

The BULGE BUGLE®

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

VOLUME XLV NUMBER 3

THE ARDENNES CAMPAIGN

FALL 2026



COURAGE BEYOND MEASURE: MASTER SERGEANT RODDIE EDMONDS RECEIVES THE MEDAL OF HONOR POSTHUMOUSLY



Master Sergeant Roddie Edmonds (front row, second from left) photographed with his fellow NCOs in Camp Atterbury, Indiana, prior to their deployment overseas.



Battle of the Bulge Association®, Inc.

P.O. Box 330, Mechanicsville, VA 23111-0330

The Battle of the Bulge Association® (BOBA) 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; and support Chapters of BOBA. BOBA is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization. Donations to BOBA are tax-deductible.

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BOBA MEMBERSHIP OFFICE

Send all correspondence relating to membership and all BOBA matters to:

EMAIL: BOBAmembership@gmail.com

Battle of the Bulge Association®, Inc.; P.O. Box 330, Mechanicsville, VA 23111-0330

VISIT THE BOBA WEB SITE: WWW.BATTLEOFTHEBULGE.ORG
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Leon Reed

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Stanley Wojtusik* 1995-97; 2005-07

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John Dunleavy* 1999-01

Louis Cunningham* 2001-03

Demetri Paris* 2007-10

Douglas Dillard* 2012-14

Alan Cunningham 2014-16

Gary Higgins 2017-19

John Mohor 2020-23

* *Deceased*

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 BobaMembership@gmail.com for their local meeting times and contact information.

CALIFORNIA

Golden Gate (10):

Doris Davis

INDIANA

Central Indiana (47):

Chris Schneider

MICHIGAN

West Michigan (23):

Gary Higgins

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Gateway (25):

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Hudson Valley (49):

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William Abell

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OHIO

Blanchard Valley (42):

Leonard Skonecki

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Tom Tomastik

PENNSYLVANIA

Eisenhower Chapter,

Gettysburg (70):

Leon Reed

Delaware Valley (DelVal) (4):

Dr. Andy Waskie

Lehigh Valley (55):

Steve Savage

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South Carolina (7):

Nelson McLeod

VIRGINIA

Crater (43):

Mary Ann Coates Smith

WASHINGTON

Northwest (6):

Jim Pennock

Do You Have a New Chapter President?

A President in Transition?

Forming a New Chapter?

Let Us Know!

PLEASE SEND CHAPTER UPDATES TO:

bulge.bugle.editor@gmail.com

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valuable services to support BOBA:**

Apple Press, Inc. (Printing/Fulfillment)

Martha Wasik Graphic Arts (Layout/Design)

ON THE COVER



Group image: Master Sergeant Roddie Edmonds (front row, second from left) photographed with his fellow NCOs in Camp Atterbury, Indiana, prior to their deployment overseas.

Portrait image: M/SGT Roderick 'Roddie' Edmonds

How to submit stories for *The Bulge Bugle*®

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

Stories and letters: Typewritten in a WORD document and sent as an email attachment. Word count of 500 words or fewer. 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: Send high res images via email in jpg/jpeg format. Identify the place and/or people in the photograph. Scan original photographs at high-resolution (300 dpi), or take a cellphone photo and send us largest digital file possible. Photos copied on a copy machine, or printed on a laser printer, are not suitable for publication. **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: By email: bulge.bugle.editor@gmail.com (preferred method) or by mail: Battle of the Bulge Association®, Inc, P.O. Box 330, Mechanicsville, VA 23111-0330

NEXT ISSUE DEADLINE: OCTOBER 25, 2026

QUESTIONS? Please contact *Bugle* editor Christine Guidry Law at bulge.bugle.editor@gmail.com

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Steve Landry, President and CEO

I HOPE YOU'VE all enjoyed a safe and fun summer. As we head into the fall season, our Reunion team, led by Historian Jim Treisler, Treasurer Mary Ann Coates Smith, and former Board Member Betsy Rose, is busy preparing for a great event in Richmond, VA.

The Reunion festivities will begin on October 14 and conclude on October 18, and will be centered at the Virginia War Memorial in Virginia. Details are available on our website and on page 11. I hope to see you there!

In January, our great friends Marcel Schmetz and Mathilde Meeuwissen (the famous M&M's) were preparing to attend our Commemoration in Washington, DC, when tragically, Marcel passed away after a brief illness. As of this writing, Mathilde is planning to attend the Reunion in Richmond. We can't wait to see her.

Members of our Outreach Team also made appearances at the WWII American Experience Military Weekend in Gettysburg and the BOBA Lehigh Valley Chapter's VJ Day luncheon which honored thirteen heroes of World War II. See the story on pg. 12-13. Our various BOBA Chapters have also stayed busy throughout the summer. Check out their reports on pg. 20-21. If your chapter is active and hosting events, let us know so we can support your efforts and spotlight you in our next issue.

In this issue you'll read about the great work of our Membership and Outreach Committees over the past couple of months. BOBA Member Alice Hinkle, with support from Outreach Director John Baker and myself, represented BOBA at the Mid-Atlantic Air Museum's World War II Weekend. Please see the story on page 10. Our VP of Membership Joe Wollet, assisted by VP of Military Affairs Doris Davis and *Bugle* Editor Christine Guidry Law, developed an outstanding trifold flyer to assist us in recruiting new members. See the story on page 9. Membership is our lifeblood—without it we can't keep the memories of our Veteran members alive.

These past several months have brought two remarkable honors recognizing the courage and sacrifice of our Battle of the Bulge veterans. In March, President Trump posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor to Master Sergeant Roderick "Roddie" Edmonds, with his son, Reverend Christopher Edmonds, accepting the award on his father's behalf. His story appears on page 8. In June, Truman Christian was honored with Belgium's Order of Leopold, the country's highest honor. You can read his story on page 18. Their recognition reminds us why preserving and sharing the stories of our Battle of the Bulge veterans remains so important.

Looking to the future, planning is also underway for the General Membership meeting on October 31, 2026 to be followed by the election period, November 1-7, 2026. As in the two previous years, we'll be conducting the General Membership meeting over Zoom, and using OpaVote for the election. Please look for further information on the website and via eBlast, to include the list of candidates. If you are interested in running for office or wish to nominate someone else, please contact Immediate Past President and Nominating Committee John Mohor at



airbornemohor@gmail.com. Please note that my term-limited presidency will end in December. Leading BOBA through this difficult transition period has been an honor. Thanks to everyone for their support!

As my term as president draws to a close, I find myself reflecting on all that has taken place during these past few years. We have commemorated the 80th anniversaries of World War II and the Battle of the Bulge—milestones that gave us extraordinary opportunities to honor the men and women whose service and sacrifice shaped our history. We have seen BOBA monuments restored and preserved, expanded our outreach efforts, strengthened our efforts to recruit new members, and continued finding new ways to share the stories of our veterans with younger generations.

At the same time, these years have brought a difficult reality. We have said goodbye to far too many of our beloved Battle of the Bulge veterans. With each passing, we lose not only a friend and member of our Association, but another firsthand voice from one of the most consequential chapters in our nation's history. Watching their numbers grow smaller has made our mission feel more urgent than ever.

It has been one of the greatest honors of my presidency to know so many of these remarkable men and women and, whenever possible, to help recognize and honor them during their final years. Their courage, humility, humor, friendship, and devotion to one another have left a lasting impression on me, and I will always be grateful for the time I have spent with them.

That is why I encourage each of you to join us in Richmond this October. Come help us honor the veterans who remain with us, remember those we have lost, and ensure that their legacy continues long after the last veteran has left us. Our Reunion is more than an annual gathering—it is an opportunity to come together as an Association and reaffirm our commitment to remembrance. The responsibility for carrying these veterans' stories forward now belongs to all of us, and I can think of no better way to demonstrate that commitment than by gathering together in their honor.

Finally, we are seeing a proliferation of vendors unlawfully violating and misappropriating our trademarks, in particular selling tee-shirts and sweatshirts on social media with the Battle of the Bulge Association name and symbol followed by the words "Alumni Association". The terms Battle of the Bulge Association, Inc.®, Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge®, *The Bulge Bugle*®, and both the BOBA and VBOB service marks are the trademarked property of the Association, and we have not licensed any outside vendor to sell them in any manner. Please do not purchase any of these vendor products. The only legal products bearing our trademarks are the certificates and coins available on our website or for direct purchase at our events, as well as *The Bulge Bugle* itself.

Respectfully,
Steve Landry, President and CEO

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

By Christine Guidry Law



THIS ISSUE OF *The Bulge Bugle* reminds us that there are many ways to honor the men and women of the World War II generation—and many ways to keep their history alive.

Within these pages, we recognize Battle of the Bulge veterans whose service continues to receive long-overdue recognition. We share the story of Master Sergeant Roderick “Roddie” Edmonds, whose extraordinary courage as a prisoner of war was honored earlier this year with the Medal of Honor. We also celebrate Bulge veteran Truman Christian, who at 101 years old received Belgium’s Order of Leopold in recognition of his service more than eight decades ago.

But remembrance is not found only in medals and ceremonies. It is also found in the stories veterans told, the memories their families preserved, the histories of the units in which they served, and the places where the battle unfolded. In this issue, our *Spotlight & Voices* features and *Bulge Memories* continue to

give veterans a voice, while Part One of *The Defense of Krinkelt* takes us back to the battlefield and the desperate fighting of December 1944.

We also look at how that legacy continues today through our chapters, commemorative events, and gatherings. You’ll find coverage of the Lehigh Valley Chapter’s luncheon honoring World War II veterans, the Mid-Atlantic Air Museum WWII Weekend, chapter news from across the Association, and important information about our upcoming reunion.

As editor of *The Bulge Bugle* and a member of the Outreach Committee, I am continually reminded that preserving this history is not something any one person—or one organization—can do alone. It depends upon veterans, families, descendants, historians, chapters, and members willing to contribute what they know and help us reach those who have not yet discovered our Association.

If you have a story, photograph, letter, diary, or memory connected to the Battle of the Bulge, please consider sharing it with us. Encourage your children and grandchildren to become involved. Tell a friend about the Association. Invite someone with an interest in World War II history to join us.

With each passing year, our responsibility grows. The veterans entrusted us with their stories. It is now up to us to make certain those stories continue to be told.

TREASURER’S REPORT

By Mary Ann Coates Smith, Treasurer



Hello to our veterans and members!

As I ready this report, it seems like I just did it yesterday. The summer is rushing by quickly. The past quarter has been slower than usual for this time of year, but it doesn’t mean we’re taking a rest.

Good news! Our 2025 tax return has been completed, signed, and filed. The 2026 first quarter report (January-March) will soon be filed as a short tax return, as we convert to a fiscal year, which will run from April 1, 2026 through March 31, 2027.

We began April 1st with \$140,335.93 and ended June 30th with \$138,219.53. We did not receive any donations during April and May. In June, an RMD matching donation from Towne Bank was received to be used toward our reunion, as well as another RMD to be used toward our Outreach Program.

Membership has been very slow. An information trifold has been printed for distribution, which should spark membership interest. BOBA has so many interesting stories to tell, plus our two major events each year.

The Finance Committee meets each month to go over all transactions of the previous month and to assure we’re staying within our budget.

I’m looking forward to seeing many of you at our reunion in October in Richmond, Virginia. If you cannot attend, please consider sending a check to our P.O. Box. A small check puts just as big a smile on my face as a large one. Tell your mechanic (I just did a few days ago), your hairdresser, your barber, or the store clerk about BOBA.

I support what I believe in. I feel honored and privileged to serve the members of this great organization.

I remain, in honor and memory, a very proud Gold Star daughter.



DONATIONS

JUNE – JULY 2026

John Baker – In memory of Glen Baker (father)
to be applied toward Outreach Program

James Patrick Blickenstaff – In thanksgiving for certificate

Madeleine Bryant – Donation for 2026 Reunion and *Bugle* support

Richard Burkett – In memory of Sherman W. Burkett (grandfather)

Darla Conover – In memory of Bulge Veterans Ray T. Harner
(84th INF Division) and Guy L. Conover (87th INF Division)

Dr. Robert & Ashley Feuerstein – In honor of C. Feuerstein

Robert & Andrea Sklenar – In memory of Charles Sklenar
(9th ARMD Division)

Mary Ann Coates Smith – In memory of
James H. Coates (father) POW/KIA,
matching funds to be applied toward 2026 Reunion expenses.

Make a donation today at: battleofthebulge.org/store/donate/

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

By Joe Wollet, Vice President for Membership



BOBA HAS JUST published a trifold flyer for raising awareness and recruiting new members. Debuting at the Mid-Atlantic Air Museum airshow, the flyer has been received well by members and non-members alike. (See page 9)

Since June 2025, our Association's rolls have dropped by 100 members, of whom 22 were Bulge Veterans and 78 were not. New member recruitment continues to lag lapses.

It's critical that all of us serve as BOBA ambassadors, raising local awareness, offering to make presentations, and encouraging friends and acquaintances to join our Association.

The new trifold flyer is a great resource for recruiting. If you'd like copies, email me at BOBAmembership@gmail.com.

If you know a Bulge Veteran who hasn't joined BOBA, please help them complete a membership form and send it to me at BOBAmembership@gmail.com.

	Lifetime	Annual	Lapsed *	Total
Veteran	21	21		42
Non-Veteran	104	332		436
Other**		1		1
Sub-total	125	354		479
Paid-up 2026+ Members:		478		
* As of July 21, 2026 ** Not incl. in paid-up #				

WELCOME MEMBERS!

New Members: April 21 – July 31, 2026

Lisa Kane Brown

Sue Burt

Elizabeth Fadel

Ray Gasper, 567th AAA

AW Bn., Battery C

Holly Hobbs

Pierre Lhote

Carlos Peniche

Walter Boston Stitt, 3rd

ARMD 33rd REGT Co. E

Geordy Waters

BULGE VETERAN BIRTHDAYS

TWO BATTLE OF the Bulge veterans recently celebrated their 102nd birthdays.

Sydney Levit celebrated his birthday on July 17. He served as a paratrooper in the U.S. Army 17th Airborne Division. Levit's most memorable moments included the camaraderie with fellow soldiers, which helped them endure the hardships of war.

Richard Weaver celebrated his birthday on July 25. He also served with the 17th Airborne Division. The 17th fought in the Battle of the Bulge and its members landed by parachute and unpowered glider in Operation Varsity, the largest airborne assault in history.

Do you know a Bulge veteran celebrating a milestone birthday? Send us their story and photo. We want to celebrate them!

Happy Birthday, Richard and Sydney!



Richard Weaver (102)

Sydney Levit (102)

BRAAV PLATFORM TO SUPPORT BOBA

IN COMING MONTHS, All Coin is hoping to create a Battle of the Bulge Association® page on their platform to support BOBA membership by hosting a place to upload your stories of where and when you received your BOBA challenge coin. See our next issue of *The Bulge Bugle* for more details on this ongoing effort. In the meantime, visit the platform and create your own challenge coin collecting page.

All Coin by Braav is a platform for preserving challenge coins and the stories behind them. Uploading your coins and creating a coin record is always free—add the story of how each one was earned and connect with others who share the same coins and history. Organizations can also mint digital twin coins—blockchain-verified digital versions of their physical coins that hold the story, provenance, and even video—which members claim with a simple QR code. Start your collection at allcoin.braav.co.

To purchase challenge coins, contact BOBA Treasurer Mary Ann Coates Smith at maryann.crater@gmail.com.



LITTLE KNOWN U.S. MILITARY MUSEUMS

By Doris Davis, Vice President of Military and Veterans Affairs

THIS ARTICLE MARKS the sixth column in our ongoing exploration of military museums within the U.S. It is part of a continuing mission to introduce readers to a wide range of institutions—both well-known and lesser-known. These museums quietly yet powerfully keep military history alive for future generations. All of them rely on visitors and your support to thrive. We invite you to visit and see what they offer. Some have interactive

experiences that will make a lasting impression. Many are family-friendly, so children and grandchildren can interact with exhibits and learn more about history.

If you know of a little-known military museum anywhere in the U.S., please let us know and we'll reach out to the Museum to ask if they would like to be featured in a future issue of *The Bulge Bugle*.

AIRBORNE & SPECIAL OPERATIONS MUSEUM

100 Bragg Blvd., Fayetteville, NC 28301-4806
910-643-2778

Email: info@asomf.org

Website: asomf.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/ASOMF

Preserves and honors the legacy of U.S. Army Airborne and Special Ops forces

AMERICAN MILITARY MUSEUM

1918 Rosemead Blvd., South El Monte, CA 97133

626-442-1776 (near Los Angeles)

Email: Tankland@aol.com

Website: Tankland.com

Short video: <https://tankland.com/v2/>

Facebook: www.facebook.com/americanmilitarymuseum

Largest military museum on the West Coast

MUSEUM OF MILITARY HISTORY

5210 W. Irlo Bronson Memorial Hwy., Kissimmee, FL 34746
407-507-3894

Email: militarymuseum192@gmail.com

Website: www.museumofmilitaryhistory.com/

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/museumofmilitaryhistory>

*The only military museum in FL owned by veterans
Exhibits about Civil War, WWI, WWII up through current
conflicts. Vietnam Wall with names of 1,952 Floridians*

MUSEUM OF MISSOURI MILITARY HISTORY

2405 Logistics Rd., Jefferson City, MO 65101-1203

573-638-9603

Email: none

Website: visitmo.com

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MOMilitaryHistory/>

Artifacts from Revolutionary War to current era

*See F-15 Eagle Fighter, F-4 Phantom Fighter, Sherman Tank,
C-130 Hercules, Cobra Helicopter, UH-1 Huey*

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF MILITARY VEHICLES

6419 U.S. 26, Dubois, WY 82513

307-455-3802

Email: info@nmmv.org

Website: www.nmmv.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/NMMVWY

Museum videos on website

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O748ZkeJdMU>

*World's largest private collection of U.S. military ground
transportation vehicles*

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF MILITARY VEHICLES

By Carol Higgins, BOBA Board Member

ONE OF THE FEATURES of *The Bulge Bugle* is "Little Known Military U.S. Museums" by BOBA member Doris Davis, VP of Military and Veterans Affairs. On a recent trip to explore parts of Wyoming, we discovered the National Museum of Military Vehicles, which is newly listed in this issue of *The Bugle*.



This museum is a \$100 million, privately funded foundation. It focuses on WWII, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War, and features over 500 tanks and vehicles. There is also a gallery of guns and ammunition. Should you visit, plan on spending one to two days, especially if you take the free tours. Also, plan ahead for lodging, as the town of Dubois is small, with limited hotel availability.

What a great surprise we had when we entered the area of the museum dedicated to the Battle of the Bulge. There were tanks, maps, signs, and photos explaining this portion of WWII, all nicely displayed.

Another section was about the Red Ball Express. For us, it was a must-see area just knowing our friend, Bulge veteran Joe Landry, was part of this history. The Red Ball Express delivered critical supplies such as gasoline, oil, and ammunition, by convoys to the troops. Patton's Third Army was the recipient of many such deliveries.

Also of interest to us was the area explaining the role of ordnance divisions. My uncle, Sgt. Homer Braddock, was with the 644th Ordnance Depot during all of the European campaigns, including the Battle of the Bulge. These soldiers had the responsibility of repairing and servicing heavy equipment and various military vehicles.

The NMMV was one of many highlights of the western trip Gary (past BOBA president) and I took as we traveled with four other BOBA members in a unique way to celebrate America's 250th birthday. We enjoyed many displays highlighting America's military history and the individuals who served our great country. Who would have ever guessed this military museum existed in the middle of the beautiful state of Wyoming? So, use the listing of "Little Known Museums" on your next adventure and continue to promote our BOBA history.

A HERO'S HONOR

By Reverend Chris Edmonds

THIRTEEN YEARS AGO, I met attorney Lester J. Tanner at the Harvard Club in New York City. It was an amazing honor. Through God's providence, I had discovered that we were mysteriously bonded by experiences that he and my father had lived through nearly seventy years before, during the brutality of war.

Mr. Tanner had been captured by the Germans as a Staff Sergeant in the early days of the Battle of the Bulge in the deadly forests of the Ardennes alongside my father, Master Sergeant Roddie Edmonds of Knoxville, Tennessee, who both served in the Headquarters Company, 422nd Infantry Regiment, 106th Infantry Division (HQ 422IR 106ID).

"What your father did," Mr. Tanner said, "is one of the most remarkable things I've ever witnessed. It is the defining moment of my life. Your father deserves the Medal of Honor."

What could Dad have possibly done? I thought. Then Lester shared what my father never shared with our family or anyone.

Roddie was the highest-ranking American soldier in Stalag IXA, a POW camp for non-commissioned officers near Ziegenhain, Germany. On January 26, 1945, the Germans ordered that only the Jews were to report outside for the next morning's roll call. Anyone who disobeyed would be shot. Without hesitation, Dad said, "We're not doing that. Tomorrow we all fall out."

It was bitterly cold January 27. As the Nazi Commander approached, he was stunned. All the Americans, nearly 1,300 soldiers, had lined up in sharp formation.

Major Siegmann oversaw all German POW camps. He issued the orders. No one had ever disobeyed him. He rushed to my father and screamed, "They can't all be Jews."

To which Roddie declared, "We are all Jews here."

The Nazi was furious. He pulled his pistol and pressed it hard



**Master Sergeant Roderick
"Roddie" Edmonds**

into my father's forehead. "Sergeant, one last chance. You will order the Jews to step forward, or I will shoot you right now."

Time froze. No movement, no sounds.

Roddie broke the silence. "Major, you can shoot me, but you'll have to kill all of us because we know who you are and you'll be a war criminal when we win this war, and you will pay."

Siegmann turned white and was visibly shaken. He slammed his pistol in his holster and fled the scene.

"Your father saved the lives of more than 200 Jewish American soldiers that day," Lester told me. "Two months later he saved all 1,292 of us when he refused orders to leave the camp on a death march. All of us learned to love and respect Roddie."

After Lester finished speaking and I stopped crying, I was determined to seek the Medal of Honor, which has led to other

honors. In 2016, the Nation of Israel honored my father as only the fifth American and the only U.S. soldier recognized by Yad Vashem as "Righteous Among the Nations." President Barack Obama joined us for the occasion. This year, on March 2, I shook hands with President Donald J. Trump and accepted the Medal of Honor on my father's behalf as the audience, including my family members, stood and applauded.

What's more amazing is that 20,000 people are alive and well today because of Dad's righteous actions. Yet he was so ordinary, just like you and me. Dad taught me an amazing truth. "An ordinary life lived well is extraordinary, even heroic. Your life matters—and it matters most when you choose to do what's best for others."

Let's follow Dad's selfless footsteps. March to the cadence of compassion. Stand against hatred with courage. Serve others with love. Do right by others. Let's live heroic. Be the hero!



Rev. Chris Edmonds shakes hands with President Barack Obama during a 2016 ceremony honoring his father, M/SGT Roddie Edmonds, who was posthumously recognized by Yad Vashem as Righteous Among the Nations for his heroic actions during World War II.



Rev. Chris Edmonds accepts the Medal of Honor from President Donald J. Trump (2026) on behalf of his father, M/SGT Roddie Edmonds, who was awarded the nation's highest military decoration posthumously.

MASTER SERGEANT RODDIE EDMONDS

BIOGRAPHY:

Roderick W. "Roddie" Edmonds was born in 1919 in South Knoxville, Tennessee. One of four sons, he graduated from Knoxville High in 1938. He enlisted in the Army on March 17, 1941, at Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia.

Edmonds arrived in the European Theater in December 1944 with the 106th Infantry Division. Captured on December 19, he was imprisoned at Stalag IX-A. As the highest ranking soldier, M/SGT Edmonds was responsible for the camp's 1,292 American POWs. After 100 days in captivity, he returned home.

He again served during the Korean War, with the 1st Cavalry Division. After the war, he worked for *The Knoxville Journal* and in sales for mobile homes and cable television.

Following his death in 1985, his wife gave his son Chris diaries which Roddie kept in the POW camp. Chris found several of the Jewish soldiers his father saved, who provided statements to Yad Vashem. On February 10, 2015, Yad Vashem recognized Edmonds as "Righteous Among the Nations," Israel's highest honor for non-Jews who risked their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust. The awards ceremony was held January 27, 2016, at the Israeli embassy in Washington, D.C., where President Barack Obama praised Edmonds for action "above and beyond the call of duty." Chris Edmonds received the medal and certificate of honor on his father's behalf.

Chris sought to have his father's bravery recognized with the Medal of Honor. However, the U.S. Army originally deemed him ineligible because his actions were not in combat. Multiple bills were introduced in both chambers of the U.S. Congress to recognize Edmonds with a Congressional Gold Medal.

A historical marker honoring Roddie was placed in Knoxville, Tennessee, on November 15, 2020. It was donated by the Jewish American Society for Historic Preservation, and the Knoxville Jewish Alliance.

On March 2, 2026, President Donald J. Trump posthumously awarded Edmonds the Medal of Honor. His son Chris received it on his behalf.

AWARDS AND DECORATIONS:

Combat Infantryman Badge with Star denoting 2nd award
Prisoner of War Medal
Army Good Conduct Medal
American Defense Service Medal
American Campaign Medal
European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal
World War II Victory Medal
National Defense Service Medal
Korean Service Medal with 5 Campaign stars
United Nations Service Medal Korea
Presidential Unit Citation
Korean Presidential Unit Citation
Bronze Star Medal (Posthumous)
Korean War Service Medal (Posthumous)
Medal of Honor (Posthumous)

NEW TRIFOLD CREATED FOR BOBA

THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE Association has introduced a new trifold flyer designed to raise awareness of BOBA's mission and help recruit new members.

Developed by Vice President of Membership Joe Wollet, with assistance from Vice President of Military Affairs Doris Davis and *The Bulge Bugle* Editor Christine Guidry Law, the flyer provides an informative and easy-to-share introduction to the Association.

The new trifold debuted at the Mid-Atlantic Air Museum's airshow, where it was well received by BOBA members and visitors alike. Designed as a recruiting and outreach tool, it offers members a convenient way to introduce others to BOBA and encourage them to become involved in preserving the history and legacy of the Battle of the Bulge.

Members are encouraged to use the new flyer at community events, veterans' gatherings, historical programs, and other opportunities where BOBA's mission can be shared with a wider audience.

Copies of the trifold are available for members who would like to assist with recruiting and outreach. To request copies, email BOBAmembership@gmail.com.



MID-ATLANTIC AIR MUSEUM'S WWII WEEKEND

FOR 35 YEARS now the Mid-Atlantic Air Museum (MAAM) at the Carl A. Spaatz Field in Reading, Pennsylvania, has hosted an annual World War II weekend. This major event, held this year June 5-7, combines an impressive array of World War II vintage warbirds along with a multitude of other activities commemorating World War II. These include numerous groups of reenactors as American and foreign soldiers, field camp displays, vintage military vehicles, history talks, and other activities.

Once again, BOBA took advantage of this very popular venue by staffing an outreach table during the long weekend. Our aim was to expand awareness of BOBA's purpose and activities, as well as to attract new members. Kevin and Alice Hinkle again took the lead on making all the arrangements for BOBA participation. Alice staffed the table throughout the three-day event, along with help from John Baker and Steve Landry.

The BOBA table was located in the MAAM Hangar, along with those for dozens of organizations also associated with various World War II aspects. Many visitors and participants stopped by the BOBA table each day. We distributed over two

hundred of BOBA's new trifold flyer (thanks to the good work of Joe Wollet and Christine Guidry Law in designing and producing them just in time). We made over 75 contacts with individuals interested in learning more about BOBA activities, including some three dozen who signed up to receive follow-up information.

It helped that our table highlighted BOBA's diverse activities, including *The Bulge Bugle*, the VBOB Certificate, and our forthcoming conferences—particularly the upcoming 2026 Reunion Conference in October and the DC Commemoration event in January 2027.

In addition, we enjoyed encountering other BOBA colleagues also participating in the MAAM World War II Weekend. These included Bulge Veteran Ben Berry, who was seated in the "Special Guests" section of the MAAM Hangar so he could engage with visitors. We had the chance to connect with other organizations, such as Friends of Wreaths Across America, to explore possible collaborative activities. BOBA hopes to participate in the Mid-Atlantic Air Museum World War II Weekend again next year from June 4-6, 2027.



BOBA member Alice Hinkle and Bulge veteran Benjamin Berry



Mid-Atlantic Air Museum hangar and display area



BOBA display table

2026 BOBA REUNION • RICHMOND, VA

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 14 – SUNDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2026

Register Online for the Reunion: battleofthebulge.org

COME TO VIRGINIA this October 14–18, 2026, for the Battle of the Bulge Association Reunion in Richmond/Glen Allen—where history, hospitality, and heritage come together.

Few places rival Richmond and its surrounding communities for its deep roots in American history, from storied Civil War battlefields to the scenic James River, and from the historic landmarks of Glen Allen—home to sites such as Walkerton Tavern and the Virginia Randolph Museum—to the inspiring Virginia War Memorial and the renowned American Civil War Museum. Guests will enjoy their stay at the elegant Virginia Crossings Hotel & Conference Center, a serene retreat blending classic Southern charm with modern comfort.

Members of our Virginia Crater Chapter are busily preparing to host Bulge veterans, BOBA members, spouses, and guests. The itinerary promises to showcase the best of metro Richmond:

- October 14 (Wednesday night) – Check-in/registration, welcome reception with keynote speaker, Celebration of our Veterans, BOBA Board meeting
- October 15 (Thursday) – Registration, tours of Virginia War Memorial and Hollywood Cemetery, Memorial service & Wreath laying, all-day presentations/WWII displays/auction/raffle
- October 16 (Friday) – Museum tours at Fort Lee Ordnance Training Support Facility, U.S. Women's Army and U.S. Army Quartermaster museums, evening banquet in the hotel ballroom
- October 17 (Saturday) – Historic tours of Richmond including Civil War sites and St. John's Church where Patrick Henry delivered his legendary "Give me liberty, or give me death!" speech, evening farewell reception at the hotel
- October 18 (Sunday) – Check-out or extend your stay

2026 BOBA REUNION UPDATE

SECOND HOTEL ADDED

The Virginia Crossings Hotel is fully booked. An additional block of rooms is now available at the Hampton Inn & Suites.

BOBA has negotiated lower room rates at our second reunion hotel.

ALL ROOMS ARE NOW \$125 PER NIGHT.

BOBA reunion activities, such as the welcome reception, hospitality room, guest speakers, and banquet, will continue to be held at the Virginia Crossings Hotel.

For BOBA excursions, the tour coach will pick up passengers at both hotels.

Hampton Inn & Suites

Richmond/Virginia Center
1101 Technology Park Dr.
Glen Allen, VA 23059

Located 5 minutes, 1.5 miles from Virginia Crossings (Event hotel)

Book Rooms Online at the following link:
<https://www.hilton.com/en/attend-my-event/battle-of-the-bulge26>

To make a reservation by phone, call the hotel directly: **1-804-261-2266**

Group: Battle of the Bulge, Group D, Group Code: 502

BOBA Group Rates

King: ~~\$125.00~~ ~~\$151.43~~ (per night, plus taxes)

Queen: (2 beds) ~~\$125.00~~ ~~\$171.88~~ (per night, plus taxes)

The BOBA rates are available for the nights of October 14-18, 2026.

Guests must use a valid credit card to register and present that card when they check in.

**CUTOFF DATE FOR RESERVATIONS:
SEPTEMBER 22, 2026**



LEHIGH VALLEY CHAPTER HONORS WWII VETERANS

By Stephen Savage, Lehigh Valley BOBA Chapter President

ON AUGUST 15TH, THE Lehigh Valley Chapter #55 of the Battle of the Bulge Association held a luncheon at Alvernia University McGlinn Center in Reading, Pennsylvania to honor and remember the anniversary of VJ Day, the end of World War II. In attendance were thirteen heroes of WWII, veterans ranging in age from 98 to 103 years old, many of the men wearing their military uniforms.

Our favorite “Rosie the Riveter,” 104-year-old Dorothy Trate, also joined us at the event. Bulge veteran Frank Stellar was in attendance as well. Further, the chapter had the honor of helping celebrate the 100th birthday of U.S. Navy Seabee Edward Conrad. Conrad, who served in the Pacific Theater, sat behind a table where he displayed some of his personal WWII memorabilia, including a stack of letters he’d exchanged with his family.

The event featured presentations, speeches, and a luncheon. Local historian Tyler Boland, founder of the YouTube channel “Keeping History Alive,” shared the story of every

veteran in attendance. He was joined by youngster James Papalia of Lacey, New Jersey. Papalia, 11 years old, is a historian, author, speaker and podcaster who has already published a series of children’s historical-fiction adventure books in which he experiences the stories told to him by veterans.

Special guest soprano Evelyn Stewart, a well-known vocal soloist in the Lehigh Valley who is regularly featured in regional choral and sacred-music concerts, performed patriotic songs for the entertainment of the attendees. As in past events, the celebration included routines by the Magnolia Sadies Vintage Dancers, a dance company specializing in historically accurate social dances from the early 1900s through the 1960s. The performances truly brought back the memories of the celebrations these veterans experienced 81 years ago.

The Lehigh Valley Chapter plans to hold this event annually to give local veterans the respect and honor they deserve. Last year’s event, held in Emmaus, Pennsylvania, featured fourteen WWII veterans and was equally successful.



ABOVE:

WWII veterans and “Rosie” honored:
(L-to-R: Back Row): Levon Swank, Rubino Degenhart, Harry Miller, Morris Rahn, Harry Bean, Russell Sattazahn, Frank Stellar, Ray Parker, Arthur Fishman (L-to-R: Front Row): Edward Conrad, Robert Pearce, Robert Hartline, Dorothy Trate

RIGHT:

Magnolia Sadies Vintage Dancers pose with Bulge Veterans Rubino Degenhart, Russell Sattazahn, and Frank Stellar





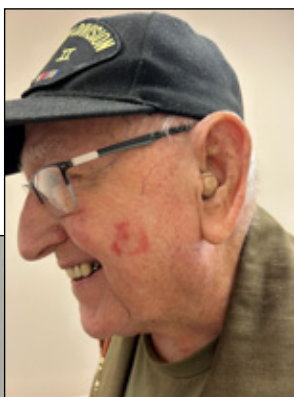
Rosie the Riveter Dorothy Trate (104) strikes the iconic "We Can Do It!" pose



BOBA Member Alice Hinkle and Bulge Veteran Frank Stellar



WWII veteran Lavon Swank (Co. B, 49th AIB, 8th AD)



"Still a Ladies' Man" (Bulge veteran Russell Sattazahn sports lipstick kiss)



Veterans Ray Parker (Bulge) and Robert Pearce (U.S. Navy) with Magnolia dancers



UNIT SPOTLIGHT

2ND ARMORED DIVISION

“HELL ON WHEELS”



Compiled by Doris Davis, Vice President of Military and Veterans Affairs
In Collaboration with James Heffelfinger, Historian for the 2nd Armored Division

ELEMENTS OF THE 66TH and 67th ARs, 2nd AD arrived in North Africa on November 8, 1942. The division participated in the invasion of Sicily on July 10, 1943. They left Palermo for England and trained for the invasion of Normandy. Participating in Operation COBRA, they landed at Omaha Beach on June 9, 1944. They were initially employed to strengthen the Auville-sur-le-Vey Bridgehead, east of Carentan. They attacked July 26 in conjunction with the 30th ID and took St. Denis-le-Gast on July 28, then were relieved in the Percy area on July 29.

Tessy fell on August 1, and on August 7, the division was committed to stop the German drive on Avranches. They overran Domfort on August 14. On August 19, the division attacked west of Dreux to cut German forces off from the Seine between Paris and Elbeuf. They reached Le Neubourg on August 23 and resumed the advance on August 30, reaching positions northwest of Cambrai by September 1. They crossed the Albert Canal on September 13 and reached the Maas River the next day as the German defenders withdrew. They crossed the Albert at Meerseen on September 13, but its bridgehead was subjected to heavy fire the following day. They crossed at Valkenburg and forced the Germans back to Sittard, which was taken September 18 as the division broke through and drove to Gangelt. A strong German counterattack restored enemy lines September 19. The division then took up defensive positions near Geilenkirchen.

The division attacked on October 4 as it crossed the Wurm River at Marienburg to expand the 30th ID Bridgehead. They attacked from Uebach the next day, suffering heavy tank losses. They stopped short of Geilenkirchen on October 6. The division fought through heavy combat at Baesweiler and Oidtweiler to attack Aachen Gap at Wuerselen, starting on October 13.

They attacked on November 16, took Puffendorf on the outer ring of the Julich defenses, and were counterattacked the next day. Against strong opposition, they took Apweiler and held it against counterattack on November 18-19. They renewed their attacks in heavy rain on November 20 and fought in the Battle of Merzenhausen from November 22-27. They reached the Roer River at Barmen on November 28. The division then assumed defensive positions along the Roer until released because of the German Ardennes Counteroffensive, moving to the Durbuy-Marche area in Belgium December 20-22.

They reached Buissonville on December 24, and took Celles on the 25th. After clearing Humain against strong opposition, they were then relieved in the Havelange area by the 83rd ID, regrouping on December 28. The division attacked Houffalize on January 3, and fought the Battle for Odeigne from January 4-6, 1945. They reached the Ourthe River on January 15, then occupied Houffalize on January 16. The division was relieved by the 4th Cavalry Group on January 19 and withdrew for rehabilitation.

The 2nd AD assembled across the Roer River on February 27 and attacked on March 1 across the Cologne Plain, assaulting over the Nord Canal. It concluded the offensive on March 4 after taking Verdingen on the Rhine River. They crossed the Rhine on March 27 and relieved the 17th Abn Div on March 29. They drove to Lippstadt and contacted the advancing 3rd AD on April 1.

The 2nd AD commenced the Battle for the Teutoburger Wald Passes on April 2. By April 5, they had reached and crossed the Weser River at Ohr. They advanced to Grohnde and took the bridge at Schulerberg over the Leine River the next day. After regrouping, the division renewed its offensive on April 10, taking the Oker River bridge at Schladen. They drove 57 miles to reach the Elbe River south of Magdeburg on April 11, assaulting Magdeburg with the 30th ID on April 17-18. The division was moved to an occupation zone south of Braunschweig on April 20 and mopped up stragglers in Forst Konigsutter on April 21-22. Hostilities ended officially on May 7, 1945.

2ND ARMORED DIVISION RECAP

Activated: Ft. Benning, GA (Jul 15, 1940)

Trained: (1941)–Tennessee Maneuvers, Louisiana Maneuvers, First Army Carolina Maneuvers (1942); Armored Corps Carolina Maneuvers. Returned to Ft. Bragg (Aug 1942); Staged at Ft. Dix and departed (Dec 11, 1942) for North Africa.

Overseas: Arrived North Africa (Dec 25, 1942); Assaulted Sicily (Jun 10–Aug 17, 1943); Returned to England and landed in France (Jun 7–9, 1944); Crossed into Belgium (Sept 2) and Holland (Sept 11); Initially entered Germany (Sept 18); Returned to Holland and Belgium (Dec 22); Re-entered Germany (Feb 4, 1945); Returned to New York (Jan 29, 1946). Arrived at Camp Hood, Texas (Feb 4, 1946).

Major Campaigns: Algeria-French Morocco, Sicily, Normandy, Northern France, Rhineland, Ardennes-Alsace, Central Europe

Composition Included: The 66th and 67th Armd Regts, 41st Armd Inf Rgt, Three field artillery battalions (the 14th, 78th, 92nd) and support units of 82nd Armd Recon BN, 17th Armd Eng BN, 142nd Armd Signal Co, 48th Armd Med BN

Days in Combat: 443

Casualties: Total: 5,864; KIA: 981; WIA 4,557; DOW: 202; MIA: 60; POWs: 266.

Commanders: MG Charles L. Scott (Jul 1940) with Col. George S. Patton in charge of training (Jul 1941), MG Willis D. Crittenberger (Feb 1942); MG Ernest N. Harmon (Jul 1942); MG Hugh J. Gaffy (May 1943). During the campaign in Sicily, they came under the command of the U.S. Seventh Army, under Lt. Gen. George S. Patton. As they prepared for the Normandy invasion, they came under the command of MG Edward H. Brooks (a decorated veteran of WWI). MG Harmon became commander (Sept 1944).

Deactivated: 1991

Nickname: “Hell on Wheels”

AWARDS

Congressional Medal of Honor: 3

Distinguished Service Cross: 23

Silver Star: 2,302

Purple Heart: 6,000

VOICES OF THE 2ND ARMORED DIVISION

THE ADRENALIN WAS FLOWING

Cpt. Louis H. Brill, 2nd AD 66th AR
(*The Bulge Bugle*, February 2001)

I WAS WITH the 2nd AD and was wounded on January 7, 1945. We had reached Aachen, in Germany, when we were pulled back to help in the Battle of the Bulge.

The first tank bogged down in the heavy snow, so Lt. Brown got out to continue in the second tank, and we became the lead tank. Unfortunately, our tank commander was new and was the one to make decisions. The Germans had laid a minefield right on top of the snow, in plain vision for all to see. Our tank commander proceeded to get off the road to skirt the minefield. As soon as we came around the minefield, and back on to the road, the Germans had a tank destroyer zeroed in on that spot. We were easy pickings for them, and two shells ripped into our tank.

I don't know how I was able to get out of the tank, as I was the radio operator and assistant gunner, and my leg was shattered. However, the adrenalin was probably flowing very strong, and being only 19 years old, I managed to get out and jump off the tank, as the ammunition started to explode inside. I hit the ground, and some other tank men pulled me into a ditch. After a while I was put on the back of a light tank and taken to an aid station. As I was being loaded, Lt. Brown got out of his tank to express his sorrow to me.

HOUFFALIZE

Ed Sammons, 2nd AD, 17th Armd Eng Bn Co E
(*The Bulge Bugle*, February 2010)

AFTER FIGHTING TO bridge the Albert Canal in Belgium and our battle for Maastricht, we regrouped in November 1944, wet and cold and then moved near the German border in the City of Aachen.

The German Army broke through the line about 100 miles to our south at Bastogne. We backtracked with the entire division about 75 miles in blackout at night to meet head-on and stop the German 2nd Panzer Division and 560th Volksgrenadier Division at Houffalize.

The pick and shovel platoon of our company cleared a path over the steep hills of blacktop roads covered with 10" of snow over 2" of ice for our tanks.

I was driver and Morse Code radio operator of command half-track for the company commander. After four days of battle, the 2nd AD completely destroyed the 560th Panzer Division. Hitler's SS Storm Troopers called the 2nd AD—"Roosevelt's Butchers."

A night later, we continued to pursue the Germans and after daylight the next morning, one of our half-tracks with 12 men on board came to a bridge. Before they could check the bridge for explosives a German 88 bullet crossed the bridge and hit the center of the armored windshield—went through and out the rear door. Not a soldier was hurt.

IT WAS CHRISTMAS MORNING.

REMEMBERING THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE

Philip Walsh, 2nd AD 66th AR Co C
(*Bulge Veterans' Stories*, January 24, 2013)

I WAS 18 years old when I got my draft notice. I had never been away from home before.

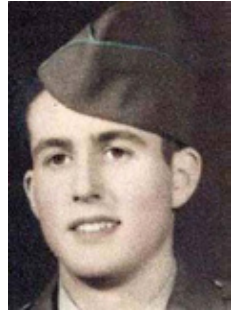
When I was sent to France I was assigned to Co C, 66th AR, 2nd AD. I can remember one soldier who landed on the beach with me. He was from the southern part of the States and was assigned to another tank because the tank commander, Lt. Johnson, also from the south, picked him for his crew.

This was the first day in battle for us. Lt. Johnson's tank was heading down a road between a row of hedges rows and ran over a mine. The explosion blew a track off the tank. The crew climbed out of the tank, started to crawl on the ground and a mortar shell landed on the back of the soldier from the south. All that was left of him was a piece of his fly and belt buckle. It was terrifying.

After 21 days in France and an advance to Germany, we deployed to Bastogne for combat at the Battle of the Bulge. It was winter, freezing cold, and I drove an open top half-track 100 miles in the pouring rain. Somewhere along the way I drove off the road. I was tired, soaking wet, and it was difficult to see because there were no headlights. I accidentally backed into Captain A.Z. Owen's tank. He hollered "get that man's name." I was afraid he would send me to jail. He didn't do anything.

When we arrived at our destination near Bastogne we were exhausted and cold. We pitched our pup tents in the freezing temperatures and went to sleep shivering. What amazes me now as I think back about sleeping in soaking wet, heavy Army clothes with my shoes frozen to the ground is that I never caught a cold. Our tank was parked next to a farmhouse. The family living in the home felt sorry for us and they invited us in to dry our clothes and get warm. We stayed with them for several nights. Unfortunately, one of the soldiers flirted constantly with the homeowner's wife. The husband got fed up and told us all to leave.

One time we liberated a couple of chickens and some vegetables from a Belgian farmhouse and I cooked it in a 5-gallon can. You cannot imagine how good this tasted on a cold day, especially after living on K-rations. A captain from Georgia said to me, "Walsh where did you get the chickens from?" Another soldier spoke up and said he got a package from the states. This seemed to satisfy the captain who helped himself to the soup without asking any more questions.



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.

Email your responses to: bulge.bugle.editor@gmail.com

THE DEFENSE OF KRINKELT – PART I

By Major David L. Hankel (Ret)

IN DECEMBER 1944, THE Germans counterattacked the Allied forces through a narrow gap in the Ardennes Forest near Bastogne, Belgium. This marked the start of what later became known as the Battle of the Bulge. My father, a company commander serving in the 2nd Infantry Division at the time, participated in this battle and recorded his experiences in writing. I want to retell the story based on data from his written accounts and historical sources about the battle.

CPT Halland W. Hankel, recently recovering from wounds received in France, returned to his unit in Belgium and was assigned as the company commander of M Co., 3rd BN, 38th IR, 2nd ID. His company was a heavy weapons company consisting of two platoons of .50-caliber machine guns (nine guns each), an 81 mm mortar platoon (three tubes), and twelve rocket launchers, also referred to as bazookas.

The feeling among American soldiers at the time was that the Germans were defeated. The Battalion Intelligence Officer (S2) reported that the Germans were using either incredibly old men or children as young as fifteen years old to defend the once-fortified Siegfried Line along the German-Belgian border. The overall assessment was that the Germans were ill-equipped and that their morale was extremely low. The general feeling was that it was only a matter of time before the German army surrendered.

CPT Hankel was happy to get back with his unit after being wounded by a shell fragment from a German 88 mm projectile while advancing through the notorious hedgerow fighting after his unit landed at Omaha Beach. He had been sent to England to recuperate and was assigned as the officer in charge of German prisoners there. The food and life in England were a great break from the constant combat his unit had endured since landing in France.

The first mission of the 3rd BN was to capture one of the three Roer River dams before the Germans could seize or destroy it. Doing so would have caused great havoc to civilians and to the advancing Third Army, commanded by General Patton, as a result of the inevitable flooding downstream of the dam.

Despite the S2's report, the Germans were not finished yet. Hitler had proposed a plan to split the American and British forces. With the heavy losses Germany had suffered over six years of war, the force was surprisingly still intact and strong. There were 250,000 men in the first wave, with an eventual total of twice that number. The attack included two armies consisting of twenty-eight infantry and motorized divisions, including eight Panzer divisions. Hitler diverted some of his best SS Panzer divisions from the Eastern Front for inclusion among the eight. One of the best tanks in the world at the time, the Mark VI Tiger tank with its 88 mm gun, became the main striking force behind this offensive. American forces in the area totaled around 83,000.

CPT Hankel and his men knew nothing about what was in store for them. They concentrated on the mission at hand: to seize the Roer River dam. On the morning of December 17, 1944, the 3rd BN received an urgent message from Col. Boos, the 38th IR commander, that read: "Proceed to the twin villages of Rocherath-Krinkelt with great haste." The Germans had counterattacked south of the 2nd ID.

The road network in Krinkelt was vital to the 2nd ID's ability to turn around and meet the German armor already in the division rear. The 3rd BN, 38th IR, was not in contact with the enemy, so Col. Boos canceled their previous mission and ordered them to move first.

CPT Hankel's M Company was only six miles from the village when LTC Barsanti, the 3rd BN commander, gave Hankel his orders. CPT Hankel had spent the last three days preparing his company for their mission to seize the Roer River dam in Germany. The men were well fed, and their equipment was ready. He ordered his .50-caliber machine-gun crews, mortar platoon, and communications sergeant to load up into the 2.5-ton trucks. He put them under the command of his executive officer. CPT Hankel ordered the rest of his men, under the command of the first sergeant, to march into Krinkelt. While they prepared to move, CPT Hankel went with LTC Barsanti and the battalion operations officer (S3) to Krinkelt to reconnoiter for the best defensible terrain.

During the reconnaissance, the lead jeep carrying LTC Barsanti and CPT Hankel drove beyond Krinkelt for approximately one mile, passing a stone church and proceeding down to a bridge crossing a small creek. They observed a U.S. Army 2.5-ton truck smoldering near the bridge. The driver was dead. It looked as if the truck had been hit by a tank round. LTC Barsanti decided it was too dangerous to proceed any further. The driver quickly began to turn the jeep around. As they started back on the road to Krinkelt, they heard the whistling sound of a tank round passing right over their heads, barely missing them. The occupants of the jeep quickly looked back and saw a German tank hidden in a draw about 500 yards away. The jeep driver accelerated and sped back to the village.

At Krinkelt, CPT Hankel linked up with his executive officer and machine-gun crews. He placed them in positions to defend the battalion's right flank as the battalion began to enter the village. The sighting of the tank on the reconnaissance meant that the Germans had infiltrated into the division's rear. LTC Barsanti had to set up a hasty defense of the village as soon as possible. He set his defense in Krinkelt as follows: I Company was in the south of Krinkelt on the battalion's right flank; L Company was in reserve inside the city of Krinkelt; and K Company was east of town on the battalion's left flank. The terrain on the west side was rugged and determined by the S2 to be unmaneuverable for tanks. Only a light force defended this sector.

After the battalion entered Krinkelt, CPT Hankel pulled Company M from their guarding position north of town and positioned them in the following manner: 1st Platoon in general support to I Company; 2nd Platoon in general support to K Company; bazookas and 81 mm mortars in general support to the battalion inside Krinkelt; and the M Company command post (CP) south of town. The battalion began to prepare defenses.

A battalion of German tanks (about twenty to thirty tanks) and a company of German infantry (ninety to 120 men) attacked K Company as soon as they arrived in town.

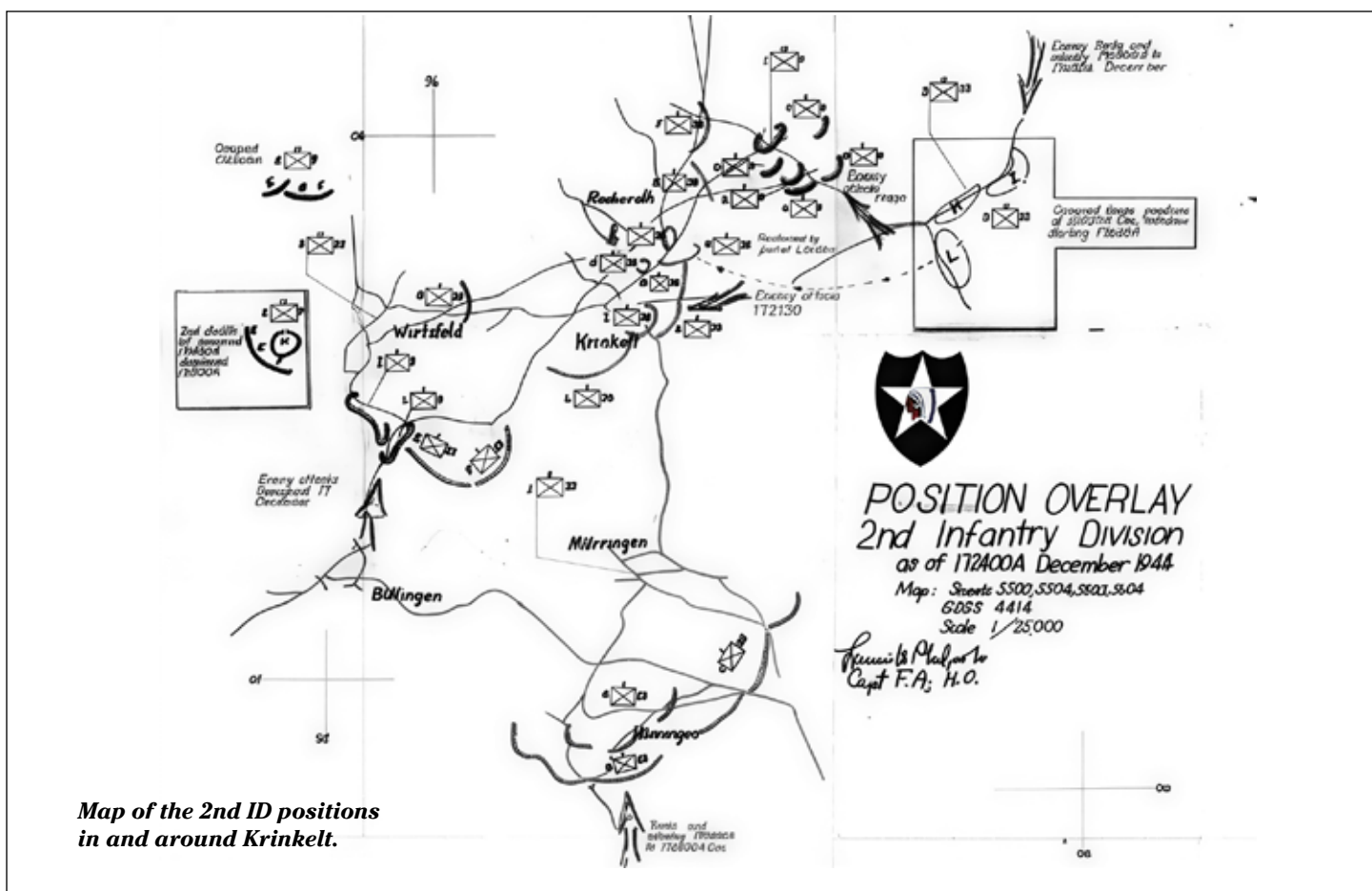
(See Part 2 in next issue)



Halland Hankel kneeling on the right. The photo was posted in Time Magazine June 12, 1944. Reprinted with special permission.



Halland and Evelyn Hankel (San Antonio, 1942) after his Commission and prior to deployment overseas.



Map of the 2nd ID positions in and around Krinkelt.

BELGIUM AWARDS ORDER OF LEOPOLD TO BULGE VETERAN

ON JUNE 10, 2026, 101-year-old Battle of the Bulge veteran Truman Christian became a Belgian knight when the Kingdom of Belgium honored him with their country's highest honor, the Order of Leopold.

Christian served as a machine gunner with the 106th Infantry Division, 424th Regiment, Company D (106ID, 424R, CO D). Born on January 1, 1925 in Kansas, he was raised on a farm during the Depression. He enlisted in the U.S. Army shortly after graduating high school in 1944. After training at Fort McClellan, Alabama, he sailed with 5,000 other soldiers aboard the USS Mount Vernon to Europe.

First landing in England, Christian moved on seventeen days later to France, then quickly continued to Belgium. On December 11, 1944—his second day in combat—he saw significant battle in St. Vith, Belgium. Soon after, on December 16, the bloody Battle of the Bulge offensive began in the area. His unit suffered devastating losses, with two-thirds of the 106ID either killed or captured within two days. Despite his youth and lack of experience, he was thrust into frontline duty in brutal winter conditions, enduring artillery fire, freezing temperatures, and the loss of friends.

By December 18, the remaining forces of the 106ID moved to nearby Poteau, Belgium. During the continuing battle, Christian crawled on his chest under fire to within feet of a German machine gun nest. He opened fire and killed at least six enemy soldiers, earning the Bronze Star for his courage. He also survived a tank encounter and the loss of an officer, but managed to hold the line until the German surrender.

After the war, Christian returned to civilian life, eventually settling in Lower Allen Township, Pennsylvania, where he has remained active in his community.

It was here that Belgium's Consul General Filip Vanden Bulcke presented him with the Order of Leopold, an order of knighthood bestowed upon Allied soldiers who fought to free Belgium. Created on July 11, 1832 by King Leopold I, shortly after Belgium gained independence from the Netherlands, the Order is Belgium's oldest and highest national honor, designed to recognize exceptional civil, military, or maritime merit.



Bulge Veteran Truman Christian (1944)

The presentation to Christian was made possible by Tyler Boland, founder of the Keeping History Alive project. Boland, age 22, has devoted his life to honoring WWII veterans as a tribute to both of his great-grandfathers who served.

In a 2025 interview with Boland, available on YouTube, Christian reported, "The fact is, I told my sister I should not have [survived the war]. I said, 'Geneva, I don't think I'll make it back from this war. You have to expect that.' But here I was. Oh, boy, I'm all emotional..."

Truman Christian went from life on the farm to the front lines of the Battle of the Bulge, carrying those experiences with him for more than eight decades. At age 101, the recognition of his wartime heroism brought his remarkable story full circle.



Consul General of Belgium Filip Vanden Bulcke, Bulge Veteran Truman Christian, and Keeping History Alive founder Tyler Boland



Bulge Veteran Truman Christian alongside jeep (1944)

WORLD WAR II AMERICAN EXPERIENCE MILITARY WEEKEND

By John Baker, BOBA Outreach Director

ONE OF THE ANNUAL highlights in the Gettysburg area is when the World War II American Experience Museum holds its Military Weekend. This is central to the museum's mission to honor the stories of the men and women who served in World War II, both abroad and at home, as well as all American veterans. The event occurred July 24 through July 26 and was well attended, thanks to good weather.

This year's Military Weekend continued the WWII American Experience tradition of exhibiting an impressive collection of vintage WWII military vehicles and artillery pieces, as well as hosting a living history encampment featuring many military reenactors. Armored vehicle and artillery weapon demonstrations were a highlight of the event, along with several information tables and memorabilia vendors, and most importantly, the opportunity to engage in person with several World War II Veterans. In addition, a Huey helicopter flew into the event to help remind participants to also honor Vietnam veterans.

BOBA had two tables available for conducting outreach and membership recruitment at the event. They were managed by BOBA VP Leon Reed, a well-known Gettysburg resident and historian, and John Baker, BOBA's outreach director. The

tables were situated in the museum's Motor Pool, which was used by outreach organizations and vendors offering a wide variety of WWII items.

The steady stream of visitors provided us with multiple opportunities to speak with those not familiar with our organization. Many had relatives who had served in WWII, including at the Battle of the Bulge. We informed them about BOBA's mission to honor the Bulge veterans, as well as our organization's range of activities. Other visitors were mostly interested in learning something about BOBA and/or the Battle of the Bulge.

We had a new twist this year on our presentation, as Leon Reed exhibited some BOBA monographs featuring selections drawn mostly from earlier issues of *The Bulge Bugle*. For example, one monograph is entitled *Christmas in the Ardennes 1944: Voices of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge*. BOBA receives a portion of the proceeds from each monograph that is sold, while the rest covers the production expenses.

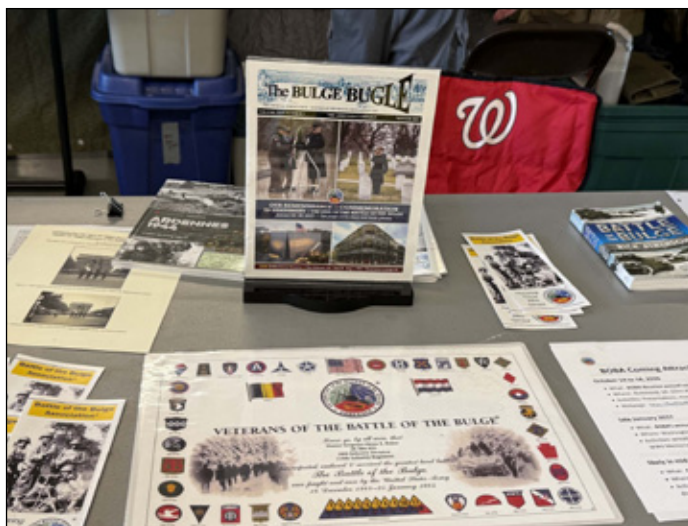
We look forward to returning next year to participate in the Military Weekend and other impressive events undertaken at the World War II American Experience.



Left: BOBA Outreach Director John Baker speaks with interested guests



Below: BOBA display table at WWII American Experience Military Weekend



REPORT ON CHAPTERS

By Leon Reed, VP of National and Regional Coordination (Chapters)

WE HAVE EMBARKED on a project to identify those chapters that remain active and those that no longer are active. We've identified the most recent point of contact for each chapter and have initiated contact.

We consider the following chapters to be "active":

- Virginia Crater
- South Carolina
- Gateway (MO/IL)
- Eisenhower (PA)
- Delaware Valley (PA)
- Golden Gate (CA)
- Lehigh Valley (PA)
- Central Indiana
- Alton Litsenberger (OH)
- Western Michigan

The Kansas, Ft. Monmouth, and Ft. Dix/McGuire chapters were recently deactivated, and the Mohawk, Tri-state, Yankee, and Reading chapters are being decommissioned.

Remaining in doubt are Hudson Valley, Trueman, Staten Island, Long Island, Pacific Northwest, and Blanchard Valley. Anyone who has any knowledge of the status of these chapters is encouraged to communicate with Leon Reed, leonsreed@gmail.com.

We are also offering support to chapters that want to become more active. Activities that chapters are encouraged to undertake include: care of VBOB monuments in their area; conducting commemorative ceremonies at some appropriate site on December 16; or contacting local schools to raise awareness of the stories of the Battle of the Bulge.

DELVAL CHAPTER

By Andy Waskie, Chapter President

ON MAY 29, THE Senior Center at Stapley Manor in Germantown held a testimonial for Benjamin Berry. About 50 people attended. Ben spoke, two of his television interviews were played, and several BOBA members spoke about his WWII heroism. Chapter President Andy Waskie presented him with a Delaware Valley Chapter of VBOB award certificate, an oversized poster of him before a WWII Deuce & a half truck (the kind he drove in WWII), and other souvenirs. A good time was had by all.



DelVal Chapter member Ed McLaughlin, Chapter President Andy Waskie, Henrietta Allen, and Bulge Veteran Ben Berry

BATTLE OF THE BULGE COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUE STOLEN

By Craig L. Stiegemeier, BOBA Gateway Chapter
Son of Billy E. Stiegemeier I (87th ID, 347th Reg., Co. H)

THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY of the Battle of the Bulge took place in St. Louis in 1994. Attendance was over 2000 people, ranging from Veterans to Belgium & Luxembourg royalty. A plaque recognizing the Veterans' contribution was placed in downtown St. Louis on the Court of Honor Wall in Memorial Plaza, then relocated to a city park near the Soldiers Memorial.

This memorial received a \$30 million revitalization in 2016. I stopped by the Museum recently to see the plaque's temporary location and discovered it had been stolen. Despite police efforts, it has not been recovered.

I contacted the Museum director, who asked for images of the original plaque to get a replacement. The museum is in process of creating that replacement. The local chapter will participate in the rededication, hopefully around December 16 for the Bulge's anniversary.



Image of plaque from The Bulge Bugle, February 1995



OUR MIDDLE NAME WAS AUTOMATIC WEAPONS

By Clyde Boden, Past VBOB President
(Reprinted from *The Bulge Bugle*, February 1986)

COL CLYDE D. BODEN, AUS-Ret., an Army War College graduate and a freelance writer, was a platoon commander in the 557th Anti-Aircraft Artillery, Automatic Weapons Battalion. He is the past president of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge.

In these days of sophisticated and costly military arms, a flashback of more than 40 years ago brings pictures of fighting soldiers and effective and inexpensive weapons that were easy to maintain.

Our mobile ack-ack battalion—the 557th—provided air, ground, and river-crossing support for a great infantry division—the 84th—while in position and when on the move in all kinds of weather in Europe during World War II.

Because we were usually deployed around the division artillery and advanced with task forces and other fighting elements, we were required often to fire instinctively and accurately at fleeting targets. We had little or no warning of high-speed enemy aircraft flying at tree-top level nor of opposing riflemen hiding behind a tree or in a haystack.

We were successful for several reasons.

First, we were trained. Everyone was in excellent physical condition and was qualified on at least one small arms weapon; the crew who fired the machine guns and the cannons had spent months drilling and on firing ranges.

Second, we were disciplined. Noncommissioned officers had much authority—moreso even in combat—and were respected by the troops and supported by the officers. The junior officers were closely associated with the soldiers but maintained a proper distance between them and also from the senior officers who provided guidance and a minimum of supervision. All members of the unit were conscious of and practiced military courtesies.

Third, equipment and personal gear were maintained. During training, more time was spent in the gun park and motor pool than anywhere and during combat one gun at a time in each platoon was out of action each day for care and maintenance. Vehicles, weapons, and clothing were inspected frequently.

Fourth, we had unit integrity. Following 16 months of training together, we fought in four major campaigns and served in the Army of Occupation and for several months thereafter as a unit.

Fifth, we were not burdened administratively. At the platoon level, for example, we had only morning, casualty, and ammunition reports to render and they were submitted verbally.

Sixth, we had weapons that were easy to master, maintain, and use—the M1 rifle, the carbine, the .45 caliber pistol, the submachine gun, vehicle-mounted and four-barrel .50 caliber machine guns, and the 40 millimeter cannons.

We were well supplied in every class and used our ammunition economically, firing only when targets were deemed to be hostile. We made every shot count. Our sighting was direct—we had no additional equipment and adjustments could be made instantly. We were proud to be the 557th AAA Automatic Weapons Battalion.



Sgt Ray Walstead's 6th gun section of A/557th AAA poses during Battle of the Bulge with Cpls Daniel Buchan, Henry Chrowstowski, and Steve Shimrak.

CHAPTER NEWS (continued)

GOLDEN GATE CHAPTER, CALIFORNIA

By Doris Davis, Chapter President

DORIS DAVIS, PRESIDENT of the Golden Gate Chapter of the Battle of the Bulge Association, attended the Luxembourg National Day reception June 23 and a Belgian flag-raising ceremony on July 22 (both events were held in San Francisco).

The Luxembourg National Day commemorates the Grand Duke's birthday and is celebrated with parades, concerts, a torchlight procession and fireworks in Luxembourg. The flag raising at City Hall commemorates the beginning of the Kingdom of Belgium that occurred on July 21, 1831 when King Leopold took the oath as the country's first monarch. Since then, July 21 has been celebrated as Belgian National Day.



Left: Doris Davis, President of the Golden Gate Chapter and Joseph Senninger, Consul General of Luxembourg. Right: Ms. Nathalie Delrue, Honorary Consul General of Belgium and Doris Davis, President of the Golden Gate Chapter



• IN MEMORIAM •

FRANK COHN

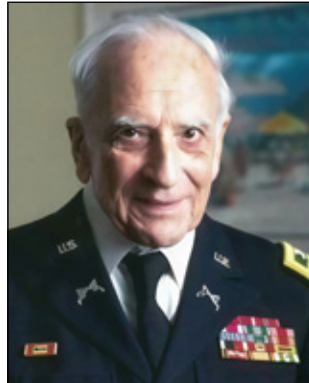
COL. FRANK COHN (Ret) passed away peacefully at his home on Saturday, July 4, 2026 with his family by his side. He was married for over 72 wonderful years to the late Paula Cohn. He is survived by one daughter Laura Cohn (Peter) Piscitelli of Ft Myers, FL.

Frank was born in 1925 in Breslau, Germany. At age 13, he and his parents fled Germany on visitors' visas to the United States. He was saved by President Roosevelt's Executive Order which precluded the return of refugees after the Crystal Night Pogrom in November 1938. He attended Junior High School and Stuyvesant High School in New York City and was drafted into the U.S. Army in September 1943.

As a member of T-Force, 12th Army Group, an intelligence unit, he participated in the Battle of the Bulge and the Rhineland campaigns in the European Theater of Operations. In April 1945 he met the Soviet soldiers at the Elbe at Magdeburg. Subsequently he was assigned to the Military Intelligence Center at Oberursel, Germany where he guarded war criminals and processed sensitive documents for the prosecution of war criminals.

He was discharged with the rank of SSGT in May 1946 but remained in the U.S. Army Reserve. In 1949 he graduated with a Bachelor of Social Science degree and as a Distinguished Military ROTC Graduate from CCNY and returned to active duty as a 2LT, Military Police Corps. Subsequently he graduated with a master's degree in Police Administration from Michigan State University.

During his two years of combat branch duty in the infantry, he served in the 26th IR, 1st ID in Bamberg, Germany and in the 6th IR in Berlin. Thereafter, he was assigned MP duties as Platoon Leader 1st MP CO, 1st ID, Company Commander, CO D, 728th MP BN, Korea; Provost Marshal, 7th Army Support Command, Germany; Battalion Commander,



793rd MP BN, Germany; Chief of Operations, Provost Marshal Office, Vietnam; and Commander, 42nd MP Group (Customs) and Custom Chief U.S. Army Europe at Heidelberg, Germany. He had a two-year detail with the U.S. Department of State, and served as Chief of Operations at the International Police Academy in Washington, DC. He was the last O-6 Branch Chief of the MP Corps and wrote a letter to the Secretary of the Army complaining that the MP Branch was going down to only one general officer. Within a couple of years thereafter six MP Colonels were promoted to Brigadier

General. His final assignments were within the Military District of Washington; he was the Assistant Chief of Staff for Police, Security and Intelligence and retired with the rank of Colonel from the position of Chief of Staff, MDW in November 1978.

His decorations included the Legion of Merit with one Oak Leaf Cluster, the Bronze Star, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Commendation Medal, the European Theater Ribbon with 3 Battle Stars, the Vietnam Service Ribbon with 4 Battle Stars, the Vietnam Honor Medal, the German Grand Service Cross, the French Chevalier of Legion of Honor and the Russian World War II Memorial Medal.

After retirement from the U.S. Army, he became an Assistant Director of Resident Life at the University of Maryland, and later served as Director of Graduate Housing. He was inducted into the Military Police Hall of Fame in 2004, became Citizen of the Year, Mount Vernon District and Lord Fairfax in 2008 and was invited to Moscow, Russia to celebrate the anniversaries of the meeting of U.S. and Soviet forces at the Elbe in 2005, 2010, and 2015.

In lieu of flowers, please consider memorial donations to The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum <https://www.ushmm.org/frankcohn>.

• TAPS •

FRANK COHN • 7/4/2026 • Fort Belvoir, VA • 12th ARMY GRP PW TEAM 66 TF

JOSEPH FOLINO • 1/14/2026 • York Springs, PA • 691 TANK DESTROYER BN

MICHAEL DAVID HOFF • 7/16/2026 • Bradenton, FL • 987 FA BN

DONALD REGIER • 6/5/2026 • Parkton, MD • 106 ID 422 REG 2 BN SERVCO

HERBERT "HERB" W. RIDYARD • 6/11/2026 • Elizabethtown, PA • 94 ID 301 INF 2 BN CO. H

ANTHONY J. VILLARDI • 12/16/2025 • Pelham, NY • 30 ID 118 FA BN HQ

BESSIE ZILLAS • 7/14/2026 • Flushing, NY • Spouse of Nicholas (Zillas) • 285 ENG CMBT BN A



MICHAEL DAVID HOFF

987 FA BN, BATTERY B

Library of Congress Veteran Interview, Sept. 9, 2006

I WAS 15 YEARS old when Pearl Harbor was attacked. The next day, everybody at Northern High School in Detroit gathered in the assembly hall and listened to President Roosevelt. At that age, I couldn't have known where the war would eventually take me.

I graduated from high school in June 1943 and was drafted shortly afterward. They offered me the Army or the Navy. I chose the Army because I didn't want to drown. I wasn't that good a swimmer.

I weighed only 122 pounds when I entered the service. After being processed at Fort Custer, Michigan, the Army decided I was suited for field artillery, and I was happy about that. I didn't want to go into the infantry. I was sent to Fort Sill, Oklahoma, for 18 weeks of training and became a surveyor. My job was to help determine the location and distance of enemy targets so our guns could fire on them.

Eventually, I joined Battery B of the 987th Field Artillery Battalion. In March 1944, we shipped overseas aboard the *Ile de France*, a former luxury liner converted into a troopship. As we left New York Harbor, I stood on deck and watched the Statue of Liberty. It was quite a sight.

Then I got seasick.

The crossing took eight days, and I spent about six of them lying in my bunk. We landed at Glasgow, Scotland, and from there went to Wales and later England, where we continued training. Nobody told us much about what was coming. In those days, you took what they gave you and that was about it.

We eventually crossed the English Channel aboard an LST and landed in Normandy. That's where the war became very real to me.

I remember being in a firing position in a field where we had dug foxholes. The Germans were firing intermittently, just putting rounds into the area. One round struck a tree above some of our gunners. The exploding shrapnel badly wounded one of the men.

He was screaming.

That's one thing people don't understand from the movies. When a man is badly wounded, it isn't like Hollywood. I watched the medic give him morphine before they carried him away on a stretcher. I never saw him again. Some things you see in war stay with you.

We took part in the fighting in Normandy and the breakthrough at St. Lô. After the bombing, we drove through devastation—craters, rubble and dead German soldiers. From there, we raced across France. We were even part of the parade when Paris was liberated, but there wasn't much time to celebrate. That same day, we were already on the road toward another objective.



Michael Hoff, awarded the French Legion Honor on July 30, 2014

We moved through France, Belgium and Germany. At one point our advance stopped because we ran out of gasoline. We had moved so fast that the supply lines couldn't keep up with us.

Later came the Battle of the Bulge. We called it the Battle of the Bulge, although officially it was the Ardennes. We were moved south and fought in different places, including Luxembourg. Sometimes we used our 155mm guns for direct fire, meaning we could actually see what we were shooting at. I remember seeing our fire knock out German pillboxes.

The winter was cold and snowy. We didn't have tents. We slept in foxholes, putting pine boughs down inside them. Sleeping was difficult, but when you're tired enough, you can sleep almost anywhere. At night, when you had guard duty, you couldn't build a fire because it could give away your position.

I always considered myself lucky. I went through combat without getting a scratch. I was lucky to be in field artillery, too. I had seen what could happen to infantrymen and tank crews.

When word finally came in May 1945 that Germany had surrendered, we were riding in the back of a three-quarter-ton truck.

The war was over.

There was no whiskey and no big celebration. We were simply happy. In some ways, I remember it seeming almost like another day.

Afterward, we were sent to Czechoslovakia for occupation duty. Eventually I accumulated enough points to return to the United States. But while I was home on furlough, the war with Japan was still going on. We were told we might be sent to fight there next.

Then Japan surrendered.

I was discharged on November 5, 1945. I had been overseas for 18 months and had participated in five campaigns.

Coming home didn't mean that everything I had experienced disappeared. I went to Wayne State University on the GI Bill, originally intending to become a doctor. But I couldn't concentrate. I had nightmares, and memories of wounded and dead men kept coming back to me. I eventually changed my studies to accounting and earned my degree.

Some of those memories have never completely gone away.

But the Army also changed the direction of my life. While I was in college, I joined Air Force ROTC and later received a commission. I went on to spend many years in the Air Force Reserve, eventually serving as a comptroller.

Looking back, despite some of the terrible things I witnessed in combat, I was glad I served.

Most of all, I know how fortunate I was. I was one of the lucky ones.

MEMBERSHIP/SUBSCRIPTION FORM



Battle of the Bulge Association®, Inc.
P.O. Box 330
Mechanicsville, VA 23111-0330

Veteran membership is for those who have received the Ardennes campaign credit. **Membership** is for relatives, historians or others with an interest in preserving the memory of the Battle of the Bulge.

☐ **Yearly Membership: \$40 (electronic Bugle)**

☐ **Yearly Veteran (Bulge Vet) Membership: \$0 for 2027***

*** BOBA is gifting the 2027 membership fee to Bulge veterans.**

Name DOB

Address City State Zip+4

Telephone E-mail

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

Campaigns

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

Regiment Battalion

Company Other

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

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

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.



WE NEED YOUR HELP!

As with all non-profit organizations, BOBA depends on the generosity of our donors to help support our mission. Please consider a donation to help sustain our mission of perpetuating the memory of the sacrifices made by those who fought in the Battle of the Bulge. You can also use the membership form on the inside cover if you have an address update or want to include a gift subscription to our magazine. All donations are tax deductible and are listed in *The Bulge Bugle*® Battle of the Bulge Association® Inc. is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization. Donations can be made online at <https://battleofthebulge.org/store/donate/> OR complete the form below and include a check made payable to: Battle of the Bulge Association®, PO Box 330, Mechanicsville, VA, 23111.

Donation Amount: ☐ \$25 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ OTHER **Your Name:**

If desired, please choose: ☐ **Gift In Memory of:**
Name Service Units (if applicable)

☐ **Gift In Honor of:**
Name Service Units (if applicable)

ALL GIFTS ARE GREATLY APPRECIATED!