked out of service. The Tank Commander, **Bill Fannucci**, and the Tank Gun Loader, **Fred Rittenhouse**, were wounded. **Fred Rittenhouse** was burned slightly and received shrapnel in his back. **Bill Fannucci** was wounded in his left hand from shrapnel from the grenade that exploded next to where he was standing.

Note: According to **Otis Burdick**, "parts of the radio were taken out of **Rittenhouse's** back." The explosion also destroyed the radio and transmitter.

The infantry quickly dismounted. The infantry suffered heavy casualties. The tankers returned fire, knocking out several enemy positions. 1st and 2nd Platoons (less 2nd section, 2nd Platoon) A Company, 777th Tank Battalion were ordered to hold at this point while artillery was brought to bear on enemy positions but the Artillery didn't materialize for three hours.

The lead tank from 2nd Platoon, commanded by **Lt. Robert E. White** was instrumental at this encounter. He saw that the infantrymen were in a bad situation. He moved in to locate the trapped infantrymen and lend assistance in getting them out.

Captain Burson wrote about **Lt. White**, "Bob White is up ahead ... has determined to make a personal reconnaissance ... Jeepers, why does he do it, this war isn't worth it."

1st Lt. White located the pinned down infantrymen and called back to inform **Captain Burson**. **Captain Burson** "ordered **Lt. White** to pull back" at this point

only to hear **Lt. White** reply ... "I won't come out until I can bring out these infantrymen." **Captain Burson** wrote... "I didn't argue with him."

Note: It is most probable that this is where **T/5 George Landers** of the Medical Detachment was administering to the wounded infantrymen under direct fire. For his bravery here, George earned a Bronze Star for Heroism.

Lt. White called **Captain Burson** and informed him that he was coming out with the wounded infantrymen on his tank. He reported that he was under heavy fire.

Captain Burson wrote: "...**White** calls back and says that he just shot and killed a German Officer 15 feet away and a lot of Dough Boys are wounded."

The German had just thrown a hand grenade at **Lt. White's** tank as he was backing out of the danger zone, but casualties are unknown.

Lt. White, who was probably standing in the open turret hatch, responded to the tossed grenade with a bullet from his pistol and killed the German Officer.

The other members of **Lt. White's** crew that were in the tank at this time were, **T/5 Frank L. Smith**, the tank driver, **John Kedick**, the big gunner, **Pfc Otis Burdick**, the tank gun loader, and **Corporal A. Hvenegaard**, the tank gunner. The name on **Lt. White's** tank is "Angel."

It was during this encounter that **1st Lt. Robert E. White** distinguished himself and earned for his gallantry, The Silver Star Medal.

Note: **Otis Burdick**, A Co., 777th Tank Battalion, who was the lead tank gunner, wrote to me recently (1996) and enclosed a California newspaper article which was published in August 1945. The newspaper article which elaborated **Lt. White's** gallantry is quoted here.

"While returning from an attempt to regroup his halted tank column, which was under direct enemy flak fire, **First Lieutenant White** saw friendly infantrymen, whose platoon leader and platoon sergeant had been killed, pinned down by enemy machine gun fire. With utter disregard for his own life and safety, **First Lieutenant White**, bravely advancing under the heavy enemy fire towards this disorganized group, was confronted by a German officer who threw a grenade at him. **First Lieutenant White** killed the enemy officer with a pistol and was successful in reaching the friendly troops. Quickly reorganizing the men, he then led them to his tank. Upon being ordered to withdraw, **First Lieutenant White** then mounted his tank which was under direct enemy 88mm fire, and fired continuously at the enemy until the wounded could be evacuated."

A considerable number of enemy soldiers were also killed during this action but the tankers were unable to verify the numbers.

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The tankers of 1st and 2nd Platoons, A Company, 777th Tank Battalion were finally ordered to withdraw North to Espenheim. **Captain Burson** wrote, "We evacuated back to the edge of Espenheim, back of the railroad tracks where the Germans can't see us."

Espenheim

16 April 1945: 1st and 2nd Platoons, A Company, 777th Tank Battalion arrive at Espenheim. 3rd Platoon and 2nd Section, 2nd Platoon, A Company, 777th Tank Battalion are still at Pegau.

2nd Section, 2nd Platoon departed Pegau for Espenheim and rejoined 2nd Platoon.

* * * * *

The Battle at Audigast

16 April 1945: At 1100, 3rd Platoon, A Company, 777th Tank Battalion, consisting of 5 tanks, **Lt. Fried**, **Sgt. Percival**, **Sgt. Thompson**, **Sgt. Nockerts** and **Sgt. Kotter**, and infantry moved out of Pegau to their final objective, Zwenkau which was about 4 miles to the northeast. Zwenkau would prove to be unattainable on this date. The tankers had to pass through Audigast which was only 1-1/2 miles northeast of Pegau and then to Kobschutz, and then through Kotzschbar, and a mile further to Lobschutz and then another mile on into Zwenkau. The infantry rode on the tanks toward Audigast.

Traveling northeast, the tankers approached a T-intersection and ran into heavy resistance from the Germans. They were just south of Audigast when the enemy opened fire with heavy concentrations of small arms fire. Instead of bypassing the resistance, a decision was made to attack the enemy at Audigast and clear all resistance from the town. This was contrary to all instructions passed on from the onset of this operation. The objective of A Company had been to "follow the 9th Armored Division and mop up any enemy resistance bypassed by the 9th Armored Division."

Even **Captain Burson** wrote, "We are supposed to follow them and bypass any resistance and keep going."

Upon arrival on the outskirts of Audigast, heavy small arms fire was brought down on the tanks and infantry. **Lt. Fried** stopped the advance and told everyone to take cover until artillery could soften up enemy positions in the town. The infantry dismounted from the tanks. He called in an artillery barrage and soon artillery was brought to bear on town.

After what was determined to be sufficient preparation of the town with tank and artillery fire, the tankers and infantry were ordered to move in.

Note: This determination that "the town was clear" was premature according to some men I spoke to at the 69th Infantry Reunion in Schaumburg, Illinois in 1996.

The Platoon soon discovered that the enemy still had will and means with which to fight when a panzerfaust rocket grenade knocked out the platoon leader's tank. **Lt. Fried's** tank received a direct hit on the turret and smoke began pouring out of the turret.

Note: The following comes from "On the Way." "**Skip** drove the tank to the side of the road and into the ditch. Then **Paul Durham** piled out bleeding about the face. The medics took **Paul** to the rear. Then **Skip** took off to the rear, driving like hell and fighting the fire at the same time. **Lt. Fried** was killed in the attack and **Luke Patrenella**, (who was severely wounded in the attack, remained in the evacuating tank) died later of wounds received during the attack.

Captain Burson wrote, "Damn, I sure liked Mort, the whole company is blue, they all liked him ... it will be hard to get an officer like him who can take his place ... I will never forget him ... gonna be hard on Hannah, his wife ..." END

Again, the commanders believed that Audigast was ready to fall so the commanders ordered two of the remaining four tanks to continue clearing Audigast of enemy resistance. This probably meant a systematic reduction of suspected enemy pockets and positions.

Note: From "On The Way," "**Sgt. Percival** and **Sgt. Thompson** took the second section of 3rd Platoon through Audigast in the direction of Lobschutz but they would not reach their objective on this date. The column proceeded forward. Contact between the two tanks was completely lost for about an hour. Finally, **Sgt. Percival's** tank appeared ... he was alone. He reported that **Sgt. Thompson's** tank received four direct 88mm hits at point blank range."

At the northern edge of Audigast the Germans had waited for the Americans. The tank of the Platoon Sergeant of 3rd Platoon, A Company, 777th Tank Battalion approached the range of their guns. **Sgt. Percival's** tank took 88mm fire on the turret. No casualties resulted.

The column proceeded forward and the second tank, commanded by **Sgt. Thompson**, received four direct 88mm hits at point blank range. The tank was knocked out and three members of the tank crew that were in the turret, **Thompson**, **Mikosek**, and **Bradshaw** were killed instantly. **Sgt. Reckrey** was severely wounded in the side and another crew member, **Anderson**, was slightly wounded.

Sgt. Percival's tank destroyed the enemy gun position responsible for this action and also set an ammunition dump on fire but could not check the status of any survivors in **Thompson's** tank.

Captain Burson received word shortly after his men were killed.

Sgt. Lewis Reckrey and **Maurice Anderson** were able to egress from the tank and hide in a ditch not too

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far from their destroyed tank. **Reckrey's** wounds would allow him to be moved back to safety. **Maurice Anderson**, therefore, remained by his side, tending his wounds, throughout the night. For this unselfish act of bravery, **Maurice Anderson** received a Silver Star Medal.

Sgt. Nockerts and **Sgt. Kotter** went into Audigast on a different road. Their task was to reduce suspected enemy pockets and positions. The enemy opened up with heavy artillery concentration on the allied position and these remaining tanks were ordered to withdraw back into Espenheim and remained there for the night.

The taking of Audigast had proven a very costly mission for 3rd Platoon, A Company, 777th Battalion.

17 April 1945: After being devastated at Audigast on the 16th, 3rd Platoon, A Company, 777th Tank Battalion moved out of Audigast for Lobschutz. They reached Kobschutz (a town but not Lobschutz) and the three remaining tanks of 3rd Platoon take the town with I Company, 3rd Battalion. According to "On The Way," this was the last battle for the tankers of 3rd Platoon.

724th GIs Reunited

Submitted By: **Ricaldo Cagno**

T/5, Battery B, 724th Field Artillery

215 South Bradford Avenue

Tampa, Florida 33609

(EDITOR'S NOTE: In Bulletin Vol. 59, No. 2, we published a letter from Michael Weichmann asking if anyone remembered his father, Lawrence Weichmann. Lawrence and Michael received the following reply.)

Although I never met you, I have never forgotten about the time you were shot. I was with "B" Battery's forward observer, **Lt. Parson**. In our group was **Al Buckovec**, myself and our 1st Sergeant **Retherford** who had never been to the OP.

We had driven up to join an infantry unit. We decided it was not safe to go any further with our weapons carrier, and started on foot going through the wooded area to join the infantry unit, we then were being shot at by snipers. We layed on the ground, **Lt. Parson** crawled on ahead. I had the 610 radio on my back at that time and every time I raised my head, the radio would push my helmet in front of my eyes. After a while two German soldiers came out with their hands up and surrendered to us.

A little while later the word came down to us that someone from a Battery had been shot in the shoulder. That was you. I would bet that the Germans that surrendered to us were the ones that shot you, because the shooting stopped. We may have been sent to relieve your FO - who were you with? I think **Lt. Feinberg** may have been one of A Battery's FO's.

Bruno Stefanoni Fondly Remembered

Submitted By: **John and Regina Bova**

2410 Cameron Mills Road

Alexandria, Virginia 22302

It is with sadness that I inform you of the passing of **Bruno Stefanoni**, Staff Sergeant, Anti-Tank Company, 272nd Infantry, on June 1st, 2006. Bruno, who is my wife Gina's great uncle, had been in ill health and passed while in the hospital. He had been living many years in Queens, New York. His beloved wife **Connie** predeceased him and although they had no children of their own, he and **Connie** had many nieces and nephews who were very fond of them and will miss them both dearly.

Like many veterans from World War II, Bruno was very proud of his service to our country but was somewhat reluctant to discuss it or glorify it. After some prodding, he started sharing many stories with me and it was obvious how proud he was to have served in the 69th and of the men he served with during that time. He often spoke fondly of the men in his squad and even put me in contact with **Joe Huber** who invited me to attend the 69th Reunion in Hampton, Virginia where I was able to meet many of the men **Bruno** served with in Camp Shelby and Europe. Unfortunately, Bruno had been unable to attend the annual reunion for many years due to health issue, but he stayed in touch with the men he served with in the War.

The photo of **Bruno** shows him posing with a Russian soldier during the 69th's historic link-up with the Soviet Army. (I actually have a bullet that the soldier had given Bruno as a souvenir). Also included is a donation to the Association in Bruno's honor.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone at the Bulletin for performing such a great service to your members and look forward to receiving the Bulletin in the future.



Annual Meeting of Officers and Board of Directors 69TH INFANTRY DIVISION ASSN. Thursday, August 17th, 2006 THE CROWNE PLAZA HOTEL KING OF PRUSSIA, PA

Call to order: The Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Fighting 69th Infantry Association, Inc. was called to order by **President Paul Shadle** at 9:00 a.m., Thursday, August 17th, 2006, in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania.

Invocation by Chaplain Bill Snidow.

Pledge of Allegiance led by **President Paul.**

President's Welcome and Report of Membership Chairman: Paul welcomed those present and noted that there were enough directors present to make the needed quorum. He noted that we have a total of 3,484 members on the Association's roster. Membership is dropping due to deaths and addresses of members with no forwarding address.

In handling the members who do not pay dues, he suggested that we should send them a first class letter advising that they will be dropped if dues are not paid. He has included a note to readers in the bulletin to advise us of changes in address or other loss of membership but stated that in some cases, the Bulletin gets to children who are not interested and just throw it out. He told about one person who returned a dues statement stating that the person died in 1997. We sent the Bulletin to that person for nine years for nothing and that it went unread.

It has been the present plan that when a bulletin is returned with a forwarding address (a cost of 75 cents) that he re-mails it first class at a cost of \$1.11. It was suggested that we do not re-mail the bulletin but make the change of address for the next issue.

Vice-President's Report by Dave Theobald:

Dave congratulated those in attendance for being able to make it to the reunion. He spoke about the West Coast Chapter of the Association and it may be possible to have a national reunion on the West Coast during his term as president.

Treasurer's Report by John Barrette:

John handed out a two-page report, one for all of 2005 and the other for the first six months of 2006. A report on the reunion will appear in the bulletin. John is working with Paul on clearing up the question of who is not a paid up member of the association.

Secretary's Report by Joe Huber:

Joe reported on the acknowledgement letters sent to people who have sent memorial gifts to the Association in memory of deceased members. These funds have

been put into the Bulletin funds to help with the ever-increasing mailing and publication costs. He suggested that we let our children know that we would appreciate them doing this for us and to give them the president's name and address as a focal point for the mailing of the memorials.

In addition, he reported that Memorial Day flowers and wreaths were placed on the Military Cemeteries in Europe and England. Photos and copies of the Memorial Day Programs are on display in the "Welcome Room area." Decorations are on order for 2007 and funds are on deposit. He noted that the people in Paris have informed him that costs should remain stable for the next two-three years.

Motion made, seconded and passed to approve the above reports.

NEW BUSINESS

A further discussion took place on the question of membership and it was noted that these questions had been covered in motions and discussions at previous Directors' and General Membership meetings so new motions were needed. "Just go ahead with it" was the feeling. In addition it was noted that some type of membership card should be sent to those who have paid dues. The possibility of using a "postcard type" of card was discussed and will be explored.

There was a discussion that those bulletins that are returned with "unable to forward" replies be dropped from the mailing list and those with a forwarding address not have the returned copy mailed to them but that the change of address be made for the next issue.

There was a discussion on the memorials to the linkup at Torgau and Strehla that have been erected by the 69th Division Memorial Association. This is a separate charitable group that IS NOT affiliated with the Association and that may accept deductible donations. Members are urged to support the group.

In addition, there was a discussion on the history of the Linkup memorials and remembrance. It seems that during the "Cold War" governments on both sides of the question tried to avoid any discussion of the event and that it was only the veterans of the two sides that kept it alive. Both the 50th and 60th anniversaries of the event went almost un-noticed by both sides. However the Russian Federation has taken more interest in the event.

President Paul Shadle stated that he will appoint a committee to plan for the break up of the association and pick a time for the canceling of reunions at the General Membership Meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Joseph F. Huber
Secretary

Annual Meeting of the General Membership 69TH INFANTRY DIVISION ASSN. Saturday, August 19th, 2006 THE CROWNE PLAZA HOTEL KING OF PRUSSIA, PA

Call to order: The General Membership meeting of the Fighting 69th Infantry Division, Inc. was called to order by **President Paul Shadle** at 9:00 a.m., Saturday, August 19, 2006 in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania.

Invocation by Chaplain William Snidow.

Pledge of Allegiance led by **President Paul**.

Minutes of the 2005 meeting were posted in the Bulletin and were approved on motion, second and vote.

President's and Membership Chairman's report by **President Paul Shadle:** Paul welcomed the members and called attention to the first time attendees. They were **Warren Goodman**, M-273 Infantry; **Gilbert Hamilton**, L-271st Infantry; **Vito Narducci**, K-273rd Infantry and **Earl Reese**, B-271st Infantry. In his membership report he noted that we have 3,484 names on the roster. Of that amount, 421 are wives, 39 are associate and 39 are honorary. There have been 144 names dropped from the membership for various reasons and that there is a list of at least 51 names for the Taps page of the next bulletin.

Vice-President's Report by **David Theobald:**

Dave congratulated those present for being here and still alive. He commented on a survey conducted by the West Coast Chapter of the Association. One outstanding note in the survey is that those who attend these functions want programs and tours. He said that events at these reunions make the events and the general feelings were that they and by the same token, the national association, should keep operating.

Treasurer's Report by **John Barrette:**

John handed out copies of reports covering operations for the year 2005 and for the first six months of 2006. There was no report on the operation and cost of the reunion. This report will be presented in the Bulletin.

Secretary's Report by **Joe Huber:**

Joe reported that he had the pleasure of acknowledging a number of Memorial gifts to the Association in memory of deceased members. These memorials were placed in the Publication Fund to help with the ever-increasing costs for postage and publication. He suggested that those members here and all members remind their children that memorial gifts to the Association would be appreciated.

He also stated that the 2006 Memorial Day decorations were placed at the four locations in Europe and England. 2007 tributes have been ordered and funds are in place. He further noted that the organization in Europe stated that prices should stay as they are for at least the next two years.

Upon motion, second and vote the reports were approved.

President Paul announced that **Ed Hill**, 881st F.A. has accepted the Board of Directors membership, class of 2007 replacing the late **Bill Ruebsamen**.

NEW BUSINESS

W.C. Sheavly presented the slate of nominations for Board of Directors, **Class of 2009**. They are:

Carl Miller 69th M.P.
Eugene Mischke Company B, 273rd Infantry
Mel Schulz A-T Company, 272nd Infantry
W.C. Sheavly Company M, 271st Infantry
Chet Yastrzemski Company E, 272nd Infantry

Nominations were called for from the floor. As there were none, a call to vote to close nominations and a unanimous ballot cast for those nominated. Seconded and carried on a voice vote.

The President appointed the members of the Board of Directors for the Class of 2007 as the nominating committee for the 2007 reunion. They, and the newly-elected Directors will be notified by the Secretary.

There was a discussion as to the possibility that the costs of the travel and the attending of the reunion could be a tax deduction as the Association is a non-profit group. Our Past President **Bernard Zaffern** warned that this is not possible because even though our organization is tax-exempt, it is not considered a charity deduction.

Bill Sheavly, Jr., author of two books on the Division's history, spoke to the members telling us about a five-page list of children and grandchildren of 69ers who do not want to see the history of the Division die if and when we disband. He is offering the founding of the 69th Division Legacy group and is asking for permission to use our name and our blessing. President Paul said that we will take it under advisement.

Bing Poon, E-271st Infantry, stated that there is precedence for this type of organization in that the 10th Mountain has one.

Ted Snyder, E-271st Infantry, suggested that it would be a good idea for members of the Association to get on the internet as it is an economical method of contacting a large number of people at one time and to keep in touch. He also asked that anyone who had contact with any concentration camps in Germany to get that information to the Holocaust Museum for historical information.

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ANNUAL MEETING OF THE GENERAL MEMBERSHIP

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President Paul appointed the following to study a plan for the eventual ending of reunions and the disbanding of the association. They are: **John Barrette**, Treasurer; **Joe Huber**, Secretary; **Robert Pierce**; **Mel Schulz**; **Ray Sansoucy**; **David Theobald** and **Bernard Zaffern**.

They will be charged with this planning and for a recommendation as to the Legacy Group as proposed by **Bill Sheavly, Jr.**

The 2007 Reunion is planned for August 19-27, 2007 in Salt Lake City, Utah.

There being no further business there was a call to adjourn. Moved, seconded and carried.

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m., August 19, 2006.

Respectfully submitted,
Joseph F. Huber
Secretary

The Old Currency Control Book

By: **Bill Drugg**

Company K, 272nd Infantry Regiment
211 North 14th Avenue
Altoona, Pennsylvania 16601

Currency Control: World War Two

After reading this book from cover to cover for many years and enjoying every article, one subject that to my recollection that has not been covered in the 69th Bulletin is Currency Control. We Old Veterans of the E.T.O. that were not lucky enough to be sent home right away in the first group will remember it well. I say LUCKY, but you boys that came home first earned the honor of being one of those, and I take my hat off to you.

So this is written knowing memories fade and many mistakes are made as they fade into history. However this is how I remember it.

Problem - The war is over, everybody has money - the Black Market is everybody's pastime. Cigarettes are worth \$75.00 a carton at least. Some areas \$100.00. Everything has an inflated price no matter what it is - guns, jewelry, pots and pans, you name it and somebody is selling it [for a price]. If you were lucky enough to know somebody that traveled, especially to a town like Berlin, you were blessed and you had it made. You had a universal shopping experience. Customers were all around you - Russian, Italians, Polish, G.I.'s etc. If they were not selling they were buying, and everybody had money or something better than money to trade. It was a Buyer's market.

Well everyone knew this couldn't last. This dream had to end. And it did. The American Soldiers were getting paid, say, a hundred million a month, (just an estimate) and a very poor estimate at that. And the G.I.s were sending home a hundred times that amount. (This too, is just a very conservative figure.) It does not take a mathematician to see something had to halt, this inflation causing action.

Soooo - we the "Occupying Forces," those of us that were left behind, know what happened. What happened was a thing called "Currency Control" roared into being and what it did was, my friends, was control the currency. No more pay-days from Mr. Black Market. I mean, BAM, it ceased to exist, the honeymoon was over and the free lunch was a thing of the past.

Everyone agreed it was very effective at least from the G.I.'s side and most everybody that had anything to say about it said, "All the I's were dotted and all the T's were crossed" We have been had. The old saying, "There is the Right way and the Army way," did not fit this situation, they had done this right. Yep.

The Powers that were had come up with an idea to thwart anything to keep money (Allied Marks) from multiplying except through the Currency Control Books which we had all been issued showing how much we were paid (legally) and that amount was the amount you were able to send home.

You could send a money order home for the amount shown on your Currency Control Book and not a Mark more. Checkmate.

Everything had been accounted for. If you wanted to gamble, fine, play poker. You could only lose as much as you had showing in your Control Book, no more, no less. If you lost to another player, a money order had to be made out to the winner by the loser showing a negative for you (loser) and a positive for that amount to the winner.

Again checkmate. The Powers that were had covered all areas. Now you could still trade items but no more candy bars, cigarettes, or soap. Well the fun was gone, Kapoot it was a slam dunk for the POWERS.

Now there was one other place you could wheel and deal. That was at the Point of Embarking. Camp Lucky Strike by Name. Some men had a lot of money showing on their Control Book but no cash, other guys had the cash but nothing showing on their Control Books. This was only paper (absolutely no value). The two get together, make a deal exchanging money orders for cash. What sort of deal was up to the two players, The sky was the limit. With the Ships Departure adding to the suspense. Now the fun is back in the game and the powers lose.

The Lowly Dog Face Has Won Again.

THE AUXILIARY'S PAGE

By **Dottie (Witzleb) Shadle**

Ladies Auxiliary Editor

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Woburn, Massachusetts 01801

A Message from your Auxiliary President, Jane Matlach

Dear Ladies of the 69th Ladies Auxiliary:

The 59th annual reunion was a happy and a sad time. Our former president, **Theresa Pierce**, passed away in the spring, and members were shocked to hear of her death. We held a special memorial service during our meeting, and **Kathy Pierce** spoke to us about her mother's love of life and her interests. A collection in her memory was taken, and sent to Our Lady of the Valley Church in Hemet, California.

Sixty-six current and nine first-timers attended the meeting.

Edith Zaffern reported that she had mailed 1,580 cards to our members during the last year.

Twenty-eight lap robes were donated to a local Veterans Home. **Paul Shadle** reported that the home is in great need of lap robes. Please keep creating those wonderful 35" x 45" robes and booties during the year, and bring them to next year's reunion.

The entertainment was provided by John Lianaronis?. He sang and played several old-fashioned instruments. I hope you have a healthy and happy year.

(See next page for letter of thanks that we received from Melissa Edonick from the Department of Veterans Affairs in Philadelphia.)

PLEASE NOTE:

If you are receiving a card for a birthday or anniversary and the person the card is intended for is deceased or no longer interested in receiving the card, please let **Dottie Shadle** or **Edith Zaffern** know. We will pass the information on to the proper person. Thank you.

LADIES' AUXILIARY
(Continued from Page 19)

Department of Veterans Affairs
Medical Center
University and Woodland Avenue
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19104

Dear Members of the Fighting 69th Ladies Auxiliary:

Thank you for your generous donation of several boxes of items which included:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| (1) quilted lap robe | (4) t-shirts |
| (14) lap robes | (1) game |
| (3) afghans | (1) photo album |
| (3) admission kits (toiletries) | (1) large bag of toiletries |
| (1) shoe box filled with stationary | |
| (2) state quarters/with postcards | |
| (deposited into General Post Fund) | |

Several veterans in different areas of the Medical Center benefited from your donation. The items were distributed to hospitalized veterans in the Medical Center, the Women's Health Center, Nursing Home Care Unit residents and Homeless Outreach.

It is generous of you to remember our veterans at the Philadelphia VA Medical Center and Nursing Home in your every day thoughts. We strive to make a veteran's hospital stay comfortable and receiving one of your donated items contributes to this goal.

On behalf of the Medical Center staff, and our veteran patients, thank you for your continuous support and donations.

Sincerely,
Melissa A. Edonick, MA, MS, CAVS
Chief Voluntary Service

- In Memoriam -

"LADIES' TAPS"

FRAN GILLEN

wife of **Lawrence Gillen, Co. K, 271st**

LENA GOON

wife of **Clarence C. Goon, Co. G, 271st**

FERN PUGH

wife of **Lewis G. Pugh, Btry. C, 880th F.A.**

VERA WHITFIELD

wife of **Howard E. Whitfield, Btry. C, 880th F.A.**

WANDA J. WITWORTH

wife of **William L. Witworth, Hq., 272nd**

WIDOWS

MRS. ALICE E. BRICKER

Company H, 272nd Infantry Regiment

MRS. MARIE HERBISON

Company I, 272nd Infantry Regiment

MRS. BLANCHE SIEGELBAUM

Company F, 271st Infantry Regiment

Company D, 271st

Submitted By: Ted Snyder

3 Carolyn Court, Syosset, New York 11791



Front: Sergeant Paul McCombs,
In Doorway: Corporal Bob Mauer
Schmidtheim, Germany

**Company I, 273rd at
the 59th Annual Reunion**

Submitted By: Paul H. Eagon

1435 North Avenue, Waukegan, Illinois 60085

**Paul H. Eagon,
Carl McNair
and
Robert Pierce**
at the 59th
Annual Reunion.

**Erwin
Sanborn,**
also of Co. I,
273rd was there
but had to leave
early because
of a sick
grandchild.



World War II Vets Meet in Sugarcreek

By Joseph Ledford, *Local Edition Editor*

Their theaters of war, specialties and experiences may have been different, but they were united on Friday in Sugarcreek, brothers in arms, devoted friends, members of the greatest generation.

At the hospitality room at the Dutch Host Inn, members of the China-Burma-India Hump Pilots Association and those of C Battery, 880th Field Artillery, 69th Infantry Division, met, reminisced and remembered their adventures in World War II and their lost comrades.

Howard Moomaw of Sugarcreek was a flight traffic controller for "hump" crews, those men who flew over the eastern ranges of the Himalayan Mountains, or "The Hump," in order to supply Chinese troops in their fight with Japan during WWII.

"The Hump Pilot Association started 65 years ago and every year there was an annual reunion," Moomaw said. "The reunion in Nashville, Tennessee last fall was the last one because everyone was getting too old with health problems, so they decided to close down the national reunion... everybody agreed to have many little reunions," he continued. "This group here tonight represents about four states."

Moomaw said that he had heard from Les Troyer of Sugarcreek that he would be speaking to a WWII military unit at the Dutch Host. Moomaw touched base with C Battery veteran **Lowell McFarlin** from Ashland and the two decided to hold a joint reunion.

The chance to meet after the many years since their time of service is special to these men. They look on their buddies from the war as family members - a family sadly shrinking with time. C Battery, 880th Field Artillery has been meeting for reunions for 28 years and this is the fifth time they have met in Sugarcreek. The first reunion saw 50 veterans and wives attend. The number this year was down to 14.

"We didn't think so much about it when we were over there, but then when you get back... you say 'I wonder where my buddies are, my real buddies that went through a lot of hell with me.' That's what holds us together really," said **Bob "Willie" Williams** of Lorain, who served with C Battery as a communications man. The unit saw action in Germany, notably the Ardennes Forest. "I wonder how I made it - I really do,"

"We all had it pretty rough, but we got through it all right," said **McFarlin**, who served as a driver for the battery, pulling a 105mm howitzer. "We were together for the whole time," he said. "Reunions mean everything to all of us."

According to Moomaw, there is a unique camaraderie that is shared between men who have experienced the hardships of war. "You remember all the buddies that didn't make it, especially over the Hump," Moomaw said, noting that the accidents over the Himalayan Mountains were common due to adverse weather conditions, poor navigational aides and the extreme height of the range.

The metal and wreckage of C-46 Commandos and C-47 "Gooney Birds" following flight paths was so numerous a book about the Hump pilots was written called "The Aluminum Trail." "They had radio navigation, until their aerals iced up," Moomaw said. "It was pretty much taking the headings and altitude you were assigned and hoping you made it."

"We call that theater 'The Forgotten Theater,'" said **Floyd Peronto** of Pittsfield, Massachusetts, a former Hump plane navigator. "Officers wanted to keep that theater open because it drew Japanese troops away from the Pacific Southeast."

Peronto recalled making a long flight only to be told he was scheduled for another the next day. When he refused to make the flight due to fatigue, another navigator asked if he could take the flight. "I said 'sure, by all means.' That plane hit a mountain and everybody was killed. So, I was a pretty lucky bird."

Not all veterans of the war present on Friday fired guns and flew planes, **Marie Walcott** of Indianapolis was a young girl in London during the time when German bombers rained death on the city.

"I was 5 when the war started in 1939... because of the bombing in London, I spent most of my childhood, till I was 11-1/2, in nothing but bomb shelters and sleeping in the subways," she said, noting she also hid from bombs under beds, under stairwells and in fireplaces. "My mother worked for the American Red Cross and she would serve 'the Yanks' coffee and doughnuts and she also worked making bombs for the war." Marie's father was a British army veteran of the battle of Dunkirk, where he saw two close friends die, and the African campaign against Nazi general **Irwin Rommel**, where he had to engage in hand to hand fighting.

"He was a changed man when he came home," she recalled. "He would never talk about the war. These men here will talk about it, but he wouldn't. If he had lived he would be close to 100 years old now."

She still has memories of coming out of bomb shelters and seeing the ruined, burning buildings, the sky glowing orange because of gun fire, smoke and death all around. The children made toys and jewelry from the parts of downed planes, Marie said she herself had boxes of shrapnel that she had collected.

One particular memory stands out to Marie. She and her younger sister had tried to get into a particular bomb shelter, but they were turned away because it was full. They were directed 100 feet down the street to another shelter.

"When we came out of that bomb shelter after the air raid warning, (the first) bomb shelter had had a direct hit, so it was never meant to be because we would have never been alive to tell our little stories."

Marie went on to marry an American serviceman in 1956 and came to the states the next year. "And I gave America four lovely American children," she said with a laugh. She later became a U.S. citizen, a testament to her gratitude for the American G.I.s help in fighting Hitler.

"I thank America for helping us. I really do," she said.

With Co. K, 272nd Infantry Regiment

Submitted By:
Bill Drugg

211 North 14th Avenue
Altoona, Pennsylvania
16601

Bill would like help in
finding old buddies.
Anyone from Company K
please write to him.



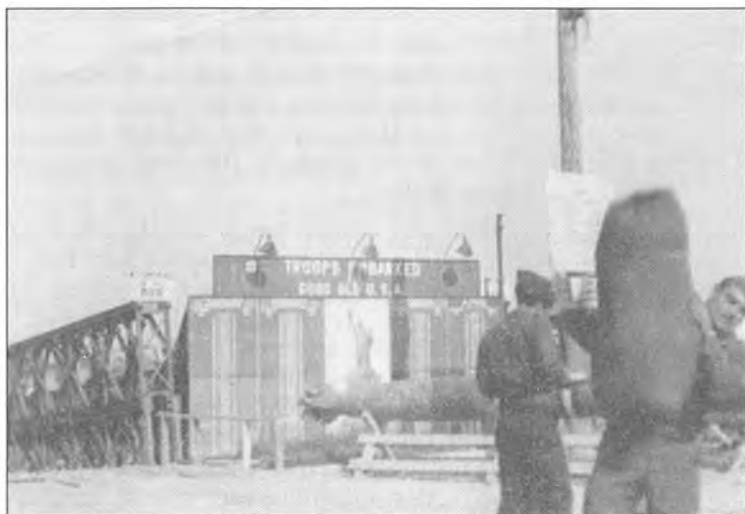
Bill Drugg hitches a ride on a locomotive and Frank Hull hitches a ride on the oxen.



*Nunn of Kent, Ohio, Jason of Worchester, MA,
Bill Drugg of Altoona, PA, Smoltz of Ohio, Wallace of Ohio
and B.D. (Bomb Disposal), our Mascot.*



Anti-Aircraft that missed its ride on the rail.



Load up for the ride of your life to the U.S.A.



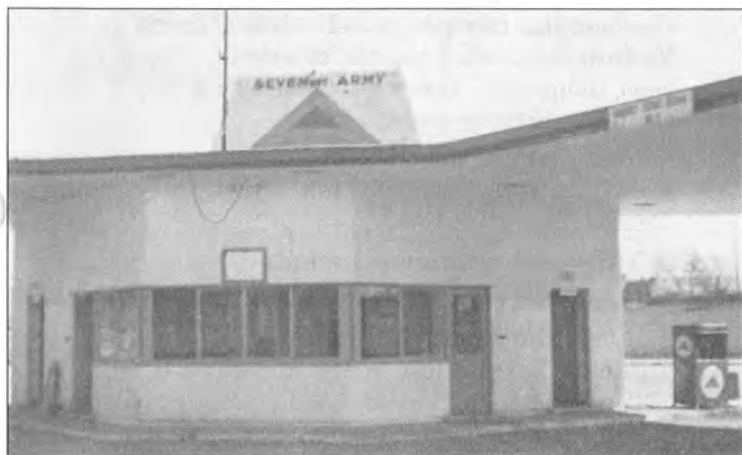
First class ride from Germany to France on 40&8s.



*Returning from a downhill race
on leave in Davos, Switzerland.*



*Looking over the ski route.
Bill Drugg and instructor getting up the nerve to push off in Davos, Switzerland.*



*Seventh Army on Autobahn - Service Station
Heidelberg, Germany*



Waiting for a wreck on the Autobahn



Fill'er up, boy.



Directing traffic on the busy streets.



Bill driving the wrecker.

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

We are interested in all news from Chapters, Groups, Branches, Companies, Battalions, Regiments, Recon, Artillery, AAA, Units, T.D.'s and minis for this column. Mail your date(s), location, banquet cost, activities and room rates, plus a good write-up to **Fighting 69th Division Bulletin, P.O. Box 4069, New Kensington, Pennsylvania 15068-4069**, as early as possible. Then follow through with a write-up immediately after the event(s).

661st Tank Destroyers

Thomas and Tammy Slopek, News Reporters

2515 Shade Road
Akron, Ohio 44333-2058

2006 Annual Mini Reunion Report

September 21st-24th, 2006

Danville, Virginia

This year's reunion took place in Danville, Virginia with the **Dawson/Puccio** families hosting this year's event. **Vince and Linda Puccio** along with grandson **Tony**, great-grandson **Josh**, and other family members extended warm Virginia hospitality to everyone with planned tours of Danville's attractions which included a private tour of the Danville Tank Museum, and the Sutherlin Mansion.

The Sutherlin Mansion, located on the famous "Millionaire's Row" section of Danville, served as the seat of the Confederate government to Jefferson Davis at the end of the Civil War. Once considered one of the finest homes in Danville, it provides a glimpse into the lifestyle and history of this era.

The AAF Tank Museum was the hit of the reunion. This huge museum featured displays of over 113 tanks, weaponry and artifacts, some dated as early as the 16th century, as well as a truly impressive collection of military uniforms and hats. The museum features an indoor radio controlled battlefield as well.

Our privately guided tour started with a bang as the veterans were shown to the museum's WWII M-18 Hellcat. Our guide allowed all of the veterans access to the inside of the display area to pose as a group in front of the destroyer, and we all got good pictures of them. Some of us were also sternly reprimanded when we inadvertently failed to disarm the flash mechanisms on our cameras! Boy, did we hear about that! Other highlights of the Tank Museum tour included a Sherman Tank that had been excavated and restored by our tour guide himself, and a very nice collection of Tank

Destroyer memorabilia featuring everything from patches to ashtrays, to printed material. I know all of our veterans appreciated this museum's devotion to preserving the role of the Tank Destroyers in American military history.

Saturday night was capped off with an elegant banquet at the hotel, with a presentation by a local Danville educator and historian, with his interesting and unique collection of WWII memorabilia and proud memories of his father's WWII military service.

Attendance at this year's reunion was good, with many extended family members making the trip with the veterans. However, we all missed **Chuck and Fran Yannul**, who were unable to attend. The number of sons, daughters, and grandchildren continues to keep the 661st reunion going!

Next year's reunion will be hosted by the **Mellinger family** in York, Pennsylvania. Watch the bulletin for details!

This year attendees included:

Bill and Mary Wahl and family: Bill and Jan Wahl

Bill and Margaret Dawson and family:

Jackie Yesalavich, Wiley and Jane Keel,

Tony and Josh Puccio, Linda and Vincent Puccio,

Billy and Christy Puccio

(Continued on Page 25)



661st Veterans in front of M-18 Hellcat at Virginia Tank Museum: Warren Mitchell, Mike Kotnick, John Sherlock, Charles Rodgers, Bill Dawson, Ken Gillett, Nelson Leaman, Bill Snidow, John Golden, Harold Saunder, Bill Wahl

DIVISION MEETINGS ACROSS THE U.S.

(Continued from Page 24)

Mike and Dorothy Kotnik

Thomas and Tammy Slopek (Jules Slopek)

Ellen (Pat) Slopek (Jules Slopek)

Jack Dowler (Jules Slopek)

Marie Mackey (George Mackey)

Arnold Mackey (son)

Nena Dresser (daughter)

Bill and Ellen Snidow with grandson, Nate

Ken and Wilma Gillette with son, Randy

Nelson and Betty Leaman

John and Leona Sherlock with son, Matthew

Warren and Dorothy Mitchell

Karen and Dave Royer (Millard Mellinger)

Harold Saunder and son, Mark

Ruth Mellinger (Millard Mellinger)

and daughter, Dawn, son, Marlin,

grandchildren, Rachel and Abe

John and Eva Golden

Charles and Carol Rodgers

Mark and Pam Bragg (Ralph Bragg)

Company D, 273rd Infantry

Kenneth Sawyer, News Reporter

2207 Country Club Road

Melbourne, Florida 32901

Telephone: 321/729-8237

Company D has nice turnout at Annual Reunion

We had 20 attendees at the annual reunion in King of Prussia. That compares favorably with the turnout of other company sized units.

We have become a fairly close-knit group through attending several previous reunions. While we have a great time renewing old friendships, we would wholeheartedly welcome some newcomers. The prospects of having this pleasure are dimming as the years take their toll. Possibly our next reunion being in Salt Lake City, Utah will provide an additional inducement.

Salt Lake City has a lot to offer. They have a trolley system to help us get around the city to the big mall and other interesting places. When not sampling the entertainment, we can relax in the hospitality room with a cold one.

The **Blackmar** clan had a terrific turnout at this reunion. Along with the patriarch, **Allan Blackmar**, there were **Ken** and **Marva Blackmar**, **Dave** and **Katie Blackmar**, **Erin** and **Lillian Blackmar** and **Mike Blackmar**. All but Mike hail from New York. Mike lives in Connecticut.

Among the other attendees were **Art Ayres** with **Art Ayres, Jr.**, **Art Ayres III**, and **Ken Ayres**. All but

Ken are from New Jersey. **Ken** is a Floridian. **Ed** and **Mary Case** represented Pennsylvania. **George** and **Barbara Johnson** drove up from Virginia. **Betty Ammon** flew in from Michigan. I came up from Florida. My niece and her husband, **Martha** and **Hal Lockard** from Pennsylvania, rounded out the group.

Remember, stay healthy so that you can make it to Salt Lake City, Utah.

Battery C 880th Field Artillery

Submitted By: Lowell McFarlin

89 North High Street, P.O. Box 236

Jeromesville, Ohio 44840-0236

Telephone: 419/368-7363

E-Mail: lowmarmcf@bright.net

27th Annual Reunion

September 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th, 2006

Dutch Host Inn, Sugarcreek, Ohio

Great weather, beautiful countryside, and wonderful fellowship – the only thing missing was too many of our friends. Age and health is forcing many vacancies.

Everyone started arriving by mid afternoon and getting settled in for the duration. An evening meal was provided by several of the ladies. After more visiting we enjoyed watching a video of last year's reunion shown by Tracy Ellis. It was good to relive that time together, but sad to see the ones not with us this year.

Thursday morning we traveled a short distance through the Amish countryside to the little village of Charm and had lunch at the Chalet in the Valley, a nice restaurant. We had a delicious lunch of our choice. After lunch, we visited a large hardware store and lumberyard by the name of Keim's Lumber. It is very interesting to see the store manned by the Amish. The store is very modern and handles beautiful home décor. The Amish men and women use all the modern machinery as well as the computers and modern technology – then leave by buggy or bicycle to go to a home with no electricity or inside telephones. We understand that cell phones are becoming popular and a real problem to the bishops trying to keep order among his people.

Thursday evening we were happy to meet in our hospitality room with another group of WWII vets that were meeting in the same motel at the same time. There were five couples from all over the USA. They were pilots who flew over the Hump – the CBI. We all enjoyed a speaker from Sugarcreek who entertained us with stories about the Amish way of life. A reporter from the local Amish newspaper, the "Budget" was there to take pictures of both groups and interviewed several people. This paper is published weekly and

(Continued on Page 26)

DIVISION MEETINGS ACROSS THE U.S.

(Continued from Page 25)

has letters from reporters from all over their area which includes several states (New York, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Virginia, Ohio, and others in a certain area.) The letters are so interesting as they tell of new babies, illnesses of neighbors, vacations, their church news, and many items that sound like someone's diary. After the reporter left we all had our ice cream sundaes – including our guests.

Friday's business meeting again had a memorial service for our recently deceased members, **Don Johnson, Enrico D'Angelo, Vera Whitfield, and Fern Pugh**. It was voted to continue our reunion for another year even though our numbers are getting less each year. The afternoon was spent visiting, sight-seeing, and working on our picture puzzle. Our banquet in the evening was held at Beachy's restaurant in Sugarcreek. We enjoyed a family type meal and after the meal, several members told of events during the past year. Group pictures were taken after we went back to the hospitality room. A DVD tape of pictures taken from all the previous reunions was shown.

Our farewells were exchanged following a breakfast meal together at the Dutch Valley Restaurant just across the valley.

Those attending were:

Frank and Marie Habay, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; **Ralph Cowin**, nephew **Tracy Ellis** and **Marie Wolcott** (friend of **Ralph** and **Tracy**), Indianapolis, Indiana; **Robert and Irene Williams**, Lorain, Ohio; **Lowell and Marjorie McFarlin**, Jeromesville, Ohio; **Cecil and Alene Cottle**, Portsmouth, Ohio; **Lester Hart**, Williamsfield, Ohio; **Vivian Kurtzman**, Wilmot, Ohio; **Bettie Bartholomew**, Rossmoor, California.



Battery C, 880th in attendance: Back - Tracy Ellis, Bob Williams, Frank Habay. Front - Ralph Cowin, Lowell McFarlin, Lester Hart, Cecil Cottle.



Battery C, 880th ladies in attendance: Left to right are Vivian Kurtzman, Bettie Bartholomew, Marjorie McFarlin, Marie Wolcott, Irene Williams, Marie Habay, Alene Cottle

Company I, 271st Infantry

H. Lynn Jones, News Reporter

1081 Meadowbrook Drive

Milan, Texas 38358

2006 Annual Mini Reunion Report

We chose to have our annual get-together at the same time and place as the Division Reunion at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania - just outside Valley Forge National Park.

The group began arriving on Wednesday, August 16th, 2006 and continued through Thursday, the 17th. Those attending this year were: **Bob and Phyllis Jorgenson** of Wisconsin; **Robert and Carol McMillan** of Ohio; **Joe McMurry** of Tennessee and his son **Mike McMurry** of Florida; **Dale and Peg Thompson** of Florida; **Harris and Hazel Timmer** of Michigan; and **Lynn and Lou Jones** of Tennessee.

Those regulars who were unable to attend were: **Douglas and Nathalie Buckstad** of North Carolina, **Dick and Jane Haines** of Ohio, **Hy and Mae Rita Kurfirst** of New York, **Jack Leibfritz** of Ohio; **Marty and Edie Miller** of Colorado, **Leigh and Mae Tenney** of Arizona; and **Ralph and Doris Uternoehlen** of Kansas. We really missed you all. We hope the ill are all improved and we regret the loss of **John Noone**, a great guy.

A hospitality room for Company I was our central gathering place for refreshments, gabbing and viewing momentos of days gone by. **Bob McMillan** had prepared an array of maps and photos of Oberreifferscheid - she had grown some since 1945 - and a few other key places on our 1945 "tour."

Thursday saw some of our gang off to Valley Forge. The museum had the entire layout of Washington's

(Continued on Page 27)

DIVISION MEETINGS ACROSS THE U.S.

(Continued from Page 26)

fortification and positions of each area of defense - a hard winter and, as usual for the infantry, short of housing, food, clothing and ammo. And I might add, it is hard to see how they won the war with so little.

Most of our group had dinner in the mall across the street from the hotel at *Bertolinis Authentic Trattoria*. Back in the hospitality room, **Dale** shared with us information from the family of our 2nd Platoon Medic, **Melvin Schmook**, who had been wounded in Oberreifferscheid, evacuated and awarded the Silver Star. **Joe McMurry** had been in contact with **Charles Melhorn** of Decatur, Tennessee and **Jason Melhorn** of Cincinnati, Ohio, the grandsons of **Frederick Melhorn** of Dayton, Tennessee, who had been killed by snipers at Audigast and the accounts of a bridge named in his honor in his home community. Their stories will appear in the next issue of the Bulletin.

Friday was a "shopping and eating at the mall day" except for **Joe** and **Mike**, who made the Philly Tour.

Assembled in the hospitality room, we learned that **Dale** and **Bob Mc** had chosen *Ruth's Chris* for our dinner. We had a great time and lots of fun - the usual jabbing and cutting at each other before and during the meal. All were well fed and satisfied. After dinner, a wonderfully orchestrated surprise - the waiter skillfully and with aplomb presented an assortment of desserts, compliments of a retired navy captain who had been dining in the room, but had departed, and wanted to honor us. What a nice gesture. The captain from Hawaii remains unnamed. Thanks Navy!

Saturday was a rehash day ... just in case we had forgotten something. **Paul Shadle**, President of the Association, and wife, **Dottie**, visited our hospitality room to look over our "stuff" - charts, maps, welcome

sign in the lobby, door sign, and photos, to see if the association would like to have some of them. They selected the signs and our poster. They may well show up at next year's association reunion in Salt Lake City, Utah.

While buying cap decorations in the Association hospitality room, I ran across a guy, **Gerald Gillenbach**, from the 273rd, whom I had not seen in 60 years, and **George West** from the 271st Anti-Tank Company.

Our Company I group attended the Memorial Service preceding the banquet where **Dale** was the candle lighter for the 271st Regiment. What an impressive and memorable scene as we each remembered one or more of our fallen comrades.

We returned to the hospitality room where **Jim** and **Beverly Thompson**, **Dale** and **Peg's** son and daughter-in-law, came to escort them back to the D.C. area where both **Dale** and **Peg**, **Jim** and **Beverly** were to celebrate their wedding anniversaries - a total of 98 years.

We all said our "see you later" goodbyes and wishes for safe travel.



Photo Above

Washington Memorial
Chapel and Bell Tower
Courtyard
at Valley Forge, PA
Mike and Joe McMurry,
Harris and Hazel Timmer
Lynn and Lou Jones

Company I, 271st

Harris and Hazel Timmer
Dale and Peg Thompson,
Bob and Carol McMillan
Bob and Phyllis Jorgenson
Joe McMurry
Lynn and Lou Jones



DIVISION MEETINGS ACROSS THE U.S.

(Continued from Page 27)

Midwest Group

John Barrette, News Reporter

930-25th Place

Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin 54494-3199

Telephone: 715/423-4921

2006 Annual Mini Reunion Report

October 11th, 12th and 13th, 2006

Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin

The Midwest Group held their annual mini reunion in Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin on October 11th, 12th and 13th. Although the weather was about 15° colder than usual, we proceeded as planned. We all had a great time and enjoyed the commraderie most of all.

We took a tour of a local cranberry marsh to see the harvest, however, the cold weather put a damper on the normally colorful event. We did get a good picture of what farmers put up with when the weather plays tricks on them.

We also toured a local cheese factory where the cheese making process was shown to us. The retail cheese and ice cream was also appreciated.

Present were:

Eugene and Marilyn Mischke Spring Valley, IL

Ernie Krause Addison, IL

Guest: Ruth Brooks

Fuzz and Lily Spangler Richland Center, WI

Eugene and Ethel Pierron Belgium, WI

Guests: Rich and Marge Bickler

Gaylord Thomas Waupun, WI

John Barrette Wisconsin Rapids, WI



Dear Friends and Veterans of the Fighting 69th U.S. Infantry

I wish you all the best and much health to the Veterans Day.

I am very proud to be an honorary member of the organization.

Juergen Moeller
Ansbach/Germany

Hq., 880th F.A. Info

Guy Oling, is looking for anyone who remembers his father, **Harold V. Oling**, originally from Duluth, Minnesota, now living in San Mateo, CA. Please write or call him at:

153 16th Avenue, San Mateo, California 94402
Telephone: 650/345-1922

UPCOMING MINI REUNION

California/Western Chapter

Sacramento, California

Late April or Early May, 2007

2007 SPRING ROUNDUP

(Exact Location and Date to be determined)

More information will follow
in an upcoming bulletin.

For the Latest Information, Contact:

Lois and Stan Hawk

10241 16th Avenue

Lemont, California 93245

Telephone: 559/582-9522

**ALL 69ers ARE WELCOME
TO ATTEND THIS MINI REUNION.**

John B. Durst Memoires

Company A 273rd Infantry Regiment

1832 Alta Street

Redlands, California 92374-1718

My infantry training battalion had gone on bivouac that came during the third week of the training at Camp Roberts. Riding into the hills in the direction of William Randolph Hearst's fabulous Sam Simean estate, the battalion had set up camp in a lightly wooded area. I had been assigned to the kitchen detail on the bivouac but being the last man to arrive, I had no one to share my shelter half with. This dilemma was solved when a request arrived from the battalion for a runner, and the corporal sent me. This turned out to be a most fortunate event for runners camped near the major's tent in case a message had to be taken to the company. And we were therefore excused from all training and night maneuvers. Pitching our tent under a tree, my partner and I settled down to some excellent conversation and reading of paperback novels, such as "All Quite on the Western Front" and "A Coffin for Demetrois." The major was a capable and intelligent man. We settled down to a pleasant four days when news of the German breakthrough in the Ardennes reached us. This alarming news cancelled the training of all infantry in the U.S. who were at least half way through the 17 week basic course, and we packed up and walked straight back to camp, thus escaping the dreaded 25 mile hike that always ended bivouac.

While I was on KP duty at Fort McArthur in San Pedro, California where I first got in the army, a mess sergeant showed me a bottle of pills he said, "We put them in the coffee." He insinuated they were Salt Peter. They were not - he was just trying to feel important! They were white pills and probably aspirin. If they were Salt Peter, they had no effect!

My Lieutenant in our platoon, **Edward L. Lucci**, had his back to the door of the house where 51 men died in the explosion and fire at Meisheid. He and our platoon sergeant and one other man were the only ones to get out alive. The blast knocked **Lt. Lucci** down and broke one rib which he only found out about recently when he had an x-ray. We got some replacements, one private was **Bill McDermott**. Before he was an M.P. in Paris assigned to a brothel. Each night he was required to arrest one man, so he went upstairs and arrested a black man each night. He took him to the M.P. station, and then went back to the brothel for the night.

Bill and **Pvt. Tommy Kilby** were my best friends in the army. **Tommy Kilby** was born on April 28, 1926 (my birthday is February 17, 1926). **Kilby** entered the army in 1944 and left in 1952. He died on August 19, 2004. Army number 11280793. He came from North Wilksboro, North Carolina. **Lt. Lucci** said **Bill McDermott** died a long time ago. There is no record of date I could find. He came from Boston. The three of us were split up in June 1945. I went to the Ordnance, I don't know where they went.



John Burton Durst, April 1945

Grimma, Germany

I am standing on the east bank of the Mulde River

Lieutenant **Edward L. Lucci** (later captain) came from Brooklyn, New York and has always lived in New York. He got a C.P.A. degree after he left the army.

Walking up a path in Helenstahl we saw many "shoe mines" - small rectangular about 3" wide and 7" long of a light brown color. One of the men pointed them out to us and told us to be careful not to step on one, they'll blow your foot off. They were buried in the ground but the tops of them were showing. In the Ardennes, a sergeant stepped on one and his foot was blown off when a group went looking for a sniper in the trees in the forest. As he was being carried away on a stretcher he exclaimed, "Give 'em hell boys!"

Major William Salladin was known as "Wild Bill Salladin." He was also friendly, energetic, and I think a fine leader. He got that moniker because besides his go get 'em, gung ho attitude, he always carried a weapon on each shoulder, one of which was a machine gun (our small 45 caliber "grease gun," and the other on the right, a carbine) or rifle. We all loved him because of his humor and upbeat personality. I still have two German daggers, one of which he gave me out of the back of a truck. He had a great many of them which he commandeered from a warehouse. It is still in very good condition. It has a light brown handle and a dark brown scabbard. It has the motto "Alles Fur Deutschland," on one side of the blade and near the hilt a picture of a puma. My other one is a Luftwaffe Officer's dagger - silver with a yellow handle.

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JOHN B. DURST MEMOIRES

(Continued from Page 29)

Major Salladin was a great leader in war and everyone loved him, because he loved everyone (even enlisted men) and he always thought about helping everyone from generals to privates. I do not know where he got his military education; West Point, R.O.T.C.; or rose from the ranks.

All the dachshunds in Germany were named "Hitler!"

Our company commander of A Company was **Captain James C. Notgrass** from Jackson, Mississippi. He was a nice, quite, pleasantly good looking and reserved fellow. When we were pinned down in front of the building next door to the City Hall in Leipzig, **Lt. Lucci** asked him what to do. The captain said, emphatically, "Take the building." Lt. Lucci replied, "In a pigs eye we will," whereupon the captain said, "Well then, retreat," and we pulled back East on the street we were on where we came from and two of us jumped in the canal behind us. I hesitated because I could not tell how deep it was, but my buddy to my left yelled at me to jump in as German burp gun (machine pistol) bullets were flying all around me, so I jumped in. It was waist deep. I walked back to the Battalion aid station to dry off by the fire. Our Platoon Sergeant **Herbert W. Smith**, a nice guy, was lying unconscious on a cot. He had been shot in the abdomen and was in shock. The corpmen were waiting for an ambulance to come and take him to the rear. I never saw him again. He was very nice, a good looking Platoon Sergeant who was the only 2nd person to get out of the house in Meisheid that blew up on the Belgium borber in the Ardennes when Lt. Lucci said "O.K., Let's go." In the movie "For Whom The Bell Tolls" Gary Cooper said "Keep the dynamite out of the cave."

The U.S. papers had it all wrong as to what we were doing in the army of occupation. They said we were tearing down all the industry in Germany when we were trying our best to build it up. The Morgenthau Plan named after the Secretary of the Treasury, Henry Morgenthau, was designed to reduce Germany to an entirely agricultural country. What an idiotic idea!

In combat you must be 18 to 23 years old and an unmarried man to do anything right. You have no time to worry about your possible loss of life or injury. You must act quickly and decisively.

In the ordance in Kassel there was a notice "If anyone wants to go to Heidelberg University, see the office." I didn't want to go because I didn't read or speak German, but my best friend at U.S.C., **Ron Getty**, (Jean Ronald Getty), the second son of J. Paul Getty went to Heildelburg for one semester in 1950 or 1951. His mother was a German woman.

Ron, my brother David Durst and I were members of the Trojan Knights, the most prestigious group at U.S.C. Ron and I had lunch together at their meeting every Wednesday.

In the City of Ulm where Albert Einstein was born, after the war there was a very bad smell. It was from the rotting corpses buried under the rubble. Field Marshall Erwin Rommel lived and died in Ulm. He was born in Heidelberg, near Ulm. I took the auto mechanic course there, where great beer was made in the local beer hall!

In the long night march during combat, **Tommy Kilby** got ill and my squad leader, **John Sepanek** told me to drop out to help him. We sat for a while until a jeep came to drive us to a town where our company was staying. At the end of the war, we had a parade of the entire company in Grimma - the end of glory!

After the war in 1946, in Wetslar where the Leica Camera factory was, a lieutenant gave us a questionnaire which asked, "Do you want to stay in the army one more year if you can go to O.C.S. (officers candidate school). I answered "no." He smiled at me in my hand decorated combat jacket, that I still have.

In 1946, I got 10 day passes to Nice, France on the French Riviera two times. The first time we flew in a C-47 over the Swiss Alps, the second time on a train. Passing Heidelberg (beautiful). In Nice, I drank cognac with a beer chaser so I was floating on air walking back to the hotel. I bought some hand made combat infantry badges for myself and my buddies in Wetslar to wear on our jackets.

After the Ruhr River attack, one night I was told the mess kits had to be taken back to the mess kitchen. I stumbled and fell on my hands injuring them so badly, I couldn't carry them anymore, so I left them in the road.

One night at Major Salladin's CP, while I was his runner, he marched us past Fort Ehrenbreitstein with his radio man behind him and me next. A medical officer looked at another medic's feet with a flashlight, because the medic didn't want to go on patrol because his feet hurt. The medic said he had frostbitten toes, but the doctor said there was nothing wrong. I had frost bitten toes twice before I joined up with the 69th, and they felt like rocks were in my toes - very painful!

In Wurtzgen when the German Army was surrendering to us to get away from the Russians, a German medical officer left a chest of operating instruments on the ground near the creek where the U.S. and foreign prisoners walked across. We made the Germans walk across the partly broken bridge.

In Kassel, in the ordnance after the war. the U.S. wreckers couldn't go up a hill or around corners because they scraped the corners of houses.

During basic training at Camp Roberts, California drilling in fatigues was very depressing. At U.C.L.A. we drilled in our Dress Uniforms - we felt very good.

In the Ardennes a G.I. was shot in a group and said "They got me, I'm dying!" and fell dead, the group around him all laughed!

Ron Presley when in England drove a truck at high speed which everyone did. A car behind honked and

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JOHN B. DURST MEMOIRES

(Continued from Page 30)

said "As a member of Parliament, I can not allow speeding on British roads." They all laughed.

Kassel in ordnance was one big pile of rubble. I had a German Burp Gun in my closet, I got rid of it. Two big German girls were sent to my room as a joke.

A G.I. on guard duty locked his door so we couldn't get him up for guard duty.

As a mechanic, I crawled under the trucks to goof off. I drove the ambulance to the hospital at the north end across town on the only road left because Kassel was all broken down!

In Heidelberg where I went to ordnance truck repairing school for three months, the major in charge of the school drove a 1942 cadillac. There was a beer hall where they made their own beer and also there was a castle.

General Patton said in England, "I don't give a damn how many of you men die. I can get more of you tomorrow, but I need every tank! Tanks are more important than men?! An infantryman and his brother in the Air Corps said General Patton told this to them in England.

In Sissone tent city was on World War I battle lines.

In the Ardennes I was given a BAR gun I could make work. **Lt. Lucci** couldn't help carriers who threw away ammo, bipods, etc.

In the Ardennes with some snow on the ground, I wore two O.P. uniforms and an overcoat, it was so cold. There we lived in wooded huts. **Sgt. Sepanac** had a fire in his hut, but he made sure so no light got out.

In the Ruhr encirclement on April 1st, the U.S. 1st Army and the 9th Army affected a junction at Lippstadt, 75 miles east of Wesel. Model, the German commander attacked at Hamm on the north and Silgen on the South, trying to break out but to no avail.

In Kassel hardly a building was left undamaged, just one big pile of rubble.

Rumor had it that G.I.s who spoke German were buying up city lots in the downtown district for practically nothing in the knowledge that someday these lots would be rebuilt and would therefore increase immeasurably in value.

In a letter home from Grimma, Germany, on May 22, 1945, I wrote: I took some pictures of a Lieutenant and a private (both Russians) at a band concert the Regimental band put on. Besides the music being very good, we had four barrels of beer. A good time was had by all. Last night we went to a musical and a variety show put on by German artists. The music was furnished by the Leipzig chamber orchestra which was very fine. One of the singers was an American tenor who had come here before the war to study and was interned. Afterward we went to a movie at the local theatre (Dick Powell, Mary Martin, and Franchet Tone). We came in too late to find out the name. They have a movie every other day. I've also seen one U.S.O.

show which was pretty good. The movies haven't been very good. "Laura" and "My Reputation" being the best. I still haven't seen "Saratoga Trunk" but Mac said he saw it in Paris. Some of the boys are getting 3 to 7 day passes to Belgium, France, and the U.K. I hope I get one someday.

The story on the Russians is: We brought a Major into the Company C.P. at Wurtzgen on May 26th. He was on a patrol, and we picked him up in a jeep. The following week we left Wurtzgen, after sending back about a thousand German P.W's which surrendered to us and a couple thousand liberated Prisoners of War of all nationalities (American, British, Canadian, French, Dutch, Russian, Polish, Serb, Arab, Indian, etc.) which the Germans had turned loose when they fled from the Red Army. From Wurtzgen, we came to Grimma which is south and on the other side (west) of the Mulde River. Now the Reds are on the east side and we are on the west. At first we went over in a rowboat, visited the Red garrison, drank vodka, and tried out each other's weapons. They have a machine gun similar to the Germans' burp gun which sounds the same and fired just as fast. Luckily, a couple guys in our platoon spoke Russian, and a couple spoke Polish and two spoke German, too.

Taking Kamburg: Walking up the main street, a sniper opened fire with a burp gun on the scouts at the head of the column, wounding two of them. We passed the word down the line and soon a medic came running up the street. After some shooting, the sniper was taken care of somehow and no further enemy resistance was encountered. The town was completely deserted. The townspeople had apparently been evacuated from the entire area of the Siegfried Line. Walking through the town everyone tried out their guns by firing both forward and to the side - some of them almost got hit by their own comrades. At the other side of town we took cover from German artillery fire which started shelling the town. One shell hit the top of a building right in back of me while I was lying in a shell hole. From this spot we watched "B" Company take a small village to the northeast of Kamburg. We by-passed those pill boxes in the Siegfried Line and the Germans inside surrendered. Apparently it was not necessary to take them after all!

In Grimma, we guarded a displaced person's camp for people to be sent back to the east. We searched the camp for arms. A dead displaced person lay on a table in a room full of people for several days.

We visited the Russian H.Q. across the Mulde River - we shot our rifles at telephone pole glass elements. We had a beerbust for the Russians soldiers, one of which was a woman!

In Kamburg I gave Pop my BAR. He threw away its legs, they were too heavy. The **Bar** only fired one shot at a time. They should have sent it to ordnance. One night I left it in the street when I went into the house to sleep upstairs. I got it back in the morning. We survivors of the Meisheid explosion and fire got reckless and indifferent at times.

(To be continued in the next issue of the Bulletin)

2nd Bn., 271st Reg't, Combat & Reconnaissance Patrol

Submitted By: Raymond C. Norris

22A Owens Landing Court, Perryville, Maryland 21903 - Telephone: 410/642-6308

Ray joined the 69th in April of 1943 in Camp Shelby and remained with the 69th until the end.



Leipzig, Germany: Hosea, Lewis, Asbell, Ingraham, Cascart, McGuire and Wheeler



*Leipzig, Germany
Wheeler, Cascart, Norris and Asbell*



Leipzig, Germany: Cascart and Lewis



Torgau, Germany: O'Brien, American POW, Tex, American POW, Russian and Cascart



Leipzig, Germany: Ingersal and McDade



Leipzig, Germany: Hosea, Erhart and Lafave



Sergeant Ray Norris



Hannaway



Lafave



Robert Hosea



John Ingraham



Perrico

*George West
of the Anti-Tank, 271st,
standing in front of
the Fighting 69th Banner
at the 59th Annual Reunion
in King of Prussia,
Pennsylvania.*

George West
4526 Green Acres Drive
Allentown, Pennsylvania 18103



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

- Part 3 -

As Recorded By: George N. Custis

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

Life in Combat with the First Section

By Pfc Robert Pittser

12 February, 1945 found the first section, then known as the second section, getting their first taste of combat under the capable leadership of **S/Sgt. Jean Kohl**, our chief-of-section. Our first position was located in the Ardennes Forest about 2,000 yards from the Siegfried Line, which was the front lines at that time. Directly in front of us was the 273rd Inf. Regt., the other part of our combat team.

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

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

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

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

firing the wrong ammo, powder lot number, powder charge, and sometimes we didn't fire at all when we should have. Considering that the section did more firing than the other sections, we didn't have too bad a record when we left there.

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

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

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

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

(Continued on Page 35)

YOUR BATTERY'S WAR, BATTERY B, 881st F.A. (Continued from page 34)

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

After this battle, we went to Grethen, near Grimma, and it was while at this position that our combat team mates, the 273rd Inf. Reg't met the Russians at Torgau and made world history. It was while here, also, that we received the news of the surrender of Germany, and again it was here that two members of our section received their Pfc ratings. They were **McMurray** and **Pittser**.

From 12 February, 1945, to 15 April, 1945, we fired approximately 1500 rounds into Germany.

At the present time, the section has the following members:

Sgt. John Nelson, Chief of Section from Kansas
Cpl. Wilmont Forry, Gunner from California
Pfc. Bruce Walker, No. 1 Man from Idaho
Pfc. Joe Ventimiglia, No. 2 Man from New York
Pfc. Roy Ducote, No. 3 Man from Louisiana
Pfc. Robert McMurray, No. 4 Man from Iowa
Pvt. William Dalton, No. 5 Man from Kentucky
Pvt. Clyde Cruse, No. 6 Man from Kentucky
Pvt. Benjamin Lewis, No. 7 Man .. from Minnesota
T/5 Arthur Wright, Driver from Tennessee
Pfc. Robert Pittser, telephone operator

and excess baggage from Ohio

These men are all good men, tried and true, ready, but not too willing for the C.B.I.

* * * * *

Life in Combat with the Second Section

By **Pfc. Alfred Glatfelter**

Now that you sit down and recall our many experiences, humorous, and not so humorous, in those weeks of combat it all seems rather prosaic. Somehow it was expected that after it was all over that you would have a fund of hair raising stories you could tell the hero worshippers back home and make their eyes pop off their heads. Instead you feel that perhaps there isn't going to be so much hero worship as you once expected, when they hear the whole story. Be that as it may, we had a good time through it all and learned to work together as a smooth working team.

Our introduction, or prelude to combat wasn't very heartening. The dead Germans and guard duty at Mirfield, Belgium, gave the impression that things were going to be rather tough and rugged. It wasn't with any regrets that we left there even if it meant going into combat. Our truck was piled high when we went into the Ardennes, on Lincoln's Birthday.

The 99th impressed us by their nonchalance and blasé air after being on the front line for three months without a respite. The last thing the officer in their outfit said, was, "For your information, that is incoming." He meant a shell we could hear coming our way.

There in the mud, mud and more mud what **Tommy Dunne** meant when he said, "Rough way to make a buck." Especially the lugging of those heavy 'ammo' boxes in the snow and mud was hard work. Then to make it a game it was necessary, sometimes, at night, to find your way by the sixth sense.

In the Ardennes, we stood guard and strained eyes and ears to discern the Jerry we were sure was creeping up to our position. We had many discussions as to how the guard should be done. **Dunne** had the scare of his life when a guard pulled the bolt on him one night, later, inside Germany. It is easy for a guard to develop jitters.

It was there in the Ardennes, that our driver, the "**Burly Hurley**" tried to find our previous position and wandered over a good part of Belgium and into the front lines before finding his way back to our position, and that by foot after the jeep got stuck in the mud.

A real thrill came as we pushed inside the Siegfried Line to Hellenthal, Germany, but it brought us an unforgettable night. Those that tried to sleep on the cold, wet hut floor, and we who were huddled around a miserable fire while every water was dripping, had a night of hardship etched deeply into our memories.

Corporal Sheffield's crew, **Pfc. Eisenberg**, **Pfc. Zyskowski**, **Pvt. Nickols** and **Pvt. Dunne** were firing that night in the Hellenthal position when 88's began to put shells in the woods just below our position. There wasn't any doubts in their minds, after guessing for weeks, whether it was outgoing, or incoming mail.

Those shells were coming their way so they hit the dirt at each scream of a shell. **Sgt. Kohl** and **Pvt. Cruse** came over and laughed when **Sheffield** hit the dirt, but a moment later he hit the dirt, too, when the flash lit up the sky. About that time "cease firing" came so no more shells came in.

During the whole episode, the other crew, **Sgt. Moen's**, **Pfc. Stanley**, **Pvt. Lewis**, **T/5 Hurley** and **Pfc. Glatfelter** had slept in the log cabin, as if safe at home, unaware of what was going on outside.

From there a long jump into Schidtheim, where we once more had a roof over our heads, and beds and straw stacks on which to sleep. The smoky, makeshift, gasoline lamps made the kitchen of that ten shades darker.

Out in the woods near Schmidtheim, one morning it was ten o'clock before **Sgt. Moen** discovered our two combat weary boys, **Nichols** and **Zyskowski** were still in their pup tents retreats.

Arzhiem was a unique stop in that the civilians there had not seen Americans soldiers before, which

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

(Continued from page 35)

was plainly written on their faces, in fear and curiosity. There we also left the guns in march order position, saw a town crier tell the people that the Yanks had arrived, and some Frenchmen celebrating their liberation.

We may not remember it was at Oberelsungen that we dug all night in a cold chilly wind, but we won't forget much that took place there. The next day after moving into position, we had our first view of Me-109's, at first erroneously identified by **Zeke** as P-47's to his charging. **Pvt. Kitchen** and some of the rest of us dug our foxholes a little deeper, after that. Here, too, we had a taste of the forbidden fruit, fraternization. First there was one pathetic little Russian girl, doing her chores in the cow barn, but soon a young boy came and then others, until before we left town that morning there was a whole group. They had much to say about the lot of a slave laborer.

Lutterburg brought a rather humorous event although it might have been different. Near our position was a wooded area of thick Spruce. In this woods **Hurley, Stanley**, and others had picked up German rifles which were later to be sent home as souvenirs. That evening after almost everybody in the battery had a look into the woods, two AA boys of the 461st came down across the fields from the trees with a scared Jerry. He was wild-eyed and nervous, as we, like a crowd of curious kids, crowded around, and tried to take pictures. He had been under some needles and branches, the whole day with an automatic pistol near him while G.I.'s scoured the whole area for boodle of any kind.

It was along about this time, that we as a section, really began to click. We did most of the firing for adjustments, we did so well that we managed to get a Bronze Star Medal for our congenial chief-of-section, **Sgt. James Moen**. The citation read, "For meritorious service," and take our word for it, he did earn it.

Along the way, the first section became the second section, when our **Sgt. Moen** became staff sergeant and chief of the firing battery. We were all glad that our sergeant should have the honor. In a shift of personnel we gained **Bob Koshinsky** and lost **Pvt. Lewis**.

An anti-tank position along the road at Saubach, Germany, gave our section and the fourth section a new mission. Our gun was on a turn, on the shoulder of the road, while the fourth section's piece was above and behind us on a steep bank so that they would have fired over us if enemy tanks had come down the road. It was a quiet position, but found out later that TD's had taken care of a tank concentration that might have come our way if the TD's had not been there.

The firing on Leipzig, from Liebertwolkwitz was the climax with a fifteen round mission and in all, 52 rounds were fired in the short time that we were there.

In all, we fired about 800 rounds, in combat. The most at one time came when the infantry jumped off while we were in the Ardennes. We fired 200 rounds that morning, which **Sheffield's** crews still boasts about.

Just after we captured Leipzig, we received two new additions to the section: **Marvulli** and **Gustovich**.

To sum up; we ate better, lived more comfortably, and suffered less from enemy action than we had anticipated before going into combat. There were strenuous days, miserable nights, long guard watches, real dangers, but God has been good to us all the way and we thank Him for victory today.

* * * * *

Life in Combat with the Wire Section

By Ray Derr

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

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

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

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

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

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

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YOUR BATTERY'S WAR, BATTERY B, 881st F.A. (Continued from page 36)

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

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

* * * * *

Life in Combat with the Instrument Section

By S/Sgt. Joseph W. Freda

It might be more in order to refer to our little group of instrument men as Sections, rather than section; for the moment we reached the climactic point in our military career when our cannoners fired that first "Round for Pay," the practical phases of combat required that we travel different roads.

It is a known fact that our genial Instrument Corporal, **Georgie Custis** had moved into a forward observation position with the R.O.s party before our firing battery had even reached the first gun position in the ETO. What his experience and general reactions were, must naturally be chronicled by himself, but concerning the remainder of us, some few facts may now be told.

At the time of our taking position near boundary road, the Instrument Section consisted of aforementioned **Georgie**, **Cpls. Kriegsmann** and **Stoddard**, **T/5 Hughes**, now **T/5 Hill**, and your narrator, **S/Sgt. Freda**.

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

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

During our stay in this position number one, which lasted for twenty-one days, **Cpl. Kriegsmann** made the trip up forward with the forward observers party, (His story appears in another chapter of this history) and the chief-of-detail spent three days up front as a member of the Battery Commander's Liaison party. This party consisted of the Radio Sergeant and the Wire Corporal as well as the above mentioned two.

The party spent some active moments in the forward observer's post at Meischeid, Germany for two consecutive nights as elements of our infantry team mates made an effort to capture pillbox 17, which culminated successfully on the last day of our stay up front.

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

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

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

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

Throughout our entire campaign, all things had been going well with our small, but highly active group when we were overtaken with the most unfortunate incident of our entire combat career. While waiting for the signal to take off on one of our reconnaissance trips from Hede-Munden, **Cpl. Stoddard** was accidentally shot as he and other members of the party were examining a captured German pistol. His injury necessitated his evacuation and as yet has not rejoined us, although we would very much welcome him back to the fold. In his absence, his duties were ably performed by **Cpl. Custis**, who handled the recorders chair until the last few days before V-E day. The transfer to our battery of **Pvt. James Boris**, who is our present recorder, ended

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YOUR BATTERY'S WAR, BATTERY B, 881st F.A. (Continued from page 37)

the changes in the Instrument Section and brings us to the present situation as occupying troops of the large synthetic gas plant of the I.G. Farbenindustrie located in Leuna, Germany. And here we awaited our next orders from the high command.

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

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

* * * * *

Life in Combat with the Fifth Section

By Cpl. Dale Nielsen

On the day of our commitment to battle, 12 February, 1945, the Fifth Section came to the line, rough and ready with the following members: **Sgt. D. Carl Barone**, chief-of-section; **Cpl. George Kahn**; **Cpl. Richard Stokes**; **Pfcs. Dale Nielsen, Joe Lawler, Joe Brady, Bruno Maj**; **Pvts. George Danziger, Philip Ortiz, Carl Metz, Leyburn Boyd, David Schaffer**, and last, but by no means the least, **Leslie T. Arne**.

The first day and night will long be remembered by the majority of the section. After lugging ammo through the mud and the slush to the guns, it was a weary crew that turned in that night. Our thanks go to the cannoneers who helped us or we'd probably still be there. It was 2100 before we were ready to bog down for the night. The best we could do was to pitch a pup tent, and take my word for it, a foot of snow makes a miserable mattress and a much more miserable person of someone trying to sleep on it. One night of that and most of us were ready to call it quits. After we got our dugout built, we were ready for more, however.

The ammunition runs were the most annoying for the section. One particular run that will remain in the memory of the men concerned happened one night when **Barone** was leading the great ammo train of two trucks gloriously down the road, when suddenly there was a loud report, and the hood flew into the air. One wheel left the truck and continued down the road. Helmets flew, and out of the mud scramble, like a gust of wind, came **Arne**, followed by none other than "**Snowjob**" **Schaffer**. **Boyd** jumped from the cab with his loaded carbine thinking seriously that someone had thrown a hand grenade at them, but under the supreme leadership of calm and collected **Barone**,

everything was soon put underway again, with the only harm being an unpleasant memory. The explosion was found to have been caused when the truck hit a teller mine.

After leaving the first position, we found ourselves still in the Ardennes forest. It was while in this position, that the boys had the experience, for the first time, of hearing German artillery dropping pretty close. Here we had the misfortune of losing **Cpl. Stokes**, who was evacuated for an appendix operation. **Dale Nielsen** was then promoted to corporal. We were in this position only three days when we moved to Schmidtheim, Germany.

It was while here that the section suffered one of its hardest knocks of the season when **Schaffer** decided that he had, did the double in the mud, and came up with a kink in his neck. He later was evacuated. This left **Barone's** hopes of a superior section completely shattered with the **Schaffer-Arne** combination broken up. However, the pressure was considerably relieved when **Fred Roe** joined the section.

From here, we started our drive into Germany. About this time, we welcomed **Robert Ziegler** in the section. At Sechtem, we lost the valuable services of **Cpl. Kahn**, who had gone forward with the FO party. **Cpl. Kahn** had the misfortune of being wounded by enemy mortars and was evacuated to a convalescent hospital. **Joe Lawler** was then appointed corporal and filled the vacancy.

The setting up and tearing down of the machine guns was a much disliked task of the section. The drive across Germany was led by "**Buck**" **Barone** and his "Boodle-hunting Buddies," **Carl Metz** and **Leyburn Boyd**. These three took the responsibility to see that nothing was booby trapped before the rest of the fifth entered the house. However, their word was never taken and another search was usually made. This one was always very thorough and almost always led by **Maj** and **Brady**, closely followed by **Danziger**.

The machine gunners ability could have been tested one morning when seven Jerry planes strafed our position. The battery had pulled into position late the night before, and in such a case, the machine guns were never set out until morning. Naturally, the planes came over too early. That same, the Jerry planes came over again, and this time the "Fighting Fifth" was there, willing and able, and they were driven away. The total number of rounds fired during our combat days was around 2000.

When we finished the battle of Leipzig, another change was made. **Arne** was sent to Service Battery and we received **John Brodnik** in exchange. The section hasn't recovered from that blow yet. Reeling under the shock of losing **Arne**, **Barone** lost his composure for the first time, and in the excitement shaved off his magnificent mustache. **Pvt. Victor Adair** joined our ranks, and the return of **Cpl. Dick Stokes**, fully recovered, made the section seem all right again.

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

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I want to wish every one in the fifth section and in the battery all the luck in the world. You've been a great bunch of guys. There aren't any better anywhere.

At the present time, the Fifth Section consists of:

Sgt. Carl Barone Pennsylvania
Cpl. Dick Stokes Missouri
Cpl. Dale Nielsen Nebraska
Cpl. Joe Lawler New York
Pfc. Joe Brady New York
Pfc. Bruno Maj New York
Pfc. Carl Metz Pennsylvania
Pfc. Leyburn Boyd Missouri
Pfc. Robert Ziegler ... Pennsylvania
Pfc. Fred Reo California
Pvt. Philip Onbiz Texas
Pvt. Victor Adair Oklahoma
Pvt. John Brodnik Ohio

* * * * *

The Fighting Fourth Overseas

By **Barney DeStefano**

Upon arrival overseas, the fourth section consisted of **Sgt. Barney DeStefano**, chief-of-section; **Cpl. Ted Pohlman**, gunner; **Pfcs. Pete Libardi, Dan Dowling** and **Henry Pastore**; and **Pvts. John Ison, Oscar Hall, Willie Work, Trinidad Garola, Phillip Ortiz** and the driver, **Lothar Davidson**. The crew had been together for some time and were well prepared for what lay ahead.

England brought about the first change. The section was blessed with the lovable personality of **Roscoe Thomas** in exchange for **Phillip Ortiz**. **Pvts. Hall** and **Davidson** made their first step up the ladder and became **Pfcs.**

Still not seriously injured, the fourth went into combat in Belgium in high spirits. It was here that the section showed itself worthy of the title, "The Fighting Fourth." During the first three weeks of combat, the section continually set the pace for the other gun sections of the battery as well as the battalion. On many a three or five round mission, **Pvt. Ison**, the best number two man in the battery, kept the chamber full of TNT. Several Jerries served their Fuhrer well by giving their lives under our accurate fire.

Before going into combat, we had hoped to do a lot of firing. This was just what we wanted, but it didn't last very long. We managed to chalk up 588 rounds fired before leaving Belgium, but that was to be the end of the firing spree, until we attacked Leipzig. The Germans realized that the 69th was on "the line," and began to withdraw. I might add that they were aware that the "Fighting Fourth," was there, also.

Now our dash across Germany began, pausing a couple of weeks at Schmidtheim. Here our beloved gunner-corporal was promoted to sergeant and placed in charge of the third section. Our loss was relieved

somewhat when **Corporal John Nelson** filled in the vacancy.

During **Cpl. Nelson's** stay with the section, the "Fighting Fourth" again proved their right to that title in a much different manner. The incident took place in Sechtem, Germany, and it concerns the fifth section. There was a little misunderstanding about the billets between the fourth and fifth sections. The "Fighting Fourth," unable to reason with the great "**Buck**" **Barone**, immediately began clearing the rooms of all fifth section equipment and personnel. **Cpl. Dale Nielsen**, not knowing the situation, stared dumb-foundedly as bed-rolls, field bags, furniture and ammo handlers whizzed out of the door. The machine gunners decided to walk out quietly. The following day there were unconfirmed reports that the great "**Buck**" **Barone** was taking boxing lessons. Two days after we crossed the Rhine, **Dowling** was given a pass to Paris and the section worked very sluggishly for the week.

Shortly after that, the fourth section was once again revised. **Hank Sarnicki** replaced **Davidson** as driver. **Hank** was well liked in the section as he had been our driver before and was one of the original members of the "Fighting Fourth."

A few day later near the town of Bucha and Saubach, Germany our sleepy-eyed gunner, who calls himself, **John Armand Nelson**, was promoted to sergeant and put in charge of the first section. **Pete Libardi**, then became our gunner-corporal. This latest change was a wonderful break for **Dan Dowling**. He now became official number one man. **Pfc. Dowling** had become quite a figure in Baker Battery because of his efficient work on the battery newspaper. He was quick to seize this opportunity because it afforded him a means by which he could safely abuse his chief-of-section. It all started back in Camp Renikhet and in each and every issue, the chief of the section was being pushed around. The war was coming to an end and we were to suffer another great loss. This time our well-liked **Roscoe Thomas** was transferred to "C" Battery. Before the section fully recovered from his shock, we were knocked down again when **Pvt. Arthur Kitchen** was added to the list of the section's members. There were several comments as to who got the best of the deal. A quote from **Sgt. DeStefano** reads, "What did I ever do to deserve this?"

Within a few days the war in Europe ended. It just had to. Our total combat rounds fired was 736, and the total fired by our howitzer, 1736. It is a good record.

After the war was over, a new face appeared in the section; **Frank Navarro**, who came from the Air Corps via an Infantry Training Center.

Of course, **Pfc. Pastore** is still with us. It would be impossible to overlook him. Pat was a little peeved when he discovered he won third place as the noisiest man in the battery in a recent poll. We, of the fourth section, believed that he wanted first place.

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

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V.E. Day has brought about many questions in the minds of the members of the section. Is it going to be the Pacific? Furloughs? Discharges? Some of these questions have been cleared up, but others remain unanswered. Whatever our fate may be, we are proud to have been members of "Baker" Battery, 881st F.A. Bn. No doubt, we will have different paths to follow before long. On behalf of the "Fighting Fourth," I wish every man lots of luck, and a safe return to the good old U.S.A. Memories of the "Fighting Fourth" will live forever. The present section consists of:

C/S Sgt. Barney DeStefano	New York
Gnr. Cpl. Pete Libardi	New York
No. 1 Pfc. Dan Dowling	Minnesota
No. 2 Pfc. John Ison	Kentucky
No. 3 Pfc. Henry Pastore	New York
No. 4 Pfc. Oscar Hall	North Carolina
No. 5 Pfc. Willie Work	Ohio
No. 6 Pfc. Phillip McVann	Massachusetts
No. 7 Pvt. Trinidad Garola	Texas
Pvt. Arthur Kitchen	Missouri
Pfc. Frank Navarro	Texas
Dvr. Pvt. Hank Sarnicki	Pennsylvania

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The Third Section in Review

By Cpl. Eugene Tabacchi

In order to understand the third section you must know it as eleven individuals, therefore I think the primary purpose of this article should be the introduction of each individual to the reader.

The "boss-man," **Sgt. Pohlman**, chief-of-section, is a small cocky fellow with a sunny disposition which counteracts all the cockiness. He hails from New Bremen, Ohio, and just in case a few of you haven't heard of New Bremen, it is in the vicinity of Dayton. Teddy is an old married man and he wishes he was home to make the most of it.

Cpl. Tabacchi, the gunner, is also an Ohio man. He hails from Clark Gable's hometown, or rather Gable comes from his home town. Our handsome corporal can give you just about any historical data you are interested in knowing, along with any of the latest news flashes. **Gene** has no definite post-war plans in mind, but we know that whatever field he selects, he will excel.

And now we come to every man's friend; that's right, the mailman, **T/5 Leonard A. Sampson**. **Sammy** calls Lynn, Massachusetts his home and that is his privilege. He has been around quite a bit since the flag waving began. About four months was spent in the Maritime Service, but **Sammy** doesn't talk about that and we don't either. His time in the Army has been spent in the infantry, the paratroopers, and finally the third section. The third is glad to call **Sammy** its own.

"Dainty," or big, **John Young**, is another non-citizen fighting for the USA. John saw the war going on and decided to leave his native Brooklyn and go over and give his good neighbor a helping hand. Very nice of him, don't you think?

Milwaukee's gift to the third is **Phillip Sparacino**, the butt of all the section's practical jokes. Phil was at one time a member of the 26th or Yankee Division. But then came ASTP, which eventually meant a transfer to "B" Battery and the "Terrific Third."

Sylvester Duvall, our converted rebel has seriously been thinking of migrating to Brooklyn after the war. At the present we will call Shabute, Mississippi his home. Ask the Shabute jailer.

And from down where the "Corn and Taters" grow, comes **Charlie Cook**. Charlie is a Fort Bragg man and doesn't hesitate to talk about it or **Capt. Sweeny**, if a bottle is in the neighborhood. No Charlie isn't a soak, it is just that he can't stand the smell of the cork.

The "Fuddy Duddy" watch maker, in the third section is **Rollin Bulson**, of Rochester, New York, and is also the section's cook. How good is he? Just ask any of the boys who ever ate any of his venison steaks.

Dapper **John Fields**, also an alien, is the oldest man in the section. He is watching every move on the VFW. I wouldn't blame him if I were 35. Fields is also the section handy-and-y. You might call him the king of the 'grip.'

Mike, or **Marcello M. DeMaria**, our casanova used to live some place in Jersey; Vineland to be more specific. If anyone is interested in a good short story, ask Mike about the time he was driving for **Lt. Cross**.

Our truck driver is **Albert Pike Jones**, a rebel from Charleston, South Carolina. Jones is an old Army man and still broods over his enlistment.

So there are eleven different personalities. On no two subjects do any of them agree with one exception. They all want to get out of the Army. During the war, the third didn't knock out any of the several hundred tanks that it had planned to, but I am sure that we are responsible for many Jerry "Purple Hearts." We also put smoke in their eyes, eh fellows? It was our policy to keep the Jerries guessing and **Lt. Bell** in a high state of nerves; the letter wasn't intentional, however.

I am sure the whole battery remembers old "B-9," coughing and chugging up the hills of Western Germany. And I am sure the third remembers the rest of the battalion passing us as our motor section went into action. **Sgt. Newman** really earned his money on those occasions.

We also remember the strings of gun pits we left behind us. The kinks will come out of our backs and the callouses will vanish, but the memory will linger forever. We still hear **Sampson** saying, "I'll take my chances on the ground," but digging gun pits is just like anything else, it's just a knack and two or three hours of hard work.

Now that this half of the war is over and none of us are in the upper point bracket, we want to leave the ETO. Do we want to go to the Pacific? Tsk!! Tsk!! But should it be our destiny, the third will be there pitching until the Nippon says "Uncle."

(To be continued in the next issue of the bulletin)

Charlie and the Chicken Dinner

Written By: Gus R. Wiemann

Company L, 271st Infantry Regiment
and Headquarters Division
7126 Canella Court
Tamarac, Florida 33321

This is a true story of a young GI whose name was Bobby. I had hesitated submitting it years ago thinking that I might embarrass the young man.

Then within the last year I found his name under "Taps." I sent a condolence card along with a note to his widow.

Months later I received a telephone call from his twin brother thanking me for the card and mentioning that Bobby's wife had also passed away. He added he and his brother were like night and day in personality. When I told him about the episode that I wrote he laughed and said, "That was Bobby."

As I reread the story, I decided to change the name "Bobby" to "Charlie." Probably the reason I wrote about him was that after sixty-odd years he was the only soldier I met who never seemed to have developed that hard protective shell that the rest of us wore.

* * * * *

It was March, 1945 and our 69th Infantry Division, which lay in the Eifel Forest sector of the Siegfried Line, waited to begin the spring offensive. Every day nearer April meant more thawing of the frozen roads through the forest and more vehicles had to be dug out of the slush and mud.

The majority of the soldiers fell into the 18-22 year age group as the Division had received replacements who originally had been sent to universities throughout the United States in the Army Specialized Training Program to study German, French, Russian, Spanish, medicine or engineering. After the infantry had suffered exceptionally heavy losses at Anzio, Cassino and other points in Italy and France, most of the soldiers at the schools were sent to Infantry Units.

Momentarily we expected the order to attack. Tent equipment, extra shirts and shoes had been turned in at Company Headquarters. Every morning found small clusters of GIs just back from night patrols. They huddled with black-streaked camouflaged faces topped by brown knitted caps around fires, boiling water for K-ration coffee.

My outfit was the intelligence and reconnaissance section which consisted of five privates, a sergeant and a lieutenant who was the intelligence officer for the battalion. I was the interpreter. Our work was to patrol, observe and help guide our artillery fire, search for and translate all documents left by the enemy and interrogate prisoners.

One private of the section was **Harry Benson**, a smart 20-year-old from a town in upper New York State. He was tall, swarthy and his bulbous brown eyes seemed to stare constantly through his steel-rimmed glasses. He often displayed his quick temper by lambasting someone or an order with a sarcasm usually dealt in a nasal twang.

This sarcasm fell often upon another private named Charlie Smith, who never showed any resentment and could have passed himself off as the personification of the Golden Rule. Charlie came from Minnesota and at night before crawling into his bedroll he often spoke quietly but enthusiastically of that state's attributes, to the accompaniment of uncomplimentary interjections by Harry. The other two privates were **Don Hayes** and **Frank Taylor**, both from Philadelphia, modest, retiring and good soldiers.

One evening the order reached the company that the following morning would mark the beginning of the offensive. Weapons were cleaned and oiled. Socks and underwear were rolled and packed. Church services were held and then some slept.

At 4 o'clock we had breakfast, cleaned our mess kits and slipped them into our packs, which we then pulled onto our backs, buckled shoulder straps, adjusted helmets and waited for the order to "fall in." As soon as it came the entire company assembled in a clearing near a road. In a few minutes we were in two single files marching along the edges of a muddy road churned by the treads of the tanks which were spearheading the attack. We passed a deserted stone farmhouse. On the outside wall a slogan in black paint read: "They break our walls, but never our hearts." Artillery shells began falling on our flanks, but the barrage ended almost as soon as we had thrown ourselves into the ditches lining the road.

Two columns of about ten prisoners, guarded by a bearded GI came toward us. The GI said that the companies ahead of us had eliminated most of the infantry units and that their supporting artillery had retreated. We reached a small town as troops were moving supplies into buildings. German civilians were returning with belongings they had taken when fleeing from our approaching troops.

In a few minutes we had marched out of the town and were on a road again. In the distance we could see a railroad bridge which had been blown up. A sign on the road read "Schmidtheim."

Our tanks entered Schmidtheim without resistance. Bed sheets hung as flags of surrender from the windows. A manure pile stood next to nearly every house. Chickens ran cackling through the streets that had suddenly become miniature Times Squares, jammed with weaving jeeps and lumbering two-and-a-half-ton supply trucks.

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CHARLIE AND THE CHICKEN DINNER

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It was nearly three o'clock in the afternoon when our section was assigned to a room in a vacated house. For the first time in a month we washed ourselves at a sink instead of from a helmet in the snow. Then Harry announced he was leaving to reconnoiter the town. Don and Frank joined him while Charlie and I remained to unpack.

Within half an hour Harry and the others returned, laughing and singing. "Man, have we got a good deal!" exclaimed Harry as he entered the room and slapped Charlie on the back. "Come along with us."

Charlie and I slipped our helmets, cartridge belts and rifles on and followed. Harry led the way through narrow winding cobblestoned alleys and alternated between singing and whispering enthusiastically to Don and Frank. In ten minutes we emerged into a backyard.

Harry knocked on a door, leaned against the house and tapped his combat boot impatiently on the door step. As soon as a smiling elderly lady answered the knock and beckoned us to enter, Harry led us inside to a kitchen. Harry explained that he had traded something for two chickens and that he would like to ask the women to prepare a dinner for us. He was afraid that the woman had not understood when he had given her the chickens to prepare. When I explained to her what Harry had asked and that she would be repaid for her trouble, she nodded in agreement. She then pointed out two plucked chickens lying in a pan and said that she would have dinner ready by six o'clock.

On our way back to our room Charlie puckered his young face and turned to Harry. "Harry, you know it isn't right to do this. You know it's not allowed."

"Charlie," countered Harry, smiling confidently, "you know you don't have to come with us tonight. I'll tell you what. You go to the mess hall like a good boy. I heard that they're going to have the same stew that they've been having for the last three nights. Of course, we'll miss you while we're eating that chicken, but we'll be glad that you were man enough to follow your convictions."

Charlie did not answer and stared dejectedly at the alley cobblestones as we walked along.

At six o'clock the little square of Schmidtheim was filled with lines of impatient and hungry GIs holding the straps of their rifles and carbines on their shoulders and dangling their gleaming and clattering mess kits.

Away from the clamor of the square our intelligence and reconnaissance section walked rapidly along a street on the other side of town. We entered the backyard and Harry knocked on the door. As soon as the women saw us through her window, she came to the door and we entered.

The little old lady and her husband ushered us into the dining room to a table covered with an embroidered linen tablecloth topped with gleaming silverware and plates. Harry sat down smiling, rubbed his hands gleefully and remarked, "Let's forget the hors d'oeuvres, men, and proceed with the main course."

Slipped feet shuffled slowly to the entrance of the room and then the elderly couple entered holding their heads erect and the main and only course at arms' length. Upon setting two platters bearing the chickens in the center of the table, the husband and wife made a slight bow, wished us a pleasant meal and walked slowly from the room.

As Harry reached for his first helping, Charlie stood up. "Harry," he said, "Tell them to eat something first."

Harry withdrew his fork from the platter and glared at Charlie. "Look, Charlie," Harry countered quietly, "let's not be dramatic. If you don't want your share of chicken, you just go right ahead to the mess hall."

Charlie shoved his chair against the table and walked into a corner of the room. All watched as he reached into his back pocket, extracted a small cardboard box marked "K-Ration" with one end torn open. He put his finger into the torn end, produced a piece of chocolate, bit off a chunk and, munching it, eyed the chicken suspiciously.

"Actually, I guess the chicken is all right," Charlie murmured at the silent guests, "but it's just the principle of the thing."

Harry jabbed his fork into a chicken leg, swiftly separating it from the body with a knife. "Let's not let things get cold men."

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"Taps"

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

THE WORDS TO "TAPS" SAY IT ALL

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

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