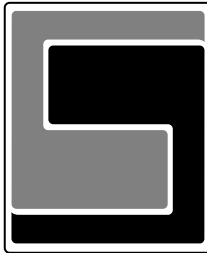


FIGHTING 69TH INFANTRY DIVISION

★★★★ *Association, Inc.*



VOLUME 62, NO. 2

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JANUARY — FEBRUARY — MARCH — APRIL
2009

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

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

bulletin

In the Field at Camp Shelby

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THE MAIL BOX

By **Dottie (Witzleb) Shadle**
Editor



Company E, 273rd Infantry Regiment
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Warren Goodman, 10395 Utopia Circle East, Boynton Beach, Florida 33437 — Co. M, 273rd: Hello Dottie and thanks for the latest Bulletin. I was getting a little worried when the bulletin did not come in a bit after the reunion. I recognize how much effort you must put in to every issue, and you really do a great job.

Also, thanks for printing a photo of my small group representing Company M, 273rd. We were lucky this time to have our son and his wife with us and of course, **Raul Nava** and his son who have attended just about every reunion of the 69th. I wish I could say the same. For the few times we have attended we have met some awfully nice folks.

Looking forward to Nashville and hope the health holds up and thanks once again. A Very Happy and Healthy New Year to you both.

William Suckel, 2910 Avon Boulevard, Ashtabula, Ohio 44004 — HS, 880th F.A.: Here is mine and my wife's dues for 2009. We haven't been able to make it to some of the reunions, but keep trying. We both like to read the bulletins. Dottie, please keep them coming.

Amy Graham, daughter of **William J. Graham** — Cannon Co., 272nd: Enclosed is my check for \$20.00 to keep the bulletin coming. My Dad, **William J. Graham**, was in the 69th that went through Europe. Tell all who work on the bulletin to keep up the good work. Dad didn't really talk much about that part of his life, so reading the different stories is very interesting. Thank you all!

Mrs. Amber Keene, PO Box 52, Boalsburg, Pennsylvania 16827 — Service Co., 272nd: Greetings from Central Pennsylvania. I have enjoyed the bulletin very much and have learned so much from it. Due to eye sight problems I wish to inform you that I no longer want to receive the Bulletin. Thank You. Have a great 2009.

Jeanette Shahan, daughter of **Alton Shahan**, 800 Ridgeway Avenue, Morgantown, West Virginia 26505 — Co. I, 272nd: Thanks so much for all your hard work with the Bulletin. Dad always enjoyed getting it and sharing it with my mom, my brother and I.

Thanks so much for putting in my request for information about a marmalade factory in your "Mail Box column." **Tom Clews** sent us information and copies from his journal. We appreciated the information. We put his letter in dad's 69th notebook. I asked dad if he ate any of the marmalade and he said, with a twinkle in his eye, "I'm not telling."

It is with great sadness that I must report on dad's passing on November 16, 2008.

We would very much like to continue to get the Bulletin.

We appreciate what everyone does to keep the 69th Association strong. We appreciate the updates and information such as the map now available. We know it is a lot of work and we are grateful.

Lynn Farrar, 17516 92nd Avenue, Bothell, Washington 98011-3602 — Btry. C, 881st F.A.: Howdy Paul and Dottie. I just received the latest 69th bulletin, and I found it wonderful as usual. I did notice how many fewer "Taps" names were included. But as President Dave said those remaining members have to be 80 years or older. I qualify as I am 86. I was talking to **Walter Haag** the other day and he is 90. But I mainly want to say how much I enjoy the Bulletin.

A couple of years ago I attended the last regular meeting of the Western Chapter in Sacramento. It was sad for me as I know of only one 69th member here in the Seattle area. He shows no interest in getting together. **Walt Haag** is the only person I talk to. I was in Battery C of the 881st FA Battalion, and my last close friend in that group is in an assisted living situation with Parkinson's in Connecticut. I phone his wife regularly. She visits him daily, has siblings in the area, and keeps me informed of his condition.

I read where the 69th has decided to hold future meetings only in the eastern part of the US. By far most remaining members live in this part of the country, but it is such a hassle to travel these days. I stay close to home to care for my wife who has fibromyalgia. I am the designated driver.

The pictures of the World War II Memorial on the cover were great, and the photos of the Elbe brought back memories. I was the driver in a forward observer party, so was at one of the first meetings on the second day with the Russians when the top brass came by.

I'm sorry to bend your ears for such a long time, but I want to assure you that all your hard work means a great deal to me. And let me wish both of you a great New Year.

Grace Cope-Riles, widow of **Kenneth Vincent Cope**, 110 Pecan Road, Walterboro, South Carolina 29488-4624 — Co. F, 271st: Greetings from the low country of South Carolina. It was with great interest

(Continued on Page 3)

THE MAIL BOX (Continued from Page 2)

that I read the article, "The Isle de France," in the last issue of Fighting 69th Infantry Division bulletin. My late husband, **Kenneth Vincent Cope**, Company F, 271st Infantry, has in his notes of sailing on the Isle de France. Even though Kenneth has in his notes that he sailed from New York on January 8, 1945, landing seven days later in Glasgow, Scotland, the exact date is not important. "I boarded a small train to Southampton, England, then onto a boat crossing the English Channel to La Harvey, France. French box-cars, known as the "40 and 8,s" took me to the front lines in Germany. I was wounded at dawn 27 February, 1945 in Buschem, Germany - a small town." Kenneth was born 4 February, 1925 and Taps was 27 June, 2000. His resting place is the National Cemetery in Beaufort, South Carolina.

I would like very much to attend the convention with my husband, John Riles, but it seems that we cannot get our schedule worked out.

We trust you will have a very successful reunion. We do appreciate you great men who gave so much that we may have freedom today.



**69th Infantry
Division Association
62nd Annual Reunion
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE
October 18th thru 25th, 2009**

More information and registration forms to follow in a bulletin to be published in June. Tentative Tour Information on page 4.

A Message from Paul and Dottie Shadle Membership Chairman and Editor

Paul Shadle, Company E, 271st Infantry
P.O. Box 4069 • New Kensington, PA 15068-4069
Telephone: 724/335-9980
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Paul: pns5@aol.com



*Membership Chairman Paul Shadle
and Editor, Dottie Shadle*

OOPS - We are sorry about the incorrect address of some of the dues notices. We had a computer problem and did not realize it until the notices were sent. We hope you did pay your dues and if not, **Please Send your Dues Now.**

We are busy setting up our reunion for October in the city of Nashville, Tennessee. We have a city tour, a boat ride and attendance at the Grand Ole Opry as part of the entertainment. We are looking forward to seeing many of you in October. More details of the reunion will be published in the next bulletin due out in July.

We have had some inquiries about the bulletin Volume 61, No. 3. It was not published as we had only two bulletins that year.

We received a phone call from **Keith Vickers** to inform us that another 69th Division Patch is being worn in Iraq. As you can see, the Fighting 69th Division is still being honored.

Paul had a phone call from his barber, who was a member of the 65th Division and trained in Camp Shelby at the same time as the 69th Division, concerning a customer who was a member of the Fighting 69th and did not know of the association. Would you believe he lives within 5 miles of us and Paul is making contact with the gentleman?

**69th Infantry
Division Association
62nd Annual Reunion
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE
October 18th thru 25th, 2009**

A bulletin will be published at the end of June with all the information about the reunion. The cut-off date will also be included. Hope to see many of the 69th members present. Let's make this reunion attendance one of the best attended. Below is a general overview of the tours.

Suggested Tours

~ City Tour ~

Wednesday, October 21st, 2009

9:00 a.m. Board Bus, Return to Hotel 2:00 p.m.

Begin a tour of Nashville with trained professional guides who will entertain your group with interesting facts, colorful legends, and amusing anecdotes of Nashville and her people. Drive by the Governor's Mansion, as well as homes of several well-known personalities such as Tammy Wynette, Ronnie Milsap, and Minnie Pearl. Drive through Centennial Park and view the Parthenon, a full-scale replica of the original in Greece. Visit the Ryman Auditorium, where the Grand Ole Opry got its start. Originally a church, the Ryman is now home to numerous musical productions. Stop on 2nd Avenue for lunch on your own at one of several different restaurants. Consider Market Street Brewery, Big River Grille, Hard Rock Cafe, or the Wild Horse Saloon.

~ General Jackson Lunch Cruise ~

Thursday, October 22nd, 2009

11:00 a.m. Board Bus, Return to Hotel 3:00 p.m.

Board bus for the General Jackson Riverboat, the world's largest showboat. Enjoy a full buffet lunch as you cruise up the Cumberland River to downtown Nashville, 14 miles round trip. You'll also be treated to true hand-clappin', toe-tappin' Nashville entertainment.

~ Grand Ole Opry ~

Friday, October 23rd, 2009

7:00 p.m. Board Bus, Return to Hotel 11:00 p.m.

Board bus for the Grand Ole Opry. Country's grandest show begins: a live country music radio program that is aired from the Grand Ole Opry House. The Opry has not missed a Saturday broadcast since it began in 1925; it is the longest-running live radio show in the world. Sit back and enjoy an American Institution at its entertaing best.

Please plan to be at the bus boarding area at least five minutes prior to the scheduled time. All trips require a minimum of thirty people, unless otherwise stated.

The price quoted for the Holiday Inn in Nashville is \$99.00. That includes a Breakfast Buffet for two each morning.

**HAVE YOU
PAID YOUR DUES!
DUES YEAR
FOR 2008-2009**

August 1, 2008 to July 31, 2009

Regular Membership \$10.00
Ladies' Auxiliary \$ 5.00
Bulletin Donation Up To You

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

Send Your Dues To:

TREASURER

John Barrette

P.O. Box 215

Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin 54495-0215

Telephone: 715/423-4921

Do not send dues to Paul Shadle.

NOTICE

If you are NO LONGER interested in receiving the Bulletin in the future, please let us know.

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

MOVING

Please print your new address below:

Name: _____

Address: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

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

PAUL SHADLE

P.O. Box 4069

New Kensington, PA 15068-4069

Please allow six weeks advance notice.

Please Step Up to the Plate

Submitted By: **Chet Yastrzemski**
Company E, 272nd Infantry Regiment
251A North Main Street
Southampton, NY 11968

Volunteers for Board of Directors and Officers Needed

I will be Nominating Chairman for the Board of Directors and the Officers. Because it has become more difficult to approach members to serve on the board or for an officer's position, I figured it would be easier to advertise through the bulletin.

So far I have two members to serve with the 271st and Special Troops but need volunteers for the other posts of the 272nd, 273rd and Artillery. I will re-enlist if I can't get someone to take my place for 272nd.

I assume **Bob Crow** will go for President, **Huber** again for Secretary and **Barrette** for Treasurer. We need to fill the post of Vice President. Those members interested in any post can either contact me, **Joe Huber** or **William Sheavly**.

25th Anniversary



Major General and Mrs. Emil F. Reinhardt celebrating their 25th Wedding Anniversary

Fighting Nazis from a London Hotel

Written By: **Gus R. Wiemann**

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

While our 69th was on maneuvers on June 6, 1944 in the woods outside Hattiesburg, a boy of about 14 years came running through the pine trees. Under his left arm he carried a stack of newspapers. His right arm held up one as he called out, "Times-Picayune, Allies invade France, read all about it." Whether any of us carried change in our fatigues that day to buy a paper, I don't remember. But the kid telling us that D-Day had arrived was a high point in all our lives.

Over three-thousand miles away from us in a London hotel was a group of men broadcasting from a radio station named "Soldatensender Calais." Using anti-Nazi German speakers with up-to-date intelligence information, they broadcast facts suppressed by Goebbel's Propaganda Ministry not only to the German civilians, but also to the soldiers who were to face us when we entered the front lines.

For further details as to the methods and sources of information for "Soldatensender Calais," there are two books available by William B. Breuer and "Black Boomerang" by Sefton Delmer.

Magazine Available on Battle of Leipzig

Here is Leipzig, Then and Now

By mid-April, 1945, the capital of Saxony in eastern Germany was one of the last big cities that hadn't yet fallen to the Allied armies invading Hitler's Germany from East and West.

With a population of 750,000, Leipzig was Germany's fifth largest city. Founded in 1160 at the confluence of the Weisse Elster and Pleisse rivers, the city had grown to become a centre of traffic, trade and culture.

In words and pictures, this is the story of the battle for Leipzig. This British-produced magazine has 55 pages of color and black-and-white photos, before and after the war, the history of the fighting, and the Units involved. Read all about the exploits of the 69th Infantry Division and its attached units in liberating Leipzig. Everyone in the 69th who was there, or their family members, should order this excellent magazine as a keepsake or gift.

To order, send a check or money order for \$11.95 (including first-class shipping) to:

RZM Imports, Inc.

880 Canal Street, Suite 3

Stamford, Connecticut 06902

www.rzm.com/magazines/atb/afterbattle130.cfm

Company G, 271st Infantry Regiment

Submitted By: **Sammie Teague**

3232 Fm 109, Columbus, Texas 78934

This group of photos is from Company G, 271st Infantry of the 69th Division. I don't know who all of them are, but maybe someone will know them.

I am the wife of **Thomas M. Teague**, who passed away January 31, 1989.

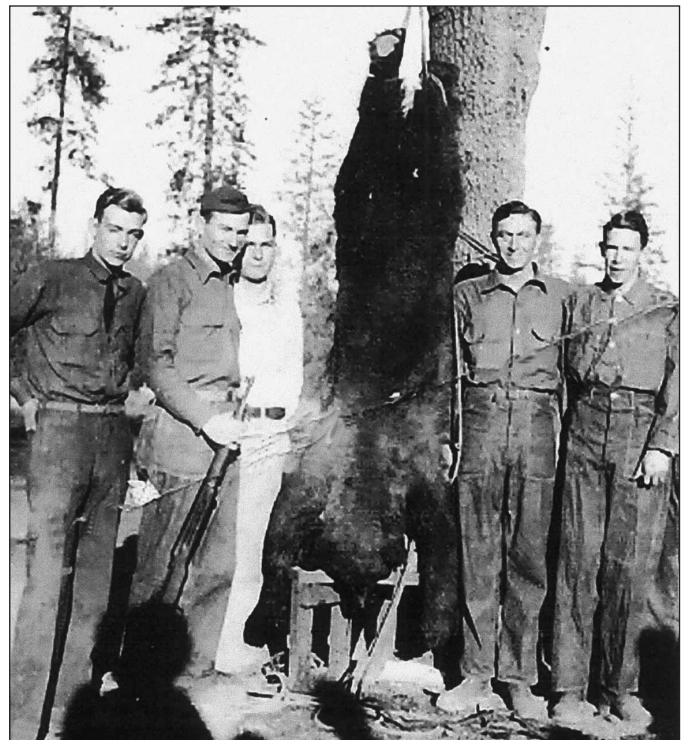
I enjoy getting the bulletin. Keep up the good work.



Bottom on the left is Thomas Teague.



Priston, New Jersey - August 18th, 1963: Gnesliam, Phillejas, Jensen, Quickle, Reynolds, Stominshak



I cannot identify the men in the photo. Tom said the bear was killed in Oregon.



Soldier on right is Thomas Teague



Center front is Thomas Teague

661st Tank Destroyers Mini Reunion

Submitted By: **Thomas Slopek**
Son of Julius Slopek, *Company C, 661st T.D.*
2515 Shade Road, Akron, Ohio 44333-2058

September 18th-20th, 2008

This year's reunion took place in Solon, Ohio, with the **Wahl** family hosting our annual event. **Bill, Jr.** and **Janice Wahl**, along with parents **Bill** and **Mary**, as well as their extended family spanning five generations, welcomed the group to the Cleveland suburb.

Activities included a hospitality room throughout the weekend, and a planned tour of NASA Glenn Research Center in Cleveland. They were met by a local photographer and reporter for the Cleveland Plain Dealer, who published a story the following week about the 661st's experiences in the European Theatre. The tour included a presentation of space travel and much insight into the future of the U.S. space program. A video of life in the space station was included as part of the tour, and was very compelling. It was interesting to all of us to see how the astronauts conduct their activities of daily living in space.

Saturday was a free day with most attendees opting for a train ride on the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railway, a tourist railroad in the Cuyahoga Valley National Park. Others shopped the day away at the nearby outlet mall.

That evening we had a wonderful home-style meal at the local VFW hall along with a very entertaining story of how **Bill** and **Mary Wahl** met. Despite the inevitable reduction in the number of attendees every year, approximately 55 attended the banquet!

Sadly, shortly after the reunion, we received word from **Bill Wahl, Jr.** that his mom, **Mary**, had taken ill, and required heart surgery, and is currently in a rehabilitation facility, and our prayers are certainly with her and her family at this time.

Next year's reunion will be hosted by **Nate Snidow** in Salem, Virginia on August 13th-16th. Our kudos go out to young **Nate** for stepping up to the plate and volunteering to act as host next year, along with his grandparents, **Bill** and **Ellen Snidow**.

This year's attendees included:

Bill and **Mary Wahl** and Family
Son **Bill, Jr.** with wife, **Janice**
Daughter **Debbie Steer** with husband, Paul
Daughter **Mary Ann Erlandson**
Grandson **Brian Erlandson** and Family
Great grandson **Justin** with **Brittany Dunn**
and Family
Grandson **Scott Wahl** and **Amber**
Grandson **Bill** with wife **Amy** and **Toby**

Ruth Mellinger (Millard) and Family
Daughter **Dawn Kilhefner**
Daughter **Karen Royer** with her husband, **Dave**
Son **Marlin** with daughter, **Rachel**

Bill and **Margaret Dawson** and Family
Daughter **Linda** and husband **Vince Puccio**
and grandson **Tony Puccio**
Daughter **Jane Keel** with husband **Wiley**

Ellen (Jules) Slopek and Family
Son **Thomas** and wife, **Tamara**
Son **Jack** and wife, **Michele** and
Daughter **Patricia**

Bill and **Ellen Snidow** with grandson, **Nate**

Mike and **Dorothy Kotnik**

Marie (George) Mackey with
Daughter, **Nena Dresser**

John and **Eva Golden**

Hope to see you all next year in Salem, Virginia.
Take care until then!

The Major's Furnace

Written By: Gus R. Wiemann

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

That winter of 1944 in England was, to put it mildly, cold. How cold was it? Well, it was so cold that our battalion major ordered a soldier to be stationed in the cellar of his requisitioned house. This soldier's duty was to report to the cellar at 1800 hours or, more specifically, to the furnace in the cellar. This duty was ordered after falling out with his company for roll call at 0700 hours. It was following chow at 1700 hours that the soldier was to station himself next to the furnace until 0700 hours, at which time he was to report to his company for the morning roll call.

It was reasoned through command decision that if a soldier observed the furnace between 1800 hours and 0700 hours of the following day, the efficiency of the furnace's heating capacity would be maintained. Theoretically, the soldier would shake the grate of the furnace, causing all spent embers to fall out, and insert fresh pieces of coal.

Unfortunately, the soldier after more than 12 hours of duty fell asleep next to the warm furnace. Any spent embers were then not replaced by fresh coal, the warm furnace turned cold and so did the major's house.

In the morning an irate and cold major reported the soldier to his company commander with the instruction that this soldier was never again assigned to tend the furnace.

As a Scottish poet many years earlier wrote: "The best laid plans of mice and men go often awry."

The Final Stage

By: **Bill Drugg**

Headquarters Co. and Co. K, 272nd Regiment

211 North 14th Avenue, Altoona, PA 16601

Telephone: 814/943-8429 • E-Mail: bucadaca@aol.com

While reading the last couple of Bulletins I noticed several referrals to the end being near and how we are fading away, and so forth. Well guys, that's life and we might as well face it.

Well it got me to thinking and that's how I started writing these little notes to have my thoughts written down so that some day when they (my family) have nothing better to do in their busy lives, they might pick a copy of the 69th Infantry Bulletin laying about and read about the good old days of the war and some things we (you and I) may have done while the war was going on. As short as my memory is now and it is not getting any better, it was a wise decision.

Now when I say the end is getting near, I have not heard any rumors of the end of the Universe - I am referring to the plans about our Bulletin, and changes that may be made. I don't want Dottie to think we are looking for a replacement (at least not in our lifetime).

* * * * *

Freak Auto Accident

This story is true, however, nobody is alive (to my knowledge) to verify that this is true. When we were young, all we had to say after a story had been told with someone doubting its truthfulness was say, "cross my heart and hope to die," and everyone knew it had to be the truth, after someone checked to see if our fingers were crossed.

The war was drawing to a close. The Russian Army was fast approaching (as fast as their oxen could approach). The 69th Infantry Patrol Jeep was getting tired waiting to meet them (they had not received the news that they were not the chosen group to meet them). Soooooo, who worries about little details, the rest is history. We met the Russians we got drunk and had a good time.

Let's go back in time. We lived in the city. We were in Headquarters Co. standing guard and taking part in Retreat every evening, for the most part folding the flag was the hardest thing we did. We rode patrol and gave drunks rides back to their quarters. One evening while getting prepared for guard duty we heard a guard challenge Halt-Halt-Halt followed by the sound of rifle fire, the sound of a car crash and then — Silence. Yes, it all happened in a flash, my friend and we were on our way. When we arrived on the scene, the car was still smoking, the engine was still hissing and by this time, all were trying to get the passengers out of the car.

What happened? What was the car doing out after hours? What were the two soldiers doing in the car? All these questions were being asked and many more. Not one of the occupants of the car could help it, they were all killed.

A good guess was that the two soldiers hitched a ride with the civilians and they almost made it. They made it to the Company Square and made a wrong turn, going away from the guards that were challenging the car. A comedy of errors that killed two G.I.s that survived the war only to be lose their lives in a freak accident.

So what prompted this article? Why? Why now? Well, this story has been in the back of my mind and I remember it as if it were yesterday. Not everything but enough to make this story. May They Rest in Peace, Amen.

P.S. Let me hear from you if you remember any part of this story. For my peace of mind, I would sure like to hear from you. It is hard for me to believe that it was a dream or that I was the only person that could recall that it ever happened.

* * * * *

Cigarette Butts

I had written this up some time ago for use at my VFW Post. Perhaps you may find it useful at your club, store, condominium, apartment project, etc.

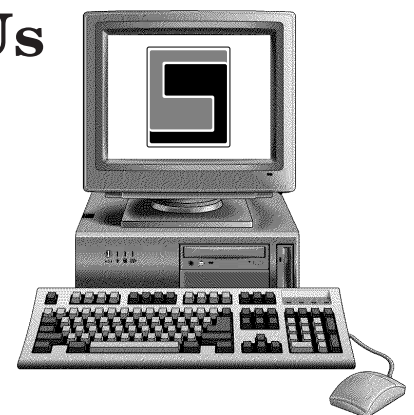
A disturbing condition that one sees much too often nowadays are cigarette butts strewn over parking areas and other common grounds and lawns. With more and more smokers now relegated to smoking outdoors because of indoor prohibitions, this littering has become a real problem.

A solution might be to develop a practice that those who serve in the military might remember, i.e. FIELD STRIPPING. This is a simple procedure. When finished with a cigarette, simply tear apart the cigarette paper, spread the remaining tobacco over nearby soil (it's good for plants) and roll the paper into a small, almost invisible ball. RESULT - a neater more pleasant surrounding.

From Joe Quade

17th Airborne Division Association

**Visit Us
On
The
Web
at**



www.69th-infantry-division.com

or contact

annejoelip@bellsouth.net

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

Ross Medical and Nursing School Scholarships

Dr. Robert H. Ross

Company I, 272nd Infantry Regiment
1111 Hypoluxo Road, Suite 203
Lantana, Florida 33462

I was drafted in October of 1944. I was almost 24 years old. After a shortened infantry basic training at Camp Robinson, North Little Rock, Arkansas, because of the "Battle Of The Bulge," I joined the 69th Infantry Division in France in January 1945 as a replacement. I missed the comradery of being at Camp Shelby but I made wonderful friends moving through France, Belgium and Germany with members of Company I, 272nd Infantry Regiment.

Life has been good to me and I would like to share some of my success with descendants and relatives of the 69th as well as those of the 461st, 661st and 777th who were with us as we completed our mission in WWII.

This article is directed to my comrade in arms who are interested in the schooling of one or more of their descendants in the nursing or medical fields, or to their descendant who have maintained an interest in their ancestors' WWII experiences by reading the 69th bulletin.

I am the Chairman of two schools in the nursing and medical fields located on the island of St. Kitts in the Eastern Carribean. They are the International University of Nursing, St. Kitts and the University of Medicines and Health Sciences, St. Kitts.

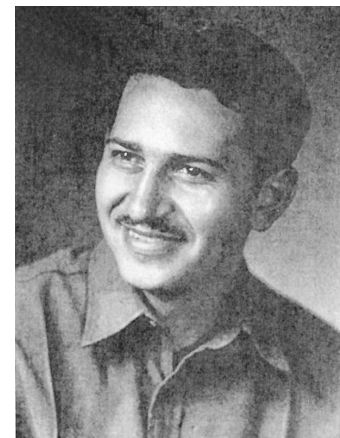
I will give **partial** scholarships of **\$2,000 per semester** for nursing students and the same for medical students to descendants or relatives of members of those units to attend either of these schools, whether the ancestor or relative is alive or deceased.

Semesters begin in September, January and May for both schools. The cost of room, board, books, etc. is approximately \$5000-\$6000 per semester for each. For either school, to learn more about tuition fees, admissions and course requirements, call the phone number listed in this article for the school, E-mail the school or visit the school Website.

The International University of Nursing partners with accredited U.S. nursing schools to offer the Associate and Bachelors degrees in nursing. Our Associate degrees consist of 6 semesters. The first three semesters are conducted at our St. Kitts campus, after which students transfer to one of our affiliated U.S. nursing schools for the 4th, 5th and 6th semesters. Our Bachelor Degree program consists of 8 semesters. The first 6 semesters are conducted at our St. Kitt campus, after which students are transferred to one of



Dr. Robert H. Ross



*Robert H. Ross
as a soldier*

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Complete details of all aspects and costs of both schools are on their Websites. You are urged to visit the Website of the school of your interest.

To learn more about me, go to the following Website: **www.ross-founder.com**.

If you, or a close relative, do not have a computer, take this article to a nearby public library and ask a librarian to open the school Website you are interested in for more information.

To apply by mail, fill out and use the application on the following page.

(Continued on Page 10)

Ross Nursing or Medical School Scholarship Application

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Please send me a catalog and application to qualify for a scholarship to the above school.

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Public School Telephone No. E-Mail Address

Signature Date

Grand March at Biloxi USO

March 7, 1944

Photo
submitted by:
Wanda Olszewski
212 McClintock St.
New Britain, CT
06053



THE AUXILIARY'S PAGE



Dottie (Witzleb) Shadle

By Dottie (Witzleb) Shadle

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A Message from your President, Dorothea Duncan

Dear Ladies of the 69th Ladies Auxiliary:

Greetings from New Jersey...it has been a long, cold winter, and I hope that all of you have had some time to pick up the crochet hook or knitting needles and make a few lap robes or slippers for our Veterans. Before you know it the summer will be gone and once again it will be time to head to the 69th Division Reunion. We are really looking forward to Nashville, and we are so happy it will be a cooler time of year!

Our Sunshine Chairman continues her good work sending a birthday card to each of us! Thank you, Edith, we all appreciate your continued work and hope to see you in Nashville this year!

Respectfully submitted,
Dorothea Duncan
President, Ladies Auxiliary

The War Years

Ladies, please send in your memories of the war years and we will include your stories in the Ladies Auxiliary pages. I am sure that many of you have interesting stories to tell. Also, photographs that your husband's may have in storage. We promise to return them to you. Send them to Dottie Shadle at the above address. Thank You.

- In Memoriam -

"LADIES' TAPS"

Nancy Faulkner

Wife of **Harold Faulkner**

280 Monticello Drive, Walnut Creek, California 94595

Cannon Company - 271st Infantry Regiment

Mary Elizabeth Hawley

Widow of **John Hawley**

330 East Fort Street, Shippensburg, Pennsylvania 17257

269th Engineers

Eleanor May Kough

Wife of **Lewis Kough**

1126 Hadtner Avenue

Williamsport, Pennsylvania 17701-3622

Company D - 777th Tank Battalion

Willa May Love

Wife of **E. Jerome Love**

687 Dorsett Road, Siler City, North Carolina 27344

Company I - 272nd Infantry Regiment

Myrna L. Parker

Wife of **Eugene Parker**

603 Idlewild Road, Bel Air, Maryland 21014-4420

724th Field Artillery

Margie Redmond

105 Hess Avenue, Martinsburg, West Virginia 25401-3522

Widow of 569th Signal Company Member

Nicole Wilson

Wife of **Walter Wilson**

107 Winding Wood Road

Hopewell Junction, New York 12533

Battery C - 724th Field Artillery

Vernon E. Tritch, Jr. and Battery C, 724th Field Artillery

Submitted By: **Mary R. Tritch**
3259 Foxiana Road
Middletown, Pennsylvania 17057-4512
Telephone: (717) 944-9080
E-Mail: mtritch@paonline.com

I met **Vernon Tritch** when I was in Nurses Training at the Harrisburg Hospital in Harrisburg, PA. I was 18. He was 19. He was home on leave in October and Easter, from Basic Training at Shelby Mississippi. Notice the pictures of him taken in Basic Training 1943, and compare how much thinner he was to the picture he had taken in Bremen, Germany, 1945.

He went into the service 1943 instead of 1942, when he graduated from Middletown High School. They didn't want him because of his eyes. But he kept trying to be accepted by eating carrots for one thing, to improve his eyes. The doctor finally said if you want to go that bad, I will pass you. I guess that's the reason he didn't like carrots after we were married.

We were married May 10, 1946 after he came home from the service. He was in the Army of Occupation after V.J. Day, September 2, 1945 until April 1946. I keep reading the articles trying to get an idea what you would do in the Army of Occupation. For that matter, I knew very little of what went on in the war. The letters were censored and when **Vernon** came home, like a lot of soldiers, he didn't want to talk about it. And then, too, we were busy rearing children.

My oldest son, Ray is named for Vernon's buddy, **Ray Morse**, although my son does take Ray as his name. His first name is the same as his father's. Vernon said he would never name a child of his Junior. He hated it at roll call when they called out his name Vernon E. Tritch, Jun-yur, with the emphasis on Junior. Ray has three children, Heather, Aaron and Timothy. Our other two boys, Stephen and Craig liked sports just like their father. Notice the picture of the boxer and the wrestler. Vernon dislocated his shoulder while wrestling at Camp Shelby. Stephen has two daughters, Danielle and Kasey. Craig got a scholarship to the University of Pittsburgh. He has two daughters, Cynamon and Ginger, he also has two grandchildren, Elena and Vincent. We have one daughter, Candice who has one son, Christopher. I wonder if Vernon thought of the tall pines at Camp Shelby (see photo) when he would take our daughter to find a tree at Christmas or if he thought of them when he would see our cedar trees.

When Vernon left the service he thought he would pick up his old job as promised by Bethlehem Steel. He got the job all right, but got the same salary as he had



*Vernon Tritch - 1943
Basic Training
Camp Shelby*



*Vernon Tritch
Near Bremen, Germany
October 1945*



In the pines at Camp Shelby: Bob Berkau on the ground. Joe Avara, Ray Morse, and Vernon Tritch.

before the war. So he moved on. He became a carpenter under the G.I. Bill. He found the work was seasonal, so he became a postman for the Middletown Post Office and there he stayed until he retired. The carpenter training came in very handy, though. He built our home and was always building something.

Vernon would have liked a college education, but his parents said they couldn't afford it. He had to settle for the Commercial Studies in High School. He was a Battery Clerk, but asked to be transferred to the Field Artillery. He tried to become an officer - not sure if it was the 90 day wonder program or the ASTP training. He didn't have the right kind of math to be an officer, they said. I'm sure that is the reason he wanted our children to go to college. They are all college graduates. Ray is a Veterinarian. He has a practice in Watson-town, Pennsylvania. Stephen works for the State of Pennsylvania as a Mail Inspector. Craig is a School Teacher, and lives in Valley Springs, California. Candice is a Service Coordinator and works for Baltimore County, Maryland.

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**VERNON E. TRITCH, JR. AND
BATTERY C, 724TH FIELD ARTILLERY**

(Continued from Page 12)

I have learned so much reading the 69th Division Magazine, understanding a little more of what our soldiers did, and how they served our country. I wish Vernon was here to share all these stories with me. He died in 1992. He fully intended to go to the reunion in Biloxi, Mississippi in 1991, but he was on chemotherapy for melanoma cancer and didn't feel well enough to travel.



*Vernon Tritch Boxing
Camp Shelby - 1943*

I'd like to write more about the reunions we went to, and send pictures. **Vernon** and **John Turner** were co-chairmen for Battery C, 724th Field Artillery. **Coy Horton** helped **John** after **Vernon** died, then it was just **Coy** and his wife, **Erline**. Now they are gone, I hope there are still a few of us left to carry on with what they did.

I would love to learn about what happened with the Fighting 69th, and especially with Battery C, 724th Field Artillery. Anyone out there with information, please feel free to contact me.



Vernon Tritch and Joe Avara wrestling, Camp Shelby



*Ray Ince and Vernon Tritch coming home
on the Florence Nightingale*



Vernon Tritch on left, then Joe Avara, Ray Morse, Bob Berkau and Tapping on the 155mm Howitzer.

T/5 Harry L. Miller, Jr.

273rd Medical Detachment

1008 Durand Drive, Belleville, Nebraska 68005-3263

I enjoy the bulletin and read it from cover to cover each time it comes.

I was fortunate to be one of the WWII Veterans on the fourth Heartland Honor Flight out of Omaha, Nebraska to Washington, D.C.

Seeing the World War II Memorial is something I will always remember. The changing of the guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier was also impressive.

On December 8, 2008 I celebrated my 87th Birthday! Below is an article that I think 69ers will enjoy.

Cot Caterer

**The Miracle of
Mullin's Mess Hall**

Written by S-Sgt. Charles Sweetland

G.I. cynics have often observed that no one has anything nice to say about a mess sergeant, excepting his mother, and even she would get out of the cheering section if she had to eat in his mess hall.

And so it is no less than front page news to find **S-Sgt. Vernon Mullins**, mess sergeant for Service Co., 273rd rating ace high, not only with his "Mom," but also with every dogface in the company.

One of the secrets of his success and popularity with the non-stripe wearers in the outfit is the fact that he had revolutionized the mess sergeant industry by his occasional "mess hall-to-hutment Sunday breakfast delivery service."

On these rare occasions the K.P.s maneuvered up to the cot side of astounded G.I.s and present them with fruit juice and their morning coffee, and then **Sgt. Mullins**, known affectionately as "Ma," personally follows up the K.P.s with a platter of eggs, bacon and toast and served them in bed.

Any other outfit seeking **Sgt. Mullin's** services can have the same over the collective dead bodies of his company mates.

Torgau - Echoing the Spirit of the Elbe

Submitted By: **Hilton O. Spokony**
3rd Battalion, Headquarters Co., 272nd Infantry
165 Sweetfield Circle
Yonkers, New York 10704-2616

From German Life Magazine
December 2008 / January 2009 Issue

By Jorg Unger

A Renaissance town with a rich history dating back to 973 and noted for Martin Luther preaching here for the very first time in the German language, Torgau capped its military history in 1945 with a photograph re-enacting the meeting which marked the approaching end to World War II. Jorg Unger

Torgau had been condemned to be a military town with barracks, prisons, tribunals, torture chambers, and execution places since 1811, when Napoleon had Castle Hartenfels converted and reinforced into a fortress. At the end of the 1930s, two of eight German military prisons were located in Torgau - called Bruckenkopf (bridgehead) and Fort Zinna, the largest one. Both housed deserters, insubordinate soldiers, draft resisters, and people who were accused of undermining military strength, espionage, or preferential treatment of the enemy. Later, the inmates also included members of the anti-Nazi resistance movement and prisoners of war. In August 1943, the Nazi's supreme military tribunal moved into the Zieten Barracks, where about fourteen hundred death sentences were issued.

During the afternoon of April 25, 1945, soldiers of the 69th Infantry Division waved their homemade United States flag from the round tower of Castle Hartenfels in Torgau, trying to make contact to the troops of the Red Army on the other side of Elbe. After the negotiations by a Russian prisoner of war, liberated from Fort Zinna, **Lieutenant William Robertson** clambered over the wrecked bridge girders to meet the Ukrainian Lieutenant Alexander Silwaschko of the 173rd Rifle Regiment, 58th Guards Infantry Division, not knowing that the first encounter had already occurred near the town of Strehla, eighteen miles upstream, about three hours before. However, it was the bridge in Torgau, which was chosen to re-enact the meeting for the news one day later and take the famous photograph that marked the approaching end of World War II.

Though the end of war also meant the disintegration of the German military penal system, Torgau did not get rid of its dreadful reputation until German reunification. In September 1945, the Soviet secret police established its special camps in the Seydlitz Barracks and nearby Fort Zinna, of which the latter remained a penitentiary in East Germany until 1990. Today, the Torgau Documentation and Information

Center, founded in 1991, displays the terrible history of Torgau in its permanent exhibition, "Traces of Injustice."

Fortunately, those awful times are over, and the veterans of the 69th Infantry Division - like **William Snidow, George Wallis, Bing T. Poon, and Hilton Spokony** - returned to Torgau again, putting flowers beside the memorial stones that commemorate the Spirit of the Elbe on the eastern banks of the river. They also honored **Joe Polowsky** (a member of the reconnaissance patrol that had met the Russian troops near Strehla), who is buried in Torgau - a wish of his last will that was granted by the East German authorities, when he died in 1983.

Beyond the river, you can still discern the first arch of the famous Elbe Bridge, which was removed in 1994, about one year after the new bridge had been opened to the public. A few yards downstream, the Elbe Link-Up Monument, designed by the Ukrainian architect Avraham Miletzki, recalls the encounter on the western banks of Elbe. It made Torgau the only place in the former Eastern bloc showing an American flag throughout the times of Cold War.

Torgau goes back to the Slavic settlement Torgove, first mentioned in a Document of the year 973. In the tenth century, the region fell under the rule of the Holy Roman Empire. Lying at an Elbe ford on the trade route between Leipzig and Frankfurt on the river Oder, Torgau flourished and became a town in the middle of the thirteenth century. In 1423, the region passed to the Wettin dynasty. Sixty-five years later, Elector Frederick the Wise and his brother, Duke John, made Torgau the capital of the Ernestine Saxony and had the old fortress extended to an impressing renaissance castle. Castle Hartenfels (meaning "hard rock") derives its name from the porphyry rock on which the first stronghold was built.

The castle consists of several wings built during different time periods. Entering the castle from the riverside, you pass the Lapidarium - a collection of eighty stone figures, slabs, busts, monuments, and coats of arms carved in sandstone, which are displayed in the historical vaults under the castle chapel that Martin Luther consecrated in 1544.

Another masterpiece of stonemasons and sculptors in those times is the huge Wendelstein (spiral staircase) of Castle Hartenfels. Built without a supporting pillar in the center, it is a unique construction of its kind throughout Germany. The sandstone stairs are held together by the staircase balustrade and six slender columns, which are stabilized by the weight of the tower vault above. The castle tower, built in Italian style from 1533 to 1535, is one hundred seventy-four feet tall. After walking up the one hundred and sixty-four stairs to the lookout, you have a great view upon the town and over the fields, pastures, and woods beyond the River Elbe, where the former rulers of Saxony indulged in bear hunting.

Passing the three bears (a gift from the zoo of Leipzig) in the castle moat, you enter the old city. The

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TORGAU - ECHOING THE SPIRIT OF THE ELBE

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metal bear tracks in the cobbled sidewalks, guide you on your way through the history of town. On the right, the former chancellery of Elector John Frederick, which became a cloth manufactory in 1705, was the place of intellectual encounter and exchange between the German scholar Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz and Tsar Peter I, the Great, from Russia when he visited Torgau in 1711 for the wedding of his son Alexei and Princess Charlotte of Braunschweig-Wolfenbützel. Today the building houses the museum of local history that shows lots of photographs of the link-up in April 1945 and the copy of the United States flag, remade and signed by **Bill Robertson**, Alexander Silwaschko, and other soldiers, who had met in Torgau on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of that day.

“If Wittenberg was the cradle of Protestantism, Torgau was its wet-nurse,” Cornelia König jokes, guiding her visitors through the upper rooms of the museum that are dedicated to Martin Luther and the origin of his views as well as the composer and singer Johann Walter, who was a member of the court orchestra in those times. Being a close friend and consultant in music matters to Martin Luther, he is regarded as the first choirmaster of the Protestant church. With his hymnbook of 1524, he introduced part-singing and polyphony into religious music.

A few yards down the street, Katharina Luther was buried in the Church of St. Mary, which can already be discerned in the paintings of Lucas Cranach the Elder, who became the court painter at Hartenfels in 1505. In April 1523, at the age of twenty-four, Katharina von Bora escaped from the convent Marienthron near Grimma to Wittenberg, with the help of the councilman Loenhard Koppe from Torgau, together with eleven other nuns where she married Martin Luther in June 1525. In the summer of 1552, Luther's widow and her youngest children fled from the plague that had broken out in Wittenberg. She was injured in an accident when the horses shied shortly before Torgau. Due to her injuries, Katharina died on December 20, 1552, in the house on today's Katharinenstrasse 11.

Opposite the church, you can visit the house where Martin Luther, Philipp Melancton, Justus Jonas, and Johannes Bugenhagen wrote the Torgau Articles, which were the basis of the Augsburg Confession, presented to Elector John the Steadfast. The house next to it was home to the founder of homeopathy, Samuel Hahnemann, who wrote his main work *Organon* in Torgau. The Cyrillic graffiti on the house wall proves that the field kitchen of the second battalion must have served provisions and rations to the Ukrainian soldiers after the U.S. troops had left the town.

Behind a simple facade of a huge house of the former cloth merchant Paul Ringelhain, who was the mayor of Torgau in the early seventeenth century, you can admire beautiful samples of interior design from Renaissance period - from old furniture to elaborate banisters, doors and ceilings, decorated with paintings and wooden ornaments.

Passing the figure of St. Mary at a house corner on Fleischmarkt (butcher market) and one of the oldest pharmacies in Saxony, you get to the market square of Torgau with its new fountain, depicting Claus Narr, the court jester, who lived in a chamber of the castle tower around 1500. He is surrounded by his dog, a bear, and two musicians. Behind the huge Renaissance town hall with its beautiful bay window, which was built in 1565, there is the church of St. Nicolaus, where Martin Luther preached in the German language for the very first time. Due to secularization, the church later became a market hall of the local cloth makers and furriers, a hall for meetings of the town council as well as the treasury and the courthouse of Torgau before it fell into disrepair over the years. Today, just the two spires are maintained and their ancient bells chime together with those of the castle chapel and the Catholic Church at noon and six o'clock in the evening to remember the victims of all the dreadful wars that went through Torgau on the Elbe River. For more information, visit www.torgau.de or www.museum-torgau.de.

Farewell Tour

In May, four of us World War II veterans and ten family members of the Fighting 69th Infantry Division participated in a “Farewell Tour” of many spots where the division fought during the war, and other significant World War II locations. Our first stop was Berlin, where we took a tour of the city, seeing many spots where the Nazis made their decisions on how to conduct the war. We visited “Checkpoint Charlie”, and we also saw many places where portions of the Berlin Wall still stand as a solemn reminder of the Soviet rule in East Germany after the war. Our next stop was Torgau, the spot where the Allies met the Russian Army in April 1945. We laid wreaths at a monument in Torgau, another wreath at Strehla, and another at the grave of Joe Polowsky, a Chicago taxi driver who wanted to be buried near the Elbe River in Torgau when he died.

Next we went to Leipzig. Outside Leipzig I found a house where I was quartered during the war. I was invited inside, where I saw the room where I had slept while we were there.

We were on to Nuremberg. We stood in room 600, the courtroom where the Nuremberg trials were held. After Nuremberg, we went to Heidelberg and Cologne and then it was on to Belgium. We visited the World War II Netherlands American Cemetery and Memorial in Margraten, and the Henri-Chapelle American Cemetery and Memorial in Belgium. It is difficult to describe the feeling one gets seeing row after row of graves of American soldiers who lost their lives on foreign soil during World War II.

After spending a day in Brussels, we went on to the beaches of Normandy in France. We walked on Omaha Beach and Utah Beach. We visited the Airborne Museum at St. Mere Eglise and the Musée de Débarquement (Landing Museum) at Arromanches.

We continued on to Paris and then ended our journey in London, with a warm farewell dinner with our new family of Fighting 69th veterans and relatives!

Vignettes of War

By: **Allan Gwynne**

Staff Sergeant, Co. A, 1st Battalion, 271st Regiment
6065 Timberlodge Lane
Roseville, California 95747

In retrospect, my entire war experience appears to have pointed toward and then proceeded from one moment in time that was particularly and uniquely mine. The 69th Division had been activated and was preparing to go to war. The entire Division was poised for its first attack in the vicinity of Hollerath, Germany. I was a buck private infantry replacement named first scout by my squad leader on the basis of a few days acquaintance in Tent City. On it's first full scale engagement with the enemy I was the

First scout of the
First squad of the
First platoon of the
First company (A Company) of the
First Battalion of the
First regiment (271st) of the 69th Division

How did a bookish teenager from small town Pennsylvania get in this precarious position? Well, this is the story. I have titled it "vignettes" because all of the short bits of action are what come to mind readily. Most of the detailed memories are thankfully hidden and justifiably so since they are for the most part inconsequential in the overall scheme of things.

I started, of course, by applying to the Air Corps. They wanted no part of me because a.) I did not have enough of my natural teeth left. And b.) I was subject to hay fever and think what a mess we would have if I sneezed in an oxygen mask. So I fastened my hopes on the ASTP which promised a college education leading to a commissioned officer slot in the far distant future. What was available was the ASTRP where the R stood for reserve - as in no pay. The carrot was an eventual college degree at government expense. So off I went to VMI and a concentrated college course for which I was ill-prepared having become accustomed in grade school and high school to easy subjects with no competition. The combination of lackluster grades and the war heating up in Europe with its demands for cannon fodder resulted after six months in a telegram that "for the convenience of the Government" I was transferred to the Infantry and assigned to the Infantry Replacement Training Center at Camp Wheeler, Georgia.

Basic Training at an IRTC camp was no picnic but was short and made shorter by the circumstances leading up to the Battle of the Bulge. We were given a few days at home and told to report to the Port of Embarkation before the end of the year. We left Miss Liberty in the haze of our departure on the 1st of January 1945.

The trip from New York to the English Channel was pretty tame and uneventful. Spent most of my time in my top bunk looking at the steel a few inches from my face and regretting that I had sent all my poker winnings to Mom and did not even have the price of a pack of cigarettes (5 cents). Probably saved me a bundle since troop ships always seem to have a few real gamblers who take advantage of the situation. We boarded the LST someplace in the south of England. The LST consisted of a small space all around the ship and several decks high with an enormous space in the middle filled with equipment of all kinds. On the crossing itself, we must have traveled as far up and down as we did forward. Somehow, in spite of the rough weather, we were served applesauce and graham crackers. It was the best tasting food I had tasted since home. There was a long, long walk up the hill in Le Havre and we boarded what passed for railroad cars at that time in France. I believe the 40 and 8's from WWI were reused without any intervening maintenance or rework. We were unloaded near the Belgian border in a huge natural cave where we were issued our rifles still in the cosmoline protective barrier that protected them from moisture, salt, etc. on their way to war. Cosmoline is just about the messiest stuff ever invented, but eventually it all came off the rifle even though it took a little longer to come off our hands and clothes. Besides chow and trips to the head, about the only thing accomplished here was to zero in our rifles. The next trip was by truck to Tent City. This is really where this saga begins, because it was at Tent City that I was assigned to my first combat infantry position with the 69th Infantry Division.

We leave the trucks in a steady rain and are assigned to pyramidal tents. The tents are heated by potbelly stoves usually red hot. Movement anywhere in the camp area entails wading in mud that is almost deep enough to go over our boots. In a couple of days, the sun finally comes out. Several of the new guys take a walk through the woodlot a mile or so away. We found a hawk caught in a small jaw type trap and one of the guys puts it out of its misery. General Reinhardt addresses us and finally it is time to move up. The Captain lets us know we are infantry by setting out from Tent City with full field packs and marching for the first 5 or 10 miles. The true nature of our advance is foretold when we are picked up by 6X6 GMC trucks and are really on our way. A day or so later, we are traveling through the Huertgen forest. Someone has been ahead of us because we encounter frequent areas where the trucks are traveling on corduroy roads with small saplings laid crossways to bridge soft stretches. Progress is slow. Word comes down that we are pitching camp but before we find out what this means, my squad is selected by **Sgt. Periera** to return two or three miles to the rear to provide guard duty for the

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VIGNETTES OF WAR

(Continued from Page 16)

Divisional water point. The water point turns out to be two pyramidal tents and the equipment to pump water from a nearby stream into canvas tanks where it is treated with chemicals to make it safe for cooking and drinking. During the day a stream of vehicles arrive to haul water to the various field kitchens and for drinking water to refill canteens. Our squad leader, "Greek" (**Sgt. Komeno Bakalis**) walks us around the site to familiarize us with the layout. One of the sights we pass helps to convince us of the seriousness of the job. A German soldier was caught in the act of defecating and lies frozen with his pants still down around his ankles. No one approaches him. Our shifts are set at four on and four off. We also get the good news. We get 10-in-one rations. Compared to the "C" rations the kitchen is serving to the rest of the company, the cheese and crackers, chocolate bars, and varied canned meals makes a special treat.

On the move again. We will replace units of the 395th Regiment of the 99th Infantry Div. on line. The trucks pass silent concrete "dragons teeth" of the Seigfried line and we are traded one by one for tired dirty men in foxholes along the brow of a hill overlooking a valley and another hill beyond. Don't move about any more than necessary, comes the word. The hill is loaded with antipersonnel mines. The next day brings our first taste of what we are facing. (The following description was called First Barrage and was submitted for my English Composition Class at M.I.T. Since it was written a little over two years after the event it represents a memory still fresh.)

Have you ever been under artillery fire? It is not a very pleasant experience even when you have become somewhat inured to it through frequent exposure. But the first big barrage that comes your way is by far the worst.

My initiation came shortly after we had entered Germany. My platoon relieved an element of the 99th Div., which had been on the front line long enough to need a rest. The day after we completed our part of the replacement maneuver, we were just beginning to become accustomed to our new homes in foxholes previously occupied by our predecessors and stretched across the brow of the hill about 50 to 75 yards apart. A buddy of mine was just returning to his foxhole after bumming a cigarette when it started. Boom!! A cloud of mud, snow, and rock rose into the air, and shell fragments shrilly whined their deadly tune. In no time, the field was completely devoid of motion. The shells started to come in steadily. Boom!! Boom!! Closer and closer the shells came as the gunners elevated their gun muzzles to "walk" the shells along the line of our foxholes. There came one from the left, then one from in front of our line. They came in what sounded like an endless procession of death and destruction.

As I pressed deeper into my foxhole and wished fervently that my clothes were not so thick, I decided that this would be a good time to pray. It's funny what other thoughts cross your mind when you should be too scared to think. For instance, I remembered what one old-timer had told us about artillery. He said, "If you hear 'em they can't hurt ya." And I said to myself, "I don't believe it. It sounds as if that one coming now will just about make it to my foxhole." But sure enough, it didn't. Boom!! That shell hit to my left. Boom!! That one showered me with dirt but it hit to my right. They've passed me. I am all right. And finally it was over.

The expected wave of German Infantry didn't follow the barrage and thanks to well-constructed foxholes, no one in our platoon was even scratched. Our Division Intelligence officer passed the word that it was "only" a pair of Nazi Tiger Tanks throwing up an 88mm screen before leaving for the hinterlands. I had come through my first artillery barrage unscathed, and I could relax again for a while.

Time to earn our keep. The Division prepares for its first combat assignment. Our Company is to attack Hollerath. Memory returns me to a dark morning. The Company Commander, **Captain Austin**, our 1st Platoon Leader, **Lt. Beccari**, and **T/Sgt. Periera** are all close to me as our own artillery starts moaning overhead. We attack when the barrage ends. I step out first up the slope toward a clearing just visible in the early morning light. Only later does it occur to me that I am the first scout, in the first squad, in the first platoon, in A Company of the 271st Regiment of the 69th Division in our first combat attack. Of course I didn't have time for such useless thoughts then, but I moved forward steadily with no sign of the enemy in front of us. Part way up the hill, we see a German farmer plowing a field several fields over, but he continues and nothing else happens. We near the top and deploy in a line below the crest of the hill. I am on the right of the platoon and B Company is supposed to be to our right. I see what my mind tells me is a German helmet about 50 yards to my right and I fire a shot at the helmet. If it was a German the noise must have spooked him because I found that I had never altered my sights from the 200 yard setting I had used in the foxhole the previous day. The slug had to be a good foot over his head. Saw no more evidence of the enemy and we move to the forward slope of the ridge and dig foxholes.

From foxholes we move to a small town (Wahld?) not far away. The kitchen has not been able to keep up but late that night we get a handout of black German bread and some sour fruit preserves which someone has liberated in the town. We have taken over German foxholes and are cautioned that there are still Germans in town. I am in a foxhole with **Parmelee** and very nearly get into a fracas trying to get him to breathe

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VIGNETTES OF WAR

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more quietly. He has a cold and it seems his efforts to supply oxygen to his lungs will alert every German in town to the exact location of our foxhole.

Someplace in this period when we find whatever cover we can for the night, Greek locates a small house that the squad will occupy for the night. Much debate ensued as to who would sleep where since one of the choices was to sleep near the hole in the roof on the theory that another shell was not likely to hit the same hole. It was great to have a roof over our heads, anyway. Also during this period we were moving through scenes of war such as dead animals, shell holes, damaged buildings, etc. There came a morning when the kitchens had caught up. We had breakfast and heard through the grapevine (never did figure out how that worked) that the Company next to us was having pancakes and they were in unlimited supply. We walked the half-mile or so to the location and stocked up on as many pancakes as we could hold with maple syrup and butter. Absolutely the finest cuisine we had had for weeks.

After a few days rest we are on the move again in trucks. The bridge at Remagen had been captured before it could be destroyed completely and we are moved to positions on the Rhine River just upstream of the bridge. Our assignment is to guard against suicide swimmers trying to float explosives down the river to blow up what remains of the bridge. We are located with our heavy artillery behind us and firing over our heads.

We crossed the Rhine in 6x6's on the "longest tactical pontoon bridge in the world" and moved to take Schmidtheim. I believe it was in Schmidtheim that my most incredible war story occurred. Unfortunately, I have been unable to confirm the truth of the story, but it's such a great tale I'll tell it anyway. Clearing a town can be a very confusing affair, since you're never sure the enemy isn't in a house until you have been through every room. My squad was in one house and we saw **S/Sgt Goodling**, leader of the second squad and a couple of men go past our building toward the next. Shortly thereafter, they came back past at a run. They said that a German soldier had fired a panzerfaust (a German bazooka with a 5# explosive charge) at them and that **Sgt. Goodling** had caught the charge and thrown it back at the German.

Our unit is assigned as infantry support to Patton's tanks on a southern sweep to eliminate pockets of resistance in our dash across Germany. The infantry is assigned 6 to a tank and we are traveling in a line of about 20 tanks at what feels like 30 to 40 mph. We have crested a hill with a view of a German village in the distance. Suddenly there are loud noises and puffs of black smoke 20 to 40 feet in the air. The tanks shed their riders and spread out in random fashion across a

field in view of the town. The tanks are mostly stopped and the infantry takes what shelter it can. You want to crawl under a tank, but of course there is always the possibility that the tank will start up at any time. I saw the company commander walking rapidly but unhesitatingly along the front of the group assessing the situation. All this time we are receiving air bursts from the 88mm guns in the town. Very little movement is evident. **Captain Austin** takes momentary cover beside me in the shelter of a tank. He allows as how it's too hot here and we will fall back and go around to attack the town from another direction. Every one gets the message, presumably through the tank radios. Without any effort or shots fired from my weapon, we are installed in the town. Rumor has it that a woman was found spotting for the German artillery and was executed. I stood guard duty all night -4 on, 4 off-, and felt like I would freeze to death.

"Greek" did not rejoin us and we finally heard that he had been hit in the fanny by shrapnel from the air bursts and taken to the aid station. I was put in charge of the squad. I was the youngest but I spoke my mind and the guys in the squad listened to me. I soon discovered what seemed to be the single hardest job of a squad leader. It was deciding who would carry the BAR. Give it to the biggest guy! Yeah, that's **Parmelee**, but he has trench foot and can hardly walk. **Malchaskey** is a lightweight and has already had a turn. In fact just about everybody has had a turn. So who gets the BAR? It turns out to have been the smallest guy in the squad because he was the most recent replacement, by the name of **Frieberger**. He was the only guy I ever saw with a 5 o'clock shadow darker than the Greek. (You didn't think I was going to carry the BAR, did you? 'm the squad leader for crying out loud.)

We were still riding tanks and were passing a small town when a rattle of small arms fire was heard and one or more explosions. We hit the ditch and I call for everyone to stay down. Our company exec, **1st Lt. Fleagle** joins us and passes on the same advice. **Frieberger** becomes very excited and starts running, away from the visible buildings. I shouted after him again to stay put and stay down, but he continues to run. I never saw him again. (Also never had a BAR man again in the squad.) He was hit by small arms fire and later picked up by the medics with a serious stomach wound. A Panzerfaust injured another man in my squad, **George Wolf**, when it exploded against the tank he was riding on. After the action (which only lasted a few minutes) he was picked up by one of the tanks and returned to the aid station. **Lt. Fleagle** was killed in the fighting. With all this going on around me I have to be honest and say that I never did see anyone or anything to shoot at. Neither did any of my squad who were close enough to maintain contact with me.

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VIGNETTES OF WAR

(Continued from Page 18)

We have reached another roadblock in our swing toward Leipzig. We are assigned to sweep through a small town (Stormthal, I think) to be sure it is clear of the enemy. We form a line and start across a field with the town buildings 300 or 400 yards away. A German pops up out of the ground and fires a shot at us. We close on his foxhole. Then **Lieutenant Humphries** runs to the foxhole and points his carbine into the top of the hole. Unknown to the lieutenant but visible to me, he accidentally hits the magazine release and he is pulling the trigger but nothing is happening. We move on and nothing more is heard from the foxhole. (I never did tell the lieutenant that he had lost his magazine. Heard later that some of our platoon behind us had killed the German when he again came out of his hole.) We reach the first few buildings and take position to see beyond. We are on a fairly high hill and off in the distance, probably 3000 yards or more is a group of buildings that someone identifies as aircraft support facilities. We can see a few men running back and forth on unknown missions. I elevate my sights to the maximum because we are well beyond reasonable rifle range, and fire a few shots in the general direction of the running men. They get the message and having aircraft weapons available, they fire a shot from a 20mm gun that cuts the clothesline about 3 feet above my head. So much for that duel.

We are met by an elderly German hausfrau wringing her hands and crying in rapid German (which no one understands) something about a German soldaten. We carefully follow her and find in the back garden another good nazi-dead that is. We enter several more homes and find nothing alive. It was a very close shave for the bust of Bach (or whoever) in one of the rooms we burst into and it took a while for my heart to slow down again. Did not hear of any other encounters in this town.

Another day. We have been traveling on trucks this time, still toward Leipzig. We reach a place that means something to somebody but no explanation comes down to us. We form up in lines and enter the nearby town with instructions to make a fast sweep through the town. My part of the sweep wound up to be several blocks into town up one street and back out on another street. Heard nothing. Saw no movement of any kind. My partner (I think it was **Woody Woodford**) and I talked back and forth in a normal voice from across the street as we proceeded. We did not enter any of the buildings. The only item of interest that brought this incident back to mind after all these years was the complete stillness and the fact that all of the buildings were in beautiful condition. The public building that looked like a water supply substation had a brand new coat of fresh paint and every house looked immaculate.

A short walk looking at signs of a recent battle and I found an Officers 45 cal pistol and a grease gun. I carried these extra weapons for the rest of the war and brought the pistol home with me.

As we near Leipzig, we are released from the assignment to Patton's tanks and are held up by an artillery battle. We hear that one of our forward observers has been killed. We are then moved into position as support for the attack on the Battle of the Nations Monument in Leipzig. For several hours we watch in awe as 155mm howitzer shells explode and bounce harmlessly off of the monument. Finally the Germans surrender and many of our unit were pressed into service on guard duty escorting prisoners west to a POW camp.

From Leipzig we crossed the river and captured Eilenberg. Eilenberg is described as one of the most difficult battles the 1st Battalion fought. But due to the vagaries of war and a lot of luck, the only shots I remember hearing in Eilenberg were the sound of Russian rifles being fired in the air just East of the houses we were quartered in. Also it was in Eilenberg that **Sgt Pereira** marched me over to the Captain's quarters where I was presented quite unexpectedly with S/Sgt stripes. It was about a week later that the Company Clerk told me that I had been officially promoted to PFC through channels.

After Eilenberg, the rest of the war was garrison duty. It had it's own flavor, but the tale does not really belong with this narrative.

To finish off this summary of my "war" experiences, I should hasten to add that it never ceases to amaze me that during the whole time there was only the one 20mm round at Stormthal that let me know that someone was out there shooting at me. There were numerous occasions when artillery shells or screaming meemies made known that this was a dangerous place to be but the sound of bullets aimed at me was remarkably and thankfully absent. Many of the men in my near vicinity had personal contact with the enemy, but I was lucky enough to avoid such encounters completely.

★★

Come on Guys, We Need Your Stories and Photos

Yes, yes, we know. You're old and tired. So are we. No excuses, please. We need bulletin material. We know that some of you are healthy enough to get up in that attic and dig out those photos and memoirs. Let's get moving. Ladies too, please.

Please send them to **Dottie Shadle**. We will return all photos to you after we have published them. We will be waiting to hear from you.

Stephen F. Komes

Headquarters 3, 273rd Infantry Regiment

Submitted By: **Ms. T. Taylor**

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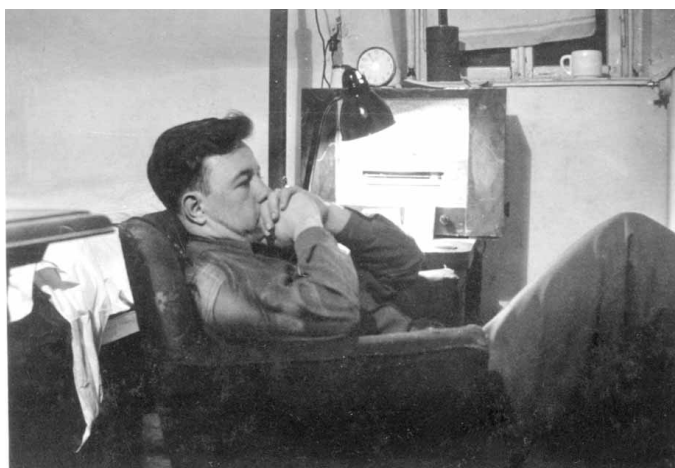
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*German aircraft wreckage near
Altenhain, Germany - Spring 1945*



*Pfc. Klein driving Ammunitions and
Pioneer Platoon truck near Altenhain*



Deep in thought.



Wurzen - Prison Town



After taking positions at the Mulde River in the town of Bennewitz, the First and Third Battalions of the Regiment began to observe the actions of large enemy concentrations in the town of Wurzen, just across the river. Motives of these forces became clear on April 24th, 1945, when the first of thousands to come began streaming across the river by any and every possible means to surrender and escape the approaching Soviets. For days the parade continued. That complete disorganization had taken place was

obvious. The officers commanded no respect from the men, and seemed not to care. The all-consuming desire was to surrender, and in this they were speedily accommodated, as the accompanying picture shows.

It was hard to believe that the same men who marched so docilely were the ones who such a short time ago reduced most of Europe to slavery and had become synonymous with savagery and destruction. No sympathy was given these "Supermen" in this, their final degradation.

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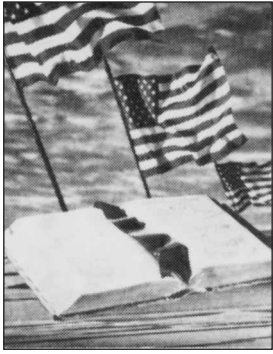
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“Taps”

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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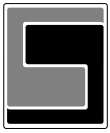
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