

# The BULGE BUGLE

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

VOLUME XLI NUMBER 3

THE ARDENNES CAMPAIGN

SUMMER 2022



## CELEBRATING OUR VETERANS



BOBA 40th Annual Reunion | Gettysburg, PA | October 21-23, 2022 | Read more on pgs. 12-13.



**Battle of the Bulge Association®, Inc.**

P.O. Box 330, Mechanicsville, VA 23111-0330  
(703) 528-4058

The Battle of the Bulge Association® is a membership organization instituted to: perpetuate the memory of the sacrifices made by those who participated during the Battle of the Bulge; preserve historical data and sites relating to the battle; promote friendship among Battle of the Bulge veterans, their relatives and others interested in the battle; foster and maintain international relations and good will with all Allied countries who were a part of the battle; support Chapters of BOBA. BOBA is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization. Donations to BOBA are tax-deductible.

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**Editor:** Betsy Rose (EMAIL: bulge.bugle@gmail.com)

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**CHAPTER PRESIDENTS**

Many members of the Battle of the Bulge Association® belong to individual chapters located throughout the United States.

The following is a list of the present chapters, the state in which they are located, and their Chapter President's name.

Please contact BOBA at [audra.boba@gmail.com](mailto:audra.boba@gmail.com) or 703-528-4058 for their local meeting times and contact information.

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**[audra.boba@gmail.com](mailto:audra.boba@gmail.com)**

.....

**SEND CHAPTER NEWS FOR BUGLE TO:**

**[bulge.bugle@gmail.com](mailto:bulge.bugle@gmail.com)**

**NEXT ISSUE DEADLINE: OCTOBER 28, 2022**

## ON THE COVER



**Top photo:** Stewart Boone (99 INFD 924 FA SVC BTRY “The Lucky Eleven”) playing his Bugle at the 2015 BOLDERBoulder with his son Jeffrey Boone in the background. Stewart has played at many Memorial Day events at the BOLDERBoulder in Colorado and still plays his Bugle. He is now the only living survivor from the Lucky Eleven and will be 98 in August. (Photo: Glen Delman)

#### **Bottom photos, pictured from left to right:**

1. John R. (Bob) Sirk, 35 INFD 134 REG C (read more on pg. 9)
2. Anthony “Del” DelRossi, 629 CBT ENGR LE (read more on pg. 19)
3. Clayton Christensen, 99 INFD 324 CBT ENGR A (read more on pg. 18)
4. Stewart Boone, 99 INFD 924 FA SVC BTRY “The Lucky Eleven” (read more on pg. 16)

## 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 email or 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, or printed on a laser printer, are not suitable for publication. Scan original photographs at high-resolution (300 dpi), or take a cellphone photo, and send us largest digital file possible. **Printed photos will not be returned, so please do not mail valuable originals—send duplicates.**

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

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

**NEXT ISSUE DEADLINE: OCTOBER 28, 2022**

**QUESTIONS?** Please contact *Bugle* editor Betsy Rose, at bulge.bugle@gmail.com

**Thanks to our vendors who provide valuable services to support BOBA:** Apple Press, Inc. (Printing/Fulfillment); Eye D Communications (Layout/Design); RBI Services, Inc. (Accounting Services)

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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

John Mohor, President and CEO

BY THE TIME YOU RECEIVE THIS Summer 2022 issue of *The Bulge Bugle*®, the U.S. Army will have turned 247 years old, and we celebrated 247 years of independence in the USA. We are diligently working on our final changes so those members and other invited associations can register for our reunion in Gettysburg, PA October 21-23, 2022. [See pgs. 12-13.] As I composed this message, I learned the Best Western is sold out, so be sure and make your hotel reservations as soon as possible.

I would like to publicly thank Carl Carraway, BOBA Webmaster, for all his volunteer hours. I would like to also thank the VA Crater Chapter and their Chapter President Mary Ann Smith for their hospitality during my visit for their May meeting. Audra has now been in support of membership over a year now. Our ever-faithful editor Betsy continues to edit your stories, and I am pleased to announce that our publication has been accepted into the The Library of Congress! [See article on p. 8.] We are looking into options for our 2023 Reunion as well, with more to follow during our October business meeting.

As I mentioned previously, we are sharing our resources with additional veteran organizations at our reunion this year. It has been a major goal while serving as your President to grow the Battle of the Bulge Association®. With unforeseen circumstances well beyond all our control, the numbers have continued to decline although we are still getting new members to join. The first two years, we were fortunate in receiving some very generous donations. This year we are down considerably in donations. Therefore,



my new challenge to the membership is to send in a donation in honor of their loved one or a special veteran between now and Veterans Day 2022. BOBA continues to perpetuate the memory of the sacrifices made so long ago. So how about helping recruit a couple new members into the organization as well? In just a few more years, the 80th Anniversary Commemorations in Europe will occur! The longevity of the organization depends on us all continuing to be financially responsible. We appreciate all the donations sent in. Keep them coming!

After seeing an article online, I will wrap up by congratulating the 10th Armored Division Bulge Veteran Harry Whisler on turning one hundred this year. He served as a Combat Medic in Luxembourg during the bulk of the Battle. He was selected to act as Grand Marshal at the 2022 Grandbury, TX July 4th Parade, in the town where he currently resides. Is anyone living in Texas interested in recruiting Harry to our organization? I will cover the successful recruiter's next year's membership fee after verification.

The motto for the 80th Infantry Division ("Blue Ridge Boys") is "Only Moves Forward" and certainly epitomized their character during their time in the Bulge, as well as throughout the war. The 80th fought in both Luxembourg and Belgium, side by side with the 4th Armored Division in the relief of Bastogne. They, like all the soldiers that served in the Battle, more than earned our respect.

I look forward to seeing folks in Gettysburg. Stay healthy everyone, and thank you all for being members of BOBA.

—John Mohor, President and CEO

## UPDATE FROM THE BOBA NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Nominating Committee recommends making a one-time exception to the 3-year maximum for the President as defined in the Bylaws: "The President can be reelected twice, not to exceed three (3) consecutive terms." This exception is in response to our not being able to conduct appropriate activities for one year due to COVID-19 restrictions.

A vote will be conducted, during the 2022 annual membership meeting in Gettysburg, PA, to get the approval of the membership to waive the three (3) consecutive terms rule for the current president, to allow him an additional 1-year term. After that vote, we will vote for the election of officers and board members per the Bylaws. The Nominating Committee presents this slate of officers for consideration by the membership. Nominations will also be accepted from the floor, following the procedures outlined in the Bylaws.

The nominations are:

### OFFICERS

#### President and CEO:

John Mohor

#### Executive Vice President:

Barbara Mooneyhan

#### Vice President Member-

ship: Doug Howard

#### Vice President Chapters:

Dr. Andy Waskie

#### Vice President Military & Veteran Affairs:

Kevin Hinkle

**Treasurer:** Ken Larke

**Recording Secretary:**

Gail Larke

### ELECTED BOARD MEMBERS

David Bailey, 106th INFD

Madeleine Bryant, Chaplain

Kristen Faller

Steven Landry

Jim Triesler, Historian

# BOBA LETTERS

## MORE ON 80TH INF

I was reading the Winter 2022 *Bugle*, and the story on Page 10 about 80 INF and about Bob Burrows. I joined the Association in 2001 in Mississippi after visiting Camp Shelby near Hattiesburg, when a monument was dedicated there. My uncle, Pfc. Charles A. Weisenberger, was in Company F of the 317th Infantry Regiment and was KIA on 21-Jan-1945 near the Sure River. I just recently finished reading *You Can't Get Much Closer Than This* by Andy Adkins III and Andy Adkins, Jr. I am



Bob Burrows (80 INF 317-HQ), and the letter he wrote to member Pete Weisenberger (right).

certain some of the battle conditions he discussed were where Uncle Charlie was deployed and suffered his fatal injuries. He is buried at Henri-Chapelle Cemetery in Belgium. I've been fortunate to visit the cemetery twice in recent years.

I have a letter from Bob Burrows from August 2001, after I had posted a request for information about the Battle and about Uncle Charlie. I regret I never followed up with him or with others who responded to my requests back then. In my career moves across the years and multiple states, I'm amazed I had the foresight to keep all these letters and all the *Bugle* editions since 2001. I regret to hear that Mr. Burrows just recently passed away, so I am now more than peeved at myself for not following up with him over all these years.

Thanks for all you and others are doing to keep the BOBA active.

**BOBA Member Pete Weisenberger, Tyler TX**

*From Bugle Editor: Thank you for sharing, Pete! I read your email with keen interest as my grandfather Edward Hughes (KIA-44) was also in the 80 INF 317-K, and Bob Burrows (80 INF 317-HQ) was the first Bulge veteran I ever met (in 2017 at an 80 INF Association reunion).*

BURROWS  
Bx 453  
BROOMFIELD, CO 80038  
303 466 5818

8/19/01

PETER WEISENBERGER  
1243 GLOCKSTADT RD  
MADISON, MISSISSIPPI 39110 -

PETE -

I SAW YOUR REQUEST FOR POSSIBLE INFO REGARDING YOUR UNCLE C.A. WEISENBERGER. KIA 21 JAN '45,

I DO NOT KNOW IF I CAN BE HELPFUL BUT, WILL TRY, THE 2ND BN 317TH BEGAN MOVING ON THE GERMAN'S AT DIERBACH, LUX ABOUT 4:30 A.M. THAT DAY. (COMPANIES E, F, G AND H.)

WE TOOK QUITE A POUNDING THAT MORNING. THE ATTACK WAS CALLED OFF ABOUT NOON. WE HAD MANY WOUNDED & I PERSONALLY KNOW OF 5 MEN KILLED -

VIRGIL MYERS, (QUARTERMASTER) ZANE TURNER & VERNE SCHOCK REMEMBER INCIDENTS & PEOPLE INVOLVED. (G & F COMPANIES RESPECTIVELY.) I WAS WITH BN HQRS. MISERABLY COLD DAY.

WE ARE LEAVING TUES 8/20 FOR BOTH DIV VETS ASSOC ANNUAL REUNION STARTING 8/23 - 8/25. WE WILL BE HOME 9/1/01.

PLEASE CALL IF YOU THINK I COULD BE HELPFUL -

DO NOT EVER FORGET YOUR UNCLE'S SACRIFICE!

RESPECTFULLY,  
/s/ Bob Burrows  
BOB BURROWS  
NATIONAL COMDR 2000-2001  
EIGHTH DIVISION VETERANS ASSOCIATION

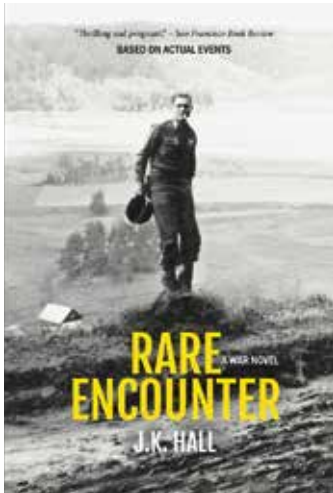
*Bob was very gracious to fill in some information for me as well. I have also regretted not doing more research years ago and talking with more 80 INF veterans. I encourage everyone not to delay their search for information!*

### Excerpt from Bob's 8/19/01 letter to Pete:

"The 2nd BN 317th began moving on the German's at Dierbach, LUX about 4:30 AM that day (Companies E, F, G, and H) - Jan 21 1945. We took quite a pounding that morning. The attack was called off about noon. We had many wounded and I personally know of 5 men killed. Virgil Myers, Zane Turner and Verne Schock remember the incident and people involved (G & F Companies respectively). I was with BN HQRS. Miserably cold day..... Do not ever forget your Uncle's sacrifice! Respectfully, Bob Burrows"

**RARE ENCOUNTER - A WAR NOVEL**

By John K. Hall, BOBA Member



Within the first hundred hours of the beginning of the Battle of the Bulge, a soldier from Durant, Oklahoma would engage the German army in action that would earn him the Distinguished Service Cross for valor. Captain John William Hall would be the only soldier in the Ninth Armored (Phantom) Division during WWII to receive this honor. A new work of historical fiction published on Dec. 16, 2021, *Rare Encounter*, is based on Hall's story and that of another young captain in Ninth Armored, 60th Armored Infantry BN, infantryman Roger Lincoln Shinn.

In the book, Shinn, who survives the war and by 1965 is an esteemed professor of social ethics at Columbia University and Union Theological Seminary, narrates their incredible stories of decades earlier. Shinn was a company commander on the front lines in Luxembourg when the German army launched its offensive. He witnessed Hall's confrontation of the advancing Wehrmacht before he was captured and tortured by the Nazis as a prisoner of war.

In the following excerpt, the festivities the night before the Dec. 16 attack are a celebration of the Yule and the American presence organized by local farmers and townspeople at Baron-Vervoy castle where some of the American officers of the 60 ARMD BN are quartered. The setting is southeast Luxembourg between Boursheid and Bettendorf, a few miles from Germany's western border.

"After leaving the celebration, Capt. Hall stumbled into his room about 1 a.m., removed his boots, pulled the covers back, and dropped into bed clothed. Accordion and violin continued to sing in his memory. It was December 16, 1944.

Captain Shinn, who also attended, left early and travelled the three-and-a-half miles of empty road from the castle to battalion command post. Lt. Graham, sapped from his journey and with a clenched coil in his gut, retired to quarters before midnight. Anxious about meeting his friend's and commander's expectations, he laid awake while the rest of the officer corps and most of the 60th's ground troops slept. Unknown to any of them or their superiors or subordinates or drowsy sentinels, the unexpected came upon them.

At 3 a.m., German foot soldiers weighted with weapons and gear and ornamented with pitch on their faces and carrying talismans at their necks—crosses, rabbit's feet, and locket holding images of loved ones or locks of hair—began crossing the Our River. Suppressing noise with tape, string and rags enveloping metal, they moved westward, protected by uneven and scarped terrain, and gathered not far from the 60th's porous front. Here they would engage a few companies stationed to



**Capt. John William Hall was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross by Maj. Gen. John W. Leonard, commander of the 9 ARMD, for valor at the Battle of the Bulge. Leonard was a member of the 1915 West Point class, the famous "class that stars fell on," which included Dwight Eisenhower and Omar Bradley.**



**Roger Lincoln Shinn (9 ARMD, 60th Armored Infantry B) had been a company commander on the front lines of the Battle of the Bulge. He was awarded the Silver Star for valor.**

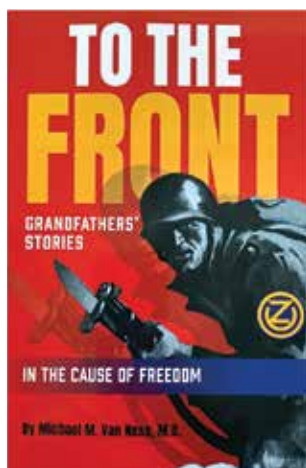
interdict "remnants" of the weakened Wehrmacht on the Western Front including those near Beaufort commanded by Hall, Shinn, Lamb, Lazarus, and Rossetti. There to do the impossible, they waited like lightning in a bottle. For the second time in the long war, the Germans would attempt to conquer the Ardennes and those who held it by deploying tanks and infantry through the steep dense forest.

The vaunted Volksgrenadiers, German infantry cloaked from view, paused like sprinters awaiting the starter pistol. When the Nazi artillery unleashed its barrage, the continent seemed to quake. It negated all sounds other than its own and signaled the German ground troops and Panzers they would soon attack with calibrated purpose. The last great battle in the Second World War's European theater, the Battle of the Ardennes, had been set in motion. The hood had been removed from the falcon. Hall, Col. Corbin Collier's Headquarters Company commander, was in a deep post-revelry slumber when the invasion began. Where Shinn slept, the concussion of German siege-howitzers powdered the ceiling plaster of the two-hundred-year-old home. Debris falling on his face woke him. Confused, he grabbed his carbine and rushed into the night. What he saw electrified him. This is of another dimension, he thought and felt in himself a deep primordial shudder. Along an eighty-five mile line stretching from southern Luxembourg, where the 60th huddled in foxholes and ancient structures, to northern Belgium, Hitler was moving a massive army through U.S. forces toward Antwerp and the sea."

*John K. Hall is the eldest son of John William Hall. He won the National Newspaper Association's Freedom of Information Award and is a Vietnam-Era veteran. Rare Encounter is available at online booksellers or at [jkhallauthor.com](http://jkhallauthor.com).*

## TO THE FRONT: GRANDFATHERS' STORIES IN THE CAUSE OF FREEDOM

By Michael Van Ness, BOBA Member



The following is an excerpt from the book TO THE FRONT: Grandfathers' Stories in the Cause of Freedom (available at [store.bookbaby.com](http://store.bookbaby.com)):

Lt. Col. Malin Craig, Jr., was the Assistant Executive Officer of the 106th Infantry Division's Artillery during the Battle of the Bulge. With his commanding officer, Brigadier General Leo T. McMahon, they were responsible for the 589th, 590th, 591st, and 592nd Field Artillery Battalions - 36 truck-drawn 105mm cannon, 12 tractor-drawn 155mm cannon, and over 2,000 men.

Craig was a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, Class of 1924. At graduation, he made the unusual but not unprecedented switch from the Navy to the Army. Coming from a family with a proud tradition of service, the switch was understandable. Colonel Craig's father was General Malin Craig, Army Chief of Staff before General George Marshall. Now he, Malin Craig, Jr., was in a desperate fight.

By the evening of December 18, 1944, the two northernmost regiments of the 106th, the 422nd and the 423rd, were surrounded, cut up, and out of radio contact. Craig took it upon himself to find them. He needed their guns for the defense of St. Vith. But first, he needed to set up a command position.

Up a narrow, muddy lane to Poteau, Craig led a column of 25 vehicles. On the Poteau–St. Vith road, Craig found the remnants of the 589th Artillery Battalion commanded by Major Arthur C. Parker III. Craig also found elements of the artillery headquarters' group and its most senior officer, Lt. Col. Burtis L. Fayram. Craig ordered Fayram to move everyone west toward Poteau, into a useful firing position. He wanted the guns to face northeast and the vehicles off the road, but facing it, ready to go either direction, east or west. Fayram appeared to understand.

Craig then headed out into the darkness to the east, back toward the sound of the guns in St. Vith, General McMahon wanted the 592nd's guns moved from the village of Schlommefurt to Poteau.

Sniper fire was intense out on the road. Craig pressed forward and found the 592nd in the woods just east of Schlommefurt. As he arrived, a motorcyclist, most likely a German soldier in an American uniform, one of Otto Skorzeny's "Trojan Horsemen" of Operation Greif, raced through with a flare. Within seconds, deadly German artillery and mortar fire began to fall.

The Germans' attack scattered the headquarters group and the 589th. Craig stepped in and restored some order. He put everyone who could drive behind the wheel of one vehicle or another, backing and filling. Craig led the ragtag force south toward Bovigny, small-arms fire from both flanks harassing the convoy. Surviving this gauntlet run, Craig positioned the three artillery pieces of the 589th and the entire complement of cannon of the 592nd into a satisfactory firing position along the Vielsalm-Bovigny road. The artillery of the 106th was now back in the fight, contributing mightily to the turning of the tide at Parker's Crossroads and Manhay.

Colonel Craig, for his achievements in the face of overwhelming odds and for showing personal initiative in the re-establishing the integrity of the 106th's artillery, was awarded both the Bronze Star Medal with "V" and the Legion of Merit. Years later, Henry Foley may well have been thinking of Craig and the men of the 106th when he said:

*"It is a difficult and thankless, and sometimes perilous, commitment fitted only for a few hard and dangerous men. Any who answer the urgent call of the drums, and march toward the sound of distant guns, must be willing to die unsung, unwept, and unknown."*

Craig lived out his years in Washington, DC. He died in 1981 and is buried in Arlington National Cemetery.



Lt. Col. Craig (right) during the Battle of the Bulge, shaking hands with Brigadier General McMahon (back to the camera), the Artillery Officer of the 106th. Of note, after the war, General McMahon would become the godfather to Lt. Col. Craig's younger son Peter.

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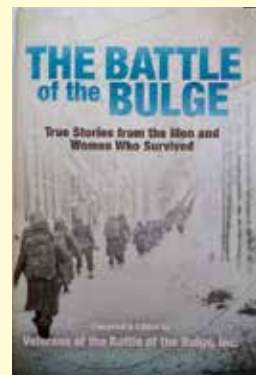
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**The book is not sold by BOBA, but we receive royalties from books purchased. THANK YOU!**



## MEMBERS IN MEMORIAM

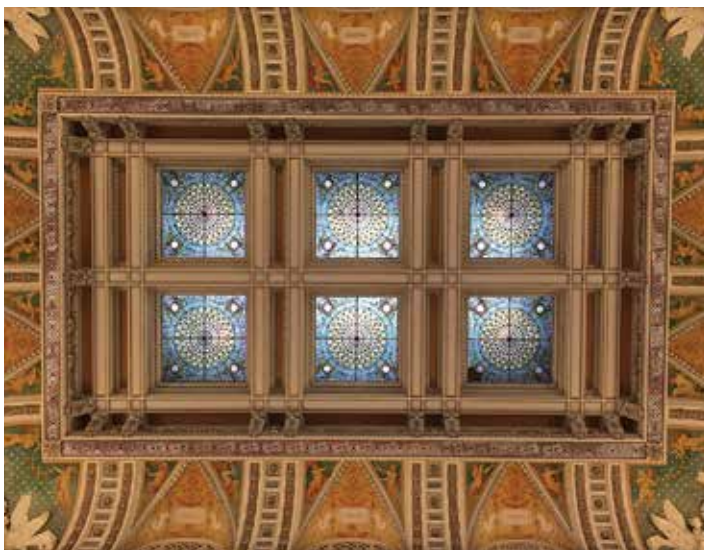
Please notify us when you hear that any member of our organization has recently passed away, so that we may honor them in a future issue of *The Bulge Bugle*®. Also, kindly notify us of any errors or omissions. Please send notices by mail: BOBA, Inc., P.O. Box 330, Mechanicsville, VA 23111-0330; or by phone: 703-528-4058; or by email: [audra.boba@gmail.com](mailto:audra.boba@gmail.com).

We have been notified as of June 29, 2022, that these BOBA Veteran members have recently passed away:

Harold Billow	285 FAOB BTRY B
Alfred Di Giacomo	926 SIG BN
David W. Frens	30 INFD 119 REG CO C
Edward L. Jensen	26 INFD 101 REG 2 BN HQ/F
Howard "Joe" Trowem, Jr.	87 INFD 345 REG CO G
Ernest R. Yanke	76 INFD 385 REG AT

## OUR VETERANS' BULGE MEMORIES PRESERVED AT THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS!

*The Bulge Bugle*® accepted into the Library of Congress



The majestic gilded ceiling and stained-glass windows in the main hall of the Library of Congress. (Photo: Betsy Rose)

We are pleased to announce that *The Bulge Bugle*® has been selected for inclusion in Library of Congress permanent collections and is in the process of being archived. The Library of Congress preserves important cultural artifacts and provides enduring access to them.

The BOBA Board voted and authorized that all past electronic editions of *The Bulge Bugle*® be accessible at the LOC going forward, with the exception of an embargo of one year. (The previous year is

only available to BOBA members through a link which is provided to members only. Currently, you can access Winter 2021 – Spring 2022 by visiting [battleofthebulge.org/members-only-2022](http://battleofthebulge.org/members-only-2022).)

“We maintain that BOBA members have first access to *The Bulge Bugle*® as a benefit to their membership,” said John Mohor, President of BOBA. “Thanks go to Ralph Bozorth, former *Bulge Bugle* editor and VBOB Treasurer, who spearheaded the campaign to get the *Bulge Bugle* issues into the Library of Congress. He also previously oversaw the digitization of all the older *Bulge Bugles* that had only existed in a printed version, so that the complete digital archive of *Bugles* exists, and will be available for Battle of the Bulge researchers for all time. In addition to Ralph, I’d also like to acknowledge our past and present editors of *The Bulge Bugle*®: R.L. Lemmon, Roy Gordon, George Chekan, Tracey Diehl and Betsy Rose. Special thanks to Tracey Diehl, who has been providing the graphic design for the *Bugle* since 2014. Thank you all for your dedication to making *The Bulge Bugle*® a historically significant publication, and thanks to our veterans for sharing their war experiences.”

Also available on the LOC website is a direct link to the descriptive record for the Battle of the Bulge Association® website - visit [www.loc.gov/item/lcwaN0035891](http://www.loc.gov/item/lcwaN0035891). The LOC crawled the site back in 2005 and 2006, and those captures are available in the archive. More recent captures will be added on a monthly basis. To go directly to a calendar page where you can view the captures of the website by clicking on specific dates, visit [webarchive.loc.gov/all/\\*/http://battleofthebulge.org/](http://webarchive.loc.gov/all/*/http://battleofthebulge.org/). Links to our *Bugle* archives will be provided in a future *Bugle* issue.

# D-DAY TRIP IN MEMORY OF BULGE VETERAN SGT. JOHN R (BOB) SIRK, 35 INFD 134 REG C

by Sue Landaw, BOBA Member

Some months ago, I saw a trip to commemorate D-Day advertised in the Indiana University Alumni Magazine. I signed up for this adventure, intrigued by the lecturers—David Eisenhower, grandson of Dwight Eisenhower and Allen Packwood, head of the Churchill archives at Cambridge University. I had visited parts of Normandy with my father, John R (Bob) Sirk in 1985. He and I also were part of the 2004 Battle of the Bulge 60th Anniversary tour. Before that, my brother Joe Sirk accompanied Dad on the 1998 35th Division tour.

Dad joined the 35th Division on November 18, 1944, and was wounded at Marvie, close to Bastogne on December 31, 1944. He was sent back to a field hospital then on to a hospital near Exeter, England, and then back to the US. He—as most other veterans—never talked about his battle experiences until much later in life. Dad finally opened up after attending the 50th Anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge held in St. Louis in 1994. It was after that when we learned of some of the horrors of his experience. He died on December 17, 2015, aged 95, but on this 2022 trip, I wanted to honor him by revisiting some of these sites. I took his military picture with me, as well as a photo of my grandfather, Flava Sirk, who served in France in WW I, and my brother Jim Sirk, who served in Vietnam in 1971-72. I placed Dad's photo on the wreath placed at the American Cemetery in Normandy by our group, and then had a

chance to talk with David Eisenhower and share with him Dad's story and photo, as well as pictures of my grandfather and brother. I was mightily impressed by his genuine interest and attention.

I had been advised by my brother Joe Sirk and his son Scott Sirk to read, before going on this trip, David Eisenhower's book, *Eisenhower at War, 1943-1945*, and I am so glad I did. It made his lectures much more relevant. He spoke at length about what tact and diplomacy was required by his grandfather to deal with heads of state—Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin—all three of very different temperaments and visions for fighting the war and with other military leaders on the Combined Chiefs of Staff—Mountbatten, Ismay, Marshall and several others—who all had different roles such as navy, air, infantry to consider and then, perhaps most challenging of all, the dynamic personalities of generals—Montgomery and Patton, especially.

David Eisenhower had at his side throughout the trip his wife, Julie Nixon Eisenhower, who was a master of diplomacy and tact herself, helping her husband manage



BOBA Member Sue Landaw (left), with Julie Nixon Eisenhower and David Eisenhower on the commemorative D-Day trip.

the many people who wanted his attention, his autograph, his picture, his time. On a personal note, I injured my left eye on the second day of the trip; I somehow suffered a scratched cornea which was very painful. The ship's doctor attended me, but Julie Eisenhower hovered over me, checking a few times each day and asking about the pain level was. I was quite impressed by this couple and their continued interest in and care for veterans and their families.

Allen Packwood, head of the Churchill Archives at Cambridge University was just as congenial as the Eisenhowers and was a master of all things Churchill—his childhood, his parents, his early fame, the disastrous failure of the Dardenelles strategy at Gallipoli, his change of political parties, and, of course, his leadership during WW II. Packwood's lectures focused on rare documents, personal communications between Roosevelt and Churchill and others. He discussed, as background information, the American connection through his mother, Jennie Jerome, wife of his father Randolph Churchill.

One of the most enjoyable parts of this trip was having breakfast with Allen Packwood during which we argued/discussed which actor best portrayed Churchill in movies and film. We agreed on Albert Finney in the wonderful *The Gathering Storm*, but I argued for the American John Lithgow, who portrayed Churchill in *The Crown*.

Visiting these sites and being onboard a small ship was a wonderful adventure in itself, but the added personal contact with the Eisenhowers and Allen Packwood, with their wealth of information and their willingness and eagerness to share this knowledge was a once in a lifetime experience.



John R (Bob) Sirk, 35 INFD 134 REG C



# THANK YOU FOR THE DONATIONS

We are so grateful for the many donations received between April 23, 2022 and June 29, 2022:

J. David Bailey\* (106 INFD 422 REG 3 BN F)  
*Wreath Fund*

John C. Baker  
*In Memory of my father M. Sgt. Glenn E. Baker  
28 INFD 110 REG 109 FA B*

Joseph Chekan

Robert Croye  
*In Memory of American Second Lieutenants KIA @ BOB*

Gary Cunningham  
*In Memory of my father 1st Lt. John H. Cunningham KIA - 11 AD*

Kathy Israelian-Fleming  
*In Memory of my father Charles (Buddy) Israelian 7 ARMDD*

Paul Goffin\* (21st Fusiliers, Belgian Army)

Cheryl J. Gordon  
*In Memory of my husband Fred Gordon 9 ARMDD*

William Jannace  
*In Honor of my mother Mary Jannace  
Dept. of the Army WWII -100th birthday June 19, 2022*

Marian Larkin  
*In Memory of Ernest R. Yanke 76 INFD 385 REG AT*

Donald C. Mayes  
*In Memory of my father Carl Mayes 53 REIN BN*

Henry W. Meetze

Stephen Miller  
*In Memory of my father Russell B. Miller 125 AAA GUN BTRY B A*

\*Denotes Bulge Veteran Member

Avis R. Millett  
*In Memory of my husband Paul R. Millett 168 ECB CO C*

John Mohor  
*Wreath Fund*

Barbara Mooneyhan  
*In Honor of David Bailey's 100th Birthday*

Dr. Anthony Pagano\* (1255 Combat Engineers)

Bonnie Tayman Powell  
*In Memory of my father William Tayman 87 INFD 345 REG*

Edwin Root  
*In Memory of my father Edwin A. Root 4 ARMDD 94 AAB*

Jacob Ruser\* (4 INFD, Combat Medic)

Ann P. Slusser  
*In Memory of my father Hamet Lee Piercy 157 ENG INFD POW*

Mary Ann Smith  
*In Memory of my father James Coates KIA 12/17/44 - 285 FAOB BTRY B*

John R. Snidarich  
*In Memory of my uncle Pvt. John F. Snidarich  
3 INFD 7 REG CO A KIA 3/14/45*

Dottie Stitinger  
*In Memory of my husband Jack Stitinger  
87 INFD 346 REG 2 BN CO H*

Mary Louise Vaught  
*In Memory of my father William S. Vaught  
106 INFD 424 REG ANTI TANK CO*

DeNeele Walker  
*Wreath Fund*

## MATCHING GIFTS HELP SUPPORT BOBA'S MISSION



VA Crater Chapter President Mary Ann Smith (center) with Chapter Members JC Wood (left) and John Payne (right).

Shout out to Crater Chapter President Mary Ann Smith, who gifted 4 membership renewals, 3 new memberships and a memorial gift! Her gift funds will be MATCHED by her former employer she retired from - Towne Bank of Richmond. Thanks, Towne Bank and Mary Ann!

**To All BOBA Members:** Whenever possible, use Matching Funds to boost your BOBA donations. Also, consider gifting memberships to help us recruit new members. Thanks for your continued support!

# 8 ARMDD MONUMENT DEDICATION CEREMONY

The unveiling of the 8th Armored Division Memorial on June 25, 2022 was a huge success! BOBA National President of Chapters Andy Waskie did a wonderful job as emcee, and the event was well-attended. Among the attendees were MG David Hill, CSM Brian Flom, WWII veterans from the BOBA Delaware Valley Chapter Ben Berry and Jake Ruser, and the youngest BOBA member Charles Cleghorn.

The U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center (USAHEC) and the Army Heritage Center Foundation also hosted American Legion Post 405 for the dedication ceremony, which commemorated the service of the 8 ARMDD. The 8 ARMDD landed in Europe on January 5, 1945. Initial operations of the unit were to stop German advances during the Battle of the Bulge. The division subsequently participated in the Rhineland, Ardennes-Alsace, and Central Europe campaigns.



**ABOVE PHOTO:** At the dedication of the 8th Armored Division Memorial at the Army War College and Army Heritage & Education Center (AHEC) in Carlisle, PA were WWII veterans from the BOBA Delaware Valley Chapter Jake Ruser (left) and Ben Berry (right), with the youngest BOBA member Charles Cleghorn (center).



**LEFT PHOTO:** A ceremony was also held at the stained glass window memorializing the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, installed in 2001 at the Army War College.

**BELOW PHOTO:** Pictured at the Army War College and Army Heritage & Education Center are members of the BOBA Delaware Valley Chapter (4) and American Legion Post 405, located at the Union League of Philadelphia.





## BOBA EVENTS

### DEADLINE TO REGISTER FOR BOBA REUNION IS SEPTEMBER 21, 2022



Gettysburg National Military Park (Photo: Destination Gettysburg)

There's still time to register for BOBA's 40th Annual Reunion in Gettysburg, PA! Join our Bulge veterans, their families and friends October 21-23 for an unforgettable experience in Gettysburg, PA. We'll visit landmarks and explore historic Gettysburg and get to know some of the personalities that influenced what occurred there during the Civil War for a truly remarkable and meaningful experience. To remember the Battle of the Bulge, we will have a wreath-laying, tour the Gettysburg battlefield and visit the Eisenhower National Historical Site. You won't want to miss this!

**To register, visit [battleofthebulge.org](http://battleofthebulge.org) and select "Attend Reunion" or use the order form on the next page.**

**BOBA is proud to partner with the following association units for our annual reunion event in Gettysburg!**



8 ARMDD



28 INF



87 INF

Each unit participated in the Battle of the Bulge, and each unit will have small informal gatherings during our BOBA reunion weekend. Contact your unit for more information re: unit-specific gatherings. If your unit fought in the Battle of the Bulge and would like to participate, please contact [Awaski01@gmail.com](mailto:Awaski01@gmail.com). Thank you!

### BATTLE OF THE BULGE COMMEMORATION SET FOR JANUARY 2023

Every year, veterans, families and friends of BOBA gather to commemorate the anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge which took place from December 16, 1944 - January 25, 1945. The upcoming commemoration is scheduled for January 2023 in Washington, DC. We're currently looking at the weekend prior up until the 25th of January. Exact dates will be coming out on the website in the Fall, and in future *Bulge Bugles*.

**While we do not have specific details to share with you at this time, please mark your calendar as a reminder, and visit our website often for the latest updates.**



Veterans and dignitaries at the Battle of the Bulge Monument wreath-laying in Arlington National Cemetery on the 75th Anniversary of the end of the Bulge, January 25, 2020. L-R: Joe Landry, Albert EL, Jake Ruser, Lester Bornstein, Christophe Payot, Ben Berry and Tanguy Watteuw. (Photo: Betsy Rose)



# 2022 BOBA REUNION • GETTYSBURG, PA

## BOBA REUNION REGISTRATION FORM

**DEADLINE FOR REGISTRATION FOR REUNION: Wednesday, September 21, 2022**

Steps to Register: 1. Contact Hotel to reserve room(s) yourself. 2. Complete the BOBA REGISTRATION FORM either online via [battleofthebulge.org](http://battleofthebulge.org) > click on “Attend Reunion”, or mail your registration form and check to BOBA, PO BOX 330, Mechanicsville, VA 23116. Registration for the reunion must be received no later than September 21, 2022. Please note that any registration cancellations will result in a donation of your registration fees to the Battle of the Bulge Association, in order to cover costs of bus reservations, as well as event fees, office staff, decorations, etc.

See our website: [battleofthebulge.org](http://battleofthebulge.org) or the Spring 2022 Bugle for full reunion and hotel details.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Guests \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Birth Date \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

BOBA Chapter Association (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

Division Association (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

Arrival date & time \_\_\_\_\_ Departure date & time \_\_\_\_\_

Nights at the hotel \_\_\_\_\_ Indicate which hotel you booked: \_\_\_\_\_

Check here if you need a wheelchair  Check here if you will be using your own wheelchair  Motorized?  Yes  No

**IMPORTANT: Please indicate No. of Persons attending free events as well!**

	No. of Persons	Cost per Person	Total Cost
<b>Registration Fee</b> (all attendees must pay the non-refundable Registration Fee)			
Adult (21 and Over)	_____	\$40	_____
Child (17 and Under)	_____	\$25	_____
Late registration fee after September 21 - add \$20 per person	_____	\$20	_____
<b>Friday, October 21, 2022</b>			
Evening reception at Quality Inn	_____	free	_____
Optional walking tour	_____	free	_____
<b>Saturday, October 22, 2022</b>			
BOBA Annual Membership Meeting	_____	free	_____
Afternoon Bus Tour of the Gettysburg Battlefield & Museum	_____	\$50	_____
Afternoon Wreath-laying	_____	free	_____
Pennsylvania Dutch Style Buffet Dinner at General Pickett’s Buffet	_____	\$45	_____
<b>Sunday, October 23, 2022</b>			
Bus tour to the Eisenhower National Historic Site	_____	\$35	_____
<b>Tax-deductible donation for Wreath Fund (indicate amount)</b>	_____		_____
<b>Sponsor a Bulge Veteran’s event participation</b>	_____	\$170	_____
		<b>TOTAL=</b>	_____

Mail this form and check (payable to BOBA) to: Battle of the Bulge Association, Inc.®, P.O. Box 330, Mechanicsville, VA 23111-0330  
Or, to pay with a credit/debit card by PayPal, register online at [www.battleofthebulge.org](http://www.battleofthebulge.org), click on “Attend Reunion”

★ OUR HEROES STAY BUSY! ★

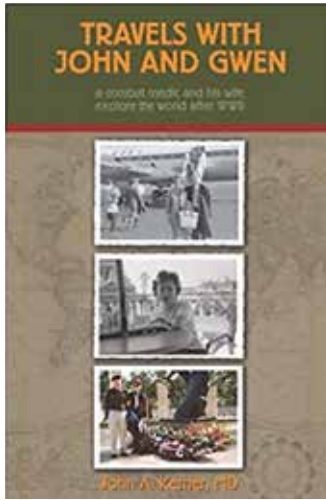


**DARRELL BUSH AWARDED LUXEMBOURG ORDER OF MERIT**

On June 29, 2022, **Darrell Reed Bush (75 INFD 290 REG 2 BN F)**, age 97, was presented with the Luxembourg Order of Merit by Ambassador Nicole Bintner-Bakshian, in Clinton, Maryland at Mission BBQ. In attendance were his wife Dorothy, Elisabeth Herndler, Kevin Hymel, Madeleine Bryant (BOBA Chaplain), Alan Cunningham (BOBA Chairman of the Board) and his wife Judy, and Mary Ann Smith (VA Crater Chapter President). (Photos: Mary Ann Smith)



**JOHN KERNER, AGE 103, PUBLISHES HIS 4TH BOOK**



Friends of **Dr. John Kerner (35 INFD 320 REG)** hosted a book signing event for him on May 1, 2022. It was a very nice event held in a beautiful home in San Francisco. It was very well-attended by many of his friends and family. This is Dr. Kerner's 4th book, entitled *Travels with John and Gwen*. (His first book was *Combat Medic*). John met Gwen after returning from the war. They were married almost 75 years and during that time had many interesting trips. Interesting fact about John: he's 103 years old and he can still tell a good story—and he loves sharing stories about travel. I feel privileged to know him (and to have known Gwen). All 4 of John's books are available on Amazon.com.

—Submitted by Doris Davis, President of the Golden Gate Chapter



**CALLING ALL MEMBERS: SUBMIT YOUR NEWS TO THE BUGLE**  
 It can be just a few sentences with a photo, or a full article. We want to hear about veterans' activities, honors, and Bulge memories; WWII/Bulge-related events or subjects and Chapter activities.  
**NEXT ISSUE DEADLINE: OCTOBER 28, 2022**  
 See page 3 for full submission guidelines

## Welcome Aboard, New Members!

We are happy to welcome these new members who joined BOBA April 23, 2022 - June 29, 2022:

Marianne Cibulas	PA	Richard Johnson	IA	Robert Seifert	VA
Marabel Dooley	GA	Maureen Kessler	NY	Kim Wohlhueter	WA
Grace Galvin	NJ	Andrew Pace	CT	Jack Wright	DE
Barbara Hiller	SC	Gary Parriott	NV		

**Special thanks to these members who either recruited and/or purchased gift memberships:  
Joseph Buono, Al Cleghorn, Henry W. Meetze, Dr. Linda Miller, Betsy Rose, Mary Ann Smith and Audra Yerian**

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
- Promoting our website: [www.battleofthebulge.org](http://www.battleofthebulge.org)
- Sending us articles to be included in *The Bulge Bugle*®
- Attending our annual reunions and DC events

## 2022 US MEMORIAL WERETH CEREMONY

It was an honor for my daughter and I [pictured below] to attend the 2022 Wereth ceremony, representing BOBA. The event took place at the U.S. Memorial Wereth in Belgium on May 21, 2022. The memorial is a tribute to the eleven WWII GIs of the 333rd US Field Artillery Battalion who were POWs murdered by German SS, and to all African-American soldiers who served during WWII.

It was a beautiful and intense ceremony, with amongst others a moving invocation from US Airforce Chaplain, the presence of honor guard, honor firing squad and gospel singers.

—Submitted by BOBA Member Joël Lamberty.

Joël lives in Bastogne, Belgium and is a Battle of the Bulge tour guide. Visit his website at [www.guideardenne44.com](http://www.guideardenne44.com).



# BULGE MEMORIES

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



## Stewart Boone

### 99 INFD 924 FA SVC BTRY "THE LUCKY ELEVEN"

On December 16, 1944, the German's Last Ditch (Final) Counter Offensive of WWII began in the Ardennes Forest of Belgium and Luxembourg. It was a battle plan identical to one used 26 years earlier by the German General Von Rundstedt and once again caught the Allies' intelligence completely by surprise.

Service battery was in Bulligen, Belgium, billeted in local residences. Before bedding down that night Captain Cobb, Battery Commander warned us that we were without much infantry out in front of us, so he advised us to dig foxholes in the yards for our protection, if needed. Well, Service Battery numbered about 80 men and I doubt if there were 20 foxholes dug that night. The ground was frozen and digging was pick axe tough. The captain's warning was legitimate as we could hear small arms fire not far away. After an uneventful night came another warning from Capt. Cobb. "Hurry up to the mess truck and have your breakfast and then pack up your gear, bed rolls (mummy bags), barracks (duffel) bags, weapons, etc., We're moving back'. By the time I returned from breakfast to my residence, the German Panzer tanks were driving down the street in front of our house.

I stepped to the door to observe what was happening and German machine gun fire shattered the door in front of me. Miraculously I was untouched. Let me pause here to say that the personnel of service battery ranged in ages from 19 to 38.

The older men were married with families and perhaps that explains the various attitudes expressed when our lives were threatened. The family men mostly said "we had better surrender or we'll all be killed" whereas some younger ones felt like there might be another option. We had heard reports of troops being massacred so surrendering had its unknowns. Probably 50 of our unit were captured. Here we might pause to evaluate the ages of fighting men. Soldiers from age 18 to 25 seem to take orders and respond to circumstances much better than those 26 to 38. Younger men with the proper training are more resourceful and seem to deal with the situation improvising and responding as required. Other considerations however came into play for our older men:

If I am killed I will never see my wife again.

If I am killed my children will never know their father.

I want to live

So I will surrender and hope for the best.

So it was that fateful morning. The older guys wanted to surrender. Many were caught in circumstances where they had no other choice. Others made a gallant stand delaying the German advance. A few of

us wanted to make the best of the situation and explore some other alternatives.

This is the brief story of the escape from Bullingen by Chester Krawczuk, George Matanich, Marvin Westbrook and Stewart Boone. Together we hurriedly decided to try to escape. By this time German tanks and halftrack personnel carriers were swarming all over the place. There was an interval of perhaps 75 yards between the German vehicles as they motored down the street past our position. Before one unit would come over the hill and into sight, we, one at a time, would cross the street. We didn't encounter any difficulty and on the other side joined forces with some 2nd Division Engineers and for a while fired our rifles and carbines to keep the tanks buttoned-up. The side of the road toward the east (front) was high and we could fire our weapons from a stand up position.

After a short time one of the engineers turned to me and said, "This isn't going to work. We had best try to get back to the rear and report what is going on up here." At this point the four of us started our trek back to division artillery headquarters. We first headed for an old dilapidated barn across a field. Upon arriving there safely we struck out for a grove of trees in the distance. Again we arrived unscathed. Our next objective was to reach a blacktopped road. At this point however the terrain was a definite advantage to the enemy as it sloped uphill to the rear. Sure enough



Jerry was waiting for us. We began taking on German rifle fire seemingly from just one person. We were definitely good targets but, one by one, we made our way over the hill and out of target range. First, Chester. Then Marvin, then George. All the time I am peppering carbine rounds into a ravine where it appeared the German was firing at us, keeping him under fire to aid our escape. Now my three buddies were safely out of sight, but what about me? It ran through my mind that Jerry was waiting for the guy who had been firing at him. With this in mind, I began my escape to join my friends.

I took 2 or 3 steps and hit the ground. Then, 3 or four and hit the ground. And so on and so on, until I had rejoined my buddies and we continued our escape.

We soon reached the highway coming from St. Vith and hailed a GI gasoline truck full of empty 5 gallon gas cans. He finally brought his truck to a stop and yelled, "Hurry up and get up on top and we'll hit the intersection at 50 mph". We hurried to get aboard. That vital crossroads had been changing hands quite often but luckily it was now controlled by the Americans. Chester always accredited me with saving his life as



**“The Lucky Eleven” 924th Field Artillery Service Battery, who managed to escape capture or death. (Standing, left to right): George Wadian, Matthew J. Ropar, William Sloneker, Estel E. Shamblin, Chester Krawczyk, George Matanich. (Squatting, left to right): Stewart Boone, Jack Westbrook, Harold C. King, John Reichard, Frank Luebben. Stewart Boone is the last living survivor of The Lucky Eleven.**

one of the German’s rifle shots penetrated the mud on the instep of his over shoe. I had seen that one of my rounds had skipped on the bank of the ravine into what appeared to be his helmet. Later, I would be awarded the Bronze Star for this meritorious service.

Well, what about the rest of the outfit?

While still at our billeted houses, Lueben would fire his Thompson sub machine gun and then run upstairs to fire it into the German personnel carriers. He was really reeking havoc. He would later be called back to the rear to receive a decoration by Gen. Montgomery for his bravery. Frank Lueben and George Wadian came out together in an abandoned ¾ ton weapons carrier with kaput radiator steaming. Lieutenant Shamblin had been back at division headquarters getting orders for the day and his (our) jeep was saved. I’m not aware of the escape routes of others, but when the dust settled and we regrouped, there were ten men and one officer that escaped to continue the battle. We escapees have often been referred to in history as “The Lucky Eleven”. They include the following: Krawczyk, Westbrook, Matanich, Boone, Lueben, Wadian, Sloneker, King, Ropar, Reichard, and Lt. Shamblin. It is tribute to Sgt. John Reichard that seven of these men were from his ammunition section, a testimony to his good training and leadership.

History also records the heroics of Grant Yager who knocked out a German tank with a bazooka, knocking the track off and disabling it in the roadway thus blocking the route of the German offensive. During this episode, Bernard Pappel was wounded and after bandaging him and giving him first aid, as the German convoy started again he was shot in the head by a German officer. Our four dead included Hutton, Pappel, Stenich, and Le Blanc. All others excluding The Lucky Eleven were captured. It was our good fortune later to liberate a German prisoner of war camp at Mooseburg where we were privileged to free our captured buddies. Our group of four was the first to reach Division HQ at Buggenbach where we reported to Gen Black, Division Artillery Commander who hardly believed our report and thought we were just a little excited. It wasn’t long however before our report was substantiated many times over.

I had received 3 or 4 periods of instruction from Tommy Hutton, Capt. Cobb’s radio operator grooming me for this duty. Hutton was scheduled for some other promotion. On the morning of the breakthrough, the

Germans captured our command post including Capt. Cobb and his Radio Operator Hutton who was ordered by the Germans to stop sending messages, but he continued to do so and was shot and killed.

The 99th is credited with holding the North shoulder at Camp Elsenborn and delaying the German offensive. We defended Rockerath and Krinkelt where we have a monument in honor of our gallantry. The people of Belgium and Luxembourg whom we have visited on many occasions are eternally grateful for the Americans and without our defense of their country they would not have known freedom for this past half century but would have been behind the iron curtain under communist rule.

The 99th went on to receive notable recognition for fighting in the Ruhr Pocket staging a point blank artillery battle with the Germans around Dusseldorf and was recognized as the first American division to cross the Rhine River at the Remagen Bridgehead. We received three battle stars for these actions.

After VE day (Victory in Europe) on May 8, 1945, I spent a brief time in the Army of occupation in the first division reaching the Rank of Staff (Supply) Sgt. and soon had enough points (40+) to return home. My return trip across the Atlantic was aboard the converted aircraft carrier, Lake Champlain which incidentally held the speed record for crossing from Naples to Norfolk. I was discharged at Camp Chaffee, Arkansas on January 23, 1946. The fight was over. Japan had signed the VJ Day surrender on September 2, 1945. I returned to civilian life and college at Southwestern College under the GI Bill of Rights. After 946 days from June 21, 1943 to January 23, 1946 (equivalent to about 31 ½ months), I bid farewell to the US Army, honorably discharged.

*Excerpt from A Fight on My Hands - The WWII Experiences of Stewart Boone, My Best of Recollections. Stewart lives in Virginia and has played his Bugle at many Memorial Day events at the Bolder Boulder in Colorado.*

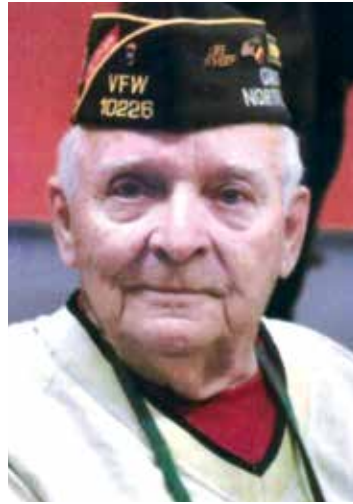
### The Checkerboard Chorus CD



**The men of the 99 INFD choir (called The Checkerboard Chorus) from left to right: B.O. Wilkins, Bert Burda, and Stewart Boone. They sang period pieces and included spoken narration from vets who were in WWII. If you would like to purchase a Checkerboard Chorus CD, please send a check for \$15 (postage paid) to: Brenda Boone Street, 332 Laskin Road, Apt. 220, Virginia Beach, VA 23451. For more information, contact Brenda at: [bstreet178@gmail.com](mailto:bstreet178@gmail.com).**



## Clayton Christensen 99 INFD 324 CBT ENGR A



### Battle of Elsenborn Ridge - My Story

Around 9 pm on the night of 12-18-1944 my captain had made his way back from Krinkelt to Elsenborn. Upon finding me, he told me to locate all of our Company A men that I could find and tell them we were eating an early breakfast (4 am) and would then walk up to Elsenborn Ridge to dig in. After breakfast I was able to count 40-45 men which was a feat due to soldiers being dressed in dark clothing in absolute darkness at 4 am while they are milling around. For an hour or so on the 19th we had listened to the clanking of tracked equipment off to the east. That night about 8 pm a platoon of the great 2nd Division men retreated back through my front line from Rocherath or Wirtzfeld and dug in to rear of my men as reserves. As the night wore on, I became very concerned that I might not get off of Elsenborn Ridge alive.

The airtemp on the morning of 12-20-1944 was a cozy 13° below zero. When I got into the foxhole with my captain the first words out of his mouth were that we would not retreat and we would not surrender. But that we would fight to the last man. That was the attitude of most of the officers in the engineers of the 99th Infantry Division.

We had 3 machine guns and about 40 men. Each gun had only 2 spare barrels. Looking east, B company to our south had the same while C company was back in reserve (to the best of what I remember). So I asked my LORD to please take charge of the battle the next day, that we were the believers and take charge he did. His coordinates, via my forward observer, were radioed back to our artillery battery of 105mm. All 4 guns would fire at the same time and whammo – another German tracked cannon gone. The Germans all along knew exactly where we were in the line. They must have thought that we did not know how to fight. BIG MISTAKE.

The Germans began the first of three attacks at 11:40 am with heavy artillery fire that lasted until 1 pm when they immediately came at us with self propelled cannons and soldiers which lasted until 2 pm. The second attack followed immediately which began with heavy artillery raining down on us until 3 pm when soldiers and a single cannon came at us till 4 pm. Then artillery again which lasted from 4 pm till 5 pm followed by self propelled cannons and soldiers from 5 pm till 6 pm. I was up front after each German attack checking out each of our machine gun

positions. The German artillery was so heavy that it felt like I was crawling through an earthquake. The Lord sure had a job keeping me alive.

On 12-20-1944 after only 5 minutes into the 3rd German attack that day my #3 machine gun lost its last spare barrel and this added another knot in my stomach. The other two machine guns were on their last spare barrel. If the Germans had tried one more time after dark they would have been in Antwerp 24 hours later and I would not be here today. For I had given my M-1 Garand rifle to one of my machine gunners. At that point in time, the only soldiers in front of me were German. In the darkness while checking out my 3 machine gun positions I am hearing many, many German voices-likely picking up dead and wounded German soldiers. My mental count of dead Germans was one thousand. Our official count was 400. But our graves and registration people did not count bodies for a day or two and nobody came to ask me anything. It looked like A and B companies combined had 2 dead and about 44 wounded.

After we came off the front line of Elsenborn Ridge, as infantry, on Christmas Eve morning we swapped foxholes with the platoon of the great 2nd Infantry and became reserves. On Christmas morning we (Company A Engineers) came off the reserve foxholes and walked back to the town of Elsenborn.

My captain told me to go to Liege, Belgium for several days to unwind. When I got back my captain told me that he had recommended that I be awarded the medal of the Silver Star for bravery in action above and beyond the call of duty while under extremely heavy fire from very large German forces.

The Battle of the Bulge was fought in the Ardennes along an 84-mile stretch that ran roughly down the border of Germany and Belgium. The 99 INFD covered the top 23 miles. Facing us was Germany's largest and best equipped (and Hitler's favorite), the 6th Panzer Army led by General Dietrich. Only the resolute determination of the officers and non-coms and the great fighting men of the 99th enabled us to come out ahead. And most assuredly my Lord should get the most praise.

*Clayton lives in North Carolina.*



99th Division vehicles moving through Wirtzfeld en route to Elsenborn. Vehicle in foreground belongs to Service Battery, 372nd Field Artillery Battalion. To the right, an M10 tank destroyer covers the column's movement. (Photo: Wikipedia/US Army Center For Military History)

# ★ Anthony “Del” DelRossi 629 CBT ENGR LE\*

The following is an excerpt from the book *The Time Left Between Us* by BOBA Member Alicia DeFonzo, granddaughter of Anthony “Del” DelRossi. Defonzo is a Senior Lecturer and Fulbright Specialist at Old Dominion University in Virginia.

“Spotting a damn SS Trooper was easy,” Del said. They were too young and had no business being there. Most were “blonde hair, blue eyed, just out of school.” Some as young as fifteen, recruited to fight and hate until a “bullet to the head.” No surrender. Del sometimes wondered if they realized what they were getting into, but that didn’t matter now.

He crouched in the flurries to give the body a once over, make sure the SS was gone. The Belgian frost made it tough to tell how long someone’s been dead. Looked like a hole, clean through the skull, crisps of dried blood at the entry point.

“He’s spent,” Del called out.



An example of *Erkennungsmarke*, German identification tags (not actual one from story.)

the kid looked older in the picture than the cold body on the ground. Perhaps it was the tired eyes. He was posing with a round faced girl, dark hair done up in wavy curls. The couple was half-smiling.

“What you got, Del? Time to move.” He shoved the SS diary and photograph into his jacket; he wasn’t sure why. Del usually didn’t hunt for souvenirs like other GIs, but this he confiscated. He should have turned it into his CO for information, but no one was looking, so he broke code. “I got nothin’!”

He glanced down at the deceased and whispered, “Sorry, pal.”

Del caught up to the combat engineers, and they trudged together through the miserable winter. He wanted to keep moving, and for damn sure, stop thinking. The kid was just another SS trooper.

Del passed in 2018. In his retirement, he lived on the Eastern Shore of Virginia where he lived with his wife Linda (also a BOBA member). He received the Bronze Service

Stars for: Normandy: June 6, 1944–July 24, 1944 Northern France: July 25, 1944–September 14, 1944 Rhineland: September 15, 1944–March 21, 1945 Ardennes: December 16, 1944–January 25, 1945 Central Europe: March 22, 1945–May 11, 1945.

*The book is available on Amazon.com and at Barnes & Noble.*

\*Combat Engineers  
Light Equipment Company



“Come on,” said the Lt. “Grab his tags!”

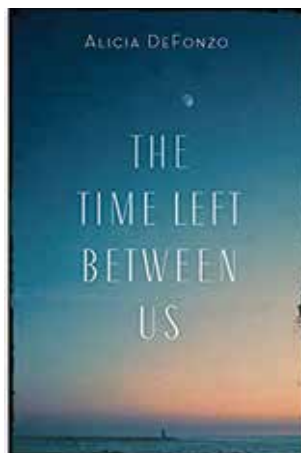
Standard protocol. Grab the dog tags and go, turn them into the CO, tally another dead German. But sometimes, they didn’t turn them in. Del said, “It depended. If the guy was noncompliant, or your buddy just got killed, or you’re just f\*cking freezing and had enough, then you wanted the guy to disappear.” He’d be forever lost to his country, his family, Missing in Action. They would never have confirmation of death, and that was enough to make some GIs feel better.

Del felt around his neck for the *Erkennungsmarke*, German identification tags with

a soldier’s name, initial unit, and serial number. Nothing. Checking through stiff fatigues, he found no identification. This nameless kid was vanishing into the snow. Del patted the body and found a hard patch worked into the coat seam. He pulled out a black, leather-bound book imprinted with the two boldfaced letters “SS,” which looked like lightning bolts. A Waffen-SS diary.

“He must have broken all military protocol carrying this thing around,” Del thought. Record cards pertaining to Waffen-SS were never allowed to be in the field, as they contained valuable information and were destroyed by the field unit upon arrival.

He flipped through the pages for a name, but it was all in German. Del only made out bits of an anthem and supply list. He couldn’t read the handwriting. The whole thing seemed useless until out fell a black and white. Full uniform, blonde hair, but



# BULGE MEMORIES



## Charles Leslie Smith, Jr. 99 INFD 392 REG, 2 INFD 23 REG M

*Charles was a member of PA Lehigh Valley Chapter and passed in 2008. He was a close family friend who originally recruited me to the group. This is his war experience.*

*—Submitted by Steve Savage,  
Lehigh Valley Chapter President*

Born in Allentown, Pennsylvania, Charles Leslie Smith, Jr. was inducted into the U.S. Army on August 11, 1944 in Wilkes Barre right after high school. He was shipped out from the bus station to the long trip to Texas. He spent his basic training with the 1st Army 99 INFD 392 REG in Camp Maxey, Texas. More than anything else, he recalls the heat, the constant humidity. He made many great friends who always knew him as “Schmitty.”. Les was able to qualify for the important Combat Infantry Badge while there as well as training to be a Cook.



His unit was shipped out to Nancy, France where they needed able-bodied replacements. He spent much of his time on patrol in France and Belgium as a T/1 Rifleman. During one patrol in France, his platoon was entering into a town when enemy firing began, and once it started, no one knew where it was coming from or even who or what they were shooting at. It wasn't until after the battle was over, he discovered one of his best buddies from his unit had been killed...even though he was in the rear of the patrol and apparently had been shot in the back. With all the gunfire, he believed it was from friendly fire.

On a cold winter night at the front, Les was in a foxhole on his watch, and while staring out into the darkness and the forest, he saw a German soldier in a long winter coat slowly coming toward him in the snow from the woods. Les snapped his bayonet on the end of his rifle, and just before he was ready to lunge at the German soldier at his foxhole, the man was gone....He was never there. His eyes and mind had been playing tricks on him. A scared young man staring out into the night during the war can do things to a soldier.

His unit, the 99th Checkerboard Division, was called in to defend one of the main thrusts of the German Army during the Battle of the Bulge, Elsenborn Ridge in Belgium. This was actually where much of the German advance had been stopped. During this battle was where Les was wounded. While being shelled from German artillery fire, he had stepped onto snow covered barbed wire as well getting hit by shell fragments.

His foot was torn up badly but he was able to stay at the front. After a short time, the wound on his foot got real bad and his Lieutenant ordered him to get to the aid station. But since no jeeps were available, he had to walk over a mile back to the Field Hospital. There he stayed to recover for two weeks.

After leaving the hospital, he attempted to find his way back to his unit and was heading for the unit headquarters in Danzig, Poland. He got lost badly, and on his way, he met a group of Allies in an old farm house. His new buddies all got him drunk before they sent him on his way. He eventually found a ride on a truck that took him to Danzig. The 99 INFD had moved on, and Les then became part of his new unit, the 2nd Indianhead Division.

While in Europe he did get a chance to see General Patton, and even spent some leave in Paris, even though at the time he was not impressed with

the city. General Patton ordered all his men to get newer uniforms so the Germans would think they were fighting fresh troops. While with Patton's Army, his unit was one of the first to cross the Rhine river, crossing at the infamous bridge at Remagen.

After crossing the Rhine, they came into a town and captured over 300 German soldiers with only 30-40 of his own men. They kept them roped off in the middle of a field with no worries for them escaping, as by that time the German's had just about given up.

Near the end of the war, many of the American soldiers were finding enemy gear for souvenirs to bring home. Les was able to bring back a German uniform that he picked up while in Europe.

Before his platoon was sent out on one of its last patrols, they were told to leave all their gear back at their tents where they were billeted. While out on patrol, they were told that the war in Europe was over. Their unit never got back to pick up their gear.

After the war was over, he was shipped back to Camp Swift, Texas for more training. He was officially discharged as a Technician 5th Grade from the US Army, 2 INFD 23 REG M on July 3, 1946 at Fort George Meade, Maryland.

Les was awarded the Combat Infantry Badge, Good Conduct Medal, American Theater Ribbon, European Africa Middle Eastern Theater Badge, WWII Victory Medal, and the Army of Occupation Germany Medal during his service.

### VETERANS MEMBERS: SUBMIT YOUR BULGE MEMORY!

If you are a veteran who participated in this historic battle, **please share a photo, a 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 method) your responses to [bulge.bugle@gmail.com](mailto:bulge.bugle@gmail.com)  
or mail to: BOBA Inc., P.O. Box 330, Mechanicsville, VA 23111-0330.

**VA CRATER CHAPTER (43)**

The Crater Chapter’s meeting luncheon met on May 16, 2022. Jim Triesler, Education Director of Virginia War Memorial (VWM), graciously hosted our event at the Memorial. Bulge veteran Malcolm “Mac” Christian attended as did BOBA President, John Mohor, who traveled from his home in NC to attend, as well as many local chapter members. Mary Ann’s father’s, and Betsy Rose’s grandfather’s names are engraved on the glass wall. Recently bricks were installed on the Walkway of Honor by BOBA members. The honored names on the bricks included: Battle of the Bulge Association, J. David Bailey, James H. Coates, Charles A. Cleghorn, Edward W. Hughes, Anthony E. Jannace, Chester Mullins, Lt RS Radspinner, Henry M. Rose, and CPL Fred Werrell. Thanks to all the BOBA members who donated to honor these veterans and/or soldiers!

John Mohor was presented with a BOBA replica of the Crater Chapter brick and a framed photo of Crater members. Member JC Wood presented Mary Ann with a 55th anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge commemorative plate (#155) he found in an antique shop. Additionally in May, Chapter members JC Wood, John Payne and Mary Ann displayed WWII memorabilia at Bon Air Church for Victorian Days.

—Submitted by Crater Chapter President Mary Ann Smith



**TOP PHOTO:** Crater Chapter members, along with national BOBA President John Mohor, who attended their quarterly meeting at VWM. (Photo: Suzanne Feigley/VWM) **ABOVE LEFT PHOTO:** Jayne Sneed graciously transported veteran Malcolm “Mac” Christian to and from the Chapter meeting. **ABOVE RIGHT PHOTO:** BOBA member Jerry Mullins and his family, from Fairfax VA, attended the Memorial Day Ceremonies. Mrs. Mullins (Jerry’s mother) is pictured with Mary Ann Smith.



**PA DELAWARE VALLEY CHAPTER (4)**

The PA Delaware Valley Chapter members visited the Battle of the Bulge Memorial at Ft. Indiantown Gap Base on June 25, 2022. Attending were our two Bulge veteran members Benjamin Berry, 99, and Jacob Ruser, 97. Ben served in the Quartermaster Corps assigned to the 3rd Army. He landed in Normandy on D+22 and provided logistical support to the forward troops for the rest of the war. Jake was a combat medic assigned to the 12th Infantry Regiment of the 4th Infantry Division. He landed on D-Day and participated in the Battle of Hurtgen Forest and the Battle of the Bulge.

*The PA Delaware Valley Chapter meets in person on the last Wednesday of each month at the Chapel of the 4 Chaplains at the Philadelphia Navy Yard. For information, contact Chapter President Andy Waskie at awaski01@gmail.com.*

# REMEMBRANCES OF THE B-17 DURING WWII

by Frederick L. Faulkner, BOBA Veteran Member



Aerial photograph of a B-17F of the USAAF over the North Sea or the Mediterranean, 1943-1944. The B-17 Flying Fortress was the best known heavy bomber in service with USAAF. (Photo: Wikimedia/USAAF)



Fred Faulkner  
(3257 SIG SVC CO)

My purpose in writing this is to share my experiences with my family and also those of you who have “paid your dues.” And to preserve my memories for generations to come.

It all started for me in September 1944 where I was in a Replacement Depot in Central England, which they call “the midlands” which is just south of Birmingham, probably the largest city in central England.

Most of you probably do not know that the Midlands is the agricultural area of England and is comprised of many very small farms. This is Shakespeare country where his museum is located and where his mother

Mary Arden had beautiful gardens, and they still exist—being carefully tended for tourists. These small agricultural entities (so small that I would not even call them farms) had no barns—just small sheds to store their tools in. This background is important, as you will see, because there was no place to store supplies and munitions coming from the U.S.

When the B-17s came over to England, it required landing fields and storage places. Since there were no barns to use for storage, I can remember seeing munitions (bombs) and supplies lined up in long piles along the side of the road. Imagine the storage needs for food, ammunition, clothing and medical supplies required to support up to 2 million troops. UNFATHOMABLE!

These fields, (and there were many) besides being small, had another problem. Picture, if you will, the problems associated with making a landing strip for a B-17 weighing between 40 & 50,000 lbs. out of several farm fields that had been recently worked. The ground had to be compacted and then paved with asphalt. Initially, the B-17s made multiple takeoffs and landings on these raw fields in order to receive some level of compaction. Later on, the engineers would lay an asphalt covering to provide stability.

Our location was not immediately adjacent to the strips but we were close enough to see them shortly after take-off. There were several of these “fields” and when a raid was begun, the first objective was to go to the rendezvous point, usually somewhere over the very south of England

or over the English Channel. After I was assigned to a unit being formed in Dartford, a small town about 40 miles east and south of London, we were able to see these assemblages, many of which contained over 100 aircraft. Once all planes were assembled at the rendezvous point, they then continued on their mission.

All of these departures were exciting to see, and many of us gave a silent prayer for their safe return—which of course, would rarely happen.

When these flights returned, the aircraft were in all kinds of disarray—many showing signs of damage. Some unable to deploy their landing gear, forcing them to slide in. You can imagine the fate of the belly gunner if his turret was unable to return into the fuselage as designed. Medics were on hand to assist when needed. Both the belly gunner and the ball turret gunner were essentially “locked in” to their positions for the length of the flight. The ball turret gunner had to be physically small in order to have his legs raised up so that his knees were up around his ears and still fit in the turret. Imagine being in this position for hours without relief. Horrendous!

We were able to see the P-47s and P-51s join the bombers as they rendezvoused and then continue their journey onto the Continent.

Before seeing these things we looked upon the Air Force personnel as glamorous and privileged because they always came home to a hot meal and a warm berth. In retrospect, their situation was tough—but then, we all had our own problem set to deal with.

After our unit moved to the Continent and moved through Belgium, France and Germany, we were able to see the results of the raids and also from the continuation of the raids. Towns and Industrial Centers were destroyed. Day time raids by the Americans and night time raids by the British and their big Lancaster bombers were thrilling to us as we knew they were having a huge impact.

The result: many strategic objectives accomplished but also many people uprooted and hungry. It was probably a good thing that we were prohibited from any contact with them. Of course, we did have contact and occasionally gave them leftover food etc.—the Dutch and French more than the Germans, but at the end of the day, they were all uninvolved people who needed help. The children suffered terribly and we always had a cookie or piece of candy handout for them when we encountered them.

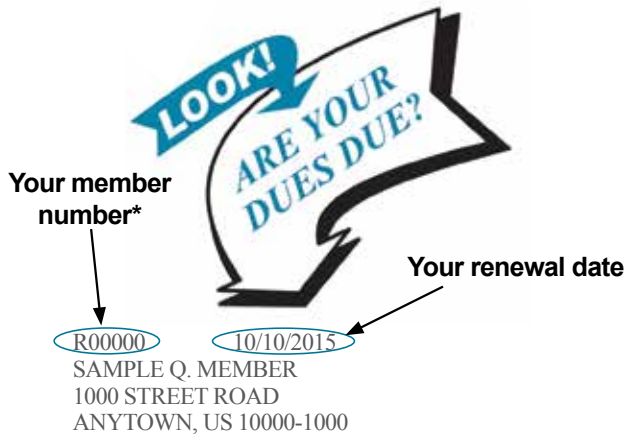
One final note that most people don’t know. The B-17s all had to be ferried to England—lots of them. In order to maximize the use of pilots and crews in bombing raids, the WAF (Women’s Air Force) was created to ferry the aircraft. Amazingly, these ladies would fly these huge aircraft from the US, up through Labrador and Iceland, to Britain. I knew one of them—and she was only 5 feet tall. I don’t know how she reached the pedals but she ferried many B-17s from the US to England.

In conclusion, this wonderful aircraft, and the great crews that flew them, were largely responsible for our victory in Europe. We probably would have won without them, but it would have taken a lot longer with many more casualties.

*Fred Faulkner (3257 SIG SVC CO) lives in Florida. He is a member of BOBA Chapters 23 & 32, and has composed 3 pieces for concert band that recognize and honor the participants of Pearl Harbor; The Battle of the Bulge and Viet Nam. To listen, go to [battleofthebulge.org](http://battleofthebulge.org) and type “Ardennes March” in the search window.*

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**If applying as a Veteran member (you are a Battle of the Bulge vet), please provide the following information about yourself:**

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Unit(s) to which assigned during the period 16 Dec 1944 to 25 Jan 1945: Division \_\_\_\_\_

Regiment \_\_\_\_\_ Battalion \_\_\_\_\_

Company \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

**If applying as an Member, please provide the following information about yourself:**

Relationship to the Bulge Veteran (if any) \_\_\_\_\_  
(wife, son, daughter, niece, etc. or N/A )

Historian

Other

The Bulge Vet's Name and Units \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Please make check or money order payable to BOBA, Inc. Mail with form to above address. Questions? 703-528-4058**



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