

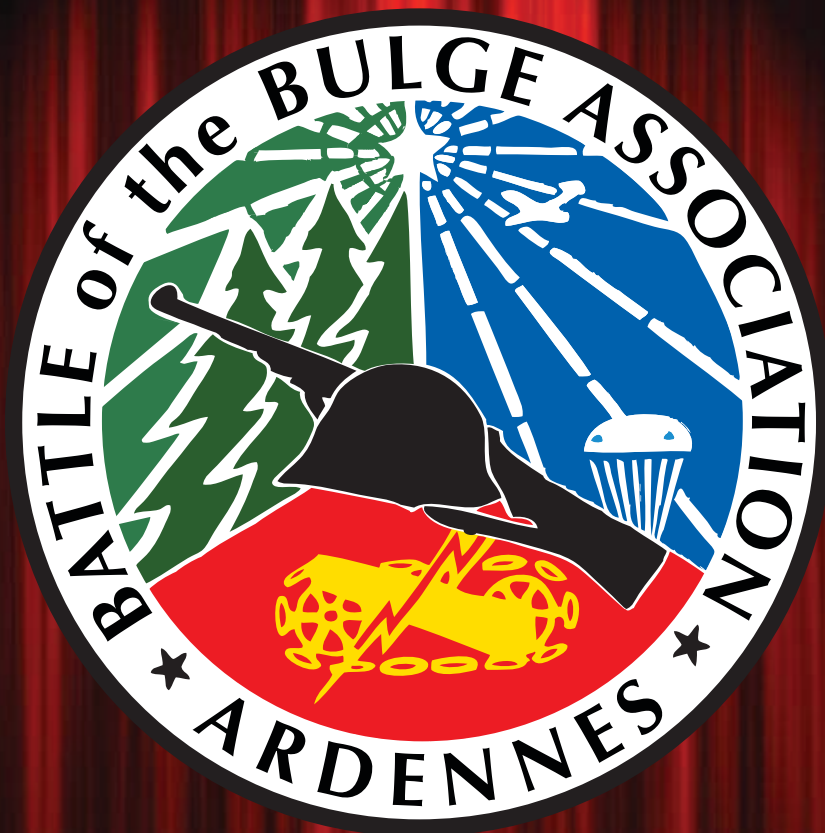
# The BULGE BUGLE

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION • BATTLE OF THE BULGE ASSOCIATION, INC.

VOLUME XXXVI NUMBER 1

THE ARDENNES CAMPAIGN

FEBRUARY 2017



## INTRODUCING THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE ASSOCIATION, INC.

*Our name change is official! See page 22 for more.*



**Battle of the Bulge Association, Inc.**  
PO Box 27430, Philadelphia, PA 19118  
703-528-4058

Published quarterly, *The Bulge Bugle* is the official publication of the Battle of the Bulge Association, Inc.  
**Historical Research:** John D. Bowen

### BOBA CONTACT INFORMATION

#### Membership Office:

Tracey Diehl, Kevin Diehl; 703-528-4058,  
e-mail: [tracey@battleofthebulge.org](mailto:tracey@battleofthebulge.org)

*Send all correspondence relating to BOBA matters, "The Bulge Bugle," or the BOBA website to:*  
Battle of the Bulge Association, Inc.;  
PO Box 27430; Philadelphia, PA 19118; 703-528-4058;  
e-mail: [tracey@battleofthebulge.org](mailto:tracey@battleofthebulge.org)

**VISIT THE BOBA WEB SITE:** [www.battleofthebulge.org](http://www.battleofthebulge.org)



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**Vice President Chapters:**

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Doris Davis

**Past President:**

Alan Cunningham

### BOARD MEMBERS

David Bailey, 106th InfD

Tom Burgess, 87th InfD

Doug Dillard, 82nd AbnD

Alfred Shehab, 38th Cavalry

Ruth Hamilton

John Mohor

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Clyde Boden\* 1981-84

Robert VanHouten\* 1984-86

George Chekan\* 1986-88;

2004-05

William Greenville\* 1988-90

Darrell Kuhn\* 1990-92

William Hemphill\* 1992-93

William Tayman 1993-94

Grover Twiner\* 1994-95

Stanley Wojtusik\* 1995-97;

2006-07

George Linthicum\* 1997-99

John Dunleavy\* 1999-01

Louis Cunningham 2001-03

Demetri Paris\* 2008-10

J. David Bailey 2010-12

Douglas Dillard 2012-14

Alan Cunningham 2014-16

\* Deceased

## CHAPTER PRESIDENTS

### ALABAMA

**Gen G.S. Patton, Jr. (11)**

Vernon Miller, 8<sup>th</sup> AD  
1409 John Wesley Dr  
Birmingham, AL 35210-2203  
205-951-0265

### ARIZONA

**Southern Arizona (53)**

George W. McGee  
445 N. Wilmot Rd., #243  
Tucson, AZ 85711  
520-298-3220

### BELGIUM

**5th Fusiliers of Belgium (38)**

Marcel D'Haese,  
Belgian 5<sup>th</sup> Fusiliers  
Boulevard du Souverain N 49  
Box 4  
1160 – Brussels, BE  
00-32-2-673.49.76

### CALIFORNIA

**Golden Gate (10)**

Doris Davis  
889 Bauer Dr  
San Carlos, CA 94070-3613  
650-654-0101

**Southern California (16)**

Fred Whitaker, 87<sup>th</sup> ID  
9552 Brynmar Drive  
Villa Park, CA 92861  
714-282-7733

### CONNECTICUT

**Connecticut Yankee (40)**

Richard Egan  
79 Alcove St.  
Meriden, CT 06451  
203-634-0474

### COLORADO

**Rocky Mountain (39)**

A. Wayne Field, 6<sup>th</sup> AD  
6130 Perfect View  
Colorado Springs, CO 80919  
719-598-2234

### FLORIDA

**Southeast Florida (62)**

George Fisher, 26<sup>th</sup> ID  
3456 S. Ocean Blvd #503  
Palm Beach, FL 33480  
561-585-7086

**Golden Triangle (48)**

Clarence Buckman, 106<sup>th</sup> ID  
53 Redwood Track Course  
Ocala, FL 34472  
352-687-8175

### INDIANA

**Central Indiana (47)**

Chris Schneider  
1795 Cherry St  
Noblesville, IN 46060  
(317) 362-6015

### KANSAS

**Northeast Kansas (69)**

Greg Penfield  
PO Box 8556  
Topeka, KS 66608-0556  
785-340-8262

### MARYLAND

**Maryland/DC (3)**

John R. Schaffner, 106 InfD  
1811 Miller Rd  
Cockeysville Md 21030-1013  
410-584-2754

### MASSACHUSETTS

**Lamar Soutter/Central (22)**

John McAuliffe, 87<sup>th</sup> ID  
425 Pleasant St, #1410  
Worcester, MA 01609  
508-754-7183

### MISSISSIPPI

**Mississippi (33)**

James W. Hunt, 1<sup>st</sup> ID  
804 20th Ave N  
Columbus, MS 39701-2332  
662-328-8959

### MISSOURI

**Gateway (25)**

Dave Schroeder  
323 S. Rock Hill Road  
Webster Groves, MO 63119  
314-961-7470

### NEW JERSEY

**Peter F. Leslie, Jr (54)**

Jerry Manning  
PO Box 104  
Parsippany NJ 07054-0104  
973-983-6985

**Fort Monmouth (56)**

Larry Lynch  
37 Princeton St.  
Red Bank, NJ 07701  
732-842-5923

**Fort Dix/McGuire (60)**

Donald "Coach" Brien  
2 Chatham Ct  
Robbinsville, NJ 08691-4005  
(609) 754-3744

**SEND CHAPTER UPDATES:** [tracey@battleofthebulge.org](mailto:tracey@battleofthebulge.org)

## NEW YORK

### Mohawk Valley (28)

Julian Scatko  
356 Higby Rd  
New Hartford, NY 13413  
315-733-4752

### Hudson Valley (49)

Matthew J. Swedick  
26 Echo Lane  
Altamont, NY 12009  
518-765-0300

### Staten Island (52)

William Abell  
297 Clarke Ave  
Staten Island, NY 10306  
718-351-9426

### Duncan T. Trueman (59)

Elliot Hermon, 87<sup>th</sup> Chem  
Mortar Bn  
3 Putters Way  
Middletown, NY 10990  
845-344-6181

### Long Island (63)

William Mueller, 106<sup>th</sup> ID  
27 Eve Ln  
Levittown, NY 11756-5511  
516-731-2488

## OHIO

### Blanchard Valley (42)

Leonard Skonecki  
324 N. Countyline St.  
Fostoria, OH 44830  
419-435-3588

### Ohio Buckeye (29)

John Kalagidis, 552<sup>nd</sup> FA Bn  
2545 58th St NE  
Canton, OH 44721-3451  
330-492-2214

### Alton Litsenberger (68)

Tom Tomastik  
10811 Keller Pines Court  
Galena, OH 43021  
614-562-6928

## PENNSYLVANIA

### Delaware Valley (4)

Gary Lambert  
123 Garfield Ave  
Collingswood, NJ 08108-1307  
856-304-3106

### Southcentral Pennsylvania (45)

Dan Medbury  
22 East James Street  
Lancaster, PA 17602  
(717) 392-6334

### Lehigh Valley (55)

John Kuhn  
2407 Woodbridge Terrace  
Easton, PA 18045  
610-438-0043

### Reading (64)

George Moore, 1252<sup>nd</sup> ECB  
207 Shockley Dr  
Birdsboro, PA 19508  
610-582-8690

## SOUTH CAROLINA

### South Carolina (7)

Rick Hurst  
117 Stonegate Drive  
Columbia, SC 29223  
803-788-7521

## VERMONT- NEW HAMPSHIRE-MAINE

### Tri-State (17)

Edward Deverell  
12 Stevens Dr  
Hookset, NH 03106-1683  
603-485-7464

## VIRGINIA

### Crater (43)

Mary Ann Coates Smith  
Post Office Box 520  
Mechanicsville, VA 23111-0520  
804-363-3400

## WASHINGTON

### Northwest (6)

Jim Pennock  
18313 Olympic View Dr  
Edmonds, WA 98020  
425-774-8420

## ATTENTION: MEMBERSHIP DISCOUNT!

In order to encourage long-term memberships, we are now offering a discounted 4-year membership for \$50 to non-BOB vets. (Save \$10 off the yearly fee of \$15!)

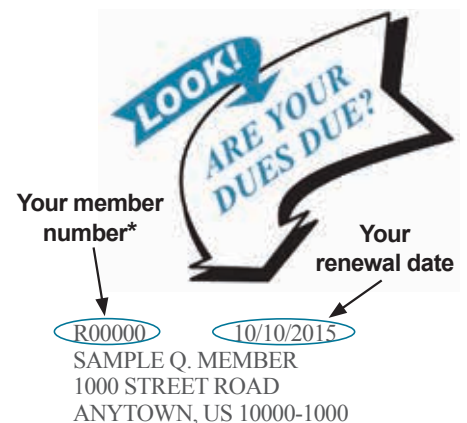
SEE MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION ON THE BACK COVER.

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## WHEN ARE MY DUES DUE?

Look at the back cover  
address label:



**\*PLEASE NOTE:** If your member number starts with the letter "L", you are a LIFE MEMBER, and therefore do not owe any more dues, ever!





# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Gary Higgins



HAPPY NEW YEAR AND WELCOME to our new era as the Battle of the Bulge Association, Inc. Let me introduce myself as your new BOBA President. I am from Michigan and have been involved with VBOB for the previous 16 years as an associate member. Many of you have met me on tours, events across the USA and military programs.

My first unforgettable VBOB event was in 2004, at the 60th Anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge

in Belgium. This event forever changed my insight into the famous Battle. Between that date and the 70th Anniversary in 2014, I spent some years on the VBOB Executive Council as a trustee, had great times doing so, and made many friends. This past October in Seattle, the members elected me to serve as your new president, a very honored and distinguished title to hold. We have family who served in the Battle of the Bulge and this is how I became involved in VBOB. It is my intent to share some of my family stories in the coming months.

Many members have asked about my background. I am a Life Member of the Vietnam Veterans of America, Life Member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and Life Member of the Disabled American Veterans. I was a squad leader with the US Army in the DMZ and in 1969-70, my rank was Sgt. E-5 in the 32nd Infantry Regiment. We did the basic infantry duties, patrols, ambush detail, security, and S & D (search and destroy), as so many of our Bulge veterans did in the cold of Belgium and the ETO.

My interest has always been in WWII and the incredible efforts our nation brought forth to defeat Hitler and the enemies of our world.

I am married to Carol Higgins (also a BOBA member), and together we have raised a son and daughter on our farms in Michigan.

At our December meeting, we shared past events, various programs, and issues including how to improve BOBA and how to get new members, as our number of veteran members decrease. (This is happening with all types of service organizations.) Please let me know of any ideas or thoughts you may have on how to assist in our membership efforts. As Article 2 of our bylaws states, our purpose is to perpetuate the memory of the sacrifices made by US military personnel during the Battle of the Bulge, and to maintain international relations. We will continue to work with the Ambassadors of Belgium and Luxembourg, and any and all of the veteran groups as well, that can relate to us on the Battle. Again, we will be seeking new members and reaching out for volunteers with ideas on how to promote BOBA, Inc.

Your board and its members will be transparent, and the same goes for me. I am prepared to assist however I can, to find the resources to get the proper answers to any questions arising. It is my hope to have a small profile of each board member in upcoming issues of the *Bugle*.

Please submit your material to the *Bugle*, with photos and history of your family members who served. It can be as small or large an article as warranted, but we need to document and share your family's Bulge story. *[Material deadline for the next issue, May, will be March 24.]*

Plans are in the works for the 2017 reunion to be held in San Antonio, Texas next fall. You will be updated as more is known, with full details in the May issue. *[See page 11 for a teaser.]*

In December, at Arlington, we had our wreath laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, our VBOB monument and also at the WWII monument. The weather was very cold and windy. The banquet was well-attended and our hospitality room well-received. John Bowen and the Battle of the Bulge Historical Foundation did a great job for all in attendance. *[See pages 22-23 for some highlights.]*

I've been informed of two chapter closings this month. If you know of any additional chapter closures, please contact us.

A new year is upon us and I want to wish all of you a great 2017!

## Battle of the Bulge Association, Inc. Board of Directors 2017

*The following are the current Battle of the Bulge Association, Inc. Board of Directors (formerly "Executive Council"), effective Dec. 16, 2016:*

### ELECTED OFFICERS

**President:** Gary Higgins

**Executive Vice President:** Barbara Mooneyhan

**Vice President Membership:** Angela Fazio

**Vice President Chapters:** Sherry Klopp

**Treasurer:** Duane R. Bruno

**Recording Secretary:** Doris Davis

**[Corresponding Secretary:** position eliminated as of 1/1/17]

**Past President:**

Alan Cunningham

*Board Members at Large are now at 6:*  
**BOARD MEMBERS**

David Bailey, 106th InfD

Tom Burgess, 87th InfD

Doug Dillard, 82nd AbnD

Alfred Shehab, 38th Cavalry

Ruth Hamilton

John Mohor

# LETTERS TO BOBA

## KUDOS ON NAME CHANGE

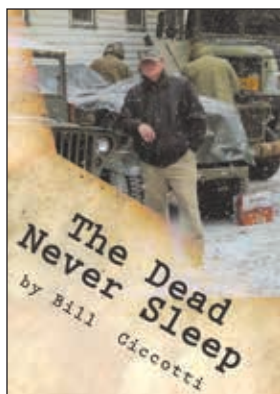
Regarding the November issue of the *Bulge Bugle*, I was pleased to read of the decision to change the name of our organization to better reflect who the membership will consist of in the near future.

I was one of those advocating for a change of name, when I wrote the National organization some years ago that I believed it would be inappropriate to continue calling our organization Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge when there would no longer be any veterans left who actually fought in that battle.

Kudos to the Executive Council for making this decision!

**Barry J. Veden, past president of  
now-idle Chapter 30, VBOB**

## THE DEAD NEVER SLEEP



Dear Battle of the Bulge Association,  
Hope you are all well. I wrote the fiction book *The Dead Never Sleep* about one of the side battles during the German Operation Mist—or better known as The Battle of The Bulge, with winter fighting in the Ardennes forests of Belgium. My dad, Sargent Angelo M. Ciccotti, was in the 87th Infantry during World War II. He was a forward field artillery spotter. They handed him an M1 carbine, field radio and binoculars, then sent him out alone to spot stuff to blow up. That generation had

guts. They didn't want to go to war. But the country—hell, the whole world—needed them. So they never thought twice. They just acted.

This book is written from the heart, with a touch of humor. The situation wasn't humorous at all, but sometimes a little insanity keeps you sane. I hope you like this book. Please write me and tell me what you think about it. I am very interested to hear your opinion and look forward to hearing from you. The book is available on Amazon.com.

I would be honored to autograph any copies for any of you.

Please feel free to write me, send me books to autograph, and let me know what you think. Thank you.

**Sincerely,  
Bill Ciccotti  
58 Roosevelt St  
Scranton PA 18505-2809**

## KILROY WAS HERE

I think everyone should know the history of Kilroy. In many of the towns we captured, we would find this hand-drawn sign, when we thought that we were the 1st or 2nd in town!



**Frank DeFrates,  
10 ArmDD**

## How to submit stories for “The Bulge Bugle”

Please continue to send us your Battle of the Bulge stories. All members are reminded to submit stories about veterans you know who fought in the battle. Guidelines for submitting stories, letters and photos to be published in *The Bulge* are:

**Stories and letters:** Please send typewritten (not handwritten) text whenever possible. We reserve the right to edit for length or clarity. Clippings/articles from recent newspapers or other periodicals must contain the name & date of publication, so we can obtain reprint permission. NOTE: We cannot reprint from books or pamphlets, unless you are the author. We do not have the resources to do lengthy permission research, esp. if the material is very old.

**Photographs:** Please identify the place and/or people in the photograph. Photos copied on a copy machine are not suitable for publication. If providing scanned images, scan at high-res (300 dpi.)

**Please include** your e-mail address or telephone number, in case we have to contact you.

**Send material to:** Battle of the Bulge Association, Inc;  
PO Box 27430; Philadelphia, PA 19118-0430; or by email to:  
[tracey@battleofthebulge.org](mailto:tracey@battleofthebulge.org)

**MAY ISSUE DEADLINE: MARCH 24, 2017**

**QUESTIONS? Please contact Tracey Diehl,  
703-528-4058, or by email: [tracey@battleofthebulge.org](mailto:tracey@battleofthebulge.org)**

## WERETH MEMORIAL



Dear Friends,  
2016 has ended and the committee of the U.S. Memorial Wereth wishes you and your family health, happiness and peace throughout 2017.

On December 17th, exactly 72 years after the eleven “Wereth” soldiers and many others lost their lives, we received the “Flag of Friendship” from the Belgian Chapter of the 106th Infantry Division Association. This flag is a recognition of our duty to remember, which can only be realized with your support, and we thank you for that. *An article and photos from the event can be seen on our website: [www.wereth.org](http://www.wereth.org).*

We hope to welcome you at our next ceremony on Saturday, May 13th, 2017, 11 AM. Students from Atlanta and from the Wereth area will present their common project at this event.

**Best regards,  
Solange Dekeyser, U.S. Memorial Wereth V.o.G.**

*For more information, go to: [www.wereth.org](http://www.wereth.org)*

# IN MEMORIAM, THOMAS R. CHAMBERS, 9TH ARMDD

*Thomas R. Chambers was called home on October 2, 2016. Tom gave many years of service to the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge organization. He was very interested in increasing the membership and including 2nd generations so that the organization would live on. He worked tirelessly and enthusiastically with VBOB as an Executive Council member. We will miss him. This is his story. . . .*



Thomas was born Sept 22, 1924 and entered the army after graduating from Kentucky Military Institute. He took basic training in Ft. Benning, GA and entered the Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP) to become an Officer in Army Engineers. He was trained in infantry weapons, M1 Rifle, air cooled machine-gun, bayonet, grenades, 60 mm mortars, barbed wire, sapper training, scouting & patrolling. Much to his disappointment, the ASTP program was closed the day he graduated from Basic.

He went from Ft. Benning to Camp Livingston, LA and joined A Co of the 343rd Inf Rgt of the 86th ID and became a member of the 2nd squad of 1st platoon. He was a rifleman for a while but was selected to be a Jeep Driver. He left for Europe in Aug, 1944 on the *Mauritania* from NY and landed in Liverpool. From there, he crossed the English Channel and landed in Omaha Beach at a time when the fighting was at Metz and in the vicinity of the Hurtgen Forest. He was processed through the 79th Replacement Rgt. about 2 miles north of Bastogne.

At the end of Oct 1944, he was assigned to the 52nd Armd Inf Bn of the 9th Armd Div. He was a truck driver for a brief time and then was assigned to the Reconnaissance Platoon of 9th Armored Division Trains. He described it as 'a place where he had a ringside seat to a war.' He was the machine gunner in jeep crew of three that took him where ever he was needed providing liaison with other units in the division, doing patrol work, to the front, to the sides and to the rear. He said he could see the tracers bullets flying over head, but seldom down at his jeep level. Night patrols, he said, were routine.

When the war was over, he was assigned to "A" Company, 26th Infantry of the 1st Infantry Division- arriving on Sept 1, 1945. For about 2 months he performed security duty at the Sud Kasern in Nuremberg. There were perhaps 30,000 displaced persons in this camp. This included Poles, Czechs, Ukrainians, Estonians, Lithuanians, all forced laborers of the 3rd Reich.

Over time, he described himself as "as bombed-out as the buildings and displaced persons around him." He said, "I was a shell of a man — complete in appearance on the outside, but nothing inside, totally hollow — empty, hope had flown. I was a psychological nothing." He jumped at the opportunity play football with the 26th inf Rgt. His first game of the season was in the gigantic stadium that Hitler had built for his Nuremberg rallies.

In mid Oct 1945, he was assigned, along with the rest of the 1st Platoon of A Company to vehicular traffic control around the Court-house where the War Crime Trials took place. The 2nd Platoon had duty in the cell blocks keeping watch on the Nazis to keep them from committing suicide.

In early Jan 1946, he got a pass to go skiing at Garmish Partenkirchen and for a week. He described it as an 'exhilarating experience.' He was at a beautiful resort hotel on the Eibsee with view of the Alps. This experience, he said, brought him back to life.

In early Feb 1946, he was transferred to the 102nd ID to head for home. The trip to Camp Phillip Morris at Cherbourg took about 4- 5 days and it was bitterly cold. Travel accommodations were the 40 or 8 boxcar (forty men or eight horses.) Fortunately, he said, the QM Corps outfitted the cars with crude bunks for about 20 men with a little stove in the middle on a box of sand. The 'bathroom' was a convenience bucket that got emptied out the door of the car directly onto the tracks as they went along.

Camp Phillip Morris, one of three transients camps that were initially for in-bound troops, served as the staging area on the English Channel for men headed for home. The wind off the Channel, although only about 30 to 35 degrees, was biting cold. He kept telling himself "2 more weeks and I'll be home" in order to keep his will to survive. A month later, he departed for home. After 10 days on the Atlantic, and enduring a horrible storm, he arrived in Brooklyn. When he got to the pier in Brooklyn, he said he got down and kissed the dirty grimy warehouse floor. A few days later, he arrived in Camp Atterbury, Indiana. There were many inspections and forms to be filled out and finally, he was a civilian again. The date was Mar 21, 1946.

After a 2 hour Greyhound bus ride to Louisville, he was home. He had been gone 2 1/2 years. He said he was not the 19-year-old youth that had departed New Castle, Kentucky in Oct 1943. He was a totally different person. He knew about and could feel the deep scars that the war had left on him. He was seized by the fear that he would not be accepted when he got home. He was afraid that he would be rejected. When he finally came up with the courage to call home, his sister answered with a sleepy voice and he said "This is Tommie." She asked him, "Where are you?" He responded, "I'm at the bus station!" Thrilled to hear his voice, she said, "What are you doing there? Get yourself home!"

He picked up his pack and duffel bag, walked outside and caught a cab. The driver took a direct route and drove along a stretch of Grinstead Drive that he knew extremely well. He noticed that the maples were just putting out the first signs of spring. The sun was up and the world was filled with light of a new day. The bursting maple buds and the new day he took as a good sign — a sign of a new beginning. He thought, "Maybe there could be a new beginning for me as well."

In a short time, he was in front of his mother's home and before he could get out of the cab, his sister came flying out of the front door in her nightgown and robe, with her arms extended, calling out to him. His mother was standing in the doorway.

Suddenly, as changed as he was, he knew he was where he belonged. The perilous trip was over. He was back home.

Today, he's home again — with his parents, his wife Elizabeth, and many of his war buddies. His memory lives on in his 3 sons, his sisters and his many friends.

*Thomas R. Chambers was inspired to write his stories because he wanted his children to know what it was like for him as a young man serving in the War. They are extremely grateful that he took the time to write his memories.*

—Submitted by Doris Davis, BOBA Board Member



# MEMBERS IN MEMORIAM

Please notify us when you hear that any member of our organization has recently passed away, so that we may honor them in a future *Bulge Bugle*. Also, kindly notify us of any errors or omissions.

Please send notices by mail: BOBA, Inc., PO Box 27430, Philadelphia, PA 19118-0430; or by phone: 703-528-4058; or by email: [tracey@battleofthebulge.org](mailto:tracey@battleofthebulge.org).

We have been notified, as of December 31, 2016, that these members of the Battle of the Bulge Association, Inc. have also recently passed away:

Burgess, James N.	4 ArmdD
Cannava, Eugene	63 InfD
Chambers, Thomas R.	9 ArmdD
Elliott, Donald S.	385 AAA AW Bn
Kaminski Jr, Edward W.	7 ArmdD
Lehndorff, William A.	36 InfD
Moirano, Sergio A.	90 InfD
Neighborgall, Roger	5 Ranger Bn
O'Rourke, Joseph P.	101 AbnD
Orth, Herbert P.	528 FA Bn
Parker, Oliver C.	83 InfD
Patucci, Joseph A.	44 InfD
Sayer, Roland H.	452 QM Co
Sellar, Waldo F.	7 ArmdD
Siembor, Louis C.	10 ArmdD
Watson, George L.	87 InfD
Williams, Joseph F.	4049 QM Trk Co

## MY BIGGEST CAPTURE DURING THE WAR

by Mike Levin, 7th ArmdD

I was a forward observer in the 7th Armored Division in WWII. My job was to advance ahead of the troops and observe where the enemy was concentrated, and relay this information back to our artillery. There were 3 of us together — my driver, a radio operator and myself. I'd always look for the best place to 'observe' the enemy. It could be anywhere — usually, it was a building.

One night, I was in a place called Bad Godesberg (South of Cologne and near Bonn, Germany) and I approached a hotel called Rheinhof Dreesen. The hotel had been vacated. There was only one inhabitant — an old German caretaker with a big brass ring of keys. I approached him and commanded him to show me around (I wanted to make sure that HE was the only person there and no one else was hiding.) We came upon a corridor and at the end of it was a large oak door. I commanded him to open the door. He said in German, "I don't have a key for that door." I pulled out my 45 caliber gun and said (in German), "I have a key for that door," and he looked stunned. He knew what I would do, and that was to shoot the lock to open it. This convinced him to find the key and open the door. What was behind this door? The largest collection of German and French wine that I had ever seen! It turns out that this hotel was where Hitler stayed frequently and this was his wine collection! I radioed back to the Special Services Officer and told him to send a couple of 6 x 6 trucks to help 'relieve' this wine from the cellar. The caretaker, having seen my weapon, chose not to interfere. That was a good decision on his part. Needless to say, our troops enjoyed the wine. This hotel is open to the public today. For current pictures, go to [www.rheinhofdreesen.de](http://www.rheinhofdreesen.de). Needless to say, it looked much different back then (*see photo below*.)



## QM Merchandise: We Need Your Support!

We still have remaining stock of VBOB logo QM merchandise and certificates. Even though we have changed our name from "Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, Inc." to "Battle of the Bulge Association, Inc", the logo visuals are identical. The VBOB logo items are especially relevant to veterans who served in the Battle of the Bulge.

We hope you'll support us by continuing to buy the VBOB items. We'll offer BOBA items starting with the May 2017 issue. (The product selection will not be the same—we'll be offering different items.) We'll continue to sell the VBOB items until sold out.

**Please see VBOB certificate form on p. 28; QM form on p. 31.**

# THE DUST GAVE US AWAY!

by Irving Locker, 116 AAA Gun Battalion, B Battery, 4th Division, VII Corp



We were the 116th AAA Gun Battalion (anti-aircraft, anti-tank and artillery) attached to the 4th Division, VII Corp. On D-Day, on Utah Beach, our role was to defend the beach from medium and high level enemy bombing. Also, since our guns could use two different types of ammunition (one for planes and artillery and the other with armor-piercing heads for anti-tank) we were selected to go into Normandy on D-Day, because our intelligence had reported that General Rommel was going to have tanks on the beaches to keep us out during the invasion. We were the first AAA Gun Battalion that landed on Utah Beach.

Since we were shooting at planes, tanks and artillery targets, we could not be stationed near any buildings, so were forced to live in

open fields. Each of our 90-mm guns weighed 9 tons and could shoot up to 30,000 feet up at planes. Each shell weighed 45 pounds and was three feet tall. It took 14 men to man each gun: 5 men to control the operation of the gun, and 9 men to handle the ammunition. Frequently, we shot at least 25 shells per minute. Needless to say, it would get a bit chaotic because the enemy was shooting at us at the same time! I was just 19 years old and a newly promoted staff sergeant in charge of 65 men and four of these guns.

All our supplies (food, ammunition, water, medical supplies, etc.) had to be delivered to us by truck as we advanced. It wasn't long after our supply trucks would arrive that we'd get shelled. We could not figure out how the enemy knew where we were. We sent out patrols to try to check it out, but they could not find where the shelling was coming from. One day, one of our communications men was fixing telephone wires up in a tree and he saw our supply truck pull up and stop in our field. As the truck came in, it raised the dust on the dirt road. When the truck stopped, the dust settled. Five minutes later, we were shelled. He watched this play out and determined that the raising of the dust gave away our position. After he came down and discussed what he had seen, we made different arrangements to pick up our supplies. The supply trucks stayed on the main roads, contacted us, and we took our smaller trucks out to meet them. This proved to be a life-saving plan.

If that soldier had not reported to us what he had seen, I would probably not be here to write this story. I was very lucky and I thank God every day that I survived the war.

## EPILOGUE: A CHANCE ENCOUNTER WITH AN EMOTIONAL ENDING

I now live in a huge retirement community in Florida called The Villages. I brought back a lot of memorabilia from WWII, including a large Nazi flag which I took off a wall in Germany and had many of the men in my battery sign.

I wear a WWII veteran's cap with many pins and insignias, including a Battle of the Bulge logo patch. Many people stop me to thank me for my service but one incident really stands out. I was in a restaurant when a young man approached me, looked at my cap and said "Thank you for your service. My dad was in WWII and he landed on D-Day and was in the Battle of the Bulge also, but he passed away in an auto accident when I was only 18 months old. I've always been interested in the war and in what he might have gone through but I never had anyone to discuss it with." I gave him my card and told him to call me, so that we could arrange for him to visit and I would show him my display and try to answer his questions.

Two weeks later, he called, all excited, and said "Irving, you won't believe this! I found your name in my father's Army Battalion

Book, which lists everyone in the 116th AAA Gun Battalion." This prompted me to check the signatures on the Nazi flag and what a surprise to find that his dad had actually signed it.

The visit happened two weeks later, when he brought his entire family to see my collection, especially the flag, and to hear my stories. It was such an emotional and unforgettable moment when they saw their father's signature and they each held the flag to their hearts and sobbed.

You hear stories of hearts connecting after many years but this one really touches the heartstrings. I couldn't help crying along with them. There are so many families who never had a chance to know their fathers (or brothers, grandfathers, etc.) or hear of their wartime experiences. I am so grateful that fate put us at the same place at the same time as this young man so that he and his family could learn more about his dad's wartime life through me. I call that 'divine intervention'.

I encourage all Veterans to share their stories with their loved ones. As hard as it is to talk about it, people must know — Lest we Forget!!!  
—Irving Locker



Irving Locker with his WWII memorabilia, including the confiscated Nazi flag signed by many of the other soldiers in his battery.



## UNDER DIRECT FIRE

by Douglas Harvey, Antitank Platoon,  
Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion,  
334th Regiment, 84th Infantry Division



Douglas Harvey, 84 INFD, pictured in early December 1944. "The rip in my jacket is from shrapnel."

During the 25th and 26th of December 1944, most of the Antitank Platoon was in Verdenne on the North side of town, unknown to us at the time, yards from the castle and the battles around us. Some time in the afternoon of the 26th, a German tank was reported as crossing the field south-east of Verdenne. The time agrees with the German Task Force Bayer's breakout and retreat from the Verdenne Pocket at 1800 hours, as related in Guderian's book: *A History of the 116 Panzer Division*.

One of the tanks turning right (southwest) was most likely the one reported to

us. Our support tanks (Shermans) refused to go south east down the street to engage the German tank, a Mark IV. Even though Guderian's book indicated that all Mark IV tanks were lost in the woods, I'm sure the tank reported to us and hit by us was a Mark IV. Several from the Antitank Platoon, myself included, volunteered to push our 57 mm gun down the street and fire on the tank. We moved the gun around 100 yards to a point where the tank was in sight in the open field to the south. We opened the gun trails on the hard surface street and aimed the gun both with the optical sight and by looking through the barrel (bore sighting.) I don't think the gun had been previously sighted in.

For some reason the tank had stopped — perhaps it was out of fuel or had mechanical problems, which were apparently common in German tanks. I found a stick to fire the gun, as without the spades on the gun trails dug in, it would jump back several feet from the recoil. A 57 mm gun is designed to fire from a kneeling position with elevation by a crank-driven screw and direction using a shoulder frame. When I turned toward the gun with the stick, Sergeant Cable was moving to fire the gun from the kneeling position. I shouted to "get back, don't fire the gun that way, it will back over you." He then realized what would happen and jumped back. I hit the firing pad with the stick and the gun jumped back at least 6 feet from the recoil. Immediately the view to the tank was obscured by the dust cloud from the muzzle blast. One of the rifleman watching from across the street shouted, "you hit it, you hit it." Several more hits were registered by our gun. 57 mm projectiles are all tracers and path of the shell can be easily seen. The projectiles are solid steel and do not explode on impact. The tank did not burn or show any crew activity. Perhaps it had been already abandoned. After we had fired our gun at least 4 times, one of our Sherman tanks came down the street at high speed and fired its gun. It fired as it rocked to a halt, then backed at high speed back up the street. I'm sure

## HELP SPREAD THE WORD ABOUT BOBA!

YOU are all our best membership advocates. When you meet someone at a military organization, or anywhere else, and get to talking about WWII, please hand them one of these promo cards so they can learn more about BOBA via our website, and encourage them to join us! We have made up these cards for you to download, print and fill in your name. (They will print 10-up on a standard business card sheet such as those made by Avery.)

If you'd like to print up some sheets of cards for yourself, email Tracey Diehl, BOBA Member Services, to get a printable pdf of 10 cards.

Or, if you don't have printing capability readily available, email, write or call Tracey (contact information below) and she can mail printed ones to you.

Battle of the Bulge Association, Inc.

PO Box 27430

Philadelphia, PA 19118-0430

703-528-4058

email: [tracey@battleofthebulge.org](mailto:tracey@battleofthebulge.org)



You've just met \_\_\_\_\_,  
a member of the Battle of the Bulge Association, Inc.

Learn more about us at: [www.battleofthebulge.org](http://www.battleofthebulge.org)

Or call: 703-528-4058

it reported that it destroyed the tank. I don't think that it even hit the tank as it never stopped moving and aiming would have been difficult. The number of claimed tank kills was probably ten times the German production. Aircraft, artillery, tanks, and antitank units frequently all claimed the same tank. What might have been a very dangerous mission for us was more like a training exercise.

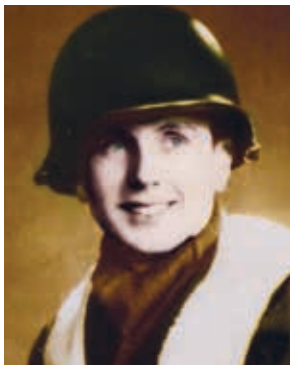
The crew of our gun all received Bronze Star awards. The citation is reproduced below:

*"For meritorious service in connection with military service against the enemy in Belgium, December 26, 1944.*

*"As a member of a gun crew occupying a position from which effective fire could not be placed on and enemy tank which was firing on friendly forces, Private First Class Harvey, completely disregarding his own safety, in full view of the enemy and under direct fire, together with four other soldiers, moved an antitank gun by hand 50 yard to this new position delivering fire from this new position which destroyed the enemy tank. The dauntless, daring action, disdain for danger and exemplary conduct displayed by First Class Private Harvey enabled his unit to continue its advance and reflects the highest credit upon himself and the service of the United States."*

# REMEMBERING THE 72ND ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE

by J. David Bailey, Company F, 422nd Infantry,  
106th Infantry Division



To share with equal voice and spoken words, on the 72nd Anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge, the Bulge Veterans tend to remember more and more about the war — its enormity — like some time release capsule in our minds. Today, in our later years, we walk a little slower and some of the spring in our step is gone. Time has taken its toll and our ranks grow thinner day-by-day.

However, when we were young men we did save the World! No other generation

in the history of mankind can make such a claim. Not the founders of the American Revolution, not those who fought in the Civil War, not even the ancient Greeks and Roman. Granted generation in the past have had greater struggles and more daunting challenges, but at best they were the saviors of only a town or a country. And what did we help save? You bet, the World!

Yet isn't it ironically fitting that the eventual victory in the most intense, deadly and important struggle in human history should seem rather ordinary to those who won it, and those that benefited the most from it? Even my own family in Bluefield, West Virginia on returning home from the War never asked me about my experiences and this seemed normal most everywhere.

Let me take you back to the last century to the early 40s. After Pearl Harbor, the young men in Bluefield joined the service not for honor, not for glory, and certainly not for lasting tribute. We joined the service because our country was attacked and we were in need. But actually the World needed us as well. It isn't that the British, French, Russians, Chinese and the freedom loving people of the world did not contribute mightily. They did and suffered severe hardships.

But back then with Europe almost in chains, Asia tethering on the edge of collapse, the Pacific in flames and the incredible brave British hanging on by their own fingernails, it was up to we American to save the World from the unspeakable horrors of global Fascist domination.

Yes, during this commemorative period of 72nd Anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge we the remaining survivors should take great pride in remembering we served our country well and helped save the World. On this anniversary who can deny that the actions of our generation and the War in which we were engaged would have such a profound effect on the universe.

It has been a privilege and honor to serve as National President of the Veterans of the Battle Of the Bulge, Inc. when I traveled as far as the State of Louisiana to spread the word. I have attended in Europe on December 16th — the 50th, 60th, and 70th reunions in Luxembourg and Belgium — very rewarding experiences. I recently read on the internet that there will be a 75th Reunion in Belgium in 2019. My comrade Alvin Sussman, also of the Golden Lion 106th Division, and I do plan to attend. It could be the last commemorative reunion where a VBOB is present. Life has no great surprises — noted — when it is over, it is over!



## HAVE OLD NEGATIVES FROM WWII?

Want to see you fellow comrades faces again? David Black, husband of member Tana Van Nice Black (Dad: Daniel Van Nice, 30 INFD, 119 REG, CO E) has graciously agreed to scan old WWII negatives to a digital format for veterans. He is a Vietnam Veteran and began scanning his own negatives after the war, and is willing to do the same for you! War negatives only, please!

Contact him at:

David Black

41612 N. Rolling Green Way

Anthem AZ 85086-1152

## A SPECIAL TRIBUTE



I was born on December 16th, so this day has always been special to me, but as I grew up and learned about history, it became even more special. This year, to honor all the soldiers involved in the horrible Ardennes battle, I decided to do something exceptional. I went to the Losheim Crossroads (Belgian Ardennes) at 5:30 a.m., at the exact place and time where the battle began 72 years ago, to light a candle to remember all the soldiers who suffered during this horrible battle. I would like to share this special moment with all the BOBA members and veterans, to be sure no one ever forgets what happened there on December 16th 1944, at 5:30 a.m., 72 years ago.

—Submitted by Jean-Marie Plusquin, Member



# FRENCH LEGION OF HONOR AWARD POLICY CHANGE

On 10 November 2016, the French Ambassador, at the Embassy, sponsored an award event in which fourteen WWII Veterans were presented the French Legion of Honor (*see photo, right.*) The veterans represented both the US Army and the Army Air Corp. Several were veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, including one paratrooper who served in the 509th Parachute Infantry Battalion. Another was an old friend of Col. Dillard from his days in Army Intelligence. Age and medical problems were very present among the veterans, but these factors did not keep them away from the honors they so rightly deserved.

In discussions with the French Chief of Staff at the Embassy, it was learned that prior policy had changed a bit, so now if a WWII eligible veteran who has applied for the LOH and received a letter stating such approval, BUT IN THE MEANTIME HAS PASSED AWAY, THE FAMILY MAY RECEIVE THE MEDAL. (Before this change in policy, the veteran had to attend the ceremony to receive the medal.)

Additionally, the French are concerned that there are still many WWII European veterans who have not received the medal and should be encouraged to apply for it. This notice is very important for those veterans who have not applied for the medal, or just do not know of its existence. They should be contacted by our membership and assisted in applying for the medal. Col. Dillard, a holder of the Legion

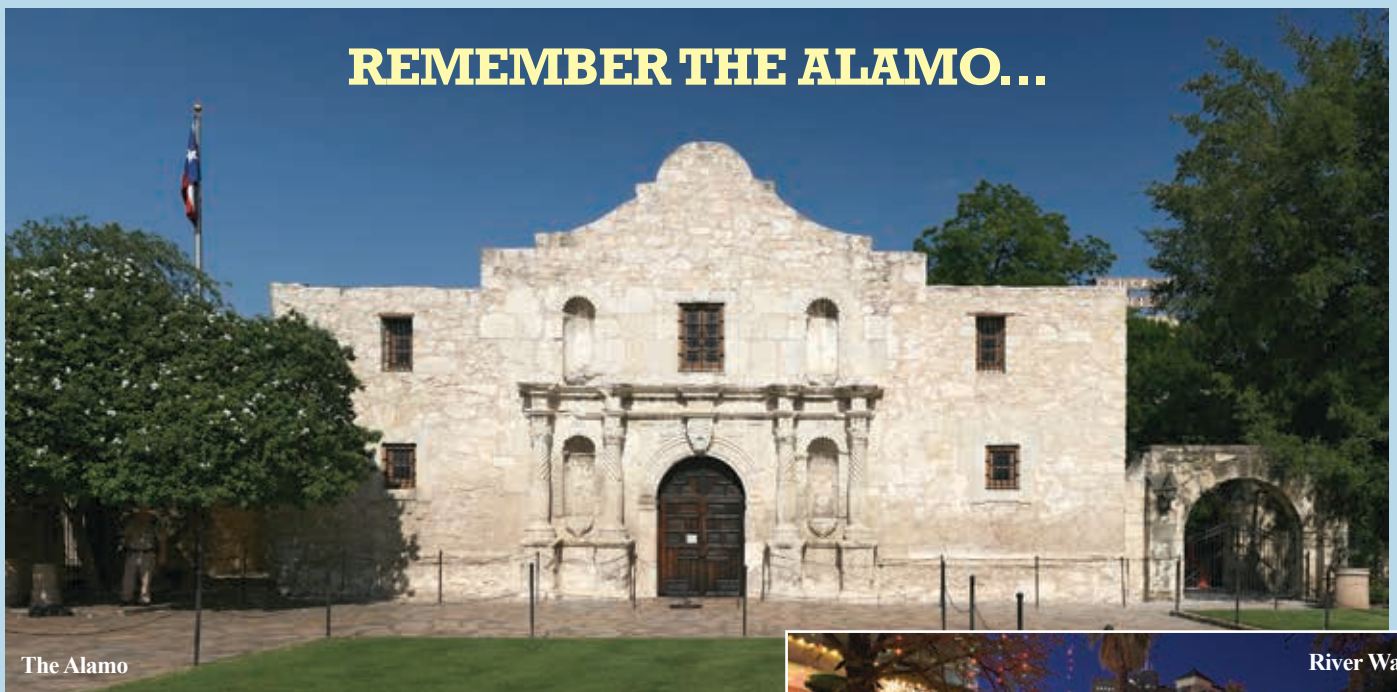


of Honor, was invited to the ceremony by the French Embassy staff and discussed the foregoing comments with the Chief of Staff at the Embassy to ensure it was new policy. Col. Dillard is a point of contact for this information and will assist veterans in their application for the award.

*For more information, contact Doug Dillard, 12114 Longridge Lane, Bowie, MD 20715, (301) 262-2439, Coldillard@gmail.com*

*—Submitted by Col. Doug Dillard, VBOB Past President*

## REMEMBER THE ALAMO...



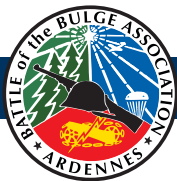
The Alamo

...And the **2017 Battle of the Bulge Reunion**,  
San Antonio TX, coming in Fall 2017.  
Look for details and registration forms in  
your May 2017 issue of *The Bulge Bugle*.



River Walk





# CHAPTERS COMMEMORATE BULGE ANNIVERSARY

## CHAPTER 56 WREATH LAYING

Member Robert Betz and his two daughters, Brianna and Faith, laid a wreath at the Fort Monmouth NJ Chapter 56 VBOB Monument on December 15, 2016. The monument is located at the Thorne Middle School, which Brianna attends, and named in honor of Horace (Bud) Thorne, Medal of Honor Recipient awarded for action in the Battle of the Bulge. Mr. Betz reports: "Both of my daughters have been going to VBOB Meetings since they were born." The wreath was purchased by Chapter 56.



—Submitted by Robert Betz, Member

## DECEMBER 16, 72 YEARS LATER



On December 16, 2016 in St. Louis, Dr. George Despotis raised his glass of Calvados, the famous apple brandy of France, in a toast to the VBOB veterans who left us this year and to the nearly 20,000 citizen soldiers who gave their lives in the Ardennes Campaign for our freedom. The WWII veterans assembled instantly recognized the pungent taste from seven decades ago, when they liberated Europe and stopped the powerful German advance in the crucial Battle of the Bulge.

This day was a time to once again thank and praise all of these incredible soldiers for the freedom they brought forth. The St. Louis Gateway Chapter commemorated the start of

the great Battle at its Annual Memorial Service and Christmas Banquet. Well over 100 veterans and guests attended the memorial service, during which the Webster Groves High School Jazz Band performed music from wartime 1940s.

During the memorial, the names and military units of 12 VBOB members who died in 2016 were called. They were infantry, armored and air corps. One was a holocaust survivor liberated by the veterans present. Another was the legendary Lyle Bouck, Jr., who at age 21, led his small band of men in forcing a crucial delay of overwhelming enemy forces. There was also a POW. Yet another survived the bloody Battle of Hürtgen Forest and the Bulge. All were extraordinary men of great courage.

The memorial concluded with the band playing a stirring rendition of "Taps." Safely rest, you Great Americans.

—Submitted by Ben Weber, Member, Gateway Chapter (25)

## WE HONOR, WE REMEMBER

Today, December 16th, a cold and sunny day in New York, Chapter #52-Staten Island, once again this year honored the memories of the Battle of the Bulge. A large crowd gathered at the V.B.O.B Memorial Site at Wolfe's Pond Park. In attendance were officers and members of Chapter #52, local dignitaries, students from a nearby Catholic school, and the families and friends of our veterans. New and individual pavers honoring veterans were commemorated on the beautiful "Walkway of Remembrance," with their families there for this special dedication. A Marine honor guard paid homage with a gun salute and the playing of "Taps." The highlights of the morning were the presence and words, genuinely spoken, by the Consul General of Luxembourg in NY, Hon. Ms. Crauser, and the Ambassador/Consul General of Belgium in NY, H.E. Calcoen. Luncheon followed, during which Bulge stories and warm conversation were shared.

God Bless our Veterans. God Bless America.

—Submitted by Angela M. Fazio, Member

## A GENEROUS TRIBUTE



Photo courtesy Jim McCarty, Cape May County Herald

South Jersey Chapter (61) had their annual luncheon at the Mad Batter restaurant in Cape May, hosted by owner Mark Kulkowitz. Kulkowitz's father, Harry, is a veteran of the Battle of the Bulge, and Mark, a BOBA member, generously honors the veterans every year with the complimentary luncheon. The event's guest speaker was U.S. Coast Guard TRACEN Cape May Commanding Officer Capt. Owen Gibbons. The South Jersey Chapter is presently inactive, as many members are unable to attend regular meetings, but they hope to meet again at the restaurant next December to commemorate the anniversary of the Bulge.

**WE NEED YOUR CHAPTER NEWS!**

Send to: [tracey@battleofthebulge.org](mailto:tracey@battleofthebulge.org)

**SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL CHAPTER!**

Go to pages 2-3 for the list of active chapters.



Don McQuade, M2OCW Board of Director member and volunteer coordinator, portraying Col. Hurley Fuller, commander of the 110th IR, 28th Inf Div and Chris Schneider, M2OCW President, portraying General Heinrich von Luettwirz, commander of 47th Panzer Korps. They were preparing for a presentation at Fort Harrison State Park concerning their troops' fighting during the Battle of the Bulge.

## CHAPTER 47 ACTIVITIES

*Central Indiana Chapter (47) President Chris Schneider sent us their news via a newsletter. Here are some highlights:*

Chapter 47 held a chapter meeting on 16 December, 2016 with Brigadier General Donald R. Canaday as speaker. General Canaday served 21 years in the US Army starting at the rank of private and included tours in Korea and Vietnam.

The Museum of 20th Century Warfare (M2OCW), located at Ft. Harrison State Park, held Battle of the Bulge events throughout December 2016 and January 2017, including Battle of the Bulge reenactments, a lecture series, and Bulge displays.

Chapter 47 also participated in the Veterans Day Parade, 11 November 2016, on a clear, sunny day of 59 degrees. Their convoy consisted of five vehicles: Neal Allman's Jeep, Tom Koppel's WC54, Brad Stansberry's Jeep, Rich Hooper's Diamond T wrecker and Tim Blakeley's Silver Flash.

## HUDSON VALLEY CHAPTER (49) ANNUAL LUNCHEON

At the Hudson Valley Chapter (49) annual luncheon (shown, left to right below): Thomas Gatta (Company E, 35th Infantry Division, 174th Infantry Regiment); William Leunig (285th Engineer Combat Battalion); Alan Atwell (28th Infantry Division); Coolidge Copeland (87th Infantry Division); Matthew Swedick (President, Grandfather John Swedick KIA 12-17-44, 2nd Infantry Division, 23rd Infantry Regiment, K Co.) Several members were featured in a local news story: [www.saratogian.com/general-news/20161216/battle-of-the-bulge-veterans-honor-comrades](http://www.saratogian.com/general-news/20161216/battle-of-the-bulge-veterans-honor-comrades).



## CHAPTER 23 ANNUAL BANQUET

Chapter #23 Michigan had their annual banquet in Traverse City, Michigan on the anniversary calendar date of the launch of the battle.

President Richard Rizzio delivered a history of the Chapter and thanked founding father and first President Maury Cole for his hard



Pictured left to right: Richard Rizzio Sr., Maury Cole, and Charlie Lewis.

work in constructing the Chapter. Richard also informed the guests that Charlie Lewis was the other of the three VBOB members attending the banquet. Richard warmly gave thanks for all their comrades' efforts, and with sadness noted that many gave their lives.

He then mentioned the Wreath Laying Ceremony scheduled for the next day at the Veterans Memorial Park in

Traverse City. Richard would be laying a wreath on the beautiful monument that commemorates the Battle of the Bulge Veterans.

In other chapter news, Richard Rizzio is featured in a news story about the Traverse City Hometown Heroes Veterans Tour. To read the story, go to: <http://www.9and10news.com/story/33421146/traverse-city-area-veterans-honored-for-hometown-heroes-veterans-tour>.

—Submitted by Tom Mountz, Member



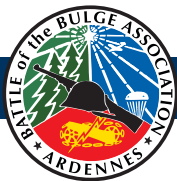
Lehigh Valley Chapter (55) meeting (Seated left to right): Clem Reed, Gordon Fenicle, Lionel Adda, Bud Fluck, Louis Vargo, and Frank Maresca. Standing left to right: Donald Burdick, Susan Alexander (artist), Matthew Stephens (who donated the gifts to the veterans.)

## LEHIGH VALLEY CHAPTER MEETING

Over 40 WWII veterans and guests were on hand for the December 13th, 2016 meeting of the Lehigh Valley Chapter (55) of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge at the Best Western Hotel in Bethlehem, Pa. It was also the day for their annual Christmas party, with much friendship, laughter, the singing of Christmas carols, and a host of food.

A special gift was made to seven of the Battle of the Bulge veterans in attendance. Local artist Susan Alexander presented each of the men with a "Hearts of Hope," a special gift with a simple message of "creating hope — one heart at a time." —Submitted by Stephen Savage





### SOUTH CAROLINA CHAPTER (7) KEEPS VERY BUSY!



Soldiers from Fort Jackson, Columbia, SC, visit with David Ray Hubbard, nearly 94, WWII veteran, at Victory Ranch, Eastover, SC, a Christian ministry to soldiers from Fort Jackson. David, nearly 94, was working for the FBI during the war. Mr. Hubbard volunteered for the Army, and was sent to England *two days later* without basic training, to become a part of the Quartermaster's Corps, and later a part of the Signal Corps, to participate in the planning of the Normandy invasion.

Vern Brantley and Leif Maseng made the front page of *The State* newspaper on November 2nd. The article was promoting an SCETV documentary "South Carolinians in World War II: Return to Normandy" which featured Vern, Leif, Gerald, and Joe and aired as a Veterans Day salute.

We learned that Murray Price, our speaker at the last meeting who told us that he wished he had an opportunity to get a college degree, was awarded an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree by Newberry College on Veterans Day. Congratulations, Murray!

The South Carolina Military History Club featured our very own Tom Burgess at their meeting on November 15th. Tom gave a presentation about his World War II service and then showed pictures of a recent trip to Europe, including a return to Czechoslovakia and the celebration in the town of Plauen, where they are still commemorating the

American liberation 71 years later. Tom showed pictures of numerous Europeans dressed as American World War II soldiers and supporters. What a tribute by those who know the value of freedom, and who honor those who secured it. It was great to have fellow VBOB members Vern, David, Leif, and Gerald at the meeting as well.

Thanks to all who have made our organization successful the past two years. Officers, Board members, chapter members, speakers, and guest have all added so much. I can't imagine a finer group of folks to spend time with. I look forward to working with Rick [Hurst] as he assumes the duties of chapter president. I predict great things for our group. —Submitted by Nelson McLeod, outgoing chapter President



Marcel and Mathilde Schmetz were guests of the SC Chapter meeting on 10 December. Mathilde gave a presentation on the Remember Museum 39-45 in Thimister-Clermont, Belgium, which she and Marcel have owned and operated since June 1994. The museum's collection of artifacts began when eleven year old Marcel kept items left behind by US Servicemen who had camped on his parents' farm during the Battle of the Bulge. Mathilde and Marcel were gracious in their thanks to veterans who had liberated their country. Flanking Marcel and Mathilde are Vernon Brantley and Tom Burgess. Seated are Joe Watson, Walter Hedges, Leif Maseng, David Hubbard, Gerald White, and Chris Carawan.



### Name Badges from [badgeworksplus.com](http://badgeworksplus.com)

Our supplier of name badges is Badge Works Plus located in El Paso, Texas.

Any member or chapter can order name badges for about \$10.40 each (price depends on fastener) plus \$4.95 shipping.

White Badges are for local chapters, and for national members (who are not officers or directors.) Gold badges are for national Board of Directors only. The local chapter is listed next to the BOBA logo with the position in the chapter, if applicable.

VBOB badges will still be available for Veterans who want one with the VBOB logo on it. (Veterans can get the new BOBA badge if they prefer.) Veterans should list the unit they served with during the Battle of the Bulge under their name and all others should just read "Member."

All former Associates (now "Members" of BOBA) should get the new badges with the BOBA logo.

I encourage all members to wear their

name badges when at BOBA meetings or other veteran organization meetings, as well as any other time it would be appropriate to show pride in our association.

To order online, go to [badgeworksplus.com](http://badgeworksplus.com), click on: Badges, Specialty Badges, Order Online, then click on the VBOB or BOBA logo, click the white or gold badge as appropriate, and select the fastener type, then proceed to checkout.

—Submitted by Alan Cunningham



# BROWNLEE BUSH FIGHTS FREEZING COLD, NAZIS IN HISTORIC WORLD WAR II BATTLE

reprinted with permission from the *Tillamook Headlight Herald*

Brownlee Bush grew up in the Redwood Empire of northern California in a small town called Requa near the mouth of the Klamath River. With an Indian reservation nearby, about half of his school were Indians.

He left school after the eighth grade and went to work driving trucks in logging camps in the local forest. "The war came along and everybody needed help."

His life in Northern California was a world away from the War in Europe. Those two worlds collided in 1944 when he was drafted.

Less than a year later he landed in France and was assigned to the 333rd Regiment of the 84th Infantry Division.

That was the beginning of a tour through Belgium and Germany which put him in the center of the war.

Later, he would be one of the five to survive through the end of the war out of the 200 soldiers in the unit when he arrived.

He was in the Battle of the Bulge.

He helped liberate German forced labor camps.

He was at the Elbe River when the Army was told to stop there, patrol and wait to meet up with Russian forces invading from the east.

He still remembers vividly when he was in the Battle of the Bulge shortly after arriving in Europe.

"I got my feet frozen in Belgium 72 years ago next month," he recalled recently. That was when he was part of one of the most famous battles against Nazi Germany - the Battle of the Bulge.

His unit was originally headquartered in the Netherlands, preparing for the invasion of Germany when they were reassigned to stop the last ditch German winter offensive Americans called the Battle of the Bulge.

The fighting was done in bitter, subzero cold and blizzard condition where the weather could be just as deadly as the Nazi soldiers.

Once, he and several other soldiers hid in a barn using the breath from the cows to try to keep warm. "It worked," he said.

That morning, the American soldiers discovered something else, a pair of Nazis had taken refuge from the cold upstairs. "We could hear them speaking German," he recalled. The Americans captured the Nazis upstairs.

A short time later, his unit was tasked to liberating slave labor camps operated by the Nazis.

"We must have opened the gates on a dozen slave labor camps," recalled Bush.

He was shocked. "The guys were emaciated and couldn't get out of bed. Some were dead.

"I couldn't go into another one after that. The smell was too much."

The largest camp liberated by the 333rd was in Salzwedel, Germany. Bush later learned than many of its inmates had come from the "extermination camp" at Auschwitz, Poland.

The 3,000 women held in the Salzwedel camp had been forced to make shell casings for small arms.

Bush was one of four men who opened the Salzwedel camp's gates. When they got ready to leave, the camp's SS cook attempted to escape.

One of the Allied soldiers shot him.

According to the division's combat chronicles, the 84th took the German towns of Wurm and Mullendorf, Dec. 18, before moving to Belgium to help stem the German winter offensive. Battling in snow,

sleet, and rain, the Division threw off German attacks, recaptured Verdenne by Dec. 28.

In the ensuing weeks, the division took Beffe and Devantave, then seized La Roche.

By mid-January, the Nazi offensive had been stopped. The 84th went on the offensive, taking both Gouvvy and Beho.

By early February, the Railsplitters Division assumed responsibility for the Roer River zone, between Linnich and Himmerich. Two weeks later, the Division cut across the Roer, took Boisheim and Dulken, and then crossed the Niers Canal taking Krefeld before the unit reached the Rhine.

After crossing the Rhine, the Division drove from Lembeck toward Bielefeld in conjunction with the 5th Armored Division, crossing the Weser River to capture Hanover. By April 13, the division had reached the Elbe, and halted its advance, patrolling along the river. The Russians were contacted at Balow.

The Division remained on occupation duty in Germany after VE-Day, returning to the United States in January 1946 for demobilization.

Now in his 90s, Bush lived in Northern California for about 39 years before he moved to Oregon, and eventually to Tillamook.

He has outlasted most of his comrades from the Railsplitter Division, attending the final official reunion several years ago in St. Louis.

He recently finished attending a Battle of the Bulge reunion in Seattle.

Bush said he doesn't know the people at the reunions any more, but he enjoyed the chances to talk about the old times and make new friends.

Still, the memories are not too far away.

He found that out when he attended a reunion in Albany (New York) almost 20 years ago. A woman asked if any members of the 333rd were attending and about four people raised their hands, according to Bush.

They found out the woman was a survivor of one of the labor camps the unit had liberated and that she eventually married an American and had a daughter. She had been wanting to thank the Americans who saved her and others in the camps. Edith Plakins and her family would eventually visit Bush in Oregon.

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## "75 YEARS AGO — 1941"

*Archie Johnson reports from Fort Benning:*

We moved Major General Patton (the old man) of the second Arm'd Division to his summer home. It took three trucks a whole day to move his belongings about seven miles. He sure had a lot of stuff. About thirty pairs of leather knee boots. He drives a special Packard sedan and his wife drives a Packard coupe. He moved into a large log cabin. It took twenty-five keys to unlock all the doors. There were fifteen men to help move and he loosened up and gave us 50 cents each for handling his stuff so carefully. I can't tell you what his wages are because no one here seems to know.

—*Reprinted with permission from The Comfrey Times*

# A WORLD WAR II LOVE STORY WITH AN INTERNET CLOSURE

by Patrick Bieneman,  
husband of Carol Bieneman, Member

My father-in-law, Clyde E. Roller, served during WWII as an infantryman in Company F, 12th Infantry Regiment of the 4th Infantry Division. The 4th Infantry Division fought in France, Luxembourg, Belgium and Germany. On September 17, 1944, at the age of 19, Clyde received his first Purple Heart, when he was wounded near the German/Luxembourg border. He suffered a concussion, chest injuries and a sprained ankle. On December 21, 1944, at the age of 20, near Connsdorf, Luxembourg, he received his second Purple Heart when he was wounded again. His injury this time was listed as a "blast injury to chest from a high explosive artillery round." A few months later, Clyde received his third Purple Heart, once again from concussion from tank gun fire which knocked him out, and other injuries. He was sent back to England. He was discharged from the hospital on March 17, 1945 but remained in England until he was reassigned as a "Grave Digger and Handler of Bodies.." Then he was sent to Luxembourg City to help lay out and build the American Cemetery, and to bury bodies there.



(left) Clyde E. Roller, 4th InfD, 12th Inf Reg, Company F, and (right) Marcel Mischo, in Luxembourg, 1945.

While assigned in Luxembourg, Clyde met a young Luxembourger soldier named Marcel Mischo and became friends. When he could get a pass, Clyde would go and have supper with Marcel and his family. Then one day Marcel's sister, Madeleine, was released from a German Labor Camp and returned home. Clyde and Madeleine soon fell in love. Within a few months Madeleine was with child.

Clyde tried to marry her but was sent home before he could. Clyde wanted to go back and get both Madeleine and their son, but because of the injuries he received in the war he was neither physically or financially able to. Clyde could not hold down a job because he suffered from epilepsy and his lungs were slowly being eaten away from a disease he picked up when wounded by shrapnel.

After a few years, Clyde did get married to a young lady. He and she had four daughters. Clyde still wanted to get Madeleine and his son to the states but he just couldn't. Over the years, Clyde would get Christmas Cards with no return address, and he just knew they were from his son. The last card Clyde received had a New Jersey return address. Clyde had his eldest daughter write a letter back, stating that he was dying and would really like to meet his on just once before he died. No reply was ever received, and Clyde passed away on April 9, 1976.

My wife, Carol, and her sisters talked many times about wanting to meet their brother. Carol and I had visited the cemetery at Hamm but we did not have the information need to find Madeleine or her son. Around the 10th-14th of October 2007, Carol and her sister, Barbara, were talking and decided they would never get to meet their brother.

On the 23rd of November, I went to check my emails and received the following:

*Dear Patrick,*

*I hope to reach by this way. I found your name as the son-in-law, honoring Clyde Elmer Roller. I try to trace the way Clyde Elmer Roller in Europe during WWII and I hope to get some information via this way from you and Carol. I'm in Germany and would most appreciate to learn if Clyde is still alive and in case to get his coordinates. Or to get directly in contact with Carol. Where do you live in the states? Can I call you? Or do you prefer to stay in contact via email? Please let me know if this email reaches the right Patrick and Carol.*

*J. Claude Kemp*

Well, Carol started getting all excited. "That's my brother!" she kept saying. But I didn't want her to get her hopes up and then become crushed. So I emailed Claude back asking why he wanted the information. He emailed back saying, "There is no easy way to say this, but I am Clyde's son." Claude's mother, Madeleine married almost 10 years after Claude was born. She married a man named Kemp and as required by law, Claude was adopted by this man.

Claude said that his mother had given him a box, but told him he was not allowed to open it until she died. Claude took the box back to Germany with him. After almost six months, Claude told his mom that if the box contained information about his father, he needed to know that information *now*. She finally said okay. In the box there was a stack of letters that Clyde had sent to Madeleine, as well as a newspaper article about him, and several photos. We told Claude that we would mail a couple of pictures and he would do the same. When we got the letter from Claude, we knew this was truly Clyde's son, because the pictures he sent us were almost identical to the ones we sent him.

Claude said that as he was growing up, his mother would take him to the cemetery in Hamm and place flowers on a grave. He just knew that this was his father's grave, but it turned out that it wasn't. Madeleine and a couple of other girls had found an American pilot who had been shot down and killed, and they turned him over to the American authorities. Madeleine was carrying on the tradition of taking flowers from her garden and putting them on the soldier's grave.

After several phone calls and emails, Claude decided that he and his wife would fly to Kentucky to meet his American sisters. Claude had never been in the southern part of America, even though he had traveled much the west and north.

Last year Carol and I flew to Germany, and Claude picked us up at Frankfurt International Airport. We drove from there to Luxembourg. For a long time, Madeleine had said that we were not welcome in her home, but we had sent Claude a lot of pictures for him to share with his mother. She then told Claude that Carol and Patrick are welcome in her home. We spent six days in Luxembourg sightseeing, but we also spent a lot of time with Madeleine. It was a very special time, and it was very easy to see how Clyde fell in love. Madeleine told us how she had waited for 10 years for Clyde. It was only because of her father's insistence that Madeleine married another man. Madeleine's father had a family member who lived in the US, and this man told him that Clyde was in bad shape, and not to let his daughter and grandson come to the states. Claude's two brothers Guy, and Roby, along with their wives, came to meet us. It was truly a great visit.

Since that time, we have stayed in contact with Claude. We have become very close to Madeleine, and we call her twice a month. In 2011, we took Carol's sister, Barbara, with us, and she and Madeleine hit it off right away.

The internet has made it possible for me to find many of the men I

served with in Vietnam. But the greatest thing that it has done is bringing two parts of a family together as one, and gave closure to a wonderful lady. She knows the man she loved never forgot her, always loved her, and told his daughters about her and their son from the beginning.

My wife Carol and I were going through some old papers we had from her dad's stay in Luxembourg and we came across a yellowed piece of paper. We opened it and found my father-in-law's signature on top and the following poem written in a lady's handwriting:

*Lilly Marlene*

*Under the lantern by the barrack gate,  
Darling I remember how you use to wait,  
Twas there that you whispered tenderly,  
That you lov'd me. You'd always be,  
My Lilli of the Lamplight, my own Lilli Marlene,  
Orders came for sailing somewhere over there,  
All confined to barracks was more than I could bear,  
I knew you were waiting in the street,  
I heard your feet but could not meet,  
My Lilli of the lamplight, my own Lilli Marlene,  
Time would come for roll call, time for us to part,  
Darling I'd caress you and press you to my heart,  
And there neath that far off lantern light,  
I'd hold you tight, we'd kiss "Good Night",  
My Lilli of the Lamplight, my own Lilli Marlene.*

Carol and I matched this against the letter that we had just received from Madeleine and the handwriting is remarkably similar.

I looked up "Lilli Marlene" and found out that it is was a poem written by a German soldier named Hans Liep during WWI. It was to his girlfriend Lilli, and also to a nurse named Marleen who would wave to him, on her way home from work, as he walked guard duty.

When he began to fear the outbreak of WWII, he composed it into a song. The Nazis hated it. Goebbels said it was not military enough. Marlene Dietrich, who was anti-Nazi, loved the sing and began singing it as much as possible. WWII began to rage in Africa. The music for the German soldiers was played from a radio station in Yugoslavia. One day, the station got hit and most of their music was destroyed. The station manager found an old box of records intact, and the bottom record was "Lilli Marlene." He had a friend serving in Africa, so he played the song. Rommel like the song because he saw it was giving *esprit de corps* to his men.

The British soldiers started singing the song in German. Back in England on a break a composer asked them to sing a song in German. They said they would if he would translate the song into English, and he agreed. They sand "Lilli Marlene." The American soldiers picked up the song as well.

We believe Madeleine wrote this poem on this piece of paper for Clyde so he would remember their love. He never forgot it, and neither did she.

Below is the song in English. You will notice the poem I have is not the complete version, but the meaning is all there. These English lyrics are by Tommie Connor, dating from 1944.

*Underneath the lantern  
By the barrack gate,  
Darling I remember  
The way you used to wait.  
'Twas there that you whispered tenderly  
That you loved me;  
You'd always be  
My Lili of the lamplight,*

*My own Lili Marlene.*

*Time would come for roll call,  
Time for us to part,  
Darling I'd caress you  
And press you to my heart,  
And there 'neath that far-off lantern light,  
I'd hold you tight,  
We'd kiss good night,  
My Lili of the lamplight,  
My own Lili Marlene.  
Orders came for sailing,  
Somewhere over there.  
All confined to barracks  
was more than I could bear.  
I knew you were waiting in the street,  
I heard your feet  
But could not meet  
My Lili of the lamplight  
my own Lili Marlene.  
Resting in our billets  
Just behind the lines,  
Even tho' we're parted,  
Your lips are close to mine.  
You wait where that lantern softly gleams,  
Your sweet face seems  
To haunt my dreams,  
My Lili of the Lamplight,  
My own Lili Marlene*

[For more photos and WWII stories, go to: [patrickbieneman.com](http://patrickbieneman.com)]

## NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to these new members who joined between  
September 16-December 31, 2016:

Andrews, Jacqueline	Member	Kramer, Kervin	Member
Aumen, Bill	Member	Laney, Thomas	Member
Barrett, Charles	Member	Marshall, Thea	Member
Bowers, Patricia	Member	McAlister, Larry	Member
Brenner, Andrew	Member	Melnyk, Walter	Member
Brinkman, Henk-Jan	Member	Mullins, Clearys	Member
Delmotte, Yves	Member	Naugher, Sarah C.	Member
Elliott Jr, Donald S.	Member	Parks, David T.	Member
House, Nancy	Member	Plifka, Terri	Member
Humke, Ann	Member	Pomfret, James J.	Member
Huseman, David W.	Member	Tennis, Bill	Member
Huseman, Rick K.	Member	Vogel, Nancy Ann	Member

We certainly are pleased to have you with us and look forward to your participation in helping to perpetuate the legacy of all who served in that epic battle. You can help immediately by:

- Talking to people about BOBA and suggesting that they also join (*Hand out our free cards shown on page 9!*)
- Promoting our website: [www.battleofthebulge.org](http://www.battleofthebulge.org)
- Sending us articles to be included in *The Bulge Bugle*
- Plan to attend our 2017 annual reunion in San Antonio, TX.  
(See the May 2017 issue for full details.)





**VET ATTENDEES AND OTHER SPECIAL GUESTS:** (Front row, left to right): Daniel W. O'Brien, 11 Armd, 56 Armd Engr; William C. 'Bill' Armstrong, 26 Inf Div, 263 FA Bn; Robert C. Schneider, 11 Armd, 151 Sig Co; Jack Stitzinger, 87 Inf Div, 346 Rgt; George J. Merz, 818 MP Co, VIII Corp; Tom Ingram, 90 Inf Div, 359 Rgt, 2 Bn; Gordena Lane, WAC; William K. Huseman, 8 Armd, 398 Armd FA Bn, HQ Bn; Charles L. Grunert, 2 Armd, 41 AIB, 2 Bn; Wayne Field, 6 Armd, 86 CAC Recon Sqd, D TP. (Back row, left to right): Brownlee Bush, 84 Inf Div, 333 Rgt; Command Sgt. Major Richard T. Mulryan, Guest Speaker; Vincent Speranza, 101 ABD, 501 PIR, 3 Bn; Fred F. Gordon, 9 Armd, 3 FA Bn; Norval 'Dick' R. Williams, 80 Inf Div, 318 Rgt; M.J. 'Mike' Levin, 7 Armd, 489 Armd, FA Bn; J. David Bailey, 106 Inf Div, 422 Rgt; Marshall V. Soria, 28 Inf Div, 110 Rgt, 3 Bn; Jack Van Eaton, 78 Inf Div, 311 Rgt; Athanace Joseph 'Joe' Landry, 776 AAA AW Bn; Peter E. Munger, 30 Inf Div, 120 Rgt. (Also in the back row, Color Guard - 5 members of the ROTC from the University of WA who were so proud to be with us.)

## 2016 ANNUAL REUNION RECAP

by Doris Davis, Member & Seattle Reunion Planner; photographs by Gloria Rucker, Member

We had a wonderful time in Seattle, WA at our 35th Reunion October 5 - 9, 2016. Of the 76 registered guests this year, we had 19 BOB Veterans who were able to attend. Many family members accompanied the Veterans, and they all felt the warmth and friendliness of the group. For some, this was their first time to attend a VBOB Reunion and they really enjoyed it.

Most of the guests arrived on Wednesday, Oct 5 and participated in the Wine and Cheese Reception in the Hospitality Room. It was quite lively—everyone was very glad to see each other again. Special thanks to our exhibitors, Peter Lahmann and Alice Miller, who really added a special touch to the Hospitality Room. Peter had many items from WWII including an M-1 Bazooka, an M-1 Grand Rifle and a German Luger. Alice had many Army uniforms and other items worn by women in the military. They both mentioned how much fun they had meeting our attendees, who were very interested in their exhibits.

On Thursday, Oct 6, after breakfast, we left for Joint Base Lewis McChord and visited their small museum. (Unfortunately, part of the museum was being remodeled, but we saw the exhibits upstairs.) Outside the museum were many vehicles on display. After lunch in the base 'dining room', we had a stay-on-the bus tour narrated by Song Johnson from Public Affairs, who had coordinated all of our base activities.

On Friday, Oct 7, after breakfast, everyone had a choice of a bus tour of Seattle, a trip to Pike Place Market or a trip to the Space Needle. We enjoyed seeing the Chihuly Garden and Glass exhibit (near the Space Needle.) There were amazing artworks by the famous glass artist, Dale Chihuly, who created structures resembling swans, trees, flowers and a complete garden.

Later that evening, we all went to Famous Dave's for delicious BBQ. Where did everyone go after the BBQ? To the Hospitality Room for more conversation and visiting. This group had so much energy!

On Saturday, Oct 8, after our general membership meeting, we went to the Boeing Museum of Flight. This museum has over 160 air-and spacecraft, including a Douglas DC-2 (an early aircraft used in the 1930s), B-17 Flying Fortress (a heavy bomber used by the US Army Air Corps), as well as more current aircraft like the Concorde 214 and a 787 Boeing Dreamliner. There are many WWI and WWII aircraft on display, from several countries including Germany, Russia and Japan. It was hard to see everything, because the museum takes up 3 acres.

On Sunday, Oct 9, everyone had a chance to visit their 2nd choice of either Pike's Market, the Space Needle or the stay-on-the bus tour of Seattle, and go back to the Hospitality Room for more visiting.

The hotel staff was great—always responsive when we needed anything. Special thanks goes to Diana Waddell and Diane Witt of the Doubletree Hotel who were so helpful. Thanks to Diane Witt, we had free breakfast and free parking, plus they loaned us huge coolers for our soda and beer. The location of the hotel was perfect, near the airport, and restaurants and stores where we could get food and snacks.

And special thanks to local chapter member Denise Frisino, for her extraordinary help in the hospitality room. And thanks to all of you who helped us with putting out snacks and keeping the room tidy. By the way, Denise Frisino has written a book called *Orchids of War* (available on Amazon.com.) And, above all, thanks to Gloria Rucker, Member, for being our photographer. She did a fabulous job.

We hope to see you at the next reunion in San Antonio!





**VET ATTENDEES WITH FAMILY MEMBERS:** (from left to right): Brownlee Bush, 84 Inf Div, 333 Rgt (and son, David Bush); Jack Van Eaton, 78 Inf Div, 311 Rgt; (and guest, Anita Sumpter); George J. Merz, 818 MP Co, VIII Corp (with son Steven Merz and daughter-in-law Deborah Randles); Marshall V. Soria, 28 Inf Div, 110 Rgt, 3 Bn (flanking him is son-in-law Mario Baraona and daughter Dolores Baraona); Gordena Lane, WAC (and daughter Connie); William K. Huseman, 8 Armd, 398 Armd FABN, HQ Bn (with his sons David Huseman and Ricky Huseman); Athanace Joseph 'Joe' Landry, 776 AAAW Bn (and his son, Steven Landry.)



# 36TH ANNUAL NATIONAL VBOB MEMBERSHIP MEETING MINUTES

The 36th Annual National Membership Meeting of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, Inc. was held on October 7, 2016 at the Double-Tree Suites by Hilton, Seattle Airport - Southcenter hotel. President Alan Cunningham called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. David Bailey, Past VBOB President, led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**VBOB REORGANIZATION:** President Alan Cunningham gave us a summary financial report: We have approximately \$150,000 in the bank, and the balance is decreasing slightly since last year. Our expenses are slightly more than our income.

Alan noted that everyone received a draft of the Battle of the Bulge Association (BOBA) bylaws in their reunion packet with the new BOBA logo on it, and we need a vote to approve said logo. John Mohor, Associate, makes a motion to approve, and it was seconded by Tom Ingram, Trustee, 90 INFD. There were no objections or discussion.

John Mohor asked if we will use the new BOBA logo on QM items. Alan responded that we will, but we're still going to have the old VBOB items available as well until the stock is exhausted. We still have about 1000 veteran members for whom the VBOB-branded items are still very relevant.

Alan reviewed the main highlights of new BOBA bylaws:

- Changing from a 501c19 veteran service organization to a 501c3 tax-exempt organization.
  - Changing our fiscal year from December 1-November 30 to January 1-December 31 to better align with IRS tax filing.
  - Our new 501c3 status means all donations to the organization are automatically tax-deductible to the individual making the donation, which they are not under our current 501c19 status. We will have some drives for donations in the next few years, including co-sponsorship of the Battle of the Bulge exhibit at the new Army Museum in Fort Belvoir, to be completed in 2019. The Duchy of Luxembourg has pledged \$125,000 to co-sponsor the exhibit, and we'd like to match that.
  - We're not going to have "Members" and "Associates" anymore—everybody will be a Member. But we'll still identify Bulge veterans as "Veteran Members."
  - "Executive Council" name changes to "Board of Directors" and we're reducing trustees from 9 to 3, for more ease in attaining a quorum at our Board meetings, held five times a year.
  - Eliminating the Corresponding Secretary position.
  - There are also other appointments at the president's discretion, including a military liaison and a chaplain.
  - Changing the maximum length of service for the president from 2 years to 3 years, for smoother operations and transitions. (President must be reelected by the membership each year.)
  - Changing the status of all past presidents as voting members of the Board of Directors to just 1—the most recent past president will be a voting board member. Again, for more ease in attaining a quorum at meetings.
  - Changing the terms of Board of Directors to align with fiscal year, January 1-December 31.
  - Chapter requirements: 3 current national members of the Battle of the Bulge Association can sign a document requesting to start a chapter. (There needs to be president, a treasurer, and a secretary.)
- Wayne Field, 6 ARMDD, made a motion to accept the new bylaws, and Peter Munger, 30 INFD seconded. Motion carried.

**DECEMBER EVENT:** Alan then reminded everybody about the Bulge remembrance event in December in D.C. The new Belgian Ambassador will have a reception at his residence. The paperwork to register for the event is available in the hospitality suite, as well as in the current Bulge Bugle.

While the Dec. event is held by the Battle of the Bulge Historical Foundation, VBOB is responsible for all the wreath layings—at Arlington Cemetery, the Battle of Bulge Memorial, the Tomb of the Unknowns, and the World War II Memorial. We are hosting Marcel and Mathilde Schmetz ("M & M") of the Remember Museum 39-45 in Belgium, and they will do one of the wreath layings. Alan invited vets to let him know if they wanted to participate in one of the wreath laying ceremonies.

He noted that anybody can do a wreath laying at the Tomb of Unknowns—they allow 3 per day. You have to have a reason, such as a family reunion, military gathering, etc. Must provide the wreath, and request well in advance.

**75TH ANNIVERSARY OF WWII:** Alan then related that there is much planning for the 75th anniversary of World War II. Events start next year and will go through the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II. Many states are involved, and our organization will be involved. We will notify members about it in *The Bugle* as planning progresses. Doris Davis, Corresponding Secretary, suggested our Board should help any small group that wants to get involved with 75th.

Alan reminded the membership that we are trying to get photos of all our World War II veteran members, in their uniforms, on our website, and to be displayed at the 75th anniversary celebration in some manner. Photos scanned at high-resolution should be emailed to [tracey@battleofthebulge.org](mailto:tracey@battleofthebulge.org).

**2017 ANNUAL REUNION:** Barbara Mooneyhan, Executive Vice President, relayed that the general membership voted last year for San Antonio, Texas as the site of the 2017 Battle of Bulge Association Reunion. San Antonio organizations have given a lot of valuable input. It will be held in late September or early October, to get the best price, best weather and the best dates.

**SEATTLE REUNION RECAP:** Doris Davis said she hoped that attendees were happy this year with the reunion, despite a small bus mix up. [Applause from general membership.] She values our members' input. Alan interjected that Doris deserves a heartier round of applause. [Louder applause from general membership.] Doris reported that Diana and Diane from the hotel staff have been very good at fulfilling our requests, and will be presented with VBOB certificates at lunchtime. Carol Higgins, Associate, contributed that Doris had been modest, has spent a lot of her time and money to set up the reunion.

**ELECTION OF BOARD FOR 2017:** Alan Cunningham explained that we're electing officers for VBOB under the old bylaws for VBOB, that are technically only going to be in place for fifteen days. Then all the officers that are elected will be transferred over to BOBA on January 1, with the exception of some of the trustees. We have reduced the number of trustees in the BOBA Board of Directors, so that it is easier to reach a quorum.



He then reviewed the nominations for 2017 Board of Directors:

**President:** Gary Higgins; **Executive Vice President:** Barbara Mooneyhan; **Vice President Membership:** Angela Fazio; **Vice President Chapters:** Sherry Klopp; **Treasurer:** Duane Bruno; **Recording Secretary:** Doris Davis; **Corresponding Secretary:** Tracey Diehl [This position will be dropped when we change over to BOBA in January.] **Three-Year Trustees:** Madeline Bryant, Tom Burgess, and John Mohor; **Two-Year Trustees:** Mike Levin, Alfred Shehab; **One-Year Trustees:** Ruth Hamilton, Robert Rhodes, and Jim Triesler.

Alan then thanked Doris Davis for stepping forward to head the nominating committee when he had to attend to a family emergency. He opened the floor for additional nominations. There were none, and the presented slate of nominees was voted in by acclamation.

**COMMENTS FROM FLOOR:** Peter Munger talked about a 501c3 organization he started called "The Society of Sons and Daughters of Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge," whose purpose is to raise higher education funds for Bulge vet descendants. All VBOB vets are automatically members, and there are no dues. He is trying to raise \$2 million to provide \$5000 grants. Visit his website: s-dvbob.org.

Joe Landry, 776 AAA AW BN, is very pleased that M & M from Belgium are coming to DC event, and gave credit to Barbara Mooneyhan for making it happen. M & M help veterans of any war. After the bombing in Brussels, people asked them to find a missing granddaughter who was at the airport during the bombing. They did, and accepted no money in return. They regularly bring vets from a hospital in Germany to their museum. WWII vets visit the museum for free.

Tracey Diehl, Recording Secretary, reminded all that material for the February *Bugle* will be due around December 24. She emphasized that we need our veterans' personal accounts of their experience in the Battle of the Bulge. Send in with a digital photo in uniform. We also want chapter news with photos. George Merz, 818 MP CO, interjected that his story was in the last *Bugle* and he was very pleased, and thanked the staff.

Dave Black, husband of Tana Van Nice Black, Associate, said he could scan and digitize old negative for members. He'll put a short writeup about it in the Bulge Bugle with his contact info.

**2017 BOBA PRESIDENT COMMENTS:** Gary Higgins, Associate, said that it will be an honor to serve BOBA. In addition to his VBOB membership, he said he is a lifetime member of the Vietnam Veterans of America, Disabled American Veterans life member and a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. His uncle landed at Normandy and managed to survive 5 major battles. In 2004, on the 60th anniversary of the Bulge, Gary made the trip to Belgium, an experience he will never forget.

He reminded us to work together to help get more members. He relayed some anecdotes, such as meeting someone on the flight to the reunion who had a family member who served in BOB, and also discovering his optometrist had a Bulge vet relative. In those situations, he speaks to them about joining VBOB. Many of our Board Members are associates now and we will step up to maintain the legacy of America's greatest generation.

Alan then told his story about being on the hotel shuttle bus, talking to a rider whose father was in BOB, and Alan gave him his Bugle. He highly recommend that we all carry something to hand out, whether it's just a card with our website address or a copy of the Bulge Bugle. Tracey Diehl noted that with advance notice, she can mail anyone extra copies of the Bugle to hand out.

A discussion from the floor then ensued about how some vets do not talk about the war with their families, but that the families need to hear it. Doris Davis introduced Bill Armstrong, 26 INFD, who was the president of the Golden Gate Chapter before her. Bill related that he used to be invited every year to a high school to speak about the Bulge. They recently stopped doing it because some parents complained.

Doris then suggested we make member cards with a member's name, and listing our website, to hand out to prospective members.

Alan stated we have gold VBOB logo name badges for the Executive Council. Any other VBOB member can order a white VBOB badge from Badgeworks.com with their name and units for \$10-12. We will change the logo to BOBA when it is in effect. We'll provide the ordering information in the next *Bulge Bugle*.

Gary Higgins rose to say that some members had asked him about his leadership qualifications. He has been president of the Lion's Club and the Farm Bureau, and served 2 governors of the state of Michigan. He recognizes parliamentary procedure, and Robert's Rules of Order. He has been Quartermaster for the VFW Post, and also the Vietnam Veterans of America. He was a sergeant with Bravo Co, First Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment.

With no further business, President Alan Cunningham then adjourned the meeting at 10:40 am.

Respectfully submitted, Tracey Diehl, Recording Secretary;  
703-528-4058; tracey@battleofthebulge.org

## 2017 BOBA BUDGET

### INCOME:

Yearly Membership Dues	\$20,700
Donations	\$4,000
Certificate Sales	\$700
Quartermaster Memorabilia Sales	\$5,300
Reunion	\$19,000
Funds from BOBA Savings Account	\$13,000

**TOTAL INCOME** **\$62,700**

### EXPENSE:

#### Bulge Bugle Publication:

Printing & Mailing Services	\$17,500
Postage	\$2,500
<b>Total Bulge Publication</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>

#### Operations:

Supplies	\$700
Mailing Services Postage	\$2,000
Printing and Copying	\$1,000
Telephone	\$600
Accounting Services & Outside Contractor Services	\$3,600
Contractor: Membership, QM Sales, Web	\$10,000
Web Site Maintenance	\$1,500
Insurance	\$1,600
Bank Service Charges	\$150
Licenses, Permits, PO Boxes	\$250
Travel	\$500
Memorial Expenses (Wreaths)	\$800
Miscellaneous	\$1,000

**Total Operations** **\$23,700**

#### Annual Reunion:

Annual Reunion Expenses	\$17,000
Travel	\$2,000

**Total Annual Reunion** **\$19,000**

**TOTAL EXPENSES** **\$62,700**

# REMEMBRANCE *and* COMMEMORATION of the 72<sup>nd</sup> ANNIVERSARY of THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE

## December 14-16, 2016 • Metropolitan Washington, DC

*Many of our members and supporters were able to attend the annual December Bulge remembrance event, hosted by the Battle of the Bulge Historical Foundation. Below are some highlights. We hope to see you there in December 2017!*

### VISITS TO THE BELGIAN AND LUXEMBOURG AMBASSADORS' RESIDENCES

During the Remembrance and Commemoration of the 72nd Anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge Dec 14 - 16, 2016, we were guests at the residence of the Ambassador of the King of Belgium to the US, Dirk Wouters, and his lovely wife Katrin Van Bragt. Along with our Veterans, Marcel and Mathilde ("M & M") Schmetz were honored that evening. M & M made the journey from Thimister-Clermont, Belgium to attend the Commemoration. Many of us know M & M because of their museum, the "Remember Museum 39-45" (website: [www.remembermuseum.be](http://www.remembermuseum.be)) Also in attendance were Johan Andries, Belgian Defense Attaché to US and Canada; Johan Verbeke, Ambassador from Belgium; and Robert McDonald, Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

We were also guests at the Residence of the Ambassador of Luxembourg, Ms. Sylvie Lucas. She and our new Consul General of Luxembourg, Stan Myck, greeted all of us.

We were honored to be guests of our Ambassadors.

—Submitted by Doris Davis  
More photos of the Belgium event (pictured, right), taken by Robert Turtill, Public Affairs Specialist of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Washington, DC., can be viewed on the VA Flickr Page: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/veteransaffairs/albums/72157676654934610>



Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge members were guests of honor at the residence of the Belgian Ambassador to the U.S., Dirk Wouters, shown here addressing the guests. VA photo by Robert Turtill

## REORGANIZATION STATUS OF VBOB TO BOBA

■ The name "The Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, Incorporated" was officially changed and recorded as "Battle of the Bulge Association, Incorporated" by the Virginia State Corporation Commission on 16 December 2016. The date of the change was unknown at the time of submission on 23 November 2016, as it was based on their workload and processing time. Having the name change become effective on the anniversary of the start of the Battle of the Bulge was a nice, unexpected outcome.

■ The new Bylaws for BOBA took affect on 1 January and we converted the Executive Council to a Board of Directors. The Executive Council voted on the conversion of positions at the last meeting on 6 December 2016. The new positions are listed on the BOBA website under the "About" tab and on pages 2 and 4 of this *Bulge Bugle*.

■ Now that the name is officially changed and we are operating under the new Bylaws, conversion from an IRS code 501c(19) to 501c(3) can be completed. (Progress will be updated in *The Bulge Bugle*.)



## VISIT TO THE PENTAGON



Pictured (left to right): Doris Davis, Gary Higgins, Steve Merz, Carol Higgins, George Merz, Jr, 818 MP, VIII Corp; Joe Landry, 776 AAA AW Bn; Marshall Soria, 28th Inf. Div, 110 Rgt.; Madeleine Bryant, Marcel and Mathilde Schmetz of the Remember Museum 39-45 in Belgium, Dolores Baraona, James Triesler and Mario Baraona.

While in Washington, DC attending the “Remembrance and Commemoration of the 72nd Anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge” a few of the Veterans and Associate Members took the opportunity to tour the Pentagon. The trip had to be set up in advance, and the tour was very interesting. We were able to see the area that was attacked by Flight 77 on September 11, 2001. There is a chapel and a ‘memory room’ in the area that was hit by the impact and was rebuilt. Lining the hallways are quilts that were made to honor those who died. It was a very meaningful tour. Outside the Pentagon, there is a garden with memorial benches dedicated to the 184 people who lost their lives either at the Pentagon or on Flight 77. Major Selwyn Johnson welcomed our Veterans on behalf of the Pentagon prior to our tour. He was proud to say “Thank you” to our Veterans.

—Submitted by Doris Davis

## THE OPPORTUNITY OF A LIFETIME

On Friday, December 16, 2016, my family and I had a chance of a lifetime. We witnessed our father, grandfather and uncle, Richard Whalen, lay a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. We were in Washington, DC to attend the Remembrance and Commemoration of the 72nd Anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge. We had 31 family members present, and many traveled quite a distance to be part of this memorable occasion. He felt honored to have this experience and we were so proud to be part of it. Along with the experience of laying the wreath, we also visited the Belgian and Luxembourg Ambassador’s Residences and were treated royally. We visited the WWII Memorial and the Holocaust Museum as part of this event. We will hold in our memory how proud Dad was to have this opportunity.

*(Richard enlisted in the US Army in Feb, 1943 at the age of 17. After basic training in Camp Barkley, in Abilene, TX, he sailed to England on the Aquitania. His first encounter in WWII was on Omaha Beach on D-Day + 10. His initial unit was 201st QM Co, Co D and*



*their name changed to 3816 GS (Gas Supply) Co. During the war, he was in France, Belgium, Holland, Luxembourg, Germany and Austria and fought in the Battle of the Bulge. Col Whalen retired in 1977 after 37 years of service which included the Michigan National Guard and Army Active duty.)*

—Submitted by Mary Towe, daughter of Col. Richard Whalen



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[www.facebook.com/pages/Battle-of-the-Bulge-Association-Inc](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Battle-of-the-Bulge-Association-Inc)  
**VISIT OUR WEBSITE:**  
[www.battleofthebulge.org](http://www.battleofthebulge.org)







## BATTLE OF THE BULGE ASSOCIATION TOURS 2017

Tours are an excellent opportunity to visit the places where your father, grandfather, uncle or family friend served in World War II. See the battlefields where he fought. Meet the people of the local communities which he liberated. Participate in official ceremonies honoring the Veterans. Tours have 'transformed' many 2nd and 3rd generations as they stand in the very place where their loved ones fought. Tours are also the very best way for today's and future generations to forever honor, celebrate and memorialize the Veteran's military achievements, history and heritage.

The Battle of the Bulge Association has expert, dedicated people to help you. Two of the best known and most experienced are **Roland Gaul** and **Patrick Hinchy**. They are also your living link with the past, because both of them were the great friends of many veterans over many years, accompanying them back to their battlefields. **Roland Gaul**, founder and CEO of Luxembourg's National Museum of Military History in Diekirch, is the author of two highly rated military histories of the southern Bulge. He recently retired as full-time Museum CEO to devote himself to military history research. Together with his wife, Silvia, he provides customized in-depth tours of the Southern Bulge in Luxembourg, Belgium and the German border region for small groups, such as veteran family groups. **Patrick Hinchy** has for the past 30 years, specialized in creating, planning and guiding long distance tours for larger US veterans and legacy groups, both in the Battle of the Bulge and throughout Europe. Patrick has a masters degree from Oxford University and speaks German, French and Italian. Here are two of his planned tours for 2017:

### **NUREMBERG, PILSEN LIBERATION FESTIVAL & PRAGUE TOUR April 30 - May 9, 2017**

Patrick has created a tour to go to the Pilsen Liberation Festival in the Czech Republic. This is the great annual anniversary festival, the largest of its kind in Europe, celebrating the end of World War II and the fall of communism, and also expressly thanking America. Pilsen loves Americans, especially General Patton and Third Army, which liberated them on May 6, 1945. All US veterans, their families and friends are very welcome. More details soon on the Battle of the Bulge Association website and in the next *Bulge Bugle*.

### **94TH INFANTRY DIVISION HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2017 WORLD WAR II PILGRIMAGE**

Patrick was asked by the legacy association of the 94th Infantry Division to propose, plan and guide a Pilgrimage Tour to Europe in October 2017. It highlights Normandy, Brittany, Paris, the Battle of the Bulge and advance to the Rhine. This is typical of the kind of customized, long-distance European tour which Patrick creates, plans, organizes and guides for larger veterans/legacy groups.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION: contact Doris Davis, Associate Member and President, BOBA Golden Gate Chapter. Email: [doris@battleofthebulge.org](mailto:doris@battleofthebulge.org) Tel (650) 654-0101 (PST)**

## ROLL ON!



**Marshall V. Soria,**  
**28 InfD, 110 Reg, 3 Bn, Co C**

Marshall V. Soria, at 24 years old and a family man, entered the Army at Camp Roberts, Paso Robles, CA. in July, 1944. After training, Marshall then traveled across the Atlantic in one week on board the *Queen Mary*. The troops landed in Glasgow, Scotland. In the early part of January, 1945, Marshall and his group then went by train to Southampton, England. They then crossed the channel in barges and landed at Le Havre, France. After the 110th Infantry Division were licking their wounds, which they received in the Hurtgen Forest and in the Ardennes during December 1944, Marshall, with

another 2500 men, were the replacements troops for the badly mauled 28th division. They always traveled by night in frigid box cars with 30 to 40 men in each car. Marshall remembered that while in transit, they lost a couple of men due to those frigid conditions. They arrived in Fumay, France around the 10th of January. Here defensive positions were constituted. The 3rd Battalion was set up around January 15th, and also

the separate companies were reorganized.

Marshall became a U.S. citizen in September, 1944, but in Fumay he was not allowed to join his squad because he had no proof of U.S. citizenship. The next day, January 21st, his citizenship was official and he then was transferred (at night) to patrol in the Vosges Mountains near Colmar. His group held defensive positions for about 10 days. It was during this time that Marshall suffered frostbite because he was only issued one pair of boots. Marshall refused medical attention and stayed with his squad. This is the only injury Marshall received during his stint in the Army.

For a couple of weeks in early February, passing through the Alsace Plains, they participated in the reduction of the Colmar Pocket. They then headed further east across the L'Ille River and Rhine-Rhone Canal to the west bank of the Rhine, where the 3rd battalion met with some heavy resistance. About 30 casualties were inflicted. During this time, after leaving the Vosges, his group was involved in cleaning out pockets of German resistance. According to Marshall, most of the German soldiers were kids.

After Colmar, all Marshall can remember is that there was a lot of marching going on. "Roll On" was their motto. The next stop was a train ride for the troops and more marching towards the Monschau Forest before Aachen, Germany. By the end of February, the Division had returned north to the American First Army and was in the line along the Olef River. March 6th was the jump-off date for an attack which carried the Keystone towards the Ahr River. Krall, Sotenich,

Zingsheim, Schleiden, Gemund, Tondorf and Antweiler all fell in the rapid advance. Many prisoners and large stores of enemy weapons, equipment and ammunition were taken.

The Rhine was crossed and the 28th advanced towards the vicinity of Fussingen, Germany. Early in April, the Division and Marshall then headed west of the Rhine and then performed occupation duties in the area north of Aachen along the Holland-German border. Two weeks later came a move to the permanent occupation area, the Saarland. The 3rd battalion in Rohrbach, Company C's duties were to guard displaced Russian and Poles. Early in July the Division started redeployment to the United States, arriving home in August 1945.

There was constant fighting action during Marshall's tour of duty. He did not have time to look after any fallen comrades, because he knew he would also become a casualty. He would make a friend here or there, but by the next day, he would not see them again due the battles or reassignment. His squad and platoon fought against the Germans on their own. The French came in afterwards to secure the areas that Marshall's group had cleared. Since Marshall was the BAR rifle man, his ammo carrier was Jerry T. Gifford of Seattle, WA. He and Jerry remained with the squad until they left France and Germany.

—Submitted by Mario & Dolores Baraona (daughter of Soria)

## CLOSE CALLS

by Ken Soderstrom, 76 InfD, 417 Inf Reg, 3 Bn, Co K

*Below is an excerpt from a lengthy treatise Mr. Soderstrom has put together about WWII:*

War is hell - make no mistake. In Tolstoy's "War and Peace" he says "War is the most horrible thing in Life."

In my 76th Infantry Division of 15,000 soldiers (of which 9000 were combat infantry troops) over 5,500 became casualties – killed, wounded, injured, and we were in actual combat for only 3 ½ months. Obviously, some divisions were in combat for longer periods of time, and/or endured more severe fighting conditions than we did and they

suffered many more casualties than we did. Replacing combat casualties was a major operation during the war.

So, some close calls that I still recall:

In one pillbox where we were penned in by German fire power, I recall two of our machine gunners, Frisch (a fast-talking salesman from WI) and Wolfe (a Pennsylvania Dutchman with strong accent), took a bucket and went to find some water, going out a sort of "back door." As they returned, we heard rifle and enemy machine guns firing at them. As they ran back to the pillbox, Frisch tore through the iron-gate entrance to the pillbox and slammed the gate closed. Wolfe, who was carrying the bucket of water, swore at Frisch in his thick accent, "Gott dammit, Frisch, you locked me out." We quickly opened the gate and Wolfe fell inside the pillbox, and water was squirting out through two bullet holes in the bucket. The bullets were still inside the bucket, along with the dwindling water supply.

While we were in that same pillbox, Germans would fire at us periodically from one or two other pillboxes. During a lull, I went outside the front gate with a few other guys. I don't remember if we were attempting to fire back at them just then, but I do remember lowering my head, glancing down and hearing a "crack" directly behind me. I was standing next to the concrete wall, and a German bullet hit immediately behind me. The bullet had passed less than a ½ inch above my left shoulder and a piece of the cartridge bounced back from the wall and landed on my shoulder.

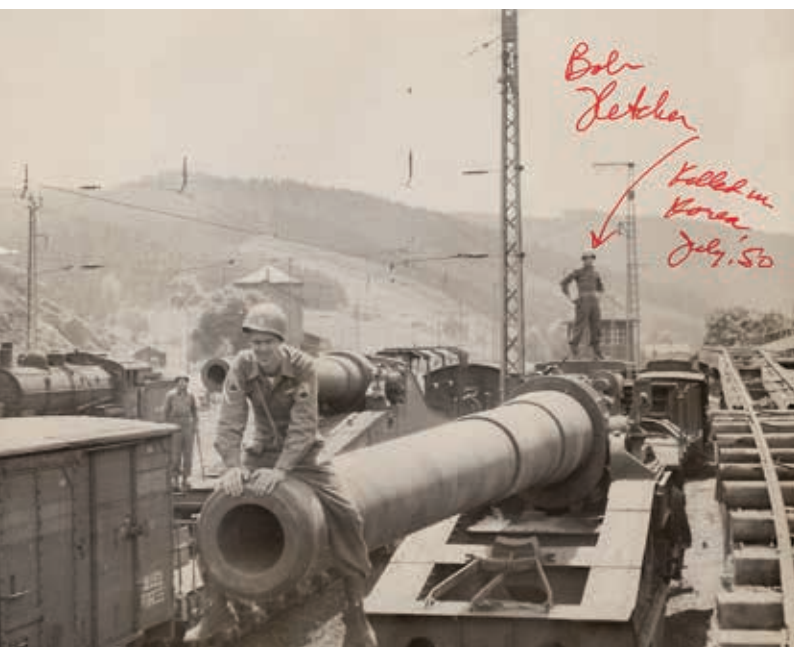
A favorite tactic of the Germans when we were out in a field was to pin us down on the ground with machine gun fire, then drop mortar shells on us. One incident I recall was a German mortar shell landing within 6' of me. Had it exploded, I wouldn't be writing this. It was a dud, and the rear fins of the shell just quivered.

On another occasion, we were trying to cross an open field under heavy enemy machine gun and mortar fire, dropping flat on the ground, then getting up and running, then back down to the ground, trying to find a depression to minimize our body as a target. Our platoon leader, Lt. Myers, who was running just in front of me, was hit with shrapnel in the stomach. I stopped, poured sulfa powder on his wound and took off to find a medic for him. I didn't know until just recently, from reading a 76th Division history book, that he died from the wound. This happened when we were attacking the town of Welschbillig, one of the many small towns situated within the Siegfried Line and its seemingly countless pillboxes.

It became 2nd nature to try to instantaneously find a low spot in the terrain to burrow in, so as to present the smallest target from enemy fire. It's amazing how small one can become when machine gun bullets are cracking a few inches over one's head!

There were lots of woods, and the Germans would fire mortars into the trees where they knew Americans were, resulting in shrapnel, and tree trunks and branches spraying down on us — in or out of foxholes. We had another new company commander, replacing the previous one who had been killed. 1st Lt. Erickson was lying down in a foxhole near me when he was hit with shrapnel. I had dug my foxhole about 2-3' deep, and was laying as flat as I could when a mortar shell went off close to me. I wasn't hit with shrapnel and was far enough away to not be killed by concussion, but the explosion affected my ears for days.

I had a backpack, canteen, rifle, ammunition, K ration — that's it, and always ready to pick up at a moment's notice — whether awake or asleep. The mortar and machine gun squads had the same, plus the weapons and ammo. When the order came to "move out", no time was lost collecting gear! [NOTE: Watch Soderstrom's WWII video stories at: [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com). Search: "Ken Soderstrom - My Story"]



Ken Soderstrom, foreground, shortly after VE Day. Pictured in back is Bob Fletcher, who was killed in Korea in July 1950.



# ENEMY ALIENS

by Luigi Marcheschi, 7ArmedD,  
423 Medical Collecting Co

In the late 1930's my brother Mario and I came to the United States from Italy in search of a better life. Having grown up in a very small town in Tuscany called Colle di Compito, our opportunities were limited. I immigrated in 1937 and Mario came in 1938. At that time, the only jobs we could get were working on a ranch in Half Moon Bay, where we farmed artichokes and Brussels sprouts. At that time we were making \$1.75 a day, working 12 hour days. It was a difficult life, but I was so grateful to be here. By 1940, it seemed that nobody was buying produce anymore, because they were all working in the factories building arms for defense. So my brother and I left the ranch and decided to move to San Mateo.

We were fortunate enough to find a friend, Frank Venturelli, whose family took us in. I thank the Lord everyday for that blessing. We sought other work — I worked as a carpenter and Mario as a plasterer.

In November 1941, we received a notice from the draft board to report for a physical. At that visit we were classified as 1A and were told to report for duty on December 12th. However, on December 7th 1941, the bombing of Pearl Harbor happened and everything changed. Three days later we were reclassified as 1B, enemy aliens, because we were Italian immigrants. We were restricted to the house from 7 pm to 7 am, and could go no more than 5 miles from the house.

We continued to live with the Venturelli's and that is how I met the Orsi family. The Orsis had a beautiful daughter and I fell in love with her quickly. And luckily, the feeling was mutual. We assumed that being classified as an enemy alien would prevent me from ever being called to join the service. We got married on July 14th, 1943.

We hadn't even spent two full weeks as a married couple before I received a notice from the draft board to report for duty, and by August 10th, I was shipped to the Presidio in Monterey. We were there for a couple of weeks and the Army didn't know what to do with us because we didn't speak any English.

They decided to send us to a special training school down in Riverside, California and that's where I met Desi Arnaz, but I didn't know who he was at the time. We were there about two and a half or three weeks for intensive conversational English. At the end we were shipped to Camp Barkley, Texas. Because we were classified as enemy aliens, they put us in the medical corp. At camp Barkley, we took basic training in the morning and medical training in the afternoon. They gave us very intensive medical training — we did everything but operate.

In April of 1944, at the end of my training, my brother and I were sent to Camp Beale, California to be shipped out. While there, a bunch of us were put on a bus and taken to Sacramento where they gave us our citizenship, because you could not be sent overseas if you were not a citizen.

They were going to send Mario to Japan and me to Europe. We talked to the commanding officer and told him we wanted to be together. He acquiesced and so they sent us off to Camp Carson, Colorado and eventually we ended up at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey.

Two days later we boarded a ship to go overseas. We were lucky



we ended up on the *Queen Mary*. That trip had about 17,000 troops. We landed in Glasgow, Scotland and from there we were put on a troop train and we were sent to South Hampton, England. We were there for a few days, and then we were put on another ship and we were sent to the Normandy coast, landing in Utah Beach.

When we arrived, the front was already in Paris. From there on, we followed the troop, working with the hospital and defending the hospital. We were called the 423rd Medical Collecting Company, and because we were a separate company they could send you wherever you were needed. We followed the troop all the way as far as Belgium. Once there, we were attached to the 4th Convalescent Hospital until about December 16th when Germany broke

through and the Battle of the Bulge began.

We were caught in the Bulge and I'll never forget the night of the 16th of December, when we had so many patients in the 4th Convalescent Hospital. I remember we took all the wounded and walking wounded, and put them on 6x6s and weapon carriers. We moved back a few miles, but we were still surrounded by Germans.

Finally we were needed on the front line. By the time the Germans surrounded St. Vith, they needed medics up there, so 20 of us were shipped to the front and we landed with 7th Armored Division. A few days later we joined the 101st and 82nd Airborne Divisions for a battle around St. Vith, Ardennes forest. We went through the massacre in Malmedy, Belgium. What we endured with the Battle of the Bulge was unthinkable. We had no supplies, medical or otherwise, we had no food and we were surrounded. There was nothing we could do.

Finally the troop regrouped and we started moving toward Germany again. In the middle of February, we were attached to the 1st Division (they used to be called "The Red One,") and we were marching towards the Rhine River.

On the night of February 26th, my brother started speaking to me about to handle his affairs, as if he was certain he wasn't coming home. Of course we never knew what would happen from one moment to the next, but I didn't think much of this conversation at the time. The following day, on February 27, a bunch of our medics were back at the CP waiting for orders. My brother had already left to go pick up some wounded soldiers. We got a call that there were more wounded, so we needed to see what we could do and try to bring them back. We started walking with a bunch of infantry fellas and there in the middle of the road there was a burning tank. On the side of the road there was a jeep that was blown up by a mine, and there were two dead soldiers on the side covered up with a blanket.

There was nothing we could do. We didn't even stop, we just kept walking. We ended up in this little town, I don't know, maybe a couple of miles from that. At that time it was getting dark, and we found a place to rest. But that night I couldn't sleep. A couple of my buddies said to me, "Marcheschi, what's wrong?" I said, "I can't relax. Something is wrong."

The next morning I could hear in the distance somebody calling my name. "Has anybody seen Marcheschi?" And finally one guy said, "Yes, he's in the back over there." I looked outside and I saw my lieutenant and the jeep driver coming towards me. They said "Marcheschi, we're going to take you back, so get your gear. We're going to take you back to the company."

## BLAZING A TRAIL OF GLORY

by Clarence Gomborg, 343 Med Bn, 78 Hosp Train

They took me back to the company, and I got inside this room and there were seven or eight people from the company, but nobody could look me in the face. Finally the commanding officer came towards me and puts his arm around me. He told me that my brother was killed, alongside another guy from our company. They grabbed me and they had me lay down on the couch. The thought of me walking by those two dead men and not knowing one of them was my brother was excruciating. I don't remember much after that.

Initially, my brother was buried in a military cemetery in Belgium. However, on March 2nd, 1945, I requested that his body be sent to our hometown of Colle di Compito. There he was buried with our grandmother and grandfather.

From that point on, life was different for me. I was told, "We're going to keep you back. You don't have to go back on the line." Once I was back in the company for a few days (or it could have been weeks — time made no sense anymore), the troops finally reached the Rhine River. We got a call that the Germans had left a railroad bridge standing down at Remagen, and there were some wounded soldiers there. They needed somebody to go over there to assess the situation and bring the wounded back. But nobody was volunteering to go. So I told the Sergeant that since no body else wanted to go, I would.

I took a couple of guys, a jeep driver, some litters and blankets and we went across. We took care of the wounded and we took them back to the CPO. The next day the bridge collapsed and my next trip across the Rhine River was on a pontoon bridge.

After that, we kept on moving and we got another call, this time saying that there was a prison camp that needed to be looked at. With no idea what to expect, several of us hopped in a jeep and headed for the camp. Within moments of arriving at the camp, the dark reality of what we had stumbled upon became clear — we were the first medics to arrive at Buchenwald concentration camp.

Amidst the dead bodies and gas chambers were people crying and trying to run away. The scene was chaotic and we had no idea what was going on. The commanding officer came up to me and said, "Marcheschi, go talk to that guy over there, because I think he is screaming in Italian." As I approached the man and tried to comfort him, I asked him what was wrong. He informed me that before we got there, the Germans had told all of the prisoners that when the Americans arrived, they were going to kill everyone. So, understandably everyone was in a state of panic, because they thought we were there to kill them. Once we were able to reassure the prisoners that we were there to help, we treated as many people as we could.

On January 22nd, 1945, the commanding officer of the 7th Armored Division gave us the Combat Medical Badge. We had a commendation and a unit citation, and we were supposed to be given a Silver Star. But I never received the Silver Star.

I don't remember where we went next. All I recall is being told that the war was over. Luckily, I had enough points to come home before the end of the year — it was 1945. That September I was given a short break, and I went to Italy from Germany to visit my parents and pay tribute at my brother's grave. After that I returned to the company in Germany and we started working towards being able to come home. On December 14, we arrived in La Havre, France, boarded the small ship *La Gonia Victory*, and 10 days later, we landed in New York.

I had a duffel bag and a full field bag. When I left the ship it was snowing, but I didn't care. I laid down my packs, got down on my knees and kissed the ground. A few of the guys asked me what the heck I was doing and I said, "I love this country and I want to spend the rest of my life here." Enemy alien or not, this was my home, and I was so relieved to be back.

I was inducted into the United States Army on February 10, 1943. Received basic training at Fort George Meade, MD (Infantry), then was transferred to Camp Lee, VA (Quartermaster), Station Complements, Section One. Our unit was transferred to Camp Ellis, IL, and the Seventy-Eighth Hospital Train was activated on September 21, 1943. The unit departed Camp Ellis by rail for Camp Edwards, MA, on November 11, and was attached to the 3116th Service Command Unit for training. On December 1, we were alerted for movement to a staging area. On December 8, we moved to a staging area at Fort Devens for further processing at Camp Miles Standish until December 18, when we were then moved by rail to Boston POE. We boarded the ship *USAT Marine Robin*. Two days out of Boston Harbor, we sustained two submarine attacks. One ship in our convoy was hit.

The trip across the Atlantic was completed on December 27. Our unit disembarked at Swansea, Wales, and then traveled by rail through London to Camp Crookston, Glasgow, Scotland. We were attached to the 28th Division, 3116th Service Command Unit, 3rd Army, 343rd Medical Battalion. On May 13, 1944, we received orders to depart Camp Crookston and move to a holding camp in Southampton. On June 12, we embarked on the hospital ship *HMS Duke of Lancaster* and arrived in Cherbourg, France. En route to Paris, we worked as Combat Medics. On arrival in Paris, the unit was attached to the 343rd Medical Battalion. On July 20, the unit began operating U.S. Army Hospital Train No. 5 (Hospital Train 78.) From this date until February 1945, we traveled approximately 24,000 miles, and evacuated 10,000 patients from first aid stations, field hospitals or general hospitals to ports in the Com Z. On February 25, while advancing toward forward installations in the vicinity of Evreux, France, our train was strafed by enemy aircraft, derailing several cars and injuring several personnel. Our unit was awarded the Battle Participation Award, German Campaign.

On May 5, 1945, during a routine run to Frankfurt am Main, our unit was dispatched to a siding behind the I.G. Farber Ammunition Plant, to await ambulances to transport the wounded for evacuation. Two ambulances unloaded eight litters with patients wrapped in blankets. Aboard the train (ward car No.6), patients removed their blankets, revealing their identities as German officers for transport to "the little red schoolhouse" in Reims, France, for the surrender of the war in Europe. The surrender was signed on May 7 at 0241 hours.

On May 27, Hospital Train No.5 was removed from operations. Approximately half of the unit was placed on Hospital Train No. 76, the balance placed on DS with 239th General Hospital, a medical installation in the Seine section of Paris. While in operation, our unit "Blazed a Trail of Glory" through France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Germany, traveling approximately 63,000 miles and evacuating over 20,000 patients. From the date of activation to deactivation of the unit, we had not a single Court-Martial, AWOL or case of VD marring its perfect record.

On February 10, 1946, I was transferred to Camp Herbert Tarlington, Le Havre, France, to be sent to the states for discharge. I departed Le Havre on March 19, aboard the liberty ship *USAT Texarkana*, disembarked at Fort Dix, NJ, and was discharged from active duty on March 27, 1946 (3 years, 1 month, 17 days.)

*NOTE: Clarence Romberg has earned quite a few ribbons, medals and other recognition, including the Army Commendation Medal and the Purple Heart.*



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# CROSSING THE ROER RIVER

by Norvin Vogel, 35 InfD, 134 Reg, Co L



As I write about my trip through Europe, I may not get all my memories in order — time, date and places. Sometimes there are only so many things we can remember.

The 134th Infantry Regiment Combat History, Chapter 10, page 6 states that a few good men of the 3rd Battalion L Company went across the Roer river by assault boats to protect the 60th engineers, and to secure the town of Hilfarth. The entire C Company was also at Obricht Holland to train for the river crossing.

The 134th Infantry Regiment moved to the town of Obricht Holland for rest, and for training in river crossing. While there, it was back to military basics, saluting all officers and marching to all training.

One day, the first sergeant told me to report to the company commander. The company commander called me into his office and told me the 3rd squad and I would take part in the river boat training to be prepared to cross the Roer River. After we were across the river, we would move to the right to secure the town of Hilfarth and to protect the 60th Engineers, while they cleared the bridge of mines to allow the rest of L Company to cross the river. After we cleared the town, I gave the company commander (he was waiting on the other side of the bridge) the “all clear” signal and then the 60th engineers could start to clear the bridge.

We had only one day of training on how to get into and out of the flat bottom boats on land before we were to train on the Meuse River. But before we could train on the river, orders were changed and I was told to prepare to move the 3rd squad the next day to the vicinity of the Roer River. The following day, the 3rd squad and I moved to a house near the Roer River.

We spent the night inside the house, with an 88 mm mortar firing one round every 5 minutes right outside of the house, all night long. In the morning we had hot coffee and our ‘K’ ration before moving down near the Roer River to wait for trucks to take us to the river. While we were sitting along the road, an ambulance and a jeep came flying by with two soldiers on stretchers. I heard they were hurt when a mine

exploded trying to clear the land to the river.

I finally received orders to move my men to the Roer River and get into the boats right away to cross.

The trucks were at the edge of the river and the engineers were unloading the boats. As soon as the boats were in the river, we were ordered to get into the boats and we started to cross. When we got across the river, I was the first soldier out of the boats, followed by the soldier with the (B.A.R.) Browning automatic rifle. We turned to the right through the town of Hilfarth, and we started to check all the houses. As soon as I was sure the houses were clear, I gave the “all clear” signal to the company commander. It didn’t take the engineers long to clear the bridge and allow L Company trucks and men to cross the bridge, go through the town, and continue their attack against the next town. Troops of the 1st Battalion also crossed the river at the same time, but they turned to the left to attack another town.

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3rd Squad, L Company, 134th Infantry Regiment crossing the Roer River with Sergeant Norvin L Vogel leading his squad across.



# A WORLD WAR II MÉMOIRE



**Richard Lockhart, 106th Infantry Division, 423rd Infantry Regiment, Anti-Tank Co., sent us a collection of news clippings and other documents detailing his horrific experience as a POW in Stalag IXB, Bad Orb, Germany. Here are some excerpts from his fascinating account of those dark days.**

*This passage is from an affidavit, provided by the National Archives, from a witness to the abuse of Lockhart and other American GIs:*

About January 15 1945 Privates Richard Lockhart and Donald Leedom and two other American soldiers were working on a fire wood cutting detail at Stalag IX B and were beaten and severely bruised with a rifle by a German guard merely because he did not believe they were working fast enough. I was told these four American soldiers were marched about five miles in snow and extremely cold weather to reach their work. I actually saw the bruises on two of the victims when I talked to them afterwards. I cannot recall whether any medical treatment was given them.

*The following is from a Swiss Inspection Report regarding Stalag 9B:*

It was Hauptmann Kuhle who permitted American PW to replace Russians in the camp kitchen and Pvt. Pathe who enabled them illegally to appropriate extra rations. Gefreiter Weiss, at great personal risk, informed the MOC as to the progress of the war and daily located the position of advancing American troops on maps which he daily smuggled into the American PW.

After a 23 March 1945 visit the Swiss Delegate reported, "In spite of the fact that it is difficult to obtain any kind of material to improve conditions, it is most strongly felt that the camp commander with his staff have no interest whatsoever in the welfare of the prisoners of war. This is clearly shown by the fact that although he made many promises on our last visit, he has not even tried to ameliorate conditions and is apt to blame the Allies for these conditions due to their constant bombing."

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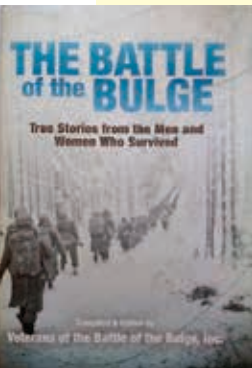
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## TREATMENT

In a report describing Stalags 9A, 9C, and 9B, which he visited 13 March 1945, the Representative of the International Red Cross stated, "The situation may be considered very serious. The personal impression which one gets from an inspection tour of these camps cannot be described. One discovers distress and famine in their most terrible forms. Most of the prisoners who have come here from the territories of the East, and those who still continue to come, are nothing but skin and bones. Very many of them are suffering from acute diarrhea with bloody phlegm due to their complete exhaustion. Pneumonia, dorsal and bronchial cases are very common.

The prisoners who have been in camp for a long time are often also so thin that those whom one had known previously can hardly be recognized.

These prisoners, in rags, covered with filth and infested with vermin, live crowded together in barracks, when they do not lie under tents, squeezed together on the ground on a thin pallet of dirty straw or 2 or 3 per cot, or on benches and tables. Some of them are scarcely able to get up, or else they fall in a swoon as they did when they tried to get up when the Representative was passing through. They do not move, even at meal time, when they are presented with their inadequate German rations (for example 9B has been completely without salt for weeks.)

## FOOD

When the Americans arrived the kitchen was in charge of Russian PW under the lax supervision of German guards. Sanitary conditions in the kitchen were foul and the soup prepared was practically inedible. When the MOC was permitted to substitute American PW for the Russian help, there resulted a considerable improvement in the preparation of the meager prison fare. The 8 bushels of potatoes which German Pvt. Dathe enabled the Americans to steal was most necessary since the German ration was terribly slight. It consisted of 300 grams of bread, 550 grams of potatoes, 30 grams of horse meat, 1/2 liter of tea and 1/2 liter of soap made from putrid greens. The greens made the men sick, and the MOC intervened to have the allotment of greens changed to oatmeal. Later, even this small ration was cut so that at the end of their stay PW were receiving only 210 grams of bread and 290 grams of potatoes per day. The MOC was convinced that a larger ration was available and attributes its non-distribution to Oberst Sieber, the commandant. The full ration listed above was the minimum German civilian ration minus fresh vegetables, eggs and whole milk. No German soldier was so ill fed.

A thousand men lacked eating utensils of any kind - either spoons, forks or bowls. They ate out of their helmets or old tin cans or pails - anything on which they could put their hands.

Only one shipment of Red Cross food parcels reached camp, 2300 parcels on 10 March 1945. Failure of another shipment to arrive from Geneva was attributed to the chaotic transportation conditions within Germany.

The German rations had a paper value of 1400 calories. Actually, the calorie content was even further lowered by the waste in using products of inferior quality. Since a completely inactive man needs at least 1700 calories to live, it is apparent that PW were slowly starving to death.

**BOBA VIDEOS:** Watch Bulge veterans tell their battle stories at: [www.battleofthebulge.org](http://www.battleofthebulge.org). Click on "Veterans' Video Stories."

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