

The BULGE BUGLE®

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

VOLUME XXXIX NUMBER 3

THE ARDENNES CAMPAIGN

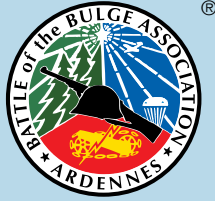
SUMMER 2020



Then and Now **OUR VETERANS REFLECT**



ANNUAL BOBA REUNION CANCELLED | "Virtual" Events Planned | Read more on page 9.



Battle of the Bulge Association®, Inc.
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Published quarterly, *The Bulge Bugle*® is the official publication of the Battle of the Bulge Association®, Inc.
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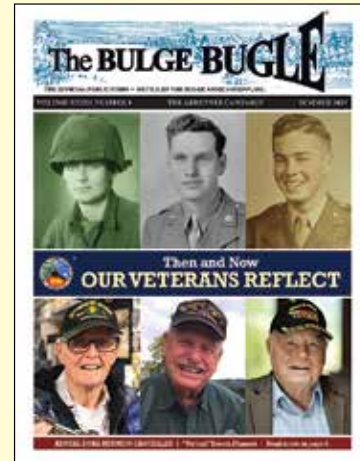
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THEN & NOW photos: Fred Whitaker (Left Top/Bottom),
Oscar Robert Freesen, Jr. (Center Top/Bottom),
James McManus (Right Top/Bottom)

Bottom left photo courtesy member Andrew Biggio;
all others provided by veterans or their families.

Read more about these heros in "Bulge Memories" on page 12.

FOR THE VERY LATEST CHAPTER LIST,

visit battleofthebulge.org > Chapters

SEND CHAPTER UPDATES TO: betsy.boba@gmail.com

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

John Mohor

FELLOW MEMBERS OF BOBA: I HOPE this finds you all well and healthy. We were sure not expecting this COVID-19 pandemic to affect our lives as much as it has so far. I haven't been to a single Veterans function since my February American Legion meeting. The rest have all been cancelled or postponed. The board met in June and I am sad to report that we voted to cancel the 2020 reunion in Charleston, SC. Our Executive Vice President, Barbara Mooneyhan, had the hotel arrangements made well before the pandemic occurred, but she has found it almost impossible to schedule the tours. We also don't want to run the risk of anyone getting sick. I'm sure the Citadel cadets are still very much interested in meeting our members one day in the future.



Despite not being able to get together in person, we are excited to partner with the Virginia War Memorial (VWM) with an on-line "livestream" Battle of the Bulge educational event in the Fall. Many thanks to BOBA member and VWM Director of Education Jim Triesler for approaching us about this opportunity! We are also looking into holding a virtual membership meeting in October as well. Please stay tuned on our website, battleofthebulge.org, to get details on how to participate.

As our veterans and members well know, change happens. And our organization is not immune. Our Vice President of Chapters, Sherry Klopp, as well as our Treasurer, Duane Bruno, have resigned from their positions. Sherry is retiring from the Board completely, while Duane is trying to reduce his commitment since he is a member of numerous Veterans organizations. I would like to thank Sherry and Duane for their steadfast service to the organization these last six years. As they say in the Navy, BRAVO ZULU (WELL DONE)!

The Vice President of Chapters position is open and available. Send any nominations by August 30th to betsy.boba@gmail.com.

The Treasurer's replacement has already been found, nominated, and voted on by the Board. Our new BOBA Treasurer is Hylton Phillips-Page. He comes to us as a well-qualified CPA and has been a member of our organization for over two years. We are happy to welcome Hylton onto the Board. Duane is helping with the transition which should be complete by the time you read this letter at the end of July.

Now that I've mentioned the changes, I would like to welcome all our new members into the organization. We now have over 1,400 members. Recently, I personally helped recruit members from Georgia and South Carolina as well as Belgium. And I hope

we will soon have a new member from Japan whom I met during the 75th Anniversary tour in Europe.

I know we all have our reasons for joining BOBA. Most joined to honor loved ones for their service and sacrifices during that very cold winter in Belgium and Luxembourg over 75 years ago. However, our overall membership numbers continue to decrease. We need to reverse this trend ASAP. Our Vice President for Military Affairs, Al Cleghorn, has been talking to other Veterans organizations to see if we can become mutually supportive. We're looking into sponsoring a small ad space to share details about their reunions also. I want to challenge all BOBA members to recruit five new members between now and the end of

2020. If we can do this, we will go from 1,400 to 7,000 members. I would love to hear about chapters starting up all over the United States and Europe. I know there are also citizens of Belgium, Luxembourg, and France who would love to have a local chapter.

We're looking at many different ways to keep this organization strong. Thanks to the efforts of our Board Chairman Alan Cunningham, we now have trademarks for our names (BOBA/VBOB) and logos, and also have our 501(3)C status requirements completed with the IRS.

Our current total assets as of May 17, 2020 are \$110,422.87, and we have one part-time employee. In the past, membership dues fully covered our costs. Like with many veteran associations, we have been losing membership over the last decade, so we need to find ways to fill that gap in order to maintain operations. To that point, our Fiscal and Strategic Planning committees are taking a hard look at our current offering and considering ways to cut costs—for example, better delivery methods of the *Bugle*. They will be providing our Board with recommendations for a long-term plan to make our organization stronger. Stay tuned!

We would still like some help on the IT Support front. I am in discussions with a couple of my soldier buddies to see if they would be interested in helping in this area. We also have a couple more appointed positions to be filled, like Parliamentarian and Judge Advocate. Please read our bylaws on our website for more details.

Thank you, Veterans, for your service. Thank you, family members, for your sacrifices. Thank you all for becoming members of BOBA. Looking FORWARD TOGETHER (345th Infantry Regiment's motto)!

BOBA LETTERS

REFLECTIONS ON MEMORIAL DAY

Note from Bulge Bugle® Editor: This letter was sent to our Board and Chapter Presidents from our BOBA Chaplain Madeleine Bryant upon the Memorial Day holiday, when much of the US was under quarantine. We felt that it was appropriate to share here as we are all coping with the impacts of COVID-19. We hope that it provides comfort and hope as it did to its original recipients. Thank you for your moving thoughts and prayers, Madeleine!

This year, how we commemorate Memorial Day may well be different for each of us.

As in many other locations, most observances in my area have been canceled. I will postpone my visit to Dad's gravesite in Arlington National Cemetery. My family will not gather. This all contributes to the day's somber feeling.

I live in a "hot spot" state, so I would have remained home anyway. My American flag is flying. I will watch "virtual" observances. True, it won't be the same—I will miss being among the crowds—but nevertheless, I can and will surround myself with the meaning of the day.

Isn't that really what it's all about? We can't permit our primary focus to be our own temporary "sacrifices." Today, we pay grateful tribute to those who truly sacrificed so much for us. We honor and preserve their legacy for future generations. Though our commemorations will differ, let us be united in this common effort.

From Abraham Lincoln's speech at Gettysburg (where he saw around him the horrible results of war):

"... We cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead who struggled here have hallowed it far above our poor power to add or detract...It is rather for us the living, to be dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they here gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain, that this nation shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth."

From John F. Kennedy on Memorial Day: "As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them."

We treasure the freedoms for which our servicemen and women fought—and continue to fight—so valiantly. In this year of commemorating the 75th anniversary of the end of WWII, we in BOBA are especially aware that these freedoms are not free, but purchased at a heavy price. With our cherished freedoms come responsibility. I encourage each of you to commemorate this Memorial Day, to live this day in whatever ways you personally feel best able to do so with respect and honor. Those who sacrificed their lives, so very much deserve that!

WE NEED YOU
TO ENCOURAGE YOUR FAMILY AND
FRIENDS TO JOIN BOBA!

We pray:

Lord, we are deeply grateful for the ultimate sacrifice of so many over countless years.

We also name in our hearts those dear veterans, especially in our BOBA family, who have died recently. Help us truly honor their legacy, as they would wish us to do.

Console loved ones in their grief. Refresh us with special memories.

Thank you also today for the many dedicated frontline fighters, especially those who have given their lives, in a different but dangerous battle against COVID-19.

We ask your protection for all who are in harm's way today, for all who are suffering in any way. Bless us always with the strength of your comforting and healing presence.

In this divided and troubled world, we pray for unity and hope—and boldly ask for peace.

Guide us each to be kinder in spirit, so that we may offer genuine compassion and encouragement to others. Grant each of us your peace. Amen.

—Madeleine Bryant, BOBA Chaplain

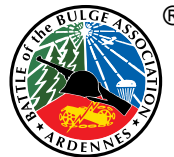
NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

BOBA has received notifications that we have officially registered on the Principal Register at the United States Patent and Trademark Office ("USPTO") for the following:

Battle of the Bulge Association®

The Bulge Bugle®

Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge®



You'll now notice, going forward, the ® applied to the above throughout this publication and on our website. Many thanks to Chairman of the Board Alan Cunningham for his efforts in this achievement!

Thank you to all of you who submit stories to *The Bulge Bugle*®. Your stories are remarkable, and I am very lucky to hear them first. I wanted to apologize in advance to those of you who might be disappointed that your story is "trimmed down" or did not make it in this issue. Too often, we get more words than we can fit into 24 pages. Luckily, we have the ability to include full versions on our website so you will notice in places where we refer you to read more there. Also, we do give priority to living veteran members so if you are a descendant who submitted a story, thank you and we will do our best to fit those in every issue as well, if not the next.

I received feedback from several of you that you received your Spring issue after V-E Day, especially those on the West coast or overseas. Our mail vendor advised us that due to COVID-19, bulk mail may be slower than usual. We apologize for any inconvenience.

Finally, thanks to all those who include kind messages about our publication with their renewals or in emails. Your support is greatly appreciated!

—Betsy Rose, Membership Office and Editor



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., P.O. Box 330, Mechanicsville, VA 23111-0330; or by phone: 703-528-4058; or by email: betsy.boba@gmail.com.

We have been notified as of July 1, 2020, that these BOBA members have recently passed away.

Hubert Alexander	11 ARMDD 42 TK BN A
John Boone	80 INFD 319 INF I
Brownle Bush	84 INFD 333 INF B
Henry Ezzard	291 FAO BN C
Joseph Fortini	83 INFD 271 INF A
Leslie Vincent Freeman, Jr.	83 INFD 329 INF 2 BN HQ
Helen Karambelas	Member, and widow of George Karambelas, 84 INFD
Paul Keilholz	183 FA BN B BTRY
Harry Payor	5 INFD 2 INF 3 BN K
Benjamin G. Rupp	80 INFD 318 REG 3 BN M
Mahlon Sebring	82 ABND 319 GLIDER FA
Curtis Thornton	514 FA BN C
Elmer Umbenhauer	8 ARMDD/7 ARMDD INF BN B
Kenneth Westbrook	663 FA BN 486 ORD EVAC CO

How to submit stories for “The Bulge Bugle®”

The Bulge Bugle® is published quarterly in the months that coincide with Winter, Spring, Summer and Fall. 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 and photos are:

Stories and letters: Please send typewritten (not handwritten) text whenever possible, and limit word count to up to 500 words. 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. Original stories will be given preference over reprinted articles. NOTE: We cannot reprint from books or pamphlets, unless you are the author. ***Stories or clippings will not be returned, so please do not mail originals you want to keep—send legible copies.***

Photographs: Please identify the place and/or people in the photograph. Photos copied on a copy machine are not suitable for publication. Scan photographs at high-resolution (300 dpi.) ***Photos will not be returned, so please do not mail valuable originals—send copies.***

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

Send material to: (Preferred method) by email: betsy.boba@gmail.com, or by mail: Battle of the Bulge Association®, Inc, P.O. Box 330, Mechanicsville, VA 23111-0330

NEXT ISSUE DEADLINE: September 7, 2020

QUESTIONS? Please contact Betsy Rose, 703-528-4058, or by email: betsy.boba@gmail.com

NEW YORK CITY OBSERVES V-E DAY

COVID-19 may have closed down New York City for Spring 2020, but it did not stop commemoration of the 75th Anniversary of V-E Day on May 8. All those who fought in Europe during World War II—especially in Belgium and Luxembourg during the Battle of the Bulge—were



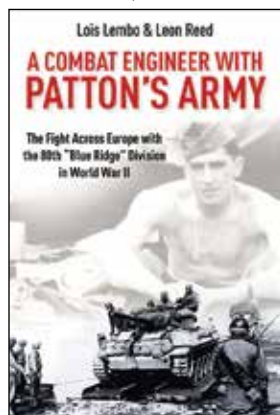
remembered with a patriotic wreath at the Veterans Memorial Triangle in Northeast Queens (see accompanying photo), which was donated by local members of the 11th Armored Division (“Patton’s Thunderbolts”). There was no ceremony due to shelter at home and social distancing guidelines, but the “V” for Victory that was seen at the end of the war in Europe will surely be seen again at veterans’ events when the current pandemic is ended.

—Submitted by Patrick Kearney, 11 ARMDD

A COMBAT ENGINEER WITH PATTON'S ARMY

By Lois Lembo, Member, and Leon Reed

BOBA member Lois Lembo is the daughter of Frank and Betty Lembo, and a former defense consultant. Leon Reed is a former congressional aide and history teacher. This article is excerpted from their recently released book *A Combat Engineer With Patton's Army: The Fight Across Europe With the 80th "Blue Ridge" Infantry Division* (Savas Beattie, 2020).



Frank Lembo was a sergeant and squad leader in the 1st Platoon of B Company, 305th Engineer Combat Battalion, part of the 80th division of Patton's Third Army. During his three years in the army, he left a priceless collection of more than 500 letters he wrote to his fiancé, Betty Craig. In the midst of combat or during lulls in the action, Lembo's letters provided an insightful commentary on the life of a GI and his buddies, occasional comments on combat, and dreams of the future with the girl he left behind.

After their 150 mile race north from the German border, the 80th first went into action at Etelbruck. But on Christmas Eve, the 80th was ordered to provide two battalions to add infantry punch to the 4th Armored attack toward Bastogne; the 1st and 2nd battalions of the 318th Infantry Regiment drew this assignment, even though both battalions had been in heavy combat and were severely under strength.

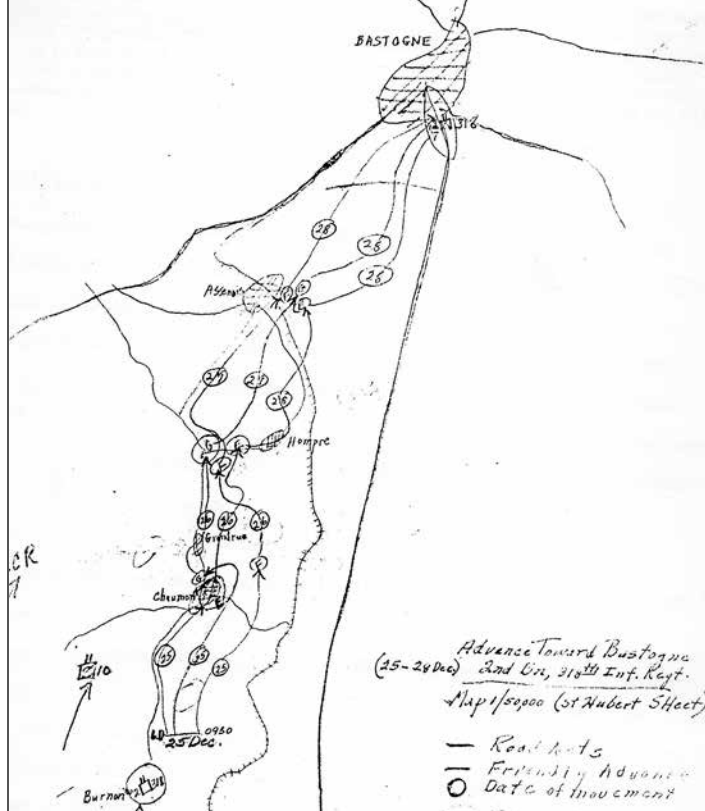
B Company's 1st Platoon was assigned as the engineer complement for this mission. As a squad leader, Sgt. Lembo was a critical leader in the detachment, which was tasked to clear roads, set up roadblocks, and sweep mines.

The 2nd Battalion joined up with Combat Command B (CCB) of the 4th Armored at Fauvillers, about 11 miles south of Bastogne, shortly after midnight on Christmas morning. By nightfall on December 27, the 2nd Battalion reached the village of Assenois, where German soldiers still blocked the route into Bastogne. A column of tanks led by LT. Charles Boggess of 4th Armored had passed through Assenois a few hours earlier and linked up with the outer defenses of Bastogne, but the town and supply route were still far from secure.

Sergeant Lembo took a few moments to write to Betty on December 27: "The battle that was going on Christmas day is still going on in increasing fury. I guess something has got to give soon, and I doubt it will be us. I guess this damn war will never end and no doubt you people back home got a severe jolt."

At 8:00 a.m. on December 28, the first company from the 2nd battalion reached the engineers' outpost line around Bastogne, and two other companies occupied buildings on the town's southeast corner. By afternoon troops from the 2nd Battalion were able to enjoy a belated Christmas dinner. For once, the depleted status of the battalion (187 total members at the start of the day's attacks) was an advantage. A soldier noted, "Since rations had been drawn for 350 men, there was ample food for all."

Back with his company a few days later, Frank told Betty he had "returned back to the company yesterday and there was quite a lot of mail



Hand-drawn map of the approaches to Bastogne, found in a 318th Infantry Regiment after action report.

for me. I received your sweater and thanks a lot. It will come in handy with this cold weather. ... Mom sent me a little bottle of rye whiskey, so we killed it. It was in a hair tonic bottle so it's the first time I've ever drunk out of a spoon. ... Well Toots I'm going to go get some fresh air so until the next letter I remain your G.I. Joe overseas and with it all the love in the world."

Frank felt no pity for the Nazis, was impatient for the war to be over, and, like the brass and people on the homefront, was rattled by the German offensive. He angrily wrote, "From the looks of things we'll have to fight our way right to Berlin, and I hope we burn that path soon. We all thought this war was over, and I guess the only way to get it over with is to destroy Germany, her soldiers, her civilians, and the ground they live on."

Frank began the new year of 1945, writing "New Year's evening and now all the holidays are gone, and my fondest hope now in this coming year is we will be able to get back together again. Today was a simple G.I. day for us here, we finished a bridge we started yesterday and late in the afternoon we had a turkey dinner."

He continued, "Things have quieted down a little since we first got
(continued on next page)



Members of Sgt. Frank Lembo's squad pose in front of the squad's command truck.

BOBA MEMBER BOOKS (continued)

here, every now and then a shell plunks in, and a few German planes come over, That's the way this war goes, for a few days all heck pops loose and you wonder if you'll come out in one piece and then it quiets down to a lull again. I'm waiting patiently for that last lull."

Perhaps it was the New Year that led Frank to reflect on his experiences since leaving the States six months earlier. The fact that so many positive memories were fresh on his mind testifies to his hopeful nature. On January 2, 1945, he wrote an emotionally moving summary of his combat experiences and his dreams, "I was just thinking about that last day together that we had, and how perfect it was, and how long a way I've come since then. I can remember that boat ride to England, our trip across the Channel, going into action and suffering a thousand deaths when we heard our first artillery shell, the mad dash across France—a ride with its wine, flowers, ripe tomatoes and eggs—the storming of our first river and the fighting beyond, Christmas in Belgium, New Year in Luxembourg. . . . Yes we've come a long way. We're a little tired, a little older, and a little bitter. We fight hoping each battle is the last one with thoughts of going home and enjoying a peaceful life. Our thoughts run to our sweethearts who we long for, each letter being a five-minute furlough with the one you love—yes darling just thinking—"

At this point, Frank still had the brutal crossing of the Sauer River, his battlefield promotion to 2nd LT and command of a platoon, the final spring campaigns, and the hazards of occupation before him. On returning home in January 1946, he married Betty and they built the life they had dreamed of during his three-year absence.

The 2nd Battalion of the 318th Infantry Regiment received a Presidential Unit Citation for its actions to relieve Bastogne. The citation was also extended to attached units, including the 44 members (including Sgt. Frank Lembo) of the 1st Platoon of B Company.



Bridge built by Sergeant Frank Lembo's squad on New Years Day, 1945.

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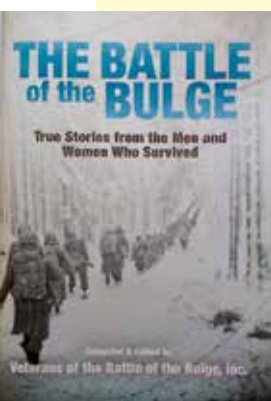
Online: Amazon: www.amazon.com;
Barnes & Noble: www.barnesandnoble.com

*To order, provide the ISBN and the title of the book:

ISBN: 978-0-9910962-3-7

Title: *The Battle of the Bulge:
True Stories From the Men and
Women Who Survived*

The book is not sold by BOBA, but we receive royalties from books purchased.

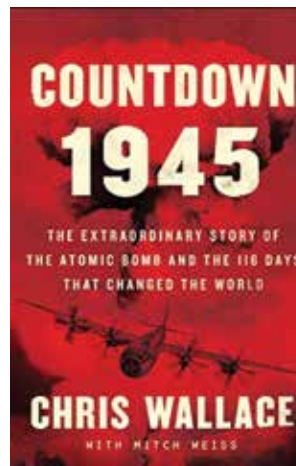


BOOK REVIEWS

COUNTDOWN 1945

By Chris Wallace

Reviewed by Warren Allen, 87 INFD 335 FABN BATTERY C,
Lifetime Veteran Member



I just finished reading this new book by Chris Wallace and it is just outstanding! It covers the 116 days from FDR passing to Truman's order to drop the bomb. Great detail about the lives and input of the scientists, the military leaders, military personnel, political leaders and others involved in making the bomb and advising Truman. Answered questions I have had, such as "Why Hiroshima?"

There's also a segment on the Bulge and discussion about our troops going right from Europe to Japan and many references to the possible number of casualties.

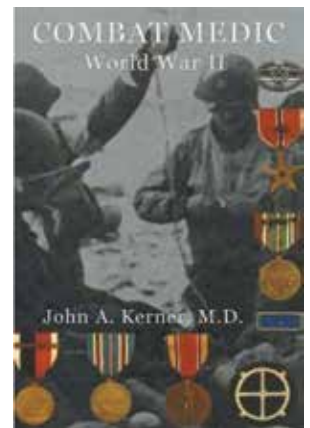
COMBAT MEDIC: WORLD WAR II

By John A. Kerner, M. D.

Reviewed by Doris Davis, President of the Golden Gate Chapter

Imagine yourself being a surgeon at a hospital in San Francisco, preparing for a surgery and looking forward to seeing the family the next day (Christmas Day). It's December 24, 1943. The main surgeon comes in to the operating room and reads a telegram that was addressed to you at the hospital. The telegram states "Report to Carlisle Barrack, PA by Dec 26." Orders from the US Army—drop what you are doing and just go—no questions—just do it. Dr. Kerner left the hospital, went to the Presidio for his clothing, said goodbye to his family and made it to Carlisle, PA on time. After training, he left the US on May 12, 1944 aboard the *H.B. Alexander*. He was assigned to the 110th Medical Battalion and served with the 310th Infantry Regiment of the 35th Infantry Division. He saw his first wounded then traveled across Northern France to Nancy and Lorraine, Metz and then Bastogne with the 35th Inf. Div. He describes his thoughts as he treated the wounded in the field. He returned home Sept 1945 a different person. His family saved the letters he had written home and he was encouraged to write his book *Combat Medic: World War II*, which is available on Amazon. It is a remarkable story of a man who was very proud to serve his country.

Dr. Kerner currently lives in San Francisco with Gwen, his wife of 74 years, and he is currently working on his 3rd book—a book about his travels with Gwen. Dr. Kerner turned 101 years old last February. He attends the annual commemorations of the Battle of the Bulge every year with Gwen and leaves with this message, "See you next year!" He is in the group photo on page 19 of the Winter 2020 issue of the *Bugle*. Dr. Kerner always wears a smile. It is an honor to know him.



Annual Reunion in Charleston CANCELLED | “Virtual” Events Planned

Under much consideration and due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the BOBA Board of Directors voted to cancel our 2020 annual reunion which was scheduled for October in Charleston, South Carolina. We are very disappointed and apologize for any inconvenience.

Several factors impacted the decision including: the ability to plan activities we wanted around strict restrictions, city ordinances and social distancing has been difficult; many members, especially our veterans, are part of the “at risk” group; and also many members expressed they would not attend this year due to the pandemic.



However, we are excited to announce that we are planning an online “livestream” Battle of the Bulge educational event this Fall in partnership with the Virginia War Memorial. We are also looking into having a “virtual” annual membership meeting. Lastly, plans are underway for our in-person Annual Commemoration event in Washington, DC this Winter.

Please check our website often for updates about these events and for the 2021 Annual Reunion: www.battleofthebulge.org. Also, if you would like an email invite to our events, send your email address to betsy.boba@gmail.com.

THE IRON MEN OF METZ

by Steve Savage, Member and Lehigh Valley PA Chapter 55 Treasurer

The Battle of the Bulge had not yet begun for soldiers of George Patton’s 3rd Army, 95th Infantry Division when they met the German forces at the town of Metz, France. Metz had been a strategic hub for military traffic during the war. German forces had set up several forts with 4 Divisions in the 4 kilometer area around Metz. The town had been fortified for hundreds of years with the last force to conquer the city commanded by Attila the Hun over 1,500 years before.

The division, also known as the Victory Division for the distinctive “V” in their shoulder sleeve insignia, was based around three infantry regiments, the 377th, the 378th, and the 379th Infantry Regiments. The division was sent into combat on October 19th in the Moselle bridgehead sector South of Metz, France, and patrolled the Seille River near Cheminot, capturing the forts surrounding Metz, and repulsing German attempts to cross the river. It was during the defense of this town from repeated enemy attacks that they earned the name, “The Iron Men of Metz,” given to them by Lt. General Heinrich Kittel, the commander of the German garrison. The division chose to adopt that as their official nickname.

On November 8, the 95th went on the offensive, crossing the Moselle River and advanced onto Bertrange. Against heavy fighting, the 95th captured the forts surrounding Metz and captured the city by November 22nd, 1944. On November 16, 1944, in Woippy, France, Staff Sergeant Andrew Miller of Company G in the 377th Infantry Regiment single-handedly entered a building housing a machine gun position and forced the Germans to surrender at bayonet point. He then took the second gun by hurling grenades into the enemy position, killing two and wounding three more and taking two prisoners. The next day outside of Metz, he stayed

behind while his platoon withdrew and destroyed another machine gun nest with his automatic rifle, allowing his platoon time to regroup and carry on the fight.

Then on November 19, S/Sgt Miller led an attack on a large enemy barracks, crawling into a barracks window and captured 6 riflemen at gunpoint. Sgt. Miller and his company scoured the building and eventually took 75 German prisoners. Sergeant Miller and three of his platoon then ran a gauntlet of machine gun fire and rushed into another building and surprised four Gestapo agents, persuading them to surrender. On November 21 in Metz, he captured twelve more prisoners and silenced an enemy machinegun, after volunteering in a mission to advance his company’s position. S/Sgt. Andrew Miller was killed eight days later, while leading his squad in a fight outside of Hemmersdorf, Germany. For his actions from November 16-29, he was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor on September 1, 1945.



Henry J. Byrnes, 95th INF, 379 INF, Co C

The Battle for the town of Metz ended when the German commander surrendered on November 22nd, 1944.

A family member of Judy Greenhalgh, a founding member of the Lehigh Valley Chapter (55), Private First Class Henry J. Byrnes, served as a rifleman in Company C, 379th Infantry Regiment, 95th Infantry Division. He fought in the Battle for Metz and was killed in action on November 15th, 1944 at Gravelotte, France. He was awarded the Purple Heart for his service and sacrifice. He is laid to rest at Lorraine American Cemetery, St. Avold, France. To this day, a Dutch citizen named Rob Sanders has adopted his gravesite and honors him by being his caretaker.

Thank you for all the “Iron Men of Metz.”



From left: Caring and brave WWII medical staff Kate Nolan, 53rd Field Hospital; Jack King, 47th Field Hospital; and Rose Young, 130th General Hospital—all served during the Bulge.

A SALUTE TO THE NURSES AND MEDICAL STAFF

by James Triesler, Member and Director of Education, Virginia War Memorial

While attending the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge® [and then, Battle of the Bulge Association®] reunions I noticed that, even as they approached their nineties, the nurses still had a way with the soldiers. There was laughter, a sense of security, and even a little flirting. After the passage of seventy-five years, it was evident that the soldiers still held the nurses in the highest esteem.

I was fortunate to have a conversation with a few of these amazing women. Kate Nolan served in the 53rd Field Hospital and after arriving in England, spent three months preparing for the Normandy invasion. Physical training included ten-mile hikes with full packs, putting up tents, and setting up hospital wards. She arrived in France a month after D-Day. “We were with General Patton when he broke out of Normandy and went racing to Bastogne.”

Since field hospitals were closest to the front, they received the most seriously wounded. From there, soldiers were sent to evacuation hospitals and finally to general hospitals. Staff had three hours to set up the field hospital. Sometimes the wounded would arrive before the staff was prepared, so they learned to set up tents in the order they were needed with the shock tent first, then x-rays, surgery, and post-op. If the wounded arrived before the medical personnel had set up their own tents, it meant

several days of sleeping on the ground outside.

During periods of fighting, the experience of the hospital personnel was intense. Nolan said, “no one would take a break until every last patient was out of surgery and there were no more wounded coming in.” The patients would often arrive in shock and needed immediate treatment by the shock team. After x-rays, the patient would go directly to surgery. Nurse Rose Young of the 130th General Hospital, said that during periods of heavy fighting, nurses would have a “sandwich in one hand and be tending to a bloody soldier with the other.” The field hospital kept the patients until they were stable enough to move to the evacuation hospital, usually 5 to 7 days.

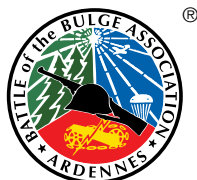
Field hospitals had excellent surgeons, who enlisted from places like Massachusetts General and Johns-Hopkins. Nolan said that the 97% survival rate for severely wounded soldiers was incredible, and the success was due to their proximity to the front, and that the soldiers had been young and healthy before they were wounded. Nolan shared that “the medics would go out with the troops and often give the patient a first shot of morphine and stop the bleeding right under the eyes of the enemy.” She was also quick to recognize the work of the Army dentists, who spent more time wiring jaws during surgery than providing regular dental care.

At one point, German tanks approached the 53rd Field Hospital and continued down the road without stopping. Nolan believed that the Germans left them alone because they knew the American field hospitals were also providing care for the most seriously wounded German soldiers. Corpsman Jack King of the 47th Field Hospital stated in a letter from France on July 30, 1944, “We treat all alike, American or German, [and] it seemed peculiar in a way, but that is the law of man and of God.”

Many of the combat soldiers during the Battle of the Bulge suffered from the bitter cold weather. Staff members of the field hospital performed under difficult circumstances and suffered from frozen feet.

At times, there were opportunities for hospital personnel to take a break. The standard equipment for a nurse who was off duty was a deck of playing cards.

At the conclusion of an interview, I asked Rose Young if she would like to share any thoughts with students. “Tell them that they can accomplish anything they set their minds to, even under the most difficult of circumstances.” Students should take her words to heart, because, like Kate Nolan and Jack King, Rose Young had experienced the Battle of the Bulge and she had learned to excel under the most difficult of circumstances.



Welcome, New Members!

We are happy to announce these new members who joined BOBA between March 28, 2020 - July 6, 2020:

Marcus E. Bailey	AL	Elizabeth P. Fuss	MD	Doyle Mullis	SC	Virginia Vance	TN
James Beck	VA	Robert L. Haines	PA	Dennis Owens	GERMANY	Freek Vogels	THE
Clifford Hugh Black	GA	Sam Hiatt*	OH	Dr. Anthony Pagano*	NV		NETHERLANDS
Allen Christensen	NC	Jerry Hudson	AL	John Peniche	VA	William Werckman*	FL
Donald G. Davis	OH	Matthew Jameson	IL	Rex D. Rish	SC	Bud H. Wickman	OR
Richard R. Davis	OH	Rebecca Kieffer	FL	Jacob Ruser*	PA	Linda Winer	VA
Paul Demoga	MA	Joel Lamberty	BELGIUM	Henry Schoepke	WI	Robert Zuniga	CA
Robert E DeVinney*	MI	Lois Lembo	PA	Fabian Somville	BELGIUM		
Nancy Israelian Doyle	MA	Willie J. May	AL	Spring Hill College Library	AL		
Ryan Fitzgerald	CO	Carol Mohor	GA	Jeanne Thornton	NE		

*Denotes Bulge Veteran 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 the epic battle. You can help immediately by:

- Talking to people about BOBA to sign up new members
- Sending us articles to be included in *The Bulge Bugle*®
- Promoting our website: www.battleofthebulge.org
- Attending our annual reunions and DC events

★ NEW MEMBER SPOTLIGHT ★

My name is Henry Schoepke. I am 12 years old and I live in Fitchburg, Wisconsin. I will be in 7th grade next year. World War II has always fascinated me—the battles, the people, and the facts.

I recently became a member of the Battle of the Bulge Association®. My family has a deep history involving World War II, and many members of my family have served in it. None of them served in the Battle of The Bulge, but they served in countless ways.

One of my great-grandfathers, Earl Jodway, was drafted into the U.S. Army after the second World War broke out. He was in the famed 32nd Infantry Division, also known as the “Red Arrow.” It was composed largely of Wisconsin and Michigan soldiers. Jodway was from Alpena, MI. He was sent to fight in the Pacific Theater of War. He spent time training in Australia and fought in New Guinea. He fought in the famed battle of Buna-Gona. In that battle, the Australians and Americans fought the Japanese empire in an eventual victory. The battle was very costly, with thousands of casualties. My great-grandfather, who was on a bazooka team, fired rockets during the battle. He survived, and went on to continue fighting in the New Guinea campaign. While overseas, he contracted Malaria. He survived the war and lived the rest of his life in Traverse City, Michigan. He passed away in 2000. He was 83 years old.



Welcome to our newest BOBA member, 12-year-old Henry!

On the other side of my family, my great-grandfather John Niemetz and great-grandmother Esther Kestelik Niemetz also participated in the war. John Niemetz enlisted in the U.S. Army. He was supposed to go to Marquette University when the war started. He was a supply sergeant in Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. Esther Kestelik Niemetz enlisted in the WACS. She was a private and worked in the Fort Leonard Wood hospital assisting recovering vets and helping them find jobs. While in service, she left the WACS to get married and she joined the Waves. She was there for two weeks and then honorably discharged at the end of World War II. Near the end of her life, she went on an honor flight with her granddaughter. She passed away in 2017. John passed away in 1985. Both were buried with military honors in Woods Veterans Memorial in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Henry loves hearing stories from veterans and is collecting autographs from World War II veterans. He has corresponded with many of our BOBA veterans, including David Bailey, Frank Cohn, Frank Dick, Jake Larson, Harry Miller and Paul Andert. We are all very excited to have Henry join BOBA, and for his enthusiasm and support of our veterans. If you are a veteran and would like to connect with Henry, contact the BOBA home office: 703-528-4058, or betsy.boba@gmail.com.

75 YEARS LATER: BULGE MEMORIES

*BOBA has been collecting memories and photos from veterans who were there 75 years ago.
If you are a veteran member and have not been featured in our magazine before, we want to hear from you!*



Marshall P. Streib

106 INF D (Golden Lions), 424 INF REG, CO B

Mission: The 106th Division's mission on December 11, 1944 was to relieve the battle-worn 28th Division that was stationed there for seasoning and rest and to defend the 27 mile border in the Ardennes Forest in Belgium. In the 424th Regiment, the First Battalion was in mobile reserve and Company B wound up in Lommersweiler, Belgium.

Lt. Nuffer was "nice enough" to put my squad at the bottom of a long hill protecting a valley with railroad tracks from Germany into Belgium. This was considered a critical supply route for the German army. My job was to secure the front line against the German advance and counter attack at the "Bulge" as it evolved.

Most vivid memory: About 5:30 AM, Dec. 16, 1944...ALL HELL BROKE LOSE. The Lieutenant ran into the room and said there was a "minor" breakthrough in A Company. He told us to only grab our rifles, we'll be back soon, but I had my men grab rifles, cartridge belts, canteens and bayonets and led them up the hill and never returned until April, 1996 when I visited the Ardennes with my daughter and her husband...51 years later.

We were then transported to Winterspelt and went through a number of skirmishes. Some time after dark (date?), B Company was pulled out of the line to protect the withdrawal of Regimental Headquarters at Heckhalenfeld, Belgium. At that point I had my most vivid memory of this war.

With only a few men (estimated at 40) and a heavy machine gun from D Company, we fought Germans, and artillery for several hours, but because of the number of Germans and firepower we were pushed back slowly until we were running out of town to defend. Captain Peyser decided to withdraw to a hill and left me with Zaragoza and Parker as rear guard. I parked us along a small road with a hedge line giving some cover in the kneeling position and we held it for a short time. Finally under heavy fire, a burp gun ripped Zaragoza open and he died still in his kneeling position. As I was checking Zaragoza and laying him down, Parker took a bullet to the head and died instantly. At that point, I withdrew up the hill to join the rest of the Company. (Daughter's note: Upon visiting this town with Marsh in 1996, it was obvious this image and the tragedy of it is emblazoned in his memory forever.)

On the hill we received mortar and small arms fire as we watched truckloads of Germans and armor driving to our rear, and knew we were being surrounded. During this skirmish, Captain Peyser was wounded and somehow evacuated. As darkness approached, we broke into small groups of 10 or 15 men and agreed to work our way back to St. Vith



and set up another defensive position to stop or slow down the attack hoping someone, somewhere was bringing up reinforcements

In Bracht we came to a Captain who said he was with K Company and that B Company was dug in on the hill so we walked up the hill and found Lt. Slutzky. He gave me the left flank at the top of the hill near Maspelt. We dug in as much as possible and repelled 2 or 3 attacks. Then, on what I believe was December 20th, the Germans mounted a Battalion sized attack along with 5 tanks. Having only rifles and bayonets as our defense, we withdrew from the hill. When we got to Bracht our Battalion Commander, Col. Welch, gave us "HELL" and said, "It's bad enough these bastards got us surrounded,

you stupid a__holes now gave them the high ground to sit there and pick us to pieces! Now get your s__t together and retake the hill!" There was a small argument when we requested bazookas and of course there were none. So he said "give me a few minutes," and went into a building. When he came out he said: "Here's the deal...go up the hill halfway and just before dawn, you'll get 3 artillery barrages: one on the hill, one on the town, and the third on the hill. Then it's up to you! I need that hill and ...good luck!"

When darkness fell, 40 to 60 of us started up the hill slow and quiet as possible. When Lt. Slutzky thought we were close enough, he signaled for us to lay there the rest of the night in snow on frozen ground, freezing our tails off. We were soon shaken by shells exploding in front of us. The order was given to "fix bayonets" as the second salvo hit the tanks and village, then as the third salvo hit the racked hill, we moved up running, screaming, and firing. When we reached the top, the tanks were gone and the Germans broke and ran. We stopped and kept firing at them but I gave the order to halt and secure your foxholes as the Germans were known for counter attacking with a larger force. There were no more attacks and we pulled out on the 22nd of December, 1944. It had been decided to give up the St. Vith area and get the 7th and 9th Armored Divisions, Infantry and supporting units out....an estimated 20,000 troops.

We then marched through the harsh snowy weather 19 miles to get back to our front line at Werbomont. That is another memorable story not meant to be told in this writing.

Awards: The Bronze Star Medal, Purple Heart, WWII Theatre Medal, European, African, Middle Eastern Campaign, American Campaign, Belgium Forager, Expert Marksman medal and others.

Marshall is 96 and lives in Beach Park, IL.

★
James McManus
75 INF 290 REG ANTI TK CO



Most vivid memory: "The Shell That Did Not Explode"

We arrived at the Belgium Bulge on Christmas eve, 1944. Vielsalm Belgium is a small town south of Liège. While our outfit dug in on the north side of town, we could hear the roar of German tanks leaving on the south side of town.

On Christmas day, we moved south, where we were in a defensive position for several days, coming under relentless German artillery fire day and night. It was during this barrage that one of those shells fell 2-3 feet from the end of my foxhole. Fortunately for both of us, it did not explode because if it had neither my partner, Ray Dunn, or I would have survived. After we cleaned out the foxhole, we saw that the impact had dumped dirt right where we slept. Thankfully, at age 97, I am here to write about this incident. We were extremely lucky!

James McManus lives in Molalla, OR.

★
Oscar Robert Freesen, Jr.
83 INF 331 REG CO K

I was drafted soon after graduation from high school in 1943 in Illinois and then spent my first basic training at Camp Stewart, GA where I learned clerk typing and then at Ft. Bliss where I learned to identify foreign aircraft. I spent many nights out in the desert looking at various aircraft. We were told to be aware of rattlesnakes coming to the warmth of our bodies and when the sun came up they would crawl away. Fortunately, I never experienced any snakes. After graduating from there I was sent to Virginia Beach, Virginia to watch for enemy aircraft. I was soon reassigned to the infantry because we were in need of replacement soldiers during the Battle of the Bulge. As a result I was sent to Camp Maxey near Paris, TX for further infantry training for six weeks and granted furlough for Christmas and New Years with my parents in Illinois.

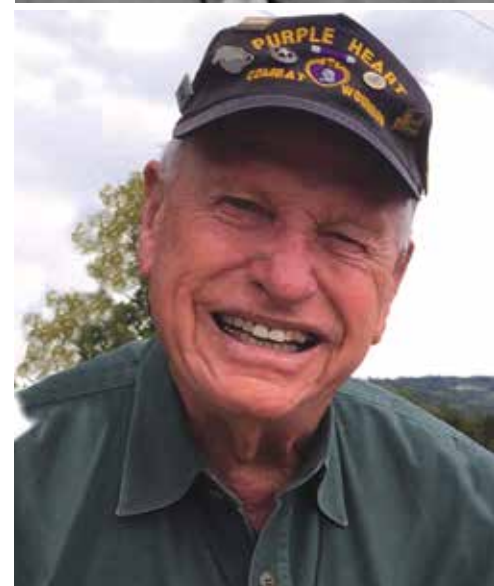
On New Year's day 1945, I reported to New York to board on the *Queen Elizabeth* for an eight-day trip to Glasgow, Scotland. I then boarded a troop train across England to board a ferry across the English Channel to Le Havre, France. We then boarded a Forty-and-Eight boxcar, which were meant to haul forty men or eight horses. We then went to Belgium to be assigned to 83 INF 331 REG CO K, as replacements for soldiers who had been injured or killed. There were also men from England, who joined our group that had been serving life in prison for various crimes. I soon met and became good friends with Kenneth Armstrong from White Hall, Illinois, a small town south of my hometown of Bluffs, Illinois. He told me he was married in the US and his wife had a baby girl after he shipped out overseas. It was very cold in Belgium and we slept in sleeping bags with our rifles inside to keep it warm. Sometimes

I would wake in the a.m. covered with snow.

After General Patton chased the Germans out of the area, we left on foot toward Berlin to chase Hitler. We sometimes would ride on British tanks and they stopped for tea twice a day. We arrived near the Rhine River at Dusseldorf, Germany and after the engineers built a temporary bridge across the river we then crossed over. I saw and heard buzz bombs going over to London. Also, we never had any lights at night so the German aircraft could not tell our locations. I saw many soldiers both German and American lying dead in the fields as we passed. Once a mess sergeant took a meat cleaver to chop off a dead German soldier's hand so he could get his wristwatch.

We then arrived in New Hamm, Germany, which was a railroad town. I saw my first sergeant get killed by a machine gun on the way uptown. There were stars coming from the street to the downstairs on both sides into the railroad station. I went down one side and a German soldier (dressed in American paratrooper clothing) came down the other side. He had a grease gun (30 caliber) and shot me four times. I was then sent by ambulance to Nancy, France because of my wounds. I was shot April 2, 1945. I learned later that my friend Kenny Armstrong was killed on April 12, 1945. I was in the hospital when the war with Germany ended. After I recovered, I was sent back to the 83rd Infantry Division, and I was made Company Clerk because of my typing skills. It was there I learned that my father was ill at Jefferson Barracks, MO, and I applied for discharge and was soon allowed to go back to the states.

Bob travels the country with his wife, Deb, in their Foretravel motor home.



75 YEARS LATER: BULGE MEMORIES



Fred Whitaker 87 INF 347 INF 2 BN HQ

An excerpt taken from the book about Fred, Whitaker: Portrait of An American Rifleman in World War II by Tom Maki

In the Ardennes ... "In one area where we were advancing the Germans were firing from foxholes that they had dug in the snow. Machine gun and rifle fire were everywhere. You had to keep down or get behind a tree. I remember that when the Germans began to fall back I started hole hopping. I would leap out of one snow hole and then run to another. Even though the Germans were pulling back there was still a lot of firing. Each time I moved I would try to keep as low and go as fast as I could which was hard to do in the snow. When I made it to a hole I would literally throw myself into it. But at one hole I got a got surprise... there was a German soldier in it! I leaped into the hole and I landed on his back. I was taken by surprise and I began to strangle him but he did not fight back because he was dead, frozen stiff at his post by the sub-zero temperatures."

"On March 25, 1945 the 87th Infantry Division's 347th Regiment was directed to cross the Rhine River. It was around one o'clock in the morning when the first assault boats started out. It wasn't raining and it wasn't too cold. It was either at this time or a few minutes later when I heard a shot. I think it was a rifle shot and I think that it came from our side of the river. I don't know what it meant. Maybe it was an



accidental discharge of somebody's rifle or maybe there was a German somewhere who wanted to sound a warning. I do know that not long after the rifle shot the river was suddenly bathed in white light. Flares were fired by the Germans from the heights across the river. Each of the flares drifted down in a mini-parachute. Right after that when all of the first wave of assault boats were in the river and on their way, a firestorm of gun and artillery fire opened up. While we waited our turn to get into a boat we all

watched as those first boats made their way across the river."

Years later, Fred found out from Colonel Cobb that the casualty rate in the first wave of assault boats had been eighty percent. In the second wave it was forty, but in the third wave it was only twenty. The Americans' artillery fire from across the river along with the tenacity of the soldiers in the first and second waves who hadn't been hit had considerably improved the situation.

Awards: Fred fought in four campaigns (Saar, Ardennes, Rhineland, Central Europe) and holds five honor medals, four service medals and five foreign decorations including the French Legion of Honor, France's highest honor.

Fred is past president of the Southern California Chapter of BOBA and currently resides in Villa Park, CA.

Now photo courtesy: Member Andrew Biggio

VETERANS MEMBERS: SUBMIT YOUR BULGE MEMORY!



If you are a veteran who participated in this historic battle 75 years ago, **please share a photo, memory, and/or thoughts**

about the impact it has had. It can be a few sentences or short paragraph with a picture. We will continue to share Bulge Memories in future issues of *The Bulge Bugle*®.

Email (preferred) your responses to betsy.boba@gmail.com or mail to: BOBA Inc., P.O. Box 330, Mechanicsville, VA 23111-0330.



Marcus A. Bartusek 106 INF 424 REG 2 BN CO H



Mission: My division's mission was holding Hitler's last push along the Siegfried Line. I was a corporal and machine gunner (30 caliber aircoded).

Most vivid memory: On Christmas eve, we were caught in a barrage of fire during the attack on the town of Manhay. We had to withdraw and the next day (Christmas Day) we took the town which was one of the turning points of the war. Else we would be talking German. God bless all the heroes that never came back!

Awards: European-African-Middle Eastern Campaigns with four Battle Stars, Bronze Star, and French Legion of Honor.

Marcus resides in Manly, IA.

★ Constantine Emmanuel Hastalis

743 TANK BN CO A

Inducted into the U.S. Army March 14, 1941. Arrived in England late May 1944, assigned to Replacement Depot as an excess officer. On June 15th I arrived in the battle area. I was instructed to take a shovel, dig a hole and get in it, as Bed Check Charlie flies over and drops bombs—they were German bombers who flew over our lines, dropping flares followed by bombs. The ground was hard; I gave up trying to dig a hole, as things were quiet. I took off my helmet, coveralls, shoes, and had laid my carbine close by. Sometime later, Bed Check Charlies came over and the ground began to shake. I did not remember just where my shoes and clothes were. I grabbed my Crucifix and prayed as the nearby concussions became most uncomfortable. That was the last time I did not follow orders. How quickly this ‘smart’ 2nd Lieutenant became a veteran.

Assigned to 743rd Tank Battalion, A Company, D-Day casualties were high, thus my exposure to war in the Bocage.

We fought across France, Belgium, Holland and into Germany. We entered Belgium and Holland prior to any other units; we were very fortunate. This was not a tour; much fighting, ran out of fuel and equipment, as the supply line extended in most instances to the Beach. Also, General Patton’s 3rd Army at times received supplies before us. The 743rd entered Tournai, Belgium September 2, 1944, and Maasticht, Holland 14th of September; Germany 18th of September. I was



wounded on October 3rd, breaching the Siegfried Line; many officers and enlisted men on this drive killed or wounded. Rejoined on November 17th, adverse weather conditions and fierce German resistance through November.

Things quieted down waiting at the Roer, training our new recruits, augmenting the ranks of each Company. December 16th alerted that the Germans had launched a counteroffensive through the Ardennes. Moved out at 0200 on the 17th, headed to Malmedy, arriving at 1000. We had no maps, information that some Germans were dressed as American, from captured Americans, spoke excellent English, which included slang expressions.

Thus began the “Battle of the Bulge”—frigid weather, improper clothing, snow, low visibility, ice-covered roads, steep drops into chasms if you began to skid, no air support due to weather. To prevent the Germans from splitting the armies on

their way to Luxembourg, we engaged them in towns, i.e. Stavelot, La Gleize, St. Vith, Vielsalm, Stoumont. December 24th the skies cleared, the American Air Force went to work reining havoc on the Germans fleeing. Crossed Roer River February 24th, back to Aachen. Crossed the Rhine March 14th; April 17th took our last objective, Magdeburg. April 18th, no more fighting. April 24th overran a German Concentration Camp, freeing 2,500 starving inmates. V.E. Day May 8th, prayers for our fallen comrades, time to reflect, plans to come home.

—From Constantine’s written memoirs,

submitted in memory by his son Noel Hastalis, Member

NOTE: “Verify” was the code name assigned to the 743rd. There is a wonderful book: Move Out Verify, the Combat Story of the 743rd Tank Battalion with, as its Forward, “A Letter to the Tankers” by William D Duncan, Lt. Col., Infantry, 743rd Tank Battalion, Commanding. This book is available free online at digicom.bpl.lib.me.us/ww_reg_his/66/. It follows the 743rd from its D-Day Omaha Beach invasion through to victory. Constantine wrote this note in his book on September 18, 1979, to me: “This book contains a storehouse of memories of a distant past that is shared with you, as you read our adventures when ideals kindled our spirit and motivated us to achieve the impossible by meeting the enemy on their home grounds and defeating him.” —Noel Hastalis



★ REMEMBERING THE FALLEN ★

BOBA has been collecting stories of those who were lost during the battle, so if you are a descendant or comrade of the fallen, please share about the soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice, so that we can honor them.



VA CRATER CHAPTER (43) LUNCH

Shown at Mission BBQ, Midlothian, left to right: Jayne Sneed, J.C. Wood, Ron Kimler (8 AF BOBA veteran member), Rick Rohas, Ken Robinson, Helen Berry, Ron Peterson, Mary Ann Smith (Chapter 43 President) and John Payne. Ron's military photo is on the wall there, and they brought everyone hot chocolate chip cookies after the meal.

DELAWARE VALLEY CHAPTER (4) MEETING

The next Delaware Valley chapter meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, August 26, 2020 at 12:30 pm at the Chapel of the 4 Chaplains at the Navy Yard, 1201 Constitution Avenue, Philadelphia, PA, which is the site of a World War II Navy Chapel (built in 1942). We have not been together in a long time, and wanted to hold this meeting to reorganize. Please spread the word, especially to the ones who do not use e-mail. Entry screening, masks, and social distancing will be required. For more information and to RSVP contact Andy Waskie at awaski01@gmail.com or 267-240-3659.

—Submitted by Andy Waskie, Chapter 4 President

WE NEED YOUR CHAPTER NEWS!

Send to: betsy.boba@gmail.com

NEXT ISSUE DEADLINE: SEPTEMBER 7, 2020

SC CHAPTER (7) D-DAY ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

Last year at this time, we had all attended events celebrating the 75th Anniversary of the landings on the beaches at Normandy on June 6, 1944 D-Day. Hundreds, even thousands, of people celebrated this historic event around the world. However, this June 6th, D-Day was almost just another day in our world due to certain circumstances, especially COVID-19.

In June 2019 in Columbia, SC, the 75th Anniversary of D-Day was celebrated with the assistance of the South Carolina Chapter of BOBA. Some of our Bulge veterans attended as well as other WWII veterans. All these veterans agreed to sign autographs for more than 3 hours.

One individual I remember was a young school teacher, named Ashley, who was introduced to me by my daughter. They were standing in line waiting for autographs and I asked her what she knew about WWII and specifically about the Battle of the Bulge. Her reply caught me off guard. She said she knew something about World War II but very little about the Battle of the Bulge. She also told me that her grandfather was in WWII but he never spoke about his service. She said she had never met a veteran of the Battle of the Bulge but really wanted to do so. This statement is sadly common in our younger generations and really needs to be corrected. This can be corrected by our WWII veterans, especially the Battle of the Bulge veterans, and all of our BOBA members.

After having lunch with our chapter, Ashley met several of our veterans and some WWII veterans. Later our chapter received a very nice thank you card from Ashley. She appreciated our hospitality and especially being able to meet some of the “heroes” of WWII and the Battle of the Bulge. My hope is she will take the things she has learned and will inform her students, her family and friends about our history.



Lief Maseng (far right) fought at D-Day and in the Battle of the Bulge. Lief is pictured with fellow Veteran Members Gerald White (left) and Vernon Brantley (center) at last year's D-Day 75th Anniversary event.

Remembering D-Day 2020, what is going to happen in December 2020 and January 2021, etc.? What is going to be done to honor our veterans? Maybe it will be up to the members of our organization to keep honoring our veterans. Who will honor them when we are gone? The answer is: whoever comes after us. So we should be telling these veterans' stories to everyone, especially our families.

—Submitted by Doug Patterson, Chapter 7 President

SC CHAPTER (7) CONNECTS NEW MEMBERS ACROSS THE GLOBE

by Barbara Mooneyhan, BOBA Executive Vice President and SC Chapter Member

The South Carolina Chapter has been in quarantine and not able to meet with our membership in person for two quarterly meetings but are busy, never the less, in making new friends! As many of our group follow the usual social media pages associated with WWII and the Battle of the Bulge specifically, one of us noticed a plea on Facebook from the Henri-Chapelle American Cemetery page. It happened to be a dear soldier's grave who was killed on December 17, 1944—only the second day of the infamous battle—and the person that adopted the grave wanted to get in touch with the soldier's family. Rex Rish was from South Carolina so all of our antenna went up! When we found out that the soldier seemed to be from the Columbia area, we all reached out to anyone with the "Rish" name.

Here is what the adopter of the grave wrote: "Finally I was able to visit the grave I adopted last month of PFC Rex Rish, 28th Infantry Division 110th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Bn HQ Co. He died on December 17, 1944, 1.5 km south of Hosingen, Luxembourg during the second day of the Battle of the Bulge. He's one of the men that paid the highest price in exchange for time, when General Middleton gave the order to hold at all cost. The 101st Airborne Division needed that time to get from Mourmelon in France to Bastogne for defending the town. I'll remember you! 'Roll on 28th, Roll on!'"

We communicated with Freek Vogels, who is from a small town in southern Netherlands who adopted the grave and got any information he had on the sleeping veteran. With "all hands on deck," we were calling family, friends and even fishing/hunting buddies that might could help. Before we knew it, our SC Chapter members identified that the family had owned a local flower shop for many years and even were able to put their resources together to come up with two obituaries of Rex's brother and wife that listed survivors. Within 72 hours, we were able to connect the dots!

Vernon Brantley (75th ID) did the heavy lifting and called the phone number listed for the surviving nephew, also named Rex, so many times



The Henri-Chapelle American Cemetery grave of soldier Rex Rish, South Carolina.

he was afraid to be labeled a stalker or spammer. A follow-up letter went out to the address we had—certified, return receipt requested. FINALLY, a return phone call came from Rex (the nephew) to Vernon and indeed his wife was sure it was someone trying to scam him!

We found out that his uncle had married a lady, Mrs. M. A. Rish, he met in London, England and she was 2 months pregnant when he went away to war. Little Rex Rish, named after his father, was born but sadly died at the tender age of 2 years old from the flu. In a loving tribute to his fallen brother, Howard and Edith Rish of Columbia named their first-born son, Rex, after his uncle. This makes him the closest, living relative to our fallen soldier. Rex hopes to visit his uncle's grave in Belgium next summer.

Of course, we were in constant contact with Freek in Nuth, Netherlands. We found out that his grandfather served in WWII and thinks he fought at Grebbelinie, an important defense line in the Netherlands. His grandfather was taken prisoner and spent a couple of months in Germany before returning home. Four years ago, Freek started working as a volunteer at the Eyewitness Museum

in Beek (one of the best private museums in the Netherlands/Europe, he says) that is about 10 km from Nuth. This is where he started reading about the Battle of the Bulge and specifically the 28th ID, 110th IR. For these reasons, he wanted to adopt a grave from a soldier who served in that unit. Because no graves were available to adopt in Margraten, the Netherlands American Cemetery, he adopted the grave at Henri-Chapelle American Cemetery in Belgium. He specifically wanted a grave of a soldier who fought with the 28th ID, 110th IR. In the future, he is considering becoming a battlefield tour guide in the area where the 28th ID fought with the 9th AD CCR during the first 4 or 5 days of the Battle of the Bulge.

The SC Chapter is proud to welcome warmly our new BOBA members. Feel free to contact Freek at facvogels8@gmail.com. He would love to hear from veterans in the 28th ID or 110th IR!



CONSIDER GIVING TO OUR WREATH FUND

Almost every gathering with BOBA includes a wreath-laying to honor those fallen during the Battle of the Bulge. This year we began collecting money to start a perpetual wreath fund, so that funds would be readily available when these events occur. If you would like to give to the Wreath Fund, go online to: battleofthebulge.org > donate and indicate "Wreath Fund" in the notes OR mail a check (note "Wreath Fund" in memo area) to BOBA, PO BOX 330, Mechanicsville, VA 23111.

GOLDEN GATE CHAPTER (10) MEMBER MARSHALL SORIA TURNED 100!



Marshall Soria, 28th Infantry Division, 110th Regiment, 3rd BN, Co C

Veteran Member Marshall Soria celebrated his 100th birthday on July 3. Unfortunately, his family could not have a large family gathering due to COVID-19. Instead, they had a small social-distanced gathering and will plan a large gathering when it's safe. When the local sheriff's department heard about Marshall's birthday on the local news in Fresno, CA (where he lives with his son) they decided to pay him a short visit and brought gifts, balloons and birthday cards. This made him feel very special.

Marshall served in the 28th Infantry Division, 110th Regiment, 3rd BN, Co C. He joined the Army in July 1944 and after only 4.5 months of training in Camp Roberts in Paso Robles, CA, was shipped off to Europe on the *Queen Mary* and arrived in France around 10 Jan 1945. He's still able to recall the fierce battles in Alsace, Colmar Pocket, Voges Mountains, Monschau Forest and Aachen. He was among the replacement troops that was sent in to help the 28th ID who suffered many losses in the Hürtgen Forest and the Ardennes Dec 1944. He suffered from frostbite during that harsh winter of '44-'45 and refused medical attention because he wanted to stay with his squad. Fortunately, this was the only injury that he suffered. He knows he was extremely lucky for being able to return home when the war was over. He has not forgotten the comrades he lost during the war and thinks of them often.

Marshall was born in Torreon, Mexico on July 3, 1920 and emigrated to the US via El Paso, TX with his parents in June 1922. Sadly, his parents lost 4 of Marshall's older siblings to the Spanish flu in 1918.

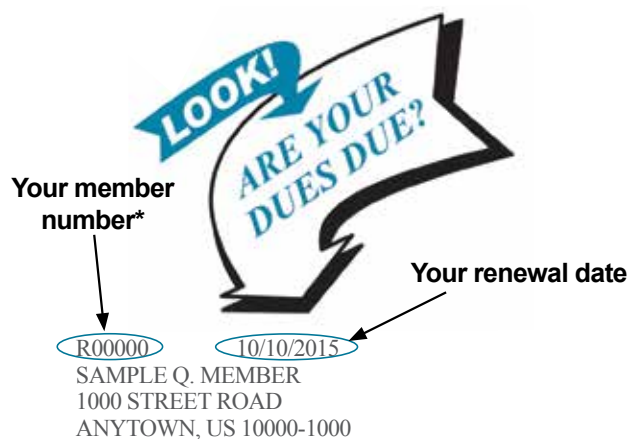
Marshall lived with his parents and younger siblings in southern and central CA and worked in agriculture. He attended high school in Delano, CA and was a track and field star. Marshall married Thomasa Rojas in 1941. He became a US Citizen in Sept, 1944. After his discharge from the Army in 1945, he returned to Delano, CA and resumed married life. Around 1950, he moved the family to San Francisco area and became a cement mason. In 1970, he started his own cement business and retired 10 years later. His family has grown over the years: his 8 children has made him a proud grandfather to 22 grandchildren, 40 great grandchildren and 26 great great grandchildren. He attributes his longevity to "The good Lord and hard work."

If you would like to send Marshall a note (even though his birthday was in July), please contact Doris Davis at doris@dordavis.com. (Additional contact information is on page 2 in the list of Chapters.)

—Submitted by Doris Davis, President of the Golden Gate Chapter; written along with Mario and Dolores Baraona (Marshall's daughter)

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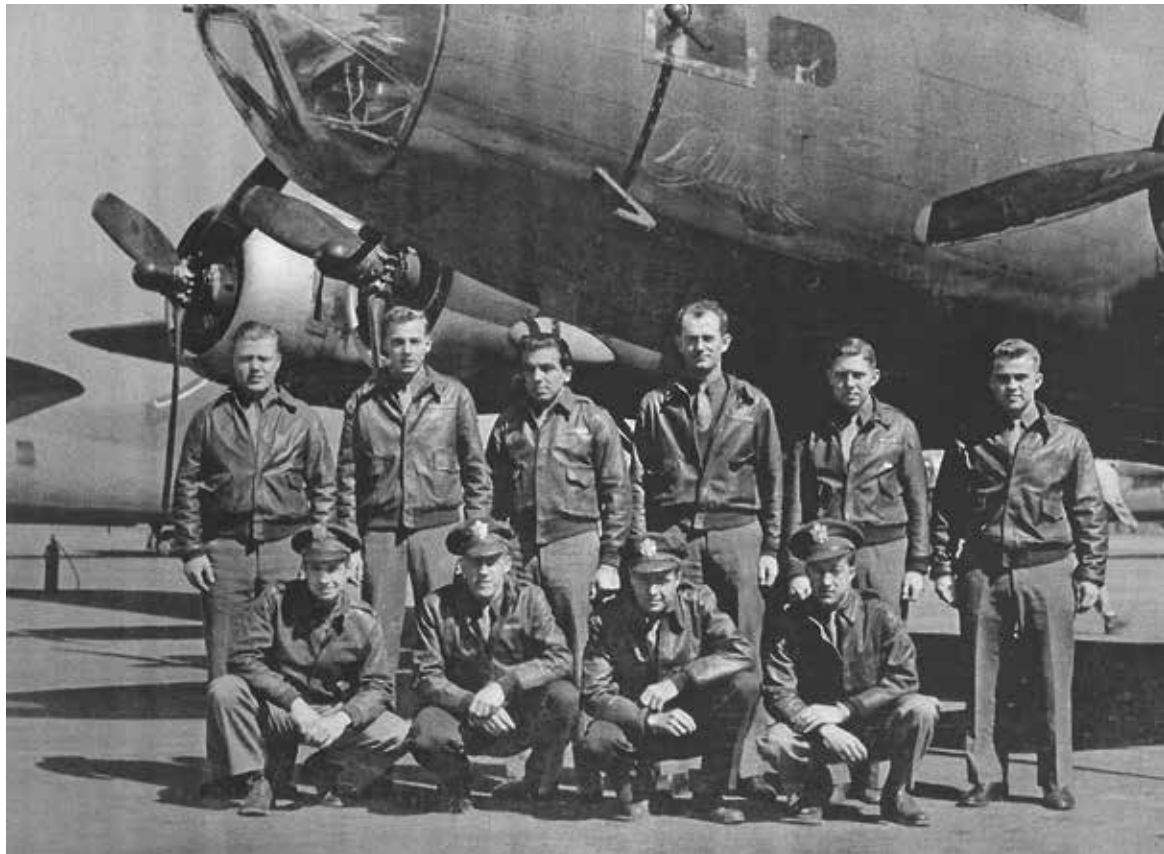


VETERAN MEMBER VIDEO INTERVIEWS

Watch our veterans' videos on our website at:
www.battleofthebulge.org, then click on "Video"

by Rick Hurst, Member

Aerial gunnery school was difficult. The most difficult part of this was the moving platform skeet shooting training. Here, they had us stand in the back of a pickup truck, with a protective fence in the bed, and with a shotgun shoot at clay pigeons from high or low “houses” stationed around a one-half mile circular or oval track. As the truck drove



In going overseas, we were first given a new B-17 to fly. Just before we took off, we were ordered off because of problems with landing gear. A number of those new planes had been grounded. Instead, back to Camp Kilmer, NJ, to board a stripped-down ship designed to carry in our assigned space sixty men. There were 210 of us in that space. The food was slop, so I lived for those nine days on canned salmon and

(continued on next page)

DICK SCHNEIDER (continued)

Hershey bars. In Britain, we flew a number of practice missions and had a refresher gunnery course before our first mission.

On my first combat mission, I wondered why I had been so eager to enlist! The fighters hit us, with a Focke-Wulf fighter zooming by my window. The B-24s below us took flak hits and just disappeared in a puff of smoke. Our tail gunner suffered frozen feet on that mission, so I replaced him as tail gunner. He went to another crew and was killed when shot down May 30, 1944 over Dessau, Germany. I remained a tail gunner for the rest of my missions.

Our routine for a mission was to be roused at 0200 to begin preparing. I had to dress for 40 to 50 below zero weather at elevation. I started with long underwear, pants and shirt, and a heavy double thick knitted sweater. On my feet, I wore heated boot liners, with wool hunting socks (from home) over that, and then my insulated boots. My feet were always cold. I then donned heated clothing, and a fur parka over that. I added my Mae West, a parachute, and a helmet. On my hands, I wore silk gloves, heated gauntlets that connected with my heated clothing, and then gunner's mitts with just a thumb and trigger finger. We then went to our briefing and to our planes.

A flare signaled engine start, then taxi and takeoff.... hopefully! We were always loaded to the max with fuel and bombs, and I sometimes wondered if we'd get off the ground. I was always very meticulous about my 50-caliber machine gun. I wiped it dry of all oil, because oil was like molasses at those temperatures. The guns wore out sooner, but we could always get new guns.

The average mission into Germany was 8 to 8-1/2 hours. The longest mission was about 10 hours. We bombed munitions, ball bearing and aircraft factories, and other industries. We were pretty successful at our precision bombing. We flew in formations on our daylight missions, as opposed to the British, who flew at night, not in formation. Near the target, the bombardier was flying the plane because the Norden bombsight required a fixed path. There was no maneuvering once the bombsight was engaged. Of all our targets, Berlin was the worst. The air and ground defenses were very heavy, and the flak over our targets made the sky nearly black. I completed five missions to Berlin.

In July 1944, I had a severe infection in my head/neck area, and was sent to Brompton General Hospital in England. I had surgery and, following my recovery, was sent back to my group. On August 5, 1944, our crew was given a mission, but my name was not called. I wanted to go with my crew, but was told that I had not fully recovered, and would have to wait one more day. I had completed only 15 missions at that point. A substitute tail gunner was assigned in my place. He needed only two missions to complete his tour. My crew never returned. A flak burst over Hamburg damaged the plane. In returning to England over the North Sea, the plane was hit again and went down. Some of the crew were killed, pulled under by their parachutes and drowned. Others became POWs. It was a severe blow to me as, out of my crew, I was left alone. Of my original crew of ten, seven did not make it through the 28 missions. The pilot was 1st Lt. Salvatore Melomo from Brooklyn. He was 26 and

went to William and Mary College, and was the best formation flyer of all pilots I flew with. He had been a fighter pilot prior to this (KIA). The bombardier was 2nd Lt. Erwin Brown, from Texas (POW). The co-pilot was 2nd Lt. Lee Nelson from Miola, Wisconsin. The navigator was Capt. George Robinson. The top turret gunner was T/Sgt. Willard Gilbertson from Ruth, NV (KIA). The radio operator, Sela Panazelos, was from Lynn, MA. The ball turret gunner was S/Sgt. Julian Hill from MD (KIA). S/Sgt. Bob Hittel was the original tail gunner (POW). The other waist gunner was S/Sgt. James Morehead, from Sommerset, IA (POW).

During the Battle of the Bulge, the weather was terrible. The snow was so heavy that it was like walking into a white wall. Once the weather cleared, we were able to give air support during that battle.

I completed my 28th mission over Europe on December 28, 1944, and just couldn't believe that I had survived the war. The Eighth Air Force had suffered 26,000 killed and 26,000 POWs prior to D-Day. I left a lot of friends over there. I was in a number of different airplanes, because sometimes they were so shot up that they had to be repaired or rebuilt. In the course of my missions, I survived three crash landings, all due to combat damage to our planes. Once, when we couldn't get the flaps down, we ran into the trees off the end of the runway.

Our barracks held twenty airmen, two ten-man B-17 crews. I became friends with the other crew's tail gunner. On missions, he and I would exchange greetings by one of us waving our machine gun up and down, and the other would respond. On a mission to Berlin May 24, 1944, his B-17 was to our starboard side. I had just "waved" at him, and he had just waved back. A bomber above my buddy's was hit by ordnance from the ground, and fell into my buddy's bomber, causing both planes to explode. The flaming fuel from both airplanes engulfed our airplane, and our pilot banked sharply to the left. The debris from the collision struck the plane behind us, severely damaging the tail of the plane. That tail gunner bailed out. Miraculously, the pilot flew that plane back and landed safely. I was roasting in my plane, figured everyone up front was dead, and that we were going down, so I decided to bail out. I had my parachute on, and my combat boots tied to me and had my hand

on the exit hatch handle, ready to bail out headfirst, when the captain called back and asked about the status of the crew. I realized that our plane was still flying, so I went back to my station. We completed our bombing mission. Our group alone lost six planes on that mission, sixty men. It was hard to take.

—Told by Dick Schneider; May 25, 2005, and July 7, 2019

During my interview with Dick, I had pulled one of the books from his bookshelf, and began reading aloud the story of May 24 mission he described. As I was reading, he came over to me and began telling the story himself. Wisely, I closed the book and listened, transfixed, and with a grateful heart for what he and millions of others had done for our country. As he spoke, I saw through my own tears the flash of intensity in his eyes....the same intensity I saw when I first met him years before. Rest well, Richard Schneider.

Visit battleofthebulge.org to read the full article by Rick Hurst of Dick Schneider's service.



Three Amigos on Honor Flight to WWII Memorial from Columbia standing left to right: Fred Merrill and Dick Schneider, Seated: Jim Mooneyhan (holding a copy of January 1, 1945 Life Magazine in which he was pictured).

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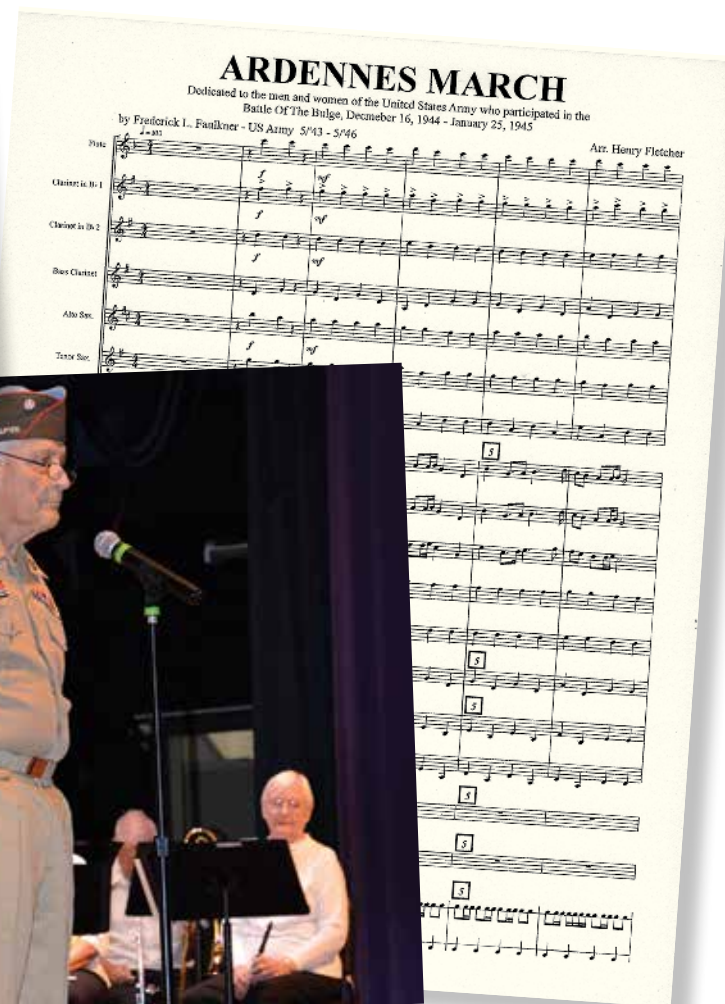
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BULGE VET TURNED MUSICIAN

Frederick L. Faulkner (3257 SIG SVC CO), member of Chapters 23 & 32, has composed 3 pieces for concert band that recognize and honor the participants of Pearl Harbor, The Battle of the Bulge and Viet Nam. Having played piano and the reed instruments in concert and jazz bands over the years as a hobby, he decided to try and write something that would honor these wars that he had lived through and participated in. Having had no formal training in composition, he was helped immensely by his current concert band director Henry Fletcher, in New Port Richey, Florida. After the success of *The Ardennes March*, he was motivated to write the *Pearl Harbor Memorial* and the *Viet Nam Tribute*. The *Viet Nam Tribute* is unique in that there is live battle sound incorporated into the piece. These 3 works were received equally well by the audience and are played annually by the Richey Concert Band in new Port Richey, Florida. The band consists of 65-75 pieces and is a non-paid community band of 48 years standing.

Check out links to these wonderful compositions at battleofthebulge.org.



Frederick L. Faulkner (above), 3257 SIG SVC CO, at a performance of "The Ardennes March," and as a young WWII soldier (top).

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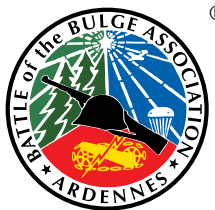
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