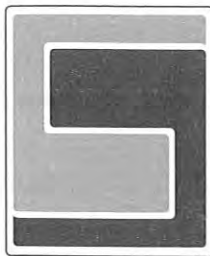


FIGHTING 69TH INFANTRY DIVISION

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JANUARY — FEBRUARY — MARCH — APRIL
2010

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

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bulletin

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69th Infantry Division Association 63rd Annual Reunion October 12th thru 17th, 2010



SHERATON CHARLESTON AIRPORT HOTEL CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

A Message from Our President Robert Crowe

Company E, 273rd Infantry Regiment
149 East Side Drive #164
Concord, New Hampshire 03301
Telephone: 603/228-9485



Advance Information for our 63rd Reunion — Which is Approaching Fast

It will be held at the **Sheraton North Charleston Hotel** in **Charleston, South Carolina**. There has been some confusion about the location—the hotel name is, as above, in South Carolina, **NOT** North Carolina. The complete address will be on your hotel reservation form.

It is located 10 miles from the Charleston Airport and the hotel provides complimentary shuttle service both ways.

If driving, the hotel can be seen from the junction of Intersection 26 and 526.

The hotel lobby is large with the hotel reservation desk on the left and the computer center on the right. Ahead on the far right, a corridor leads to the elevators but the first left is our reservation room.

The hospitality room is double the size of last years and the hotel will be serving wine, beer and table snacks at no charge. Local requirements do not allow them to serve hard liquor, but the hotel bar is ten steps across the hall, here you must pay for your drinking.

As at the 62nd reunion we will receive a complimentary breakfast buffet for two, per room, each morning of your stay.

Three outside events have been planned and the usual ones, including a beer party, inside.

Call around and talk some of your old buddies into coming—Last year we had seven first-timers.

Take care and see you at the reunion,
Bob Crowe,
President

661st Tank Destroyers Mini Reunion

Submitted By: **Thomas Slopek**
Company C, 661st T.D.
2515 Shade Road, Akron, OH 44333
Home Phone: 330-665-3510
Cell Phone: 330-715-2659
Email: tas5559@yahoo.com
or: Legacy of 661st Tank Destroyers on Facebook

August 12-15, 2010

This year's reunion will be hosted by Thomas and Tamara Slopek in Akron, Ohio. the reunion date is August 12-15 (Thursday - Sunday). We are hoping that holding the reunion earlier in the year will enable more of the extended family and grandchildren of the TD'ers to attend. Our accommodations will be at the Hampton Inn in Stow, Ohio. Room rates are \$89.00 per night. Amenities included are a hospitality room, indoor swimming pool, and free continental breakfast.

We have some fun activities planned for our guests this year. They include a Friday tour of the historic Stan Hywet Hall and Gardens. Stan Hywet is the estate of F.A. Seiberling, founder of Goodyear Tire and Rubber. We are hoping to put together the traditional Friday night ice cream event at a local old fashioned ice cream parlor here in Akron. Saturday morning will bring an outing to the Jonathan Hale Homestead and Farm, one of Akron's earliest settlers. This is a working model of an 1800's era farm with demonstrations of early crafts and lifestyle. Included in this day's activities at Hale Farm is a Civil War encampment complete with a 2:00 P.M. battle re-enactment.

Saturday night will be our traditional formal banquet which will take place at the local restored G.A.R. Hall. The cost of the banquet will be approximately \$25.00 per person. We ask that when you make your hotel reservation you also call or e-mail Tom to let us know how many people in your party will be attending the banquet. It is important for us to be able to tell the caterer the number of people we will have for dinner.

We encourage everyone to bring their photographs, memorabilia and artifacts for the hospitality room. The hospitality room will be open and available all three days for those who would prefer to stay around the hotel and relax.

Hotel Information:

Hampton Inn Stow
4331 Lakepointe Corporate Drive
Stow, Ohio 44224
Phone: 330-945-4160

Reservations for the Event will be made by the individual guests. (Please specify "WWII Group" when making reservation).

Reservations can be made online at:

www.stow.hamptoninn.com

by calling:

1-800-HAMPTON

or by calling the hotel directly at:

330-945-4160

Guests are to reference group code (WWG) when placing the reservations. **Reservations must be received on or before July 29th 2010.**

**For anyone needing special help with airport accommodations or directions please call Tom.*

THE MAIL BOX

By Dottie (Witzleb) Shadle
Editor



Company E, 273rd Infantry Regiment

P.O. Box 4069

New Kensington, Pennsylvania 15068-4069

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General Phil Bolte (Retired), 175 Warrior Creek Drive, West Union, South Carolina 29696: Many thanks for your kind note and the photos. It was a real pleasure to be able to participate in the final dinner of the reunion for the first time since Louisville. What a great group.

I look forward to making it to Charleston next year.

Warren Goodman, 10395 Utopia Circle East, Boynton Beach, Florida 33437—Company M 273rd: Just received another great edition of the bulletin.

Another 'memorable' situation came to me the other night when they showed on TV a chap fishing in a canoe that was attacked by a goose. Yes, a goose.

Right after the battle of Leipzig we were billeted in a small farm village close by. To keep busy me and a couple of the others decided to split wood for the elderly lady whose house we were occupying. By the way, this "elderly" lady must have been maybe 50 and to us elderly. Her husband was in the Wehrmacht and the last she heard from him he was in Russia.

Anyhow, she had a pet goose. Whenever anyone of us bent over to pick up the split wood the goose "attacked" going for you know where. I know she was concerned that one of us might shoot the darn bird so she always kept running out waving a broom and yelling at the goose, "Vooley Kum".

I remember that silly situation as though it happened yesterday.

Thanks for the great newsletter and please keep up the good work.

Philip Graham, 609 E. Beaver Road, Kawkawlin, MI 48631-9701—Associate 272nd: Enclosed you will find my dues for 2010. What a wonderful article on how the Bulletin got started. I thoroughly enjoy reading about what happened during WWII. My father **William J. Graham**, really didn't talk much about what went on but would talk about certain areas. Dad was always a glass half-full man. We still miss him very much.

We were saddened by the disbanding of the Ladies Auxilary. It is too bad more of the extended families of our vets who sacrificed so much for our country won't take more of an interest in the GI's legacy.

In closing, GOD Bless you all; GOD Bless America.

Michael Booker, 50 Edgehill Road, Mitcham, Surry, CR4 2HU, England—Honorary: In 2005 I had published a book titled "Collecting Colditz and its Secrets". This included chapters on the Liberation of Colditz Castle by a four man patrol of HQ Company, 3rd Battalion, 273rd Infantry Regiment of the 69th Infantry Division. I was ably assisted on the actual liberation of the lawn by a number of veterans from that battle, with whom I am eternally grateful.

As to the Castle and Liberation of the prisoners I am indebted to **Pfc. Alan Murphey** and **Robert Miller (bronze stars)**. They are now sadly deceased. Neither of them however could find any trace of the other two members of the patrol **Pfc. Francis Giegnan** and **Pfc. Walter Burrows (bronze stars)**. It is not even known if they survived the war.

This, therefore, is my final effort to trace these two gents or at least discover what happened to them after the episode at the Castle. *Can anyone help Michael locate these two men?*

Albert B. Drake, Jr., 160 North Lakeside Drive, Madison, Indiana 47250 — Company D 369th: I eagerly look forward to receiving the Bulletin and read it cover-to-cover every time.

Thank you for all the outstanding and dedicated work you and Paul do for the Fighting 69th Infantry Division Association.

I also thank Paul and salute him for his service to our great country.

Attached is an article I hope you could use in your bulletin. (*You will find this article in another place in this bulletin*).

Nick J. Etze, Harmon House, R 212, 600 Church Street, Mount Pleasant, Pennsylvania, 15666 — Company D 272nd: It is people like you whom are devoted that keeps our Division strong. God Bless you all and keep healthy.

William Drugg, 211 North 14th Avenue, Altoona, Pennsylvania 16601 — HQ Company, Company K 272nd: Just a note to thank you and Paul for all your help during the years, It has been a pleasure knowing you. I have decided to make this my last letter. Just about all my stories have been told, I told my first one hoping someday one of my buddies would read it and write to me with some success and I thought that maybe one of my family would read one of them and get a kick out of it. The fact is, this old man is slowing down.

Thanks for putting up with this "old dog", it was fun.

Howitzer Al Kormas, 12500 Edgewater Estates-503, Lakewood, Ohio 44107 — HQ Company 879th: Happy Holidays & many more. As you know lost my Marge 6-23-09 after 34 years, my first wife passed Christmas of '71. I do miss my Marge. God Bless & take care, hug each other daily. Sending a couple of photos maybe you could use them in a bulletin. (*Editors note: Photos located in this edition*)

(Continued on Page 4)

Edwin Lansford, 1096 Peavine Firetower Road, Crossville, Tennessee 38571—HQ Company 271st: My guest and I enjoyed the meeting in Nashville very much. Being native Tennesseans, we both had been to the "big city" many times before, including "The Grand Ol' Opry, but we took all of the tours anyway, and were both suprised at how much more we saw and learned about our own State Capital! Enclosed is an account of my military days. I hope you can use it. Hope to see all of you again in Charleston, God Willing. (editors note: Ed's article appears in this issue.)

John Gerster, 5227 Silver Bluff Drive, Oceanside, California 92057. Email: jgerster@cox.net—Company C 369th Medical Battalion: I'm enclosing a copy of a letter I wrote to a family friend shortly after VE day; perhaps it will be of interest for your publication.

My parents kept every letter I wrote, but sadly and stupidly I burned them when I returned home, perhaps trying to erase the vestiges of war. They would have been a great chronicle of the war.

My memory of course is most spotty regarding places and actions— and I was surprised that this letter contained place names and actions of which I'd forgotten.

I commend you for your efforts these years. Takes a lot of time and dedication-to-purpose. (Editors note: John's letter appears in this issue)

A Message from Our Vice-President Ed Sarcione

Anti Tank Company, 272nd Infantry
P.O. Box 648, Hamburg, New York 14075
Telephone: 716/861-7660
Email: ejsarcione@yahoo.com

It is an honor and privilege for me to serve as your Vice President of our 69th Infantry Division Association. I consider my mission to be twofold.

1) To receive and transmit members concerns regarding association business and activities to the President and the Board of Directors for appropiate action. I encourage all members to submit constructive suggestions and recommendations to assist our association to survive and thrive during these next critical years.

2) I look forward to assisting and supporting our President Bob Crowe to meet and overcome the many challenges expected during the coming years. Bob's enthusiam and dedication to service will play an important role in allowing our 69th Infantry Association to continue as an active and vibrant organization during the upcoming years.

That Strafing Attack

Submitted By: **Eldred F. Tubbs**
Company E, 272nd Regiment
730 West 11th Street, Claremont, California 91711

The note by **Julius G. Tivald** in the summer issue (Volume 62 No.3, p14) cleared up something that has puzzled me ever since February 1945. I was in the mortar section of E Company of the 272nd. We were in reserve in a heavily wooded part of the Ardennes. Most members of the section were in a substantial log structure that was next to a clearing, but three of us were in a dugout that was maybe 100 yards away. (Calling it a dugout is perhaps being generous. The term "improved fox hole" might be better.)

The sun was out, we had a little free time, and I decided it was a good time to shave. I went to the kitchen and got some hot water in my helmet. I had positioned myself in the entrance to the dugout with my shaving mirror and helmet of hot water balanced on top. I was about to start shaving when I heard a crack of bullets. I crouched down in the entrance trying to determine from what direction the firing was coming from. After all we were in reserve and presumably out of range of small-arms fire. Then I saw the plane. Needless to say I didn't spend a lot of time studying it, but I could see that it was a low-winged monoplane with a radial engine. After diving into the dugout, I concluded that it must have been an FW 190. I had only a vague idea of what one looked like, but I knew that it was a German fighter and that it had a radial engine.

Our section sergeant, **Bob Greek**, had quite a different take on the situation. He was sitting on a log in the clearing cleaning his rifle when the attack occured and had a very good view of the plane. When I asked him if he had heard the bullets, he replied something to the effect that he saw it was one of ours and that it couldn't have been shooting at us. At the time I could only shrug my shoulders. I couldn't see how we both could be right. I was certain that I heard bullets, and he was sure it was a P 47. It turns out that we were both right. The plane was firing at "us" and it was a P 47. The thing that never crossed our minds at the time was that the P 47 was being flown by a German pilot.

PLEASE

If you have newspaper articles or photos that you would like to have in the bulletin. Send the originals. We will make sure we get them back to you. We can not reproduce a photocopy of the pictures.

Dr. Drake: Dedicated, Dangerous, Devious, Determined, and Diverse Dentist

Submitted By: **Albert B. Drake, Jr.**

Son of: **A. Brooks Drake (deceased)**

Dentist, Company D, 369th Medical Battalion

160 North Lakeside Drive, Madison, Indiana 47250

Phone: 812-866-1463

In any war, communication between family members is an emotional, sacred and honored transaction. War changes people, soldier and civilian alike, in both expected and unexpected ways. Sometimes a small action results in a lifelong change. This is true for our family.

Dad was ABD Senior, I am ABD Junior. Mom was adamant that I was not going to be called "Junior." Dad wrote home a V-Mail asking about his little buddy. From then on my nickname was, and is "Buddy." I have the original V-Mail and a "Red Six, Blue Nine" patch framed on the wall of my study. This was a small thing with no foregone major objective, but it has forever touched our lives.

Now that my father is dead I feel compelled, and that it is permissible, to share some of the things he did and said during and after WWII. Most people, when they think about a dentist serving in the Army, do not attach much danger to the subject. You be the judge.....

A German sniper was in a church bell tower and began shooting at the American soldiers, including my father's dental unit. They all took cover; the riflemen in the area returned fire, killed the sniper and dragged his body into the street. Dad removed the snipers binoculars and sent them home; we are still using them. I have given them to my son, ABD III, and he will in turn give them to his son ABD IV.

As a medical officer my father was required to wear a helmet with the Red Cross insignia painted on all four sides. Immediately upon entering a combat zone for the first time, he rubbed mud and grease on his helmet to at least partially downplay it as a target.

One day a German airplane strafed them. Being caught in the open he had no time to seek cover. He had on a green jacket and brown pants and quickly lay down with his brown pants in a plowed field and his green jacket in the grass. Apparently this improvised camouflage was effective because he did not get shot.

Late one evening in Germany his unit accidentally got ahead of the front line. They were told that they would probably be captured before morning. Because they had picked up and were using some German items, such as knives, leather cartridge cases to hold packs of cigarettes, etc., they immediately stripped all their "German contraband" and gave it to a dental assistant with instructions to destroy all of it. They spent the night in a school but were not captured. The next morning they walked out of the school and on the

ground next to the door was their pile of German contraband! The assistant did not destroy it so they "re-appropriated it" and moved on. There is no telling what trouble this could have caused them had the Germans found this pile of obviously confiscated German equipment just before entering the school.

In a German town Dad was on the third floor of a building and found a loaded pistol. As he looked at the pistol he happened to look out a window when a German soldier started running away. Dad emptied the pistol at the German soldier without obvious effect. Whether he was hit or not the soldier was undoubtedly motivated to run faster. As we all know, it does not pay to mess with a dangerous dentist!

For many years I wore my father's U.S. Army field jacket while fishing, hunting and camping. It had one "odd" non-issue button on it. I finally asked Dad about it, and he replied that he had paid a French woman two cigarettes to sew on a button after a button had come off and was lost. He was unable to supply a GI issue button, but she had a civilian one of the right size that would suffice. Her work endured many decades.

GI's were not supposed to send home war trophies. However, it has been said that the Pyramids of Egypt took a thousand years to build and American GI's could dismantle and send them home in three days. Dad was a great scrounger and readily devious in dealing with regulations whenever they annoyed or limited him. Being an officer he could sign for his own outgoing mail and packages. Mother started receiving boxes of "stuff." I still have one of those boxes with his rank and signature on it in my garage. He sent home binoculars, electric meters, a German generator, a metal working lathe, a German helmet and canteen, a Nazi flag, pliers, screwdrivers, files, insignia items of German origin, a few knives, two complete German dental field kits, a wooden wine bottle, etc. He was determined to ship as much of Germany home as he could. Every time a box would arrive Mom would eagerly open it anticipating something feminine in nature such as dishes, silverware, silks, clothes, etc. No such luck. He sent only "man stuff." Time has thinned this out and very little of this "booty" is in our possession today. When I was about forty years old I asked him why he shipped this stuff home. He replied: "The Germans stole some of the best years of my life, and I felt they owed it to me. I earned it, I liberated it, I kept it!" I never asked "Dr. Devious" about it again.

He was dedicated to the good dental health of every soldier no matter what the circumstance. While on the ship going across the Atlantic to England a soldier reported to Dad with a toothache. He was in excruciating pain, and the tooth had to come out. The ship did not have a dental clinic. He had his dental instruments but no Novocain was available. So, after discussing the situation with the soldier and obtaining his permission, Dad had him sit on a footlocker, lean his head back on Dad's leg and extracted his tooth *without anesthesia*. No wonder the Germans lost. The men of the 69th are as tough as they come!

Upon graduation from Dental School in 1943 Dad

(Continued on Page 6)

DR. DRAKE DEDICATED, DANGEROUS.....

(Continued from Page 5)

was commissioned a First Lieutenant and sent directly to Officer Training School at Carlisle Barracks, PA, along with many other dentists. As all soldiers must do, one of the things they had to learn was how to march. They were rotated through the position of leading their squad. One dentist was giving them close order drill and could not remember the word to get them to stop. Instead of yelling "Halt!" he yelled "Stop...Cease Marching...Go Back...Don't Go...No More, etc.!" Being cantankerous they all continued marching until they reached a wall where they marched in place. By then the frustrated dentist was yelling: "Stop, damn it, stop!" The smirking Drill Sergeant then stepped in and took over. Oh, the joys of converting from a civilian to a soldier!

While in Europe some of the men around him noticed that his dental chair looked like a barber chair. Since no one really cared how a hair cut looked, they asked him to cut their hair. He saw an opportunity to diversify his skills so he got a pair of GI issue manual hair clippers, a pair of scissors, and a comb and developed yet another skill situated on the human head. Unfortunately for my brother and me, he continued this "other" trade when he got home. The hand-actuated clippers pulled our hair if he did not make a clean cut all the way through or pulled away too soon. It hurt like fire! He would herd us out on the back porch, have us strip to the waist and go at it. He always justified this torture as saving money. I graduated from high school having never been in a real barber chair!

When he was mustered out of the Army at Fort Knox as a captain, they tried to get him to join the Army Reserve with a promotion to major. He was the only one of seven dentists in the room to decline. The other six, all of whom were acquaintances, were called back into service for Korea. He remained a civilian for the rest of his life, passing away at age 87.

These are some of the stories that WWII and The Fighting 69th generated that became part of my life.

Adventure from Basic to Bomb Disposal

Submitted By: **William R. Drugg**
Company K & Headquarters Co. 272nd
211 N. 14th Avenue
Altoona, Pennsylvania 16601-5611
Email: bucadaca@aol.com

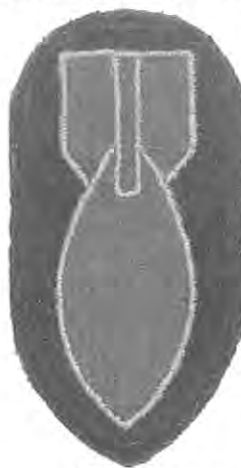


After my adventures in basic training at Camp Wheeler, Georgia (where they taught us how to fire an M1, how to make a bed without wrinkles, and how to dig a fox hole.) They had shortened our time there as we were needed in the E.T.O. After an airplane ride home for a brief furlough, a boat ride on the Atlantic Ocean, a short ride across the bay, a midnight truck ride, a short stay at a

Repple Depple, and even the trade of a fox hole with a tired bunch of comrades, we were set to chase the German army back to Germany, and with the help of some Russians, it was done.

So the Russians were met and we were all given our new jobs, although most of my outfit were transferred into ordnance, a couple of my buddies and myself were transferred into the small auto division. (Jeeps, 3/quarter tons) to fix flats, although we didn't. The German X prisoners did the work. The living quarters were nice and the main cook was not too bad, and we had a dance every night in the Mess Hall. We had it pretty good, until my buddy **Jason** had the idea that we should volunteer for a transfer (this would be a sure way to keep our dog) I had always been told not to volunteer, but we did, and we ended up in a bomb disposal outfit. So, **Jason**, the dog and I are off to dispose a bomb. Whatever that entails, the dog knew more than we did.

We check in with our new team, a Captain and his crew (four noncoms and a beautiful blonde, which



Bomb Disposal Patch

belonged to the captain.) We had four trucks which were all equipped with red lights and sirens. We were told not to touch anything that looks like a tool. Our main job was to help civilians that find items in the fields and bring them to us for safe keeping. We then get a collection of these items and take them to a big field for disposal, along with the BOMBS (there's that word). The work is fair, the food is good and we got all the candybars and cigarettes we wanted. If you wanted to get fat and were not afraid to get blown up, this was the job for you. The Captain was the only one to touch the bombs! (No argument there.)

We all agreed to abide by this rule, since we all agreed we wanted to stay alive.

The hardest part of the job was to keep from running everytime someone knocked at our door with a grenade in his hand, asking what he should do with it. We never did get used to not yelling and running for cover. About once a week, we took the trip to the area where we would dispose of the junk. The Captain, was once again, the only person that ever disarmed a bomb. A real thrill, he was a rare person. We were all glad when they no longer needed our help. The perks were great, the Captain took good care of the men in his outfit, but we were glad when it was over. We enjoyed the trips back from the adventure, when he had to work on the bombs to make sure they did not explode on the trip to the dump with sirens, all on full, and red lights blinking, and all of us singing. We won again and we are Americans!



*The 69th
Infantry
Badge*



The 12th Army Patch

Next Generation Update

Submitted By: **William H. Sheavly**

Company M, 271st Association

5301 Weblin Farm Road, Virginia Beach, Virginia 23455

The Next Generation Group continues to grow and expand, so we thought we would take a minute to share with members of the Association our progress and our projects.

Nashville Reunion

The Next Generation Group had several activities in Nashville. First, they had a very successful souvenir room and sold a lot of new items such as sweatshirts, tee shirts, and even computer mouse pads. Large canvas tote bags, long sleeve tee shirts and embroidered hats were very popular. In addition, The Next Generation Group set up a formal Steering Committee to help guide the organization as it grows. Members of the Steering Committee are:

- Ross and Shirley Duff
- David J. Voigt
- George West
- Tom and Tammy Slopek
- Worley H. "Butch" Smith, Jr.
- William S. Lee
- Patsy A. Bocek
- James R. Brittain
- Connie Brough
- Bill Sheavly, Jr.
- Brigadier General, Phil Bolte, USA Retired.

The goal of the Steering Committee is to help get the organization moving and be a spearhead on such important items as a working Board of Directors, election of Officers and the establishment of a Constitution and By-Laws.

Website

Our website: www.69nxtgen.org continues to grow with new articles and information daily. Our webmaster, Mike McKibben has not only done a tremendous job on our website but has been a huge help with Joe Lipsius on the Division website as well. Both of these sites are truly outstanding and we encourage you to take a look at both of them. Be sure to study the Bulletins which have been scanned in (a massive project headed up by Mike) which will serve as a great reference source about the 69th for many years to come! Look on the site for information about joining The Next Generation Group.

Charleston — here we come!!

The Next Generation Group is already planning for several functions at the upcoming Reunion in Charleston, South Carolina, October 12-17. First, we are planning on combining our souvenir room with the Association souvenir room so that we can work together and help sell each other's items. We plan to have new items for sale in Charleston and hope everyone attending will come by and see what we have to offer.

Second, we are going to host a Saturday Morning Social for all the women while the men have their General Membership Meeting. In the past, The Ladies

Auxiliary held their meeting in that time slot, but in Nashville they voted to disband the group. We still want them to have something fun to do, so we are in the process of putting together a program which will be fun and entertaining for that Saturday morning time slot. Be watching for details!

Finally, for the first introductory column on the Next Generation Group, we want to thank the members of the Association who have been so supportive of our efforts over the last few years. We believe that preserving the good name of the 69th Infantry Division is worth doing and keeping the memories of all those that served is our duty and obligation. We look forward to continuing the good will that we have established as our organization continues to grow. Thank you for your support!

Bill Sheavly, Jr. on behalf of the Steering Committee and the over 100 members of the Next Generation Group.

Medical Detachment

Submitted By: **Col. Saul R. Strauss, Retired**

272nd Medical Detachment,

8 Foxridge Road, Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27514

I usually send picture and recollections to the family of a departed comrade upon learning of the passing of my friend. "**Bud**" **Parsons** upon seeing my collection stated that I have a treasure.

J.B. Hancock passed away several weeks ago at the tender age of 91. He was our detachment clerk from activation May '43 until the time after VE Day when the Division was going Stateside or in some cases being transferred to the 29th Division.

My fond memory of **J.B.** has to include his willingness to lend me the use of his car when I would go to New Orleans.

J.B. functioned in a manner that had nothing to be desired. **J.B.** was one of the most pleasant person to be with. We have exchanged Christmas greetings over many years and he will always be in my memory.

I have had command of several units during my time in uniform, 37 years, and I rate the 272nd Medical Detachment the best of all.



On way to Born, Belgium from Tent City, 1, Feb., 1945: L-R Jolilbolx, Gryzkoj, Grimm, Cody, Hancock, "Bappy" Lanza in his Suite.

The Ol' Lamplighter or Life in the Ardennes

Submitted By: **Raymond K. Mann**

*A&P Platoon, HQ Company, 3rd Bn., 271st Infantry
18535 Melissa Springs Drive, Tomball, Texas 77375*

Shortly before joining the 69th in Camp Shelby, I married my high school sweetheart on February 1, 1944. As you can imagine, we had precious little time together before the 69th left for overseas duty.

Now I must confess I was terribly remiss about writing letters to my bride and she let me know she wanted to see improvement in that area. In fact, she wrote that a friend's husband wrote his wife a letter every day. When the 69th relieved the 99th Division survivors of the Battle of the Bulge in late January, 1945, I realized that our first wedding anniversary was just days away. Although I knew my v-mail would not reach her until long afterward, the pressure to write her before the big date was intense. However, after my unit assumed its assigned positions, it was difficult to write during the daytime, so one night I stupidly followed the example of some of my buddies and fashioned a small lamp from a c-ration can, a shoelace and about a cup of gasoline. A private **Brown**, I think from South Carolina, and I had inherited a sturdy log covered two-man foxhole on a steep hillside. I carried my little lamp to the foxhole, got down on my knees and was about halfway inside when I placed the lamp on the pine bough covered floor in front of me. When I lit the shoelace, I knew immediately something was wrong. Burning gasoline was running down the outside of the can onto the flammable pine boughs. "**Brownie**" was cowering in a back corner of the foxhole, his eyes as big as platters, and he screamed "Get that damn thing out of here!" As I backed out with the burning lamp in my gloved hand, I somehow bumped the thing on the log roof and dumped the flaming mess on my head. Somewhere along the way, I had taken off my steel helmet, but I still had the wool beanie we wore under our helmets in cold weather on. The roar of the flames was incredibly loud. Knowing my head was on fire, I wisely fell to the ground and rolled to and fro beating my head with my gloved hands, but alas my gasoline soaked gloves were also on fire. Luckily, I accidentally rolled into a partially snow filled open foxhole, got my head into a corner and the fire went out.

One thing I remember vividly about the Ardennes is how dark it was at night in that replanted forest with the trees so close together. I don't remember who was on guard that night, but imagine being in those pitch black surroundings, hearing shouts and suddenly seeing a human torch which almost as quickly disappeared in the darkness. Momentarily blinded by the flash of light, the guard approached my position calling, "R.K., R.K., what happened? Poor R.K.! R.K., where are you?" He was standing right above my lucky foxhole, but he couldn't see me. I replied weakly "I'm down here." Aroused by the commotion, other members of my platoon helped me up. After explaining what had happened, I began to determine the extent of my injuries. The wool beanie had saved me from serious burns. The tops of

my ears were burned and I had lost a good portion of my eyebrows and eyelashes. I made my way to the battalion aid station where they gave me some salve for my ears. I was our platoon's first casualty, albeit non-battle connected.

I later wrote my wife that her friend's husband was probably a rear echelon desk jockey and she should not expect a lot of letters from me until the end of the hostilities. I guess she forgave me because we had 65 wonderful years together before I lost her last December.

65th Anniversary East Meets West Elbefest 2010

Submitted By: **Joe Lipsius**

*HQ Company, 272nd Infantry Regiment
6314 Deerings Hollow, Norcross, Georgia 30092-1899*

April 25, 1945, three battle weary patrols from the 69th Infantry Division's 273rd Infantry Regiment finally became the Allies first unit to meet up with the Soviets on the Elbe River, meetings that split Nazi Germany in half and dooming its fate.

One of these meetings took place in Torgau, Germany, a city dating back to the 10th century, Martin Luther and the Reformation.

Leading the patrols meeting in Torgau were American **2nd Lt. William "Bill" Robertson** and Russian **Lt. Alexander Silwaschko**. Their patrols met on the mangled Torgau bridge with handshakes from **Robertson** and one of the Russians.

For years, April 25 has been a time of celebration in Torgau and April 25, 2010 was no different. Thousands of people strolled the Torgau streets and walked its Elbe River meadow banks, April 23-24, 2010.

From Seattle, Washington came **Rick Robertson**, son of "**Bill**", to represent his father. **Larrisa Silwaschko** along with her daughter, representing her father who had passed away a few weeks ago at his home in Belarus. Also present was **Ted Polowsky**, Chicago, IL, son of **Joe Polowsky**, a member of one of the three patrols who became an American peace activist whose dying wish to be buried in Torgau was fulfilled. With **Ted** was his wife **Rose** and daughter **Alexis**.



In this symbolic photo of the Torgau linkup on the banks of the Elbe where the west side of the now demolished bridge ended are at the left the Russian's granddaughter, then Ted Polowsky, the host, the Honorable Mayor of Torgau, Andrea Staude, Larrissa, then Rick Robertson.

Other 69ers at the Elbefest were Anne and Joe Lipsius, HQ 272nd Infantry Regiment; Don Connely, HQ Company 2nd Battalion 271st Infantry Regiment. Jeff and Rinah Thau, Dayton, OH, whose father was a Russian soldier, were among the celebrants.

69th Infantry Division Association 63rd Annual Reunion

October 12th thru 17th, 2010

**SHERATON CHARLESTON AIRPORT HOTEL
CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA**

Tuesday, October 12th

Complimentary Breakfast Buffet
Hospitality and Souvenir Rooms open
2:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. **Reunion Registration open**
Dinner and evening on your own
7:00 p.m. - 11:00 p.m. Hospitality Room open

Wednesday, October 13th

Complimentary Breakfast Buffet
8:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. **Reunion Registration open**
"Next Generation"
9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. BOONE HALL (description follows)
12:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. Hospitality Room open
2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. **Reunion Registration open**

Thursday, October 14th

Complimentary Breakfast Buffet
7:30 a.m. - 8:00 a.m. **Reunion Registration open**
8:30 a.m. - 3:15 p.m. CRUISE / CITY TOUR (description follows)
12:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. Hospitality Room open
3:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. **Reunion Registration open**
"Next Generation"
6:30 p.m. Cash Bar
7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. Early Bird Dinner

Friday, October 15th

Complimentary Breakfast Buffet
9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. PATRIOTS POINT / CHARLESTON CRAB HOUSE RESTAURANT (description follows)
12:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. Hospitality Room open
"Next Generation"
3:00 p.m. Board Meeting
Dinner on your own
7:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m. PX Beer Party

Saturday, October 16th

Complimentary Breakfast Buffet
10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Membership Meeting
1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. Hospitality Room open
"Next Generation"
6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. Cocktail Hour with Cash Bar
7:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. Memorial Service
7:30 p.m. Banquet served, followed by music and dancing

Sunday, October 17th

Complimentary Breakfast Buffet
Farewells and Departures

Cancellation and Refund Policy for Armed Forces Reunions, Inc.

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

Register online & pay by credit card at www.afr-reg.com/69inf

69th INFANTRY DIVISION REUNION - TOUR DESCRIPTIONS

BOONE HALL PLANTATION

Wednesday, October 13th

Arrive at America's most photographed plantation, Boone Hall Plantation. Drive down the famous three-quarter mile avenue of massive, Spanish moss draped live oaks. Step back in time and relive the grandeur of the Old South when you tour the mansion, smokehouse, gardens, original slave quarters, and cotton gin house. There will be an approximate two block walk to the house from where the buses must stop. Level walking, but please wear comfortable shoes.

9:30 a.m. board bus, 12:30 p.m. back at hotel
\$45/Person includes bus, guide, and admission.

CRUISE / CITY TOUR

Thursday, October 14th

Begin the day with a two-hour guided tour of the Holy City, named for its many picturesque churches. Favorite sites include the Battery overlooking Charleston's harbor and Fort Sumter, colorful Rainbow Row, the Citadel, and White Point Gardens. Arrive for an early lunch and shopping on your own in the Market Area, Charleston's historic marketplace surrounded by restaurants and eateries of all types. Reboard the bus for a short ride to the marina. Enjoy a one and a half hour harbor cruise that cruises by Fort Sumter, Fort Moultrie, Patriots Point, the U.S. Naval Base, waterfront mansions, commercial docks, and more.

8:30 a.m. board bus, 3:15 p.m. back at hotel
\$57/Person includes bus, guide, admission, and harbor cruise. Lunch on your own.

PATRIOTS POINT / CHARLESTON CRAB HOUSE RESTAURANT

Friday, October 15th

Start the morning touring Patriots Point, home of the largest naval and maritime museum in the world. Visit the carrier USS Yorktown, the submarine Clamagore, and the replica of a Vietnam Support base. Priceless war planes used during wars and conflicts spanning from WWII to Desert Storm are featured aboard the Yorktown's 40,000 square foot hangar bay and atop the 888 foot flight deck. Patriots Point is also the home of the Congressional Medal of Honor Society and their official Medal of Honor Museum with tons of interactive exhibits. Reboard the bus for lunch at the Charleston Crab House. You'll be given a lunch voucher to exchange for Fried Shrimp Salad, Grilled Chicken Sandwich, or Fried Shrimp and Flounder Platter with chef's choice of accompaniments and beverage.

9:00 a.m. board bus, 2:00 p.m. back at hotel
\$62/Person includes bus, escort, admission, and lunch.

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

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69th INFANTRY DIVISION ACTIVITY REGISTRATION FORM

Listed below are all registration, tour, and meal costs for the reunion. Please enter how many people will be participating in each event and total the amount. Send that amount payable to ARMED FORCES REUNIONS, INC. in the form of check or money order. Your cancelled check will serve as your confirmation. Returned checks will be charged a \$20 fee. You may also register online and pay by credit card at www.afr-reg.com/69inf. All registration forms and payments must be received by mail on or before September 9, 2010. After that date, reservations will be accepted on a space available basis. We suggest you make a copy of this form before mailing. Please do not staple or tape your payment to this form.

Armed Forces Reunions, Inc.
322 Madison Mews
Norfolk, VA 23510
ATTN: 69th INFANTRY DIVISION

OFFICE USE ONLY

Check # _____ Date Received _____
 Inputted _____ Nametag Completed _____

CUT-OFF DATE IS 9/9/10

	PRICE PER	# of PEOPLE	TOTAL
<u>TOURS</u>			
WEDNESDAY: BOONE HALL	\$ 45		\$
THURSDAY: CRUISE / CITY TOUR	\$ 57		\$
FRIDAY: PATRIOTS POINT / CHARLESTON CRAB HOUSE			
<i>(Please make your lunch entrée selection below)</i>			
She Crab Soup and Salad	\$ 62		\$
Grilled Chicken Sandwich	\$ 62		\$
Fried Flounder and Shrimp Platter	\$ 62		\$
<u>MEALS</u>			
THURSDAY: EARLY BIRD BUFFET	\$ 27		\$
FRIDAY: BEER PARTY <i>(Please indicate # of people attending)</i>	No Charge	# of ppl	
SATURDAY: BANQUET <i>(Please select your entrée)</i>			
PRIME RIB	\$ 32		\$
GRILLED CHICKEN	\$ 25		\$
BAKED SALMON	\$ 29		\$
<u>MANDATORY PER PERSON REGISTRATION FEE</u>			
Includes entertainment and administrative expenses.	\$ 15		\$
DUES—NEW DUES YEAR IS AUGUST 1, 2010 — JULY 31, 2011			
REGULAR MEMBERSHIP	\$ 10		\$
LADIES MEMBERSHIP	\$ 5		\$
POSTAGE AND BULLETIN DONATION (UP TO YOU)			\$
Total Amount Payable to Armed Forces Reunions, Inc.			\$

PLEASE PRINT NAME AS YOU WANT IT TO APPEAR ON YOUR NAMETAG

FIRST _____ LAST _____ EMAIL _____
 UNIT _____ NEXT GENERATION? _____ FIRST TIMER? (YES) OR (NO)

SPOUSE NAME (IF ATTENDING) _____

GUESTS NAMES _____

STREET ADDRESS _____

CITY, ST, ZIP _____

DISABILITY/DIETARY RESTRICTIONS _____

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

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

EMERGENCY CONTACT _____

PH. NUMBER () - _____

For refunds and cancellations please refer to our policies outlined at the bottom of the reunion program. **CANCELLATIONS WILL BE TAKEN MONDAY-FRIDAY 9:00am-5:00pm EASTERN TIME (excluding holidays).** Call (757) 625-6401 to cancel reunion activities and obtain a cancellation code. Refunds processed 4-6 weeks after reunion.

SHERATON CHARLESTON AIRPORT HOTEL – CHARLESTON, SC
(800) 325-3535 **(843) 747-1900**

The Sheraton Charleston Airport Hotel is conveniently located at 4770 Goer Drive, North Charleston, SC 29406, strategically located near the historic downtown district and the Charleston International Airport. The hotel is approximately 3 miles from the Charleston International Airport. If you are driving, please call the hotel directly for accurate driving instructions. This hotel offers 289 spacious rooms. Each room features a coffee/tea maker, iron/ironing board, hairdryer, microwave, and free wireless high speed internet access. Recreation enthusiasts will enjoy an indoor/outdoor heated pool, fitness facility and golf courses nearby. The Sheraton Charleston Airport is a non-smoking hotel. Handicapped rooms are subject to availability. Please request these special accommodations when making your hotel reservations.

The hotel provides complimentary parking for its guests. Check-in time is 3:00pm; check-out time is 12:00pm. **Monikers**, open 6:00am-2:00pm and 5:00pm-11:00pm, features a hearty full breakfast and lunch everyday with á la carte dining available as well. **Bogies Bar**, open 4:00pm-12:00am, offers American cuisine and local favorites. Enjoy your favorite libations in a fun and inviting pub-like atmosphere.

The Sheraton Charleston Airport offers complimentary airport shuttle service to and from the Charleston International Airport. The shuttle runs every 20 minutes on the hour to and from the airport. Please call (843)747-1900 upon arrival then wait by taxi/shuttle stands outside of baggage claim for the shuttle to arrive. Space is limited on complimentary services, so you may want to make other arrangements. The hotel shuttle takes all guests to and from the Tanger Outlet area, if desired. The hotel also provides a complimentary shuttle service to and from Downtown Charleston for SPG members. You may sign up upon check in. The 11 passenger seat van runs 4 times a day.

The hotel offers complimentary RV parking for guests staying at the hotel. Should you need full hook-ups contact the Charleston KOA Campground at (843) 797-1045 or (800)562-5812. They are located at 9494 Highway 78, Ladson, SC 29456, which is approximately 11 miles from the hotel. Make your reservations as soon as possible due to limited space and availability.

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

Vendors, Schedules, and Prices are subject to change.

----- CUT HERE AND MAIL TO THE HOTEL -----

69th INFANTRY DIVISION ASSOCIATION REUNION - HOTEL RESERVATION FORM
REUNION DATES: OCTOBER 12-17, 2010

NAME _____ SHARING ROOM W/ _____

ADDRESS _____ ZIP _____

TEL. NUMBER () _____ STARWOOD PREFERRED GUEST # _____

ARRIVAL DATE _____ APPROX. TIME _____ DEP. DATE _____

OF ROOMS NEEDED # OF PEOPLE IN ROOM HANDICAP ACCESS

KING BED 2 DOUBLE BEDS

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

RATE: \$105 + tax (currently 12.5%) Rate includes breakfast buffet for two people. Rate will also be offered 2 days before and after reunion dates, based on availability.

CUT OFF DATE: 09/09/10. Late reservations will be processed based on space availability at a higher rate.

CANCELLATION POLICY: Deposit is refundable if reservation is cancelled 72 hours prior to arrival.

All reservations must be guaranteed by credit card or first night's deposit, enclosed.

AMEX DINERS VISA MASTER CARD DISCOVER

CREDIT CARD NUMBER _____ EXP. DATE _____

SIGNATURE (regardless of payment method)

MAIL TO:

SHERATON CHARLESTON AIRPORT HOTEL • 4770 GOER DRIVE • N. CHARLESTON, SC 29406

FAX TO: (843) 744-2826 ATTN: RESERVATIONS

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First Time Together Since 1945 — Dog Faces

Submitted By: **Bill Shannon**,
Company F 273rd
5703 80th, Lubbock, Texas 79424, Phone: 806-794-4924

★★★★★

Submitted By: **Ralph E. Gilliland**,
Company F 273rd
708 Old Orchard Drive, Fostoria, Ohio 44830

Many thanks for your diligent work on the bulletin, and we were honored with the presence of you and Paul at our table during the evening Banquet.



First Timers 2009 Reunion, Left to Right: Bill Shannon, Steve Shannon, John Ingram, Blair Souder, Louis Souder, Ralph "Bud" Gilliland. Bill, Louis and Bud were all members of Company F, 2nd Platoon 69th Infantry Division WWII 1945



*Company F Dogfaces 2009
L-R: W.F.Shannon, Louis Souder, Ralph Gilliland*



*Seated L-R:
W.F. Shannon, Louis Souder,
Standing L-R:
Steve Shannon, Blair Souder*

Bob Ross was hit on our ride into Leipzig on 18 April 1945. The tank destroyer he was on was disabled by panzer fire.

Bob was picked up by the German Medics and spent the night in the basement of the monument. The next day he was evacuated to England. The injury he received required the amputation of his left leg above the knee.



*12 March 1945, Sterkelhausen, Germany, Company F 273rd
5 days of Rest*

L-R: Mike DeViller, Soto, Shelton (I think), Shannon under the chair.

Ralph E. Gilliland took a small arms round to the head on our way into Hann Munden, Germany, 5 April 1945 which just grazed his scalp. "I just can not describe that feeling," **Bud** said of his injury, after seeing his helmet.



*My Special Friend, Lois Musser, holding my Helmet.
What a souvenir!*



*October 1944
Ralph "Bud" Gilliland
Company F 273rd*



*1944 — Company F 273rd
Robert Ross*



*Company F 273rd, Robert H. Ross
At Home in Dallas, Texas (2007)
With his display of medals*



*12 March 1945, Sterkelhausen, Germany, Company F 273rd
L-R: Lou Souder, Blasmenthal, DeViller, Lawrence David (Medic), Melvin Redmond. After a hot shower and change of clothes since arriving in Europe in late January 1945*

Photos of Company A 661st Tank Destroyer Battalion

Submitted By: **Richard J. Brown**
Company A 661st TD Bn
377 Shady Lane 1st Floor
Hunt Valley, Pennsylvania 19006

Do you remember.....



Co. A 661st TD Bn.
L-R: ??Knick,
G. Bailey,
Sam Goldberg,
Clarence Cavanaugh,
Unknown,
Leopoldo San Miguel



Taking a rest while the Infantry
was taking the town in the back-
ground.



Liege, Belgium, 8 February 1945
The entrance to the bomb shelter
where we slept.

Back row: Unknown, Burman, Bailey
Middle row: Brown, Menkins
Front row: Samison, Leva



Back: Northern, Balina,
Cavanaugh, Brown
Front: Goldberg, Schiff



Mulheim, Germany,
3 March 1945
R.J. Brown in front of their
Destroyer.



Lt. Nowels & Earl Nolf by
one of the cars we captured
& used a short time



R.J. Brown



Pete Leva



Liege, Belgium,
Air Raid Shelter—
Getting a new engine.
Front: Wolfe
Back: Goldberg, Bailey



Rear: SanMiguel, Goldberg
Center: Unknown
Front: Bailey, Cavanaugh



L-R: Caylor, Wolfe, Leva, Gavin, Meyers
Front: Brown, Bailey



L-R rear: McDevitt, Cavanaugh,
Shockley, Blake
L-R front: Goldberg, Unknown,
Menkins



New Billits
Cpl. R.J. Brown



L-R: Cavanaugh,
Caylor, Molinko

MOVING

Please print your new address below:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

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.

History of the Battle Axe Regiment – Anti- Tank Company 272nd Regiment

Respectfully Submitted By: **Betty Hatcher**

In memory of my Father,

2nd Lt. James Turner Hatcher

Anti-Tank Company, 272nd

1508 Reserve Street, Stevens Point, WI 54481-3826

**"Anti Tank Company" The History of the Battle
Axe Regiment of the Fighting 69th.** Editor &
Historian, E. Cline Fletcher. Graph. Kunstanstalten
J.J. Wever, Leipzig/June 1945 [pp. 116-122]



Tactically, an Anti-Tank Company's mission is just what the name implies, that is, to provide flank and rear protection for the regiment. Its Fourth or my Platoon's mission is to mark and breach enemy mine fields and to clear roads before the advancing riflemen.

Had the Anti-Tank Company worked according to the books, it would have done just that, but it was a different story for them. Their gun platoons were found up forward with the Battalions, and when they were not used for that purpose, the Company as a whole became a highly mobile rifle unit. The Fourth Platoon not only marked and breached mine fields but also cleared them.

The landing on the shores of France - D Day plus 221 - was an uneventful one. All they knew was that Le Havre was a mere skeleton of a city and the weather was freezing. After spending some time in France they went into the Ardennes, preparatory to moving into the front lines. There in that shell shattered forest they saw their first German soldier. Fritz, the only occupant of the area, was definitely dead. After everyone had looked at him, **T/5 Joseph Marien**, a former mortician, buried him with "**Chaplain**" **1st Lt. Kenneth M. Lemon** officiating at the burial.

On the line, things began to pop with the First Platoon claiming to be the focal point of a strafing attack by German flown P-47's. The Fourth Platoon spent many hours clearing the extensive mine fields of the Siegfried Line under fire. It was there clearing a



mine field that **T Sgt. Darwin H. Van Houton** lost his foot when he stepped on a Schu Mine. **Sgt. Van Houton**, though painfully wounded, lay in the field instructing the men how to probe their way to him. Had **Sgt. Van Houton** fallen differently from the way he did his head would have been blown off. Upon reaching him, **Sgt. Tony Concatelli** and **Pfc. Leon Hubermann, Medic**, found a Schu mine less than two feet from his head.



In their operations against the enemy the Fourth Platoon cleared numerous mine fields pulling well over four hundred Holz (Anti-Tank) Mines and over one hundred and fifty Schu (Anti-Personnel) Mines. That action gave the members of the Platoon the honor of being one of the first units in the regiment to receive the Combat Infantryman's Badge. When the Regiment moved up to the line, the Gun Platoons moved up with the Battalions in close support. The biggest thing there, was the fake enemy counter attack against the troops at Geschide and Reschike. That night men on guard had visions of enemy soldiers armed with knives, piano wire, and other forms of death-dealing equipment, sneaking through the town looking for them. The mirage passed quickly.



Captain Harry J. Austin
Company Commander

Meanwhile, in order to maintain our principle mission of Anti-Tank protection, **Capt. Harry G. Austin, Jr.** organized a bazooka team within each platoon. This squad, made up of three bazooka teams, a radio operator, a squad leader (Cpl.), and a platoon leader, was to proceed on foot with the Battalion the Platoon was attached to, if the road conditions made it impossible to move guns and trucks.

The taking of Dahlem was the testing ground for **Capt. Austin's** plan. The enemy had blown a road block across the 1st and 3rd Battalions' route of attack so that trucks could not proceed. So off the trucks went eight men under command of **2nd Lt. James T. Hatcher** and joined the advance elements of the 3rd Battalion and marched into Dahlem. As the 1st Battalion moved into Dahlem on the heels of the 3rd, another bazooka squad under the command of **1st Lt. Kenneth Lemon** moved with them. Not only the gun platoons played their part in this action but also the Fourth Platoon moved with the forward elements. Reports stated that the enemy had probably lined the road through the forest, making it impassable to vehicles; therefore, ahead of the troops, armed with M-1's and mine detectors, walked the Mine Platoon men under the able command of **Sgt. Paul L. McFadden**.

(Continued on Page 18)



In Dahlem the First Platoon of K Company under command of **T Sgt. Frank Livers** was attached to Anti-Tank Company for training as an auxiliary mine platoon. This platoon was to be used to ease the strain on the Fourth Platoon. Shortly after joining, the heroic actions in the Battle of the Siegfried Line caused two members of the Platoon to be presented with the Silver Star and two others to be presented with the Bronze Star. The Platoon left to rejoin Company K while in Osterfeld, Germany.

From Dahlem the Anti-Tank Company went to the Rhine at Brohl. Here they had the mission of protecting the Victor Bridge just above the Remagen Bridge.

When Combat Team 272 went into action on the east side of the Rhine, the Fourth Platoon again saw action. This time it was the clearing of Fortress Ehrenbreitstein, the last place the American flag was flown after the last war by the Army of Occupation.

The way to Kassel was uneventful except for one town to which **S Sgt. Bruno Stefanoni** brought in 183 prisoners (displaced personnel). Now he is known as "**Sgt. York**" **Stefanoni**.



Outside Kassel the gun platoons followed in close support of the Battalions to Witzenhausen. At Witzenhausen, the First, Second, and Third Platoons



went into the city to give close support to the two crossings of the Werra River. The next morning the Jerries opened up with self-propelled 88's on the infantry crossing on the support bridge and sent the Third Platoon scurrying for fox-holes. Those who had none of these lovely items dug them very quickly. On that day it looked as though a shell had landed on top Able Squad's gun position; it landed close enough to shake in the sides of the foxholes. **T Sgt. Robert Hegge** took off to see what the score was. Just as he got going at top speed another shell came in. They say that **Sgt. Hegge** slid six feet when he hit the dirt.

After leaving Witzenhausen the platoons went wild

for prisoners who were the order of the day. In one town that was taken by the First Platoon there was a Messerschmidt parts factory. Three men **S Sgt. Edward J. Oakley**, **Cpl. Calvin Hine**, and **T5 Charles Hawes**, entered the factory and found in the main office a detonator wired to blow the building and surrounding area. **Cpl. Hine** disconnected the detonator at his own risk and prevented anyone from carrying out the order to blow the factory. In that town the First Platoon captured fifteen prisoners and **Pfc. Leon Hubermann** performed an amputation of the leg of a civilian girl whose leg had been shattered by our artillery.



At Dobergast the Company, with the rest of the Regiment, was strafed. Through that action a number of Purple Hearts were earned by members of the Company. One man was seriously hurt, and, now well on the way to recovery, **Pvt. Melvin Keller** has not yet returned to the Company.

From Dobergast the Company, moved into the attack of Leipzig. The next day the Company, acting as a Regimental spear head, took the town of Otterwisch, capturing 21 prisoners.



From there the Company went to Borsdorf which was captured by the First and Third Platoons. They stayed there until the Regiment moved against Leipzig.

Before moving into Leipzig, **1st Lt. John R. Kemper**, **Sgt. Herbert Bodman**, **T5 Unno Gustafson**, **T5 Eldrige Killen**, **Pfc. David Ballou**, and **Pfc. Rufus Adams** set out to capture an SS Trooper and an enemy Pak gun on the Reichsautobahn north of Borsdorf. The gun had pulled out, but they did get the SS Trooper after a climactic fire fight.

In Leipzig the Second Platoon under the command of **2nd Lt. Robert Hennessy** followed E Company in close support. The platoon captured over one hundred prisoners, among them SS Troopers.

Throughout this, **Pfc. Edward Adamy**, acting as radio operator, maintained radio communication with both Second Battalion and Anti-Tank Company. The First and Third Platoons followed giving Anti-Tank support to the reserve battalions.

(Continued on Page 19)

BATTLE AXE REGIMENT

(Continued from Page 18)

Anti-Tank Company figured in the Regiment's historic meeting with the Russians. In Torgau, the Germans had laid mines to prevent troops from reaching the Elbe. These were cleared by joint action of the First Battalion's A&P Platoon and the Fourth Platoon of Anti-Tank Company.

When the Regiment moved to Mockrena, the Company moved up to provide an anti-tank security net. While there, the Third Platoon captured 67 prisoners and captured and destroyed five enemy [88]mm Anti-Aircraft guns. The Second Platoon at Grafendorf patrolled the area averaging 20 prisoners each day.

The members of the Anti-Tank Company are proud to have been a part of and to have fought with the Battle Axe Regiment of the Fighting 69th Division throughout this series of campaigns and know that it will go down in the pages of military history as a hard fighting, hard hitting, and fast moving Combat Team.

Personal Journal

Submitted By: **Thomas H. Clews**

Company L 272nd

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Phone: 918-455-6262

Introduction

Copies of this journal have been contributed to and accepted by: U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle, PA and PBS TV Oeta, Ch. 11, Oklahoma City, OK for their records.

I never intended this Journal to be any more than a personal reminder of my time in service — However over the years I have been asked about and been able to supply information to families of buddies.

The latest, in January 2008, the daughter of **Alton Shahan** of *Company I 272nd* was trying to learn about a "Marmalade" Factory — When and where it was. I saw her request in the *Mail Box* column of the bulletin. I mentioned this factory in my journal and was able to pass along the information to her — April 7-8th Witzenhausen — **Alton Shahan** passed away November 16, 2008.

Background History

My name is Thomas Harold Clews. I was born at home in Jersey City, New Jersey on November 2, 1925 with my Uncle Dr. Harold Hoops, MD in attendance. I was the first child of Thomas E. and Florence I. Clews.

My very early childhood was spent in Jersey City.

We lived on Atlantic Street on the top floor of a three story, six apartment, tenement house. Grandma and Grandpa Van Horn lived in the front apartment and we lived in the rear.

This was a predominatly Italian and Irish neighborhood.

When my sister Florence Christina was born the family moved to Rural New Jersey. I attended McKinley and Harding Elementary Schools and Johnathan Dayton Regional High School in Springfield, my freshman year in high school.

In 1940 my folks bought their first home in Cranford. I graduated from Cranford High School in May of 1943.

Americas involvement in World War II had been raging for about a year and a half. During my senior year in high school I enlisted in Troop B, 2nd Squadron, Mechanized Cavalry, New Jersey State Guard. This was a duty offered to high school seniors as part of the "Schools at War" program. We trained one night a week at the Armory in Westfield. The purpose was to relieve regular army personnel for active duty.

After graduation I continued my duty with the Guard. It was difficult to find a meaningful job after graduation, because I would be eligible for the draft in a couple of months. I finally found a job in the cafeteria of the General Motors Plant in Linden, where they manufactured the Grumman F4F Wildcat Fighter for the Navy.

On October 25, 1943 I requested and received an Honorable discharge from the New Jersey State Guard — For the purpose of enlisting in the U.S. Army.

On November 1, 1943, the day before my 18th birthday, I enlisted in the U.S. Army with a request for assignment to the Army Air Corps Cadet Program.

Dad went with me to sign my enlistment papers. This would keep me from being drafted and not knowing which branch I would wind up in.

On December 4, 1943 I received my orders. I was ordered to report for active duty to the Commanding Officer, 1229th SCSU at Fort Dix Induction Center in New Jersey, for processing and assignment.

For almost two weeks I waited with a group of others for assignment — In Vain.

It was then they told us the Cadet Program was being halted for a time because there was a shortage of training facilities and a surplus of trainees.

For a time it seemed, no one knew what to do with us.

At formation every morning we would wait for our names to be called and then go back to our barracks and wait until tomorrow.

The Story Begins

December 20, 1943

We recieved new orders assigning all of us to Basic Training. Upon completion we could request — With NO GUARANTEE — Re-Assignment to the Cadet Program.

We boarded a troop train and were shipped to Camp Wolters, just outside Mineral Wells, Texas.

Camp Wolters was a huge facility devoted solely as an Infantry Replacement Training Center. I was assigned to 1st Platoon, Company C, 57th Battalion.

The camp was laid out in battalion format. Large two-story barracks on two sides surrounded a large quadrangle, where most of the static training was held.

For seventeen weeks we worked, we sweated and we trained to become grunts, the last two weeks were spent in the field in places like "Pinto Ridge", and "Hells Bottom."

Request for transfer to the Cadet Program went unanswered. After basic, the battalion was disbanded, with small groups going to various units

(Continued on Page 20)

PERSONAL JOURNAL (Continued from Page 19)

I was part of a group sent to Camp Howze, Texas for three weeks of advanced infantry training. All of the three weeks was spent in the field. Live ammunition was used in all field problems. We learned to work with tank support. We learned to disembark from a ship—down cargo nets into a landing craft.

May, 1944

After three weeks at Camp Howze, **Noah Cooper** and I joined about six others from other units at Howze.

We went by train to Camp Joseph T. Robinson, located near Little Rock, Arkansas. This was another Infantry Replacement Training Center. We were told we were to be training Cadre, our MO was duty NCO.

Apparently now there is a shortage of Non-Coms.

Noah and I were assigned to the same unit. 2nd Platoon, Company E, 126th Training Regiment. The unit was several weeks into its training schedule.

We had the authority and duties of regular non-coms. This was a good duty. We were able to get several passes to Little Rock, but there was not much to do or see there.

Dad was still working for the railroad and was able to get passes for He, Mom, and my sister Peggy to come visit me. I spent a weekend with them in Little Rock and they were able to visit the camp.

September, 1944

The first part of September I recieved new orders. I had been assigned to the 69th Infantry Division at Camp Shelby, Mississippi. Shelby was in the Piney Woods of Southern Mississippi, near Hattiesburg.

We left Camp Robinson and went by truck to Shelby. About two dozen of us made the move. That was the last I saw **Noah**.

I was assigned to the Weapons Platoon, Company L, 272nd Regiment of the 69th Infantry Division. I was the only man coming into the weapons platoon. My duty was Assistant Gunner in the Machine Gun Section. Most of the men in the platoon had been together from the very beginning. They had taken basic training together and were all pretty close. I know there was some hard feelings in having a new man come in as an assistant gunner rather than promote someone in the squad, but that is the Army for you.

The Division was preparing for shipping overseas. New equipment was issued. Necessary processing was completed. It was required that anyone going overseas was to have had at least one furlough home since induction. As a result I was able to get a ten day pass home.

After returning to Camp Shelby the Division completed final packing and preparations for overseas deployment. The rumors had us going to the South Pacific since the division had done all its training in the south.

Most of the men in the 272nd Regiment came from the states of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Ohio. Most of the Officers and NCO's came from the 96th Infantry Division stationed at Camp Adair, in Oregon.

October 31, 1944

The 69th Division left Camp Shelby by troop train for an unknown destination.

The trip was uneventful. The train traveled in one direction then a few hours later we would be headed in another direction. The only stops were when engines were changed. Meals consisted of Hot "C" rations and "K" rations at noon. At night the window shades were drawn.

CONTINUED IN THE NEXT EDITION

A Message from Paul and Dottie Shadle Membership Chairman and Editor

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*Membership Chairman Paul Shadle
and Editor, Dottie Shadle*

We are sorry about the error in the last bulletin. We are going to **South Carolina** *NOT* North Carolina for the reunion in October 2010. We feel we have a good one planned.

The next bulletin will be published in July with a reminder of the cut off dates. It will also contain some additional information about the reunion.

Please remember the Veterans in the local hospitals. We still plan to donate the lap robes, socks, and etc. to the Veterans Hospital in South Carolina.

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 your dues are paid in full and are up to date.

The Day the Worm Turned

Submitted By: **Edwin G. Lansford**

Headquarters Company, 271st

1096 Peavine Firetower Road, Crossville, TN 38571

I joined HQ 271st for basic training in early 1943, made T-5, and then was lured into ASTP, which then sent me to the 44th Division when the college programs ended. I saw nearly six months of combat with the 324th's I&R Platoon, where I had the experience as told in the following account.

Every veteran who ever had to dodge or dive from one of those German 88's should appreciate this account, which was really payback time for my patrol. I'm not sure if the entire 44th Division had enough artillery to create the sustained barrage that they threw at the German tanks on that occasion. Surely, some other units were also waiting for a good target, and joined in the fun!

I transferred out of ASTP into the I&R Platoon at Camp Polk, LA, and remained with HQ Company until early March 1945. From the time we first arrived at Embermenil, I felt that every shell that came in was aimed at me personally. So, it has always been with great pleasure that I recall one day when the worm turned, so to speak, and I got a bit of revenge.

Our platoon had come into a small village close to the German border, Ersching, I think it was, when our Lieutenant took my squad out on foot patrol. We walked down a country road with **Canjar** and me as the scouts and **Dawson** bringing up the rear carrying a "300" radio. I was pleased to be a scout-much better than packing that radio! (The radio was about the same size and weight as a twenty-four can carton of Sprite or Bud.) I was hugging the left edge of the road when I noticed that my fellow scout was walking backwards with his rifle slung over his shoulder, clowning. "Come on, **Canjar** (Get serious)!"

Soon we left the road and proceeded cross-country through grown-up farmland. The morning was very quiet, so far-no sounds of war at all. **Canjar** was now serious and ahead of me. It was then that two 88s started shelling the village. I could hear the trajectories high overhead and the shells landing off to our left in the village.

After a while we reached higher ground and took a break in an orchard. Gazing back at the area we had just traversed, a distinctive patch of woods was now in view, also on higher ground back beyond where we had left the road. The sounds of the 88s seemed to be coming from that very area, so I concentrated my gaze on that patch of woods.

Voila! Two faint flashes of light and then two faint "Booms!"

"Hey Lieutenant!" "I think I see where those shells are coming from!" "Sir". (I nearly forgot my military courtesies in my excitement)

Lt. Askins came over and looked through his binoculars at where I had pointed. "Yes!" "There are two tanks firing there!"

Out came our map and the patch of woods was easily identified. HQ was contacted by radio (Yes, that same 300), and the tank's co-ordinates were reported. We then just sat back and waited. And waited. The tanks continued firing deliberately at the village. I could see the flashes, hear the "Booms", then the trajectories, and finally, two more "Booms" when the shells landed.

"Why didn't our artillery fire back?" "What are they waiting for?" "Did HQ even relay the position back to our Artillery?" "Did they get the co-ordinates wrong?" The tanks continued firing.

Finally, after what seemed like hours, I heard a different faint "Boom" from way back in our rear, then another one, then more. The tanks fired again. Now the noise from our rear had become a steady rumble like rolling thunder. And again, finally, I could hear the trajectories traveling in the opposite direction. What before had sounded like a distant jet plane, now sounded like a busy freeway. The delay in returning fire must have been spent by Corps in coordinating all batteries so that the first rounds all arrived on target at the same surprising moment.

Suddenly the area around those tanks turned orange! Our squad watched in awe as shells continued to pour into that same small area of the much larger patch of woods. The noise drifting across the distance to us was like the popping from an endless string of firecrackers! The accuracy of our artillery was truly amazing. I don't recall seeing a single stray explosion outside of that designated area. Weather the tanks' crews had been outside of the tanks to escape the noise of their own guns didn't really matter. "Man, I'm glad I'm not over there!" Now there were white puffs of smoke. White phosphorous? And now there were big puffs of black smoke also. Burning oil? Smoke was drifting out and obscuring the carnage behind it as the rumbling continued behind us and the shells kept pouring in on their target! How long our shelling continued, I don't know, but we enjoyed every second of it. I was elated beyond words. The worm had indeed turned. And needless to say no more shells were fired at our village.

LADIES

Even though the Ladies Auxiliary has disbanded, we are still collecting items for the Veterans Hospital in South Carolina. Ladies please continue to make lap robes for our Vets.

Thank you

A Letter Home

Submitted By: **John Gerster**
Company C, 369th Medical Battalion
 5227 Silver Bluff Drive, Oceanside, California 92057
 Email: jgerster@cox.net

Altenhain, Germany
 2 June 1945

This 69th division is now in a town near the Mulde River where we met the Red Army. It was my regiment, you know, that met the Russians first and officially. But then that was after Leipzig, so let's go back even further than that. We retook Kassel and Hann Munden on the Wesel River and then started an armored drive with the 9th Armored that took us to this river. That took just ten long, hard days. It was quite an experience, but once was enough, I hasten to assure you. Mile upon mile of convoys lined the roads running parallel to the line of advance. We moved on and on, never back. The Air Corps gave us grand support and saved our lives, I am sure, more than once. We were only strafed twice. Occasionally we would pull off into a field to allow the P-47s and the Selfpropelled artillery and tanks to pulverize a town before moving in. The bigger towns were merely by-passed and left for the foot troops to clean up on. About 4 A.M. or so we would pull into a still blazing town and bed down for the "night." At 6 A.M. we would roll up the blanket and mount up, to be gone again for a days work. Twice it so happened that we didn't even stop at all. Usually we were subjected to Air Bursts daily from 88s and I never did get used to that. Finally, Though, I got so I could sleep through a small 20mm barrage just fine.

After that, we and the 2nd Division took Leipzig. There was a monument there which I'll not soon forget, and not because a Paramount cameraman took our pictures, either. The All Nations Monument there contained some of our prisoners, and a band of SS Troopers. We evacuated casualties from there under a white flag after it was subjected to bombardment by everything from 105s to 240 Howitzers. Newsweek Magazine said they didn't shell it, but they sure did. That place was a breath of hell if I ever saw one. While the big-wigs were still conferring on surrender terms, to which the SS Colonel would not listen, the German Captain surrendered all his men to us Medics!

They still had their arms, and when they swarmed down the steps we thought we were being captuerd.

(Continued on Page 24)



Berlin, Germany 1945
 Two great guys: Harry Truman & Howitzer Al (sent photo)

Honors Flight

Submitted By: **Jim Mynes**
Company K, 273rd Infantry
 1411 Regency Boulevard SE, Decatur, Alabama 35601

Honors Flight: Tennessee Valley Chapter, WWII Veterans. The Flight began out of Huntsville, Alabama to Washington DC; 8 April 2008, visiting the WWII memorial and other honorable sites. The flight consisted of 125 WWII veterans and volunteer Guardians. There were 125 Guardians and 52 of them were assisting men and women in wheel chairs. My Guardian was a wonderful lady, a resident of Washington DC. She watched over me as well as my mother would have done! Great Lady.

What a wonderful organization: There are other Chapters throughout the USA.



WWII Memorial — Beautiful: Washington Monument in background

Part of the WWII
 Memorial

Each star represents
 (100) WWII men and
 women who lost their
 lives — South Pacific
 and Europe — **May
 God Bless Them**

**MY HATS OFF TO
 THEM. THEY ARE
 THE REAL HEROS**



This photo is very troublesome to me and other veterans.

I was a young soldier stationed at Camp Shelby 1941 (38th Division)—packed for shipment to the Philippines —When President Roosevelt made this famous speech on the Radio ending it with these words....**"SO HELP US GOD"**. The Monument

Committee made a terrible mistake. Why????

By omitting the final quote of that famous speech!

Two former
 Infantry
 Soldiers: at
 the WWII
 Memorial.
 Former
 Senator,
 Robert Dole.
 He honored
 me with a very
 moving conversation.



Senator Jeff Sessions-
 Alabama, Greeting all of us.

I was the only 69th Veteran on the Flight. Photos were taken by my Guardian and the Huntsville Times.



"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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*Merseburg Airport, June 1945
L: Wilson, Back: Dave Oberst (deceased)
R: Howitzer Al Kormas (sent photo)*



the 69th

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A LETTER HOME

(Continued from Page 22)

The reverse happened to be true, however, and so we were quite the guys for the time. I collected four pistols from my "prisoners" and some other junk, none of which I have now, darn it all. I do have a Rolleiflex and a Zeiss Tessar camera, though, as most useful souvenirs.

Released Germans are now being taken back into occupied Germany and released by the US Army. It is sure strange to see the guys who were very eager to kill you the months before, now being driven home by the US Army. This is all very necessary, however, since those now being released are farmers and certain men with special skills. Farming will hit Germany hard soon if we do not release some POWs for labor. All their forced laborers are gone now, and none but the very old and very young remain. The roads are still lined with displaced persons of all nationalities seeking to return home. Germans, too, are just as displaced as other nationalities, and it makes me mad to see what the damn Nazi people have done to Germany. And Germany is, in so many ways like the USA, that it makes one wonder if sometime it could happen there, too.

The French, as you say, are very unconcerned with morals, the soap

shortage, black markets in wholesale quantities, and anything else which does not directly affect their way of life. Cigarettes now bring Two Dollars a pack. Soap 40-80 cents per bar. A five gallon can of gas from 10 dollars and up. They will buy the shoes off your feet for \$20. Watches will bring \$150. Wrist watches, that is. A luger pistol will sell for less than more useful items. Top price on one is \$50, but an Air Corps Officer will pay \$90.

One more incident I must tell you about. A platoon of volunteer negroes are attached to Company G. They are grand fellows, and always good for a laugh in a tight spot. **Halftrack**, in particular, is a character. He is as black as sin, and just as homely. Without the ever-present ammunition dump he carries, including 20 hand grenades ("eggs"), he weighs over 250#. At Hann Munden we were pinned down, in a small draw, by intense sniper and machine pistol fire. We were all flat on our bellies, wishing we had less bottom showing, when the Lt. noticed a huge black hulk on top of the hill, cautiously peering around a tree which he dwarfed. He was standing up right! "**Halftrack**, for God's sake get down. There are snipers up there." Replied **Halftrack** scornfully, "Man, what you-all think I se lookin fur?" Incidentally, he got three of them. When next I write I hope to be in the States.

**Look for our next
issue in July for
more Reunion
Information**

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**Send Address Changes,
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