

FIGHTING 69TH INFANTRY DIVISION

★★★★ Association, Inc.



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www.69th-infantry-division.com

SEPTEMBER – OCTOBER – NOVEMBER – DECEMBER
2001

“THE THREE B’S”
BOLTE’S BIVOUCKING BASTARDS

P.O. BOX 69
CHAMPION, PA 15622-0069
724/455-2901

bulletin

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*Let Freedom Ring ...
for all nations
and all people!*

**GOD BLESS
AMERICA
GOD BLESS
OUR TROOPS**



For those of you who are not aware, we lost our Treasurer, Bill Matlach on October 16th, 2001. Bill was very dedicated to the 69th and as our Treasurer, had a phenomenal job on his hands. Bill will be sorely missed by all of us and his death is a great loss to the Association. I asked Ed Lucci to please write a little something to honor this fine member of the 69th.

A Tribute to Bill Matlach

Written by: **Edward L. Lucci**

Company A, 2nd Platoon, 273rd Infantry Regiment

30 Lenox Road - 2H

Rockville Centre, New York 11570-5250

Telephone: 516/593-6592



William R. and Jane Matlach

I have been sitting here at my computer for almost 2 hours now, and I haven't gotten past "Dear Dottie." How do you say goodbye to someone you have known since February 1941, when you just turned 18 years of age and he was only 16 years and two months of age? In fact, Bill himself, didn't like the word "Good bye." He preferred the words "Auf Wiedersehen."

In February 1941, we were both freshmen at CCNY. Bill was enrolled in the School of Engineering, and I was in the School of Business. We both joined the ROTC, and from that point on we led parallel lives. In the military everything is done in line and in alphabetical order. Bill was directly behind me everywhere we went: the Enlisted Reserve, (we were called to active duty in June 1943), Infantry Basic Training, Army Specialized Training Program, Officer's Candidate School, the 69th Division, the 29th Division and the 69th Infantry Association. In the beginning we were always in the same squad, he was usually in the next bed or at most, one or two beds away. From the beginning, Bill was almost always chosen to be squad leader, because he was well disciplined, responsible and ready to do his duty, he was also tall with good military bearing and reasonably well coordinated.

These qualities carried over to the 69th Division Association, as witness the fact that he was the 12th President, he was also Vice President, Secretary and

Treasurer (more than once), and served on many committees, throughout the years. **Bill** was instrumental in helping and encouraging **Clarence Marshall** to restore our membership roster from a low of about 900 to well over 6000 at its peak. We owe **Clarence** a debt of gratitude that can never be repaid. **Bill's** philosophy was that we cannot remove members from the roster, solely for failure to pay dues. Once a name is removed from the roster, that member's whereabouts could be lost forever. (I still have the names, addresses and serial numbers of 22 members of Company A, 273rd, from June 1945, that I still have not been able to locate.) We have no way of knowing the financial condition of our members, or the reasons why some pay dues and others don't. Quite frankly, it doesn't matter. It is up to those of us who can pay, to carry those who can't or won't. We have had it happen quite often, that we received a check for as much as \$100.00 or even \$200.00 from someone, who hadn't been paying dues or stopped paying dues. In many cases, they paid for more years than they missed paying for. We don't keep score!

In the early years of the Association, the New York Chapter was very active. In addition to holding annual reunions for the entire membership, we had periodic family outings and monthly dinner meetings at various restaurants in New York City. It was at these meetings that **Bill Matlach**, **Jane Matlach**, **Ed Lucci** and **Johanna Lucci**, got to be close friends. We met for dinner every two or three weeks throughout the year, alternating between West Islip and Lynbrook on Long Island.

During the reunion at the Drawbridge Inn, Kentucky, **Bill** developed an unstable blood clot in his leg, from his ankle to his hip. **Bill** was hospitalized in Kentucky until the Sunday after the reunion, when the doctors deemed that he was able to fly home. A few days after he returned home, **Bill** was hospitalized again, in the hope that the doctors could determine the cause of his problems.

On the morning of October 16, 2001, I visited **Jane** at her home at **Bill's** request that I look over some of his personal papers. At one o'clock in the afternoon, we both went to the hospital to visit with **Bill**. I remarked to **Jane** during the visit, that **Bill** did not look overly depressed, given the physical problems he was going through. He appeared to be quite calm. That same morning, at the same hospital, Laura Matlach gave birth to his grandson, Christopher William Matlach.

I eventually left the hospital at about 5 o'clock, while his entire family remained. Late that same night, I got a phone call from Ray Armstrong, Debbie's husband, informing me that **Bill** had just passed away. Needless to say, it was a jolt.

Gloria Czyzyk, the President of the Ladies' Auxiliary and her husband **Stanley Czyzyk** of C-273, stopped by the funeral parlor to pay their respects, as did **Chet Yastrzemski**, Director from E-272, and his wife **Barbara**. **Ray Sansoucy**, our newly elected President of the Association, came from Worcester, Massachusetts. He was there both days, at the funeral parlor on Friday and the entombment in Pinelawn Cemetery on Saturday, where we said "Auf Wiedersehen."

THE MAIL BOX

By Dottie Witzleb, Editor



Company E, 273rd Infantry Regiment
P.O. Box 69
Champion, Pennsylvania 15622-0069
Telephone: 724/455-2901

Rolland J. Correll, 1329 Nevada Street, Allentown, Pennsylvania 18103-3006 — Co. L, 271st: In May 1943, I was one of the many soldiers who were activated into the 69th Infantry Division. We started soon after on our basic training. As stated by veterans before, we were known as "The Three B's." Somehow I remember a 4th B put in there before basic training was over. Bolte's Bitching Bivouacking Bastards. Am I correct on this?

After basic we were sent on maneuvers. All kinds of tactical warlike problems. Our training was unmatched by any other outfit. I credit this to my being alive today. We accomplished the following:

1. Speed marches with full field equipment (60 lbs.) of 5 miles in 1 hour, 9 miles in 2 hours and 25 miles in 8 hours. The 25 mile march started at 12:00 midnight and ended at 8:00 a.m.
2. Running an uphill combat bayonet course in specified time.
3. Digging a slit trench from prone position.
4. Running a combat course with surprise targets.
5. A night compass course one and one half mile.

In May 1944 I, along with many others, was shipped out to staging areas where we waited for our orders. I crossed the Atlantic and arrived in England just in time for Normandy, attached to Company "A" 60th Infantry, 9th Division. I spent 101 days on the front lines only to be captured in the Herztgen Forests on September 25, 1944, seven and one half months as a P.O.W. in Stalag V11A, Moosburg, Germany.

Most of my good memories are with the men of the 69th that I trained with. I have never been able to come across their names in the 69th Bulletin. The following are some that I remember.

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. 1st Lt. McLean | 9. Sgt. Hargraves |
| 2. 2nd Lt. Stadler | 10. Pvt. Campbell |
| 3. Sgt. Russell Friday | 11. Pvt. "Whitey" |
| 4. Sgt. Gallagher | 12. Pvt. Shortsleeve |
| 5. Cpl. Brock | 13. Pvt. Cowan |
| 6. Sgt. Edward Roeder | 14. Pvt. Anthony Basile |
| 7. Sgt. John McKinley | 15. Pvt. Sherman |
| 8. John Dudeck | |

I have a group picture of Company L, 271st Infantry taken at Camp Shelby August 1943. We are all on it.

Alex Greensher, 2422 Poe Avenue, Clovis, California 93611-5977 — Hq., 273rd: I had to write and remark on the last report in the bulletin on the meeting of the Russian-American Link-Up. This was the first report that acknowledged that **Lt. Kotzebue** was the first to contact the Russians. The story is a bit tainted still. People are still covering their butts.

I was the radio operator that received the message via radio from the lieutenant's men. I was on duty at Regimental Headquarters. I got the message in code and had it delivered and the s--- hit the fan. Nobody wanted to accept the message.

Anyway, my regards to you and the men that are left. If anyone wants any more information that I can supply, you're welcome to get in touch. Love and regards to my comrades.

Thomas P. Withers, 9304 Fairway Lakes Court, Tampa, Florida 33647 - E-Mail: tpwwbc@gte.net: **Tom** is the son of **Emmett Withers** (deceased) of Company M, 273rd: My father was very proud of his involvement in World War II. He didn't speak much about the war. The few times he did were when we were out in the woods of Pennsylvania, supposedly hunting deer. We would meet up in the woods, start up a small fire to warm our hands, and he would recount his days with the 69th and 29th Divisions. I was always left with the feeling that there were more stories, but they likely could only be related to others who had shared the experience.

My wife and I got him signed up in your Association, and even got him to attend a reunion in Myrtle Beach. I believe he enjoyed it immensely. If anyone knew him, I would appreciate correspondence. Thank you.

Robert A. Heisler, 1104 Chemawa Loop N.E., Keizer, Oregon 97303-3739, E-Mail: rbrtheisler@cs.com — Co. B, 2nd Signal: In reading some of the back issues of the bulletin, I get the impression that the army transferred some of the men stationed at Camp Adair, Oregon to Camp Shelby to reorganize and train the 69th for duty in the E.T.O. Camp Adair is about 20 miles from where I live. If there is anyone around that is still interested in that camp, here are some details of what became of Camp Adair.

There are some cement foundations left. Otherwise, it had been completely dismantled. In the early 1980's, the Air Force built a humungus building with no windows. It was quite secretive. It was called S.A.G.E. - Semi-Automated Ground Environment. They built new housing for the air personnel. After about 10 years, they closed it up. Some people decided to form a city and they did. It has a mayor, city council and all that stuff. It is incorporated and is called Adair Village, population - 680.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Robert has a story elsewhere in this issue of the bulletin.)

Folks

There is a list of folks I know,
All written in a book,
And every year at Christmas time,
I go and take a look

That is when I realize
These names are just a part,
Not of the book they are written in
But in my very heart.

Each name stands for someone
Who had crossed my path sometime,
And in that meeting they've become
The rhythm of the rhyme.

I really feel I am composed
Of each remembered name,
A little bit of each of you
With me will 'ere remain.

And while you may not be aware
Of any special link,
Just meeting you has shaped my life
Much more than you can think.

For once you've met somebody
The years cannot erase
The memory of a pleasant word
Or of a friendly face.

So never think my Christmas cards
Are just a mere routine,
Of names upon a Christmas list
Forgotten in between.

For when I send a Christmas card
That is addressed to you,
It is because you're on that list
Of folks I am indebted to.

For you are a total
of the many folks I've met,
And you happen to be one of those
I prefer not to forget.

And whether I have known you
For many years or just a few,
In some way you have had a part
In shaping things I do.

And every year when Christmas comes
I realize anew,
The very best gift that life can give
Is knowing folks like you.

So may the spirit of Christmas
That forever and ever endures
Leave its richest blessing in the
Hearts of you and yours.

author unknown



A Note from Dottie, Your Bulletin Editor

First I would like to tell you that I did return safe and sound from my trip to Idaho to raft the river. What an experience. It was just awesome. I would do it again if the opportunity would arise. Well next year is another new experience but I am not sure what yet. I will let you know later.

As some of you may know by now, we lost our Treasurer, **William Matlach**, after the reunion in Kentucky. Bill was in the hospital in Kentucky for a few days and then flew back to New York and took sick again and sad to say, he passed away. He will surely be missed by all members of the association. Our sincere sympathy is extended to **Jane Matlach** and family.

Our reunion at Fort Mitchell, Kentucky was from September 9th through September 16th, 2001. Even though the situation in the United States was scary at the time, we did have a nice turn-out at the reunion. We also had a few cancellations due to the airplane situation. Some members drove in to Kentucky after their flights were cancelled. We hope everyone arrived home safely.

Please keep your stories coming as you are the ones that keep the bulletin going.

I would like to wish all of you a Happy Holiday Season and the best of everything in the New Year.

Visit Us
On
The
Web
at



www.69th-infantry-division.com
or contact

annejoelip@earthlink.net

Visit often to keep up with what's going on!

If you are not on the internet, visit your library and ask for help in searching the site.

If you need any help, contact **Joe Lipsius** at

E-Mail: annejoelip@earthlink.net

6314 Deerings Hollow

Norcross, Georgia 30092-1800

Telephone: 770/416-7725

*Happy Holidays to all 69th Members
and their families and
a healthy and prosperous New Year.*

A Note from your Membership Chairman, Paul Shadle

Paul Shadle, *Company E, 271st Infantry*
1504 Greensburg Road
New Kensington, PA 15068
Telephone: 724/335-9980

As Membership Chairman, I basically expect to provide you, the readers, with five main services:

1. Adding New Members to the Fighting 69th Roster List, presently consisting of more than 4,200 names.
2. Deleting Deceased Members from this list.
3. Replacing a Deceased Member's name with their spouse's name or their children's name if they desire to continue receiving the "Bulletin."
4. Generating the "TAPS" list for publication in the Bulletin. Our Taps list is current as of November 12th, 2001.
5. Updating Changes of Address. **YOUR CORRECT ADDRESS IS VERY IMPORTANT FOR YOU TO CONTINUE RECEIVING THE BULLETIN.**

Also, to family of deceased members of the 69th: If you wish to continue receiving the 69th Bulletin, please let us know.

Please contact us if you have any information that relates to any of these services.

HAVE YOU PAID YOUR DUES! NEW DUES YEAR FOR 2001-2002

August 1, 2001 to July 31, 2002

Regular Membership \$10.00

Ladies' Auxiliary \$ 5.00

Bulletin Donation Up To You

**Keep the Bulletin Coming.
Send Your Dues in Today!**

Send Your Dues To:
JANE MATLACH, TREASURER
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West Islip, New York 11795-0474

Telephone: 631/669-8077

Do not send dues to Dottie Witzleb.

New Men Relocated Since Our Last Bulletin

Robert D. Bailey, Sr. — Associate Member
160 Huguley Road, Opelika, Alabama 36804-1891

Norman Balanger — Unit Unknown
9737 West Lockwood Drive, Peoria, Illinois 85382

Ethel A. Glaser
38753 Ryans Way, Palm Desert, California 92211

William A. Campbell — Unit Unknown
12080 Regency Run Court, #2, Cincinnati, Ohio 45240

James R. Hutchins — Company E, 271st Infantry
25 Juniper Drive, N. Kingston, Rhode Island 02852

Thomas L. Edward — Company F, 273rd Infantry
6520 Park Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio 45227

Fort Polk Military Museum Exhibit

Submitted by: **Robert L. Pierce**
Company L, 273rd Infantry Regiment

144 Nashua Court, San Jose, California 95139

The United States Army, Fort Polk Military Museum, is building a new museum exhibit themed "Fighting Infantry Regiments of World War II." In support of this new exhibit, they want to display the original metal distinctive Infantry Regimental pins for all the units in the exhibit.

The museum staff is requesting support from members of the 69th Infantry Division in obtaining a regimental pin for the 271st, 272nd and 273rd Regiments. If anyone from these units has a pin they are willing to donate to the museum display, contact:

David S. Bingham, Museum Curator
FORT POLK MILITARY MUSEUM

P.O. Box 3916 • Fort Polk, Louisiana 71459-0916

Telephone: 337/531-7905

MOVING

Please print your new address below:

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PAUL SHADLE
1504 Greensburg Road
New Kensington, PA 15068

Please allow six weeks advance notice.

Message from the President



Raymond Sansoucy
Anti-Tank Company, 272nd Regiment
23 Paradox Drive
Worcester, Massachusetts 01602
Telephone: 508/754-8786

Dear Members,

Our Fort Mitchell, Kentucky Reunion was hampered by the September 11th tragedy. It caused some members to cancel and others had a difficult time returning home due to the airline situation.

Another sad event occurred when our hard working and respected treasurer, **Bill Matlach**, was hospitalized during our reunion, then was able to return home only to be hospitalized again and passed away on October 12th, surviving long enough to hear that his first grandson had just been born.

My Company Commander, **Harry Austin** of Anti-Tank, 272nd Regiment, had passed away the week before. I attended both funerals and on behalf of our Association, I offered condolences to both families.

To my delight and relief, **Jane Matlach** has agreed to be our Treasurer, at least until our next meeting.

Also, I want to salute **Bob Pierce** and his committee for their work in making the Fort Mitchell meeting a success despite the September 11th tragedy.

Membership!!! We need to all work at together. We need replacements! Our ranks are dwindling by 200 to 300 per year.

55th Annual Reunion
Hampton, Virginia
September 22nd to 29th, 2002

Further information elsewhere in this bulletin.

Finding Our Web Site - the Easy Way

We know that many 69ers and their families have no access to the Internet to see the 69th Infantry's web site. Some who do have a computer aren't skilled enough at finding their way around the internet. But it's well worth your while to check out our web site, where you'll find a wealth of facts, photos, news - and connections with other 69ers.

With this in mind, we looked for a method for you to visit our web site without any difficulty. We found the answer in the local public library. We visited several libraries and we found that their staff would be more than happy to lead you on a visit to:

www.69th-infantry-division.com

Go to the information desk of the library. Carry the bulletin or a copy of this page with you. Explain you were in WWII with the Army's 69th Infantry Division. Show this page and explain that you would like their help in viewing the 69th web site; above is our web site's address. If you have a computer at home, follow the tips below carefully.

Once this address is entered, our **Home Page** will display, with the following subjects shown in block-shaped buttons:

Home, Guest Book, Reunion & Bulletin, Reunion Registration, News & Events, Camp Shelby, Units, Combat Narrative, Scenes From the War, Route Across Europe, East Meets West, Memorials, Awards & Decorations, Honor Service, Preserve The Past.

Click each of these **buttons** with your computer mouse to see important information. In some cases, you or your helper will need to move the display up, down or sideways to see all the information. Sometimes there are sub-headings, usually underlined in color, that you can click for more information. Follow any directions on the screen or ask your helper for assistance in moving around the web site.

On the **Home Page**, you should see a blue streamer moving across the screen that says, "Click here or the 69th Division insignia at the top of any page for Overseas assignments, Organizational Structure and Attached Units." Click on that streamer to the make-up of the 69th Division.

Please sign the **Guest Book**, giving your full information such as name, address, 69th unit, etc. Do not check the box at the bottom that says "PRIVATE." You can review and see who from your Unit may have signed the Guest Book, and you may even be able to send e-mail to people by clicking on their e-mail address.

We've found that public libraries are eager to help in situations like this. Please avail yourself of this service - and have fun!

Fort Mitchell, Kentucky 2001 Reunion Report

Robert L. Pierce, Reunion Committee Chairman
Company I, 273rd Infantry
144 Nashua Court, San Jose, California 95139-1236
Telephone: 408/226-8040

Photos by Chet Yastrzemski

Northern Kentucky/Cincinnati was an ideal location for a reunion with many interesting attractions and tours. However, the timing proved to be less than ideal with the World Trade Center tragedy occurring on our first day. In any event, the reunion was a success with about 400 in attendance. There were many disappointed members who called to cancel as they were stranded in transit; or, were unable to travel.

I would like to commend the Reunion Committee members, especially the locals: **Ed and Lou Hill**, Registration Chairmen; **Mel and Joan Shulz**, Tour Chairmen; **Bob Hogan** and Bob's son, Hospitality helpers. What a terrific support group! Success could not have been achieved without our dedicated Committee Chairmen: **Erwin and Carmen Sanborn**, Hospitality; **Bob and Jean Ross**, Souvenirs; **Bob Crowe**, Seating; and the many other volunteers who assisted our committees. A special thanks to **Wilfred Ferda**, an honorary member who helped every day at Registration.

An explanation is in order for the Banquet Seating confusion and late start of the Memorial Service. Table and seating assignments begin with the first Reunion Registration Forms in May and continue until Registration closes at the Reunion Saturday at 4:00 p.m. This has not normally been a problem and everything was in great shape until the World Trade Center tragedy Tuesday, September 11th. Within hours cancellations came in, even from nearby members who were reluctant to travel. Pre-registered members living in the outlying states who did not cancel were assumed to be unable to attend.

There were about 400 seating assignment cards in 50-plus table envelopes that required a complete audit for re-assignments and a head count for food service minimum contractual guarantees. Because the banquet dinner was a specialty meal, i.e., London Duet of Filet and Chicken, the Hotel Catering Manager could not prepare more extra dinners than the guaranteed quantity plus 25. Guarantee was due by Thursday noon for the banquet dinners. Recounting cancellations, no-shows and probable no-shows, a figure was given. The forecast dinner quantity also dictated the number of tables the hotel would dress plus the 25 extra places.

The best laid plans were upset starting on Friday afternoon and continuing until as late as 6:30 p.m. on Saturday. Members who cancelled showed up; early no-shows showed up late; and last minute walk-ins registered. Total impact of the late changes affected about 50 people. **Bob Crowe** was desperately shuffling names from table to table assignment envelopes

attempting in his zeal to seat members with their unit, with their family, or with friends.

The house of cards collapsed, it was after 6:00 p.m., members were becoming upset, and we realized we were three tables short to accommodate the increase in guests. The Catering Manager brought three extra tables and substituted Prime Rib for the 25 London Duet Dinners he was short. All's well that ends well! It did turn out to be a good Banquet and Dinner Dance after everyone settled down.

No apologies are made as the circumstances were beyond the control of myself, **Bob Crowe** or the hotel. Next year individual seating assignments will not be made by unit or changed after the cut-off date; late arrivals and walk-in registrations will be placed at open seating over-flow tables.

See you all in Hampton, Virginia September 22 thru 30, 2002.

A Note from Your Reunion Hospitality Chairman

Erwin Sanborn, Company I, 273rd Infantry
333 Mechanic Street
Laconia, New Hampshire 03246-2570

As Chairman of the Hospitality Room at the Drawbridge Inn at our 54th Annual Reunion, I would like to thank everyone that volunteered to tend bar that very hectic week. Some of the ones that come to mind are **Del and Donna Philpott**, **Bob and Jean Ross**, **Eugene Pierron**, **Richard Hadley**, **Nick Rocco** son of **Gilbert Rocco**, **George Philipps** and **Charley White**. The local members were **Bob Hogan** and son **Chip** and **Mel Schulz** who drove **Bob Pierce** and I all over the Tri-City area to get the best buy on all the supplies we needed for the hospitality room and also tended bar for many hours.

Let's not forget the new president **Raymond Sansoucy** who I am told tended bar on Friday when I was on tour to the Air Force Museum (He got my vote.) If I have forgotten anyone it was not on purpose and thank you very much because it made for a very excellent reunion. One more I must thank is my wife **Carmen Sanborn** who worked in the registration room and also tended bar for me.



Bartenders Mel Schulz and Dick Hadley.

FORT MITCHELL 2001 REUNION

(Continued from Page 7)

A Note from Reunion Committee Members, Ed and Lou Hill

Battery B, 881st Field Artillery

819 Main Street, Hamilton, Ohio 45013-2550

Telephone: 513/863-6851 • E-Mail: sgtlou@msn.com

My sincere thanks to all of you for your time and effort toward a really successful registration.

As a greenhorn not knowing what to expect, you all made life a breeze for Lou and me. A few rough spots, yes, but a fine effort that I believe made for a good reunion experience for those who passed through our busy station.

Lou and I will again serve as Registrars for the 2002 Reunion at Harper Point. So, if you can make the 2002 Reunion, we would surely welcome your help and company there. Have a safe year and we'll look forward to September in Virginia with each of you.



Jim and Betty Yakle



Dominic Dezio, Sanford Firsichbaum and Bing Poon



George Kjos and Pat Avery



69th member with our new president, Ray Sansoucy



Jeanne and Welkos Hawn



Bud Parsons, Christine and Hank Williamson



Chet Yastrzemski with World War I Pilots at museum



Tillie and Jim Boris



Fred and Pat Avery, Fredda Carter, Barb Yastrzemski



Ann and Earl Walters



Brett and Betty Everson



Bill and Catherine McCall



David and June Wittman



Nancy Eisenreich and Fred Butenhoff



Mr. Davis, Lee Wah and Mr. Barrette

273rd at the 2001 Reunion

Submitted by: **Paul Eagon, Company I**
1435 North Avenue, Waukegan, Illinois 60085

We enjoyed the reunion in spite of the airplanes crashing into the buildings in New York City, the field in Pennsylvania (my home state), and the Pentagon. The crashes really put a pall over the reunion; only three couples from my company were there. Others had planned on coming later in the week but with the airlines grounded, they were unable to make it.

We enjoyed all the trips to the various places but my wife especially enjoyed the one to the U.S. Air Force Museum, Wright-Patterson, as she finally got to see a plane, a C-47, like the one her uncle, Marvin D. Huebner, flew in the South Pacific in World War II.



Co. I - Rear: Elaine and Paul Eagon. Front: Erwin and Carmen Sanborn, Robert and Theresa Pierce



*Rear: Peg and Robert Shaw - Co. B.
Elaine and Paul Eagon in front.*



Robert and Theresa Pierce reading their 50th Anniversary card which Carmen Sanborn had brought for the members of Co. I, 273rd to sign.

The Rest of the Story

Submitted by: **Philip L. Bolté**
Brigadier General, U.S. Army, Retired
Son of our own General Bolte
175 Warrior Creek Drive
West Union, South Carolina 29696
Tel: 864/638-0102 • E-mail: philbolte@earthlink.net

As a Civil War buff, I could not let the article on "Taps" in the last issue go unanswered. Anyway, I thought the members might enjoy the rest of the story.

While the poignant story submitted by Gail Stalker has been widely quoted and may have some truth in it, it is not the whole story behind the song. Here is the way the tune was composed in 1862 during the Peninsula Campaign, according to Bruce Catton in *The Army of the Potomac: Glory Road*, a version widely supported.

"General Daniel Butterfield, a strange but politically safe little man who had an unsuspected streak of poetry under his breezy bluster,.... left a permanent mark on the U.S. Army.He early noticed that when his brigade sounded a call (which would be picked up and repeated at once by all regimental buglers in the brigade) there was apt to be confusion, since other brigades were usually within earshot. So he invented a little recognition call - three whole notes, followed by a couple of triplets - which would precede all brigade bugle calls, and the boys quickly fitted a chant to it: 'Dan-Dan-Butterfield!' It appears that one day in the camp at Harrison's Landing, shortly after Malvern Hill, Butterfield called his bugler into his tent, whistled a little tune for him, and asked him to sound it on his bugle. Somewhat struck, for generals did not ordinarily behave so, the bugler obeyed. The result did not quite suit Butterfield, and he did a little more experimental whistling, until finally he had it the way he wanted it. The bugler wrote the call down on the back of an old envelope, and Butterfield instructed him to use the tune thereafter in place of the call prescribed by regulations for 'lights out.' The regulation call, said Butterfield was not musical; he wanted one which would somehow express the idea of the darkening campground with tired men snuggling down to a peaceful sleep, and he hoped his new call would do it.

"So the bugler used the call after that, and other buglers heard it and liked it and came over to copy the tune, until before long it was used all through the Army of the Potomac. Later on, when some of the troops were transferred west, the bugle call was taken up in the Western armies, and at last it became regulation and has remained regulation until this day, the drawn-out haunting call that puts lights out for soldiers and that hangs in the still air over their graves at military funerals - "Taps."

2001 Reunion Golf Report

James E. Boris, Golf Chairman

Battery B, 881st Field Artillery

6800 Henry Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19128

This year we had fewer players out for the golf tournament but we had a great day.

The following won gift certificates to the souvenir shop: **Pat Nagy** for low gross score, and for closest to the pin and **Tillie Boris** won for straightest drive.

For the men, **Earl Hansen** won low gross score and closest to the pin. **Jim Walsh** won low net, and **Walter Haag** won the straightest drive. Thank you all for coming out to play.



Emil Matys, Jim Boris, Tillie Boris, Walter Haag and Robert Adsit



Emery Nagy, Pat Nagy and Earl Hansen



Orrie Pullen, Jim Walsh, Phil Delphey, Bill Sheehan



Frank Nemeth, Jim Shoemaker, Robert Adsit

Regarding Memorial Bricks

Submitted by: **William C. Sheavly**

Company M, 271st Infantry Regiment

218 Sacred Heart Lane, Reisterstown, Maryland 21136

I just received a copy of the Armed Forces "Museum News" from Camp Shelby and find that there have been a total of \$35,300 in Memorial Bricks purchased. The 65th Division has purchased \$14,800, 442 RCT has purchased \$7,000, however the members of the 69th have purchased only \$1000. I'm sure that we do not want the 65th to be ahead of us. Memorial bricks are as low as \$50 (4"x8"x4"). Picture of the brick can be seen in Bulletin Volume 54, No. 2, page 39. The address of the Museum is: **Armed Forces Museum, Bldg. #850, Camp Shelby, MS 39407-5500.** If you have not already bought a brick, take time and make arrangements to do so now! Remember these bricks will be placed around the 69th memorial located very close to the Museum. Thanks for your participation.

Company K, 272nd

Submitted by: **Joe Tukis**

34 Hendrickson Place, Fair Haven, New Jersey 07004



*Somewhere in Germany in 1945
Jerry Fazzari and Joe Tukis*

69th Infantry Division Association 55th Annual Reunion HAMPTON, VIRGINIA

September 22nd thru September 29th, 2002

HOLIDAY INN

1815 West Mercury Boulevard
Hampton, Virginia

Reunion Committee Chairpersons:

Bob and Theresa Pierce

Company I, 273rd Infantry

144 Nashua Court

San Jose, California 95139-1236

Telephone: 408/226-8040

Committee Chairmen:

Ed and Louise Hill Registration

Erwin and Carmen Sanborn Hospitality

Bob Crowe Seating Assignment

Bob and Jean Ross Souvenir Sales

Bob Pierce Tours/Entertainment

Committee Members:

Charles and Edith Chapman

George and Rita Wolff

Fred Avery

Joe Huber

George Phillips

Wilfred Ferda

Vivian Bailey

G. Scott Gresham

Keith Vickers

Frank Balicky

Archie Moore

* * * * *

HOLIDAY INN,

HAMPTON HOTEL & CONVENTION CENTER

The hotel is a large property at Exit 263-B at I-64 and Mercury Boulevards. It sits with a cluster of eight hotels surrounded by 13 acres of beautiful landscaped grounds. There are 321 rooms with plenty of convenient free parking. The main area of the hotel is a very large three-story atrium-style open room with a restaurant, indoor swimming pool, exercise room, whirlpool, sauna, and gift shop, a cocktail lounge and seating areas in the centers. Complimentary airport transportation is provided to/from Newport News/Williamsburg International Airport. The hotel will arrange transportation to/from Norfolk Airport at a cost of \$10 per person round trips.

Room rates are \$55 per night single or double. These rates will apply 3 days prior and 3 days after the Reunion dates. Coupons will be furnished to each guest for discounts from 10-25% for each meal in the Tivoli Gardens Restaurant.

Coliseum Central. The hotel is located in "Coliseum Central," the largest retail and commercial center on the Virginia Peninsula, with four major shopping complexes plus many freestanding stores and smaller shopping centers. Across Mercury Boulevard from

the hotel is Coliseum Mall, a complex a half-mile long, featuring 120 speciality stores, five department stores, "The Food Place" with ten restaurants plus a full service cafeteria.

There is food service galore within walking distance, in addition to the fine dining in the surrounding hotels. On the Mercury Boulevard are all the fast food and inexpensive chains: Waffle House, IHop, McDonalds, Jack in the Box, Denny's, Kentucky Fried Chicken, etc. On Coliseum Drive by the Mall is a restaurant row with the mid-to-higher priced dining establishments with a large variety of popular national chains, many with entertainment. For the gentlemen who are young at heart, "Hooters" is only a half block from the hotel open for lunch through closing time.

Getting around in Hampton is convenient with the Hampton Trolley that connects to Coliseum Central area to the downtown waterfront with the Visitors Center and historic Queensway Districts. Trolley also provides service from Coliseum Central hotels to nearby shopping centers. Trolley picks up riders at each stop including the Holiday Inn, every 30 minutes, admission 25¢.

HAMPTON, VIRGINIA

Hampton is located in a region called Hampton Roads that describes both a body of water and a geographic region. Hampton Roads, the waterway, is one of the finest natural harbors in the world. The geographic region encompasses the cities of Chesapeake, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Poquoson, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Virginia Beach and Williamsburg.

The first boatload of English settlers to set foot on American soil was at Hampton in 1607, before moving up-river to found Jamestown. Hampton is the oldest continuous English speaking settlement in the U.S. Hampton is the site of the first Christmas celebrated in the New World when starving colonists from Jamestown visited the Kecoughtan Indians in December 1608 and shared oysters, fish and holiday cheer.

Spanish pirates roamed the waters off the colonies of Virginia until 1718 when the famous pirate, Blackbeard, was killed in a fierce battle. After the battle his head was displayed on a spike at what is now Blackbeard's Point on the Hampton River. Hampton has the dubious claim to be the first city in America where the first African slaves were brought in 1619. Today they boast of their deep roots in African-American heritage with more than a dozen African-American Historic Sites.

Hampton Roads Region is an American historian's dream from the first colonists; through the American Revolution and Lord Cornwallis surrender to General George Washington at Yorktown; the Union forces at Ft. Monroe and Confederate General John Magruder at Hampton; Langley Field was the center of Tactical Aviation during WWII for the U.S. Army Air Corp. and

(Continued on Page 13)

UPCOMING 55th ANNUAL REUNION

(Continued from Page 12)

finally to the space age with Hampton being the first home base training center for NASA and America's First Astronauts, the Mercury Seven.

TOURS & EVENT OPTION. There are numerous choices in the Hampton Roads Region, most are historical and/or military choices within 30 miles of the hotel.

ARMED FORCES MEMORIAL: Located in Town Point Park, a seven-acre waterfront park in downtown Norfolk.

CARRIE B HARBOR TOUR: Ride a 19th Century Riverboat with a narrated tour of historic Norfolk Harbor. View the site of the battle between the Monitor and Merrimac; see the nation's first naval shipyard; and the nation's largest naval base with a close look at the Hugh Gray Ladies of the Atlantic Fleet. Cruise Hampton Roads scenic Hampton River and Virginia Beach.

NORFOLK NAVAL BASE TOUR: The base is the home port for 106 ships of the Atlantic Fleet; including aircraft carriers, cruisers, destroyers, amphibious assault vehicles and submarines.

HAMPTON ROADS NAVAL MUSEUM: See an impressive collection of ship models and artifacts.

HISTORIC FORT NORFOLK: Built in 1794, it has been called the best preserved War of 1812 location in America.

MacARTHUR MEMORIAL: The final resting place of Gen. Douglas MacArthur, the memorial's extensive collection of military and personal artifacts tell the compelling story of General of the Army MacArthur and the millions of Americans who served our nation.

COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG: Even though we held our Reunion at Williamsburg in 1985, there have been additions and changes in 17 years. Further, there has also been a large increase in 69th Divisions membership that may make this a good tour to re-visit.

YORKTOWN: Visit the village of Yorktown and an overview of the Battle of Yorktown. This tour could include a ride to Jamestown Island, the original site and ruins of the first permanent English settlement in America.

VIRGINIA BEACH TOUR: Enjoy beautiful views of the Atlantic Ocean and Chesapeake Bay; visit the old Coast Guard Station with exhibits of shipwrecks and a special WWII exhibit; and, visit the Marine Science Museum with Virginia's largest aquarium with over 800,000 gallons of aquariums.

VIRGINIA WAR MUSEUM: A fascinating saga of military history with over 50,000 artifacts documenting America's wars from 1775 to present.

VIRGINIA AIR & SPACE MUSEUM: This is the official visitors center for NASA Langley Research Center. There are more than 100 'hands-on' exhibits. Their IMAX Theater has a five-story screen with 16,000 watts of surround-sound.

ST. JOHNS CHURCH: Established in 1610, it is the oldest continuous English speaking parish in the U.S. A featured highlight is a stained-glass window depicting the Baptism of Pocahontas.

FORT MONROE: The largest stone Fort ever built in the U.S. Within the Fort is Casemate Museum which chronicles the history of the Fort and the Coast Artillery Corps. During the Civil War, Fort Monroe was a Union-held bastion in the center of a Confederate state. Confederate President Jefferson Davis was imprisoned at Fort Monroe after the war. His prison cell has been kept exactly like it was when he was a prisoner.

FOOD SERVICE AND EVENTS: Hampton Roads boast they have the best seafood in the world. Let's see if they can pass the taste test. For our evening out event, we are considering a seafood buffet at a featured restaurant; a dinner cruise with seafood buffet; or, perhaps a catered outing at the beach featuring, yes, seafood!

GOLF: There are two public golf courses in Hampton; the Woodland Golf Course, an 18-hole course, and the Hamptons Golf Course. The Hamptons is a beautifully maintained 27-hole championship course only five miles from the hotel. Both golf courses have senior rates with prices in the low \$20 range including electric carts. Even after prize money is added to the fee, it is a very reasonable price.

For retired Officers, they can make individual arrangements to play at Langley Field Air Force Base Golf Course.

This information is being sent to the Association Golf Tournament organizer, Jim Boris, to make all necessary arrangements so golf can be added to the Reunion Registration Program.

We are hoping that you will consider attending this reunion. Yes, we are all getting older, and many of us do have health problems, but lots of times we all have to admit to ourselves that we make excuses for not attending, just because it seems like it is just too much trouble. You will not regret attending a reunion. You do not have to know anyone. We all fought for the same cause and we are all buddies. You will feel right at home. See you in September 2002!

**DEADLINE FOR MATERIAL FOR NEXT BULLETIN IS
JANUARY 31st, 2002 • Volume 55, Number 2
January, February, March, April 2002
*Get Your Material In On Time!***

A Time to Remember

Submitted by: **Alfred F. Aronson**
Company G, 273rd Infantry Regiment
200D Winston Drive, Apt. 1019
Cliffside Park, New Jersey 07010

Shortly after the Link-Up with the Russians, Company, G, 273rd Infantry was relocated from Trebsen, several kilometers west, to the rural countryside. **Lt. Albert Kotzebue's** third platoon was assigned to provide 24-hour guard duty at Leipzig's radio transmitter station, known locally as the "Sender" and located near the towns of Seelingstadt and Grosstorkwitz. The Third Platoon was detached from the rest of the Company and billeted in a dormitory-like building at the Sender. Assigned also, were radio specialists from the Signal Corps, whose job it was to keep the radio station broadcasting.

Aside from maintaining security at the site, we also conducted frequent patrols around the surrounding countryside. It was on one of those patrols to Seelingstadt, with **Jim Sublette** and **Pete Calascione**, that we came upon a large building compound that the natives referred to as "The Castle." Upon entering the compound, we saw a large group of small children being cared for by a doctor and a staff of nurses, student nurses, a teacher and household workers. They explained that the building was being used as a hospital for refugee children from the surrounding area, namely Leipzig. Many of these children were severely handicapped and it was not difficult to develop a strong sense of caring for them. Jim, Pete and I returned several times to bring food and treats for the children and staff.

While we were at the Sender, the war in Europe ended. We all started thinking of returning to our homes in the good old USA. I recall the staff at the hospital expressing joy in knowing that the Americans were occupying their land when the war ended. They had a great fear of Russian Occupation.

It was early June, I believe, that we got word that the Military Chiefs reached an agreement on the Zone of Occupation of Germany by each of the Allied Forces. The result was, that we were to abandon our location to the Russian Forces.

This resulted in a flurry of activity to move all surplus radio equipment and spare parts at the Sender to a new location within the American Occupation Zone. In addition, we were told, under severe penalty, not to mention any news of our planned departure to any Germans in the area. There was to be a 24 hour gap between our departure and the Russians arrival. This was to avoid any confrontation between the Russian and American Forces.

Needless to say, it was very difficult not to give some warning to the staff at the hospital and I have often wondered what happened to them, once we departed.



Pete Calascione, Al Aronson and Jim Sublette in front of the castle, a make-shift children's hospital.



Rear: Student nurses. Front: Nurses, Teacher, Doctor and his wife at Children's Hospital

Fifty years later, during my return to the Elbe for the 50th Anniversary of the Link-Up meeting with the Russians, **Jim and Betty Kane, Joe and Diane Panganiban** joined my wife, **Betty** and I, on a trip back to Seelingstadt and the Castle. I had brought copies of the photos taken there in May 1945.

Upon our arrival, we were greeted by a man who asked the purpose of our visit. We explained briefly why we were there. He immediately excused himself and returned with the director of the facility, a Catholic Nun named Sr. Agnes, originally from Austria. She explained the facility was now a home for the aged but unfortunately, no one was available who knew of the hospital in 1945. Sr. Agnes gave us a tour of the Castle and the aged facilities and treated us to coffee, ice cream and cookies. We took several pictures to record our visit.

We spoke for several hours and though disappointed in not knowing the final disposition of the children's hospital, it was encouraging to know that the Castle was caring for patients at the other end of the spectrum, the aged ... A story to be remembered.

(Continued on Page 15)

A TIME TO REMEMBER
 (Continued from Page 14)



"Butch" and Nurse



Nurses and Patients



Sublette and Calascione



Jim Kane, Al Aronson and Joe Panganiban in 1995 at the Castle.



*Back: Jim Kane, Joe Panganiban, Al Aronson
 Front: Sr. Agnes, Diane Panganiban, Betty Kane*



*Left to right: Sr. Agnes, Betty Kane,
 Diane Panganiban, Jim Kane and Betty Aronson*

Victory?

Written by: **Bruno A. Campese**
Anti-Tank Company, 272nd Infantry Regiment
3703 2nd Avenue
Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania 15010

Looking through some memorabilia I had stashed away a long time ago, I came across some poetry I had written about 55 years ago. I called this one "Victory?" Perhaps one has to read it a couple of times to gain an appreciation of how I felt at age 21 back in 1947.

Join the Army! Help your country!
When I was eighteen, that's what they told me.
So I joined the army and helped in the war.
It was tough going take a look at the "score."

Cities and countries, and nations were torn
and billions of dollars were literally worn.
Planning and training were long and hard,
but it was us at the end with the "winning card."

Yes victory came, but defeat did too
for many a home is today "very blue."
Oh, it wasn't the lack of food or it's cost.
It was the price of the lives that were lost.

Today I am twenty-one and considered a man
I support myself as best I can ...
The world owes me not, I'll take what you give
I'm only so happy to be able to live.

But I think of the past, the boys eighteen,
and fathers of children who were in on the "scene"
Many are still in the countries we fought
They died for a peace, of which they know not.

I try not to remember, but it's so hard to forget
it makes me fidgety . . . I can hardly sit.
I get nervous and jumpy, and weak in my knees,
"I want to be alone . . . if you please!"

It's buddies I served with I try to find
when I'm alone with a restless mind.
I helped all I could, but it's "He" your true friend
he gave even more, he died in the end.

But he doesn't regret it . . . he'd do it again
die for his country if and when
an enemy threatens as it did before
and dying meant victory as in the second World War.

Correction

In the last issue of the bulletin, a letter appeared in the *Mail Box* regarding the death of **Roy E. Bush**, Anti-Tank Company, 272nd, which was sent in by **Bruno Campese**.

The date of his passing was stated to be March 5, 2001 which was incorrect. The actual date of his passing was **February 3, 2001**.

We apologize for this error.

LeVerne writes on the subject of Fraternization

Submitted by: **LeVerne Loveland**
Company G, 271st Infantry
517 Rosewood Terrace, Linden, New Jersey 07036

I read the story on page 26 of the Bulletin, Vol. 54, #3, about the court martial of Roscoe Blunt Jr. and his final pardon by President Clinton.

I know only too well what the military rules were regarding fraternizing with the enemy, even after we had conquered their territory. But those people were only human beings and most were not Nazi sympathizers or followers of Hitler. When I read the story about some officer who probably wanted to make a name for himself reporting Blunt's fraternizing with a German family, that was very upsetting. As I moved into German territory, I found many people who welcomed us and they were friendly and very cooperative. They even told us where the Germans had set up their defense positions. Yes, there was fraternization and that rule lasted even after the war ended, although it was ignored after that, but it was still in effect. I know of no one convicted of fraternization. Our time was spent in trying to build a new nation of freedom and democracy for the German people and time has proven our effort.

The court martial of Pfc. Blunt was just a symbol of the Army's intent of controlling its soldiers and showing no regard or compassion for the German residents. I hope that the officer who reported him is no longer in our service and he regrets his action!

Our troops finally brought peace to Europe for many years, but the Russians then continued their controversy in the Balkans. And in many parts of our world there were and still are conflicts going on.

When will people learn to respect the opinions, religious beliefs and ethnic heritage of others? I hope I live to see that day, but I just don't see it in our future! We have lived through two terrible and costly wars with a great cost of lives lost. What does the future hold for our descendants? Hopefully, it will be a century of peace for everyone!

(EDITOR'S NOTE: LeVerne wrote this letter before September 11th. Unfortunately LeVerne, it looks like your hope for peace in this century has been shattered! Let's hope the spirit of America can once again restore some sort of order to the world in these most difficult times.)

Editor's Note: Once again, we really had a great deal of material submitted for this bulletin. It is amazing to me, that as our members get older, they write even more. Guess we all have more time on our hands. If you did not see your article in this bulletin, it will appear in another issue of bulletin. Thank you for your patience. We love receiving your articles, stories and pictures.

Russian VIP Treatment

Submitted by: **William Beswick**
Company B, 661st Tank Destroyers
P.O. Box 576
West Point, Virginia 23181-0576

Recently I received a phone call and I would like to share the results with you. It is all true and I am not trying to pull your chain:

May 1st, 2001 I received a phone call from the Russian Embassy, in Washington, D.C. It was the First Secretary and he asked me if I could go to Russia. My response was "Yes." His next question was, "Will you go?" Again my response was "Yes." Now it was my turn to ask a question. I asked him, "What's it going to cost me?" He replied, "NOTHING." I then told him that I would go, if I would have time to look up a couple of old friends of mine, being General Alexander Olshanski and Vlodya Surovtsev. He replied, "Yes, that can be arranged." I then asked what was the occasion. He said, "You have been invited by President Vladimir Putin of Russia." I had been selected by the Russian War Veterans Committee, to come celebrate and observe the MAY DAY FESTIVITIES in MOSCOW on May 8th and 9th, 2001, which was the 56th Anniversary of the ending of World War II with Germany.

I asked the Russian First Secretary if this was true, or was one of my friends trying to pull a joke on me. With his best Russian accent, he assured me that it was official. He was to inform me later that he would make all plane reservations and purchase my tickets for me. The next day he called and said I would need a Russian Visa. I had to go to Washington, D.C. to obtain it. He said on my arrival at the Consulate, that I would be placed first in line behind whoever was in line at the time. The Visa cost about fifty or sixty dollars. They paid for it. My arrival time at the consulate was about ten fifteen o'clock. The clerk asked me if I could return and pick it up at 2:30 p.m. I told him of my conversation with the Embassy First Secretary. Then the clerk looked at the papers and saw where the invite came from and immediately went to work on them. Then one of the consulate officials brought and presented my paperwork to me in twenty minutes and told me there was no cost to me. They normally slip it to you through a slot in the window.

After all this, I packed my clothes and drove to Washington-Reagan National Airport in Alexandria. Sure enough my airplane ticket to Moscow was there waiting for me. I boarded the plane, which ended up only about two thirds full. It was a nine hour flight and eight hours difference in time zones. You gain time on your body and it is physically hard on you. Of course, you gain this time back on your return and it's harder on your body than before. So far, I am just getting myself adjusted after about six days. I never get out of bed before about nine o'clock in the morning,



President Vladimir Putin of Russia with Bill Beswick

but since my return home, I am ready to get up about four thirty in the morning.

I had a brief conversation with a woman on the plane, but I was trying to get some sleep before the plane landed in Moscow. For some foolish reason or other, all overseas flights leave the States between 6 p.m. and 11 p.m. at night.

Anyhow, on arrival at Moscow, as we were departing the plane, a message came over the plane's speaker "Mr. William Beswick, check with the Personnel Officer on the plane." When I did, he told me that some escorts were waiting for me. There were three hefty Russian soldiers in my sight. The Personnel Officer made a motion that I was their person. They came toward me, one took my carry-on bag and the other two, each took an arm and escorted me to a waiting car. (I still wonder what the people on the plane thought, I guess they were wondering what I had done wrong). But, it was the beginning of some very interesting days. Everyone should experience a few days like that.

I was taken to the Presidents Hotel (in name only), a five star hotel and escorted to my extremely fine room, on the fifth floor overlooking Moscow. After hanging up my clothes, I went to the hotel lobby, just to look around and to retrieve my Russian Visa. The lobby was fairly deserted and was to remain so for the balance of my visit. While sitting there, the Colonel in charge came over to speak, trying to find out if I was the American, as I was the only American to be invited. He did not speak English, nor do I speak Russian. But, he finally said "Americanski," then I knew what he was trying to say.

Very soon, three fine looking young men, dressed in suits came into the hotel and sat nearby. The man in charge, Colonel Lateepov, brought one of them over to

(Continued on Page 18)

RUSSIAN VIP TREATMENT

(Continued from Page 17)

meet me and I was informed that he would be my escort and interpreter during my stay. The next thing that was done was to assign me a car and driver, who was at my beck and call the entire time.

On the day of my arrival, my escort asked me where I would like to visit first. Since a friend asked me to bring back a photo of Red Square, that's where we went. It is still a fabulous place. In the last two or three years, an underground mall has been built just before you enter Red Square. My interpreter had never been there. His name was Andryea and he was a lieutenant in the Russian Army. He stated that he would love to go there, as he had never been there. I took a few photos of Red Square.

The next morning, May 7th, 2001, we were to visit the Russian World War II Unknown Soldiers Tomb, where President Putin placed a very large wreath and each of us World War II Veterans (twenty three of us) placed two red carnations. Prior to placing the wreath and flowers, President Putin came to our group of World War II Veterans and shook hands with each of us and welcomed each of us to the Honored Memorial sight. There were twenty three World War II Veterans. I was the only American Veteran invited. One Englishman, one Belerussian, one Ukrainian, two Frenchmen, one Bulgarian and the balance from all over Russia and Siberia. Everyone was extremely nice and polite. Afterward we had lunch with President Putin, with a fabulous spread of food.

May 8th, 2001 was to be another interesting and eventful day. We visited the Kremlin and saw the Transfer of Colors from one Russian unit to another, with the Pomp and Ceremony that goes with it.

From there we went to the Presidium, where we had a seat posted with our name plates and were able to address President Putin and receive his response. I also addressed him - why should I not and lose this great opportunity. I then forgot to present him with three gifts that I had taken to present to him. Two more veterans addressed him and a lull came in the conversation, so I held my hand up to be recognized again and he did. I asked him if I could approach his chair, he said, "Yes." As I got up to go, he also got up and met me halfway I presented him with a pin that I designed and explained it to him. I then told him that we had our meeting with the Russian Soldiers on April 25th, 2000, which was our 55th Anniversary. He appeared to be pleased. I then presented him with a hat with West Point, VA with the town seal on it. I told him it was from my hometown. He seemed to be amused. Afterward, he escorted us to lunch, which was fabulous. I felt extremely pleased and proud as we went to eat and he motioned for me to come stand beside him. His deputy was beside him and he had him move, so I could be there. My!! What an honor for

me. I told him when I had a chance, that I would like to have my photo taken with him and he said sure. Shortly, someone came for him and I thought, "There goes my chance for a photo." But, he turned to me and said, "I'll be back." Sure enough, in about fifteen minutes he returned for a group photo. Then he sorted me out and said, "Let's get our photo," which we did.

This completed our day of celebration. Then Andryea said, "Let's go see your friend, retired General Alexander Olshanski." It was an enjoyable visit. Tomorrow was to be another full and complete day.

The group took a bus to Red Square and observed a true old fashioned Soviet parade in a new Russian tradition. We saw the marching and parade of the Russian troops, the passing of the colors and the exercise of the bands. Then we heard President Putin's address to the crowd. To be admitted to Red Square, a pass was required. I would not give up mine, I kept it. The Minister of Defense was in one car and his deputy was in a similar car passed in review of the President, and stopped at each of the Army Battalions on Red Square. I guess there was about forty thousand people present.

I had my name tag on and a man stopped and recognized me as an American. We talked and he asked me some questions, then introduced himself as being the Deputy Ambassador to Norway.

After the parade, we went toward the exit of Red Square, but were guided to a very large door that I had seen numerous times before and found myself in a different part of the Kremlin that I had not seen before. I followed the crowd, arriving at a great hall. A pass was required and again, I would not relinquish my

(Continued on Page 19)



Vladimir Putin shaking hands with Bill Beswick

RUSSIAN VIP TREATMENT

(Continued from Page 18)

pass. The guard was not going to permit me to enter, but Colonel Lateepov saw this and gave the guard the dickens. (Boy, could he get steamed up in a hurry) because he was not going to let me in. Anyhow I kept my pass as a souvenir.

I entered the largest auditorium that I had ever seen. There was forty or fifty thousand people present. We were presented with a concert based on the events of World War II and it was very well presented. My assigned seat was in the forth row center.

After the concert, we went to dinner in an extremely large hall. I was assigned to table number eight, up front near the presidential podium. President Putin gave an address, then he came to shake hands at our table first. He certainly was showing his support and recognition to all World War II Veterans. There was a magnificent spread of all types of food. My, how fabulous.

Later that evening around 8:30 p.m. all of the invited veterans had a late night dinner at the hotel that had been planned by Colonel Lateepov, the colonel in charge.

That was the end of my participation of the activities in Moscow, Russia. The following day I was escorted back to the airport by the driver, one soldier and the young man that had been my escort and translator. He was a fine young man, very polite and courteous.

German Youth visit U.S.

Submitted by: **William Beswick**

During several visits to Europe and Germany, me and my wife **Jo** had the pleasure of meeting a number of Germany's young ladies and corresponded with them for several years. They were from Torgau and it's environs.

During the correspondence, they expressed their desire to come to America, so Jo and I talked it over and decided to invite them after we had dinner with them and their parents on our trip to Torgau in the year 2000. The young ladies readily accepted the invite, which proved to be delightful and interesting. Members of the 69th also met them.

Our first visit was with two of the girls we met. They were Konstanze Albrecht, who is studying psychology at the University of Leipsig and Jana Richter who was studying Public Relations and has since graduated. They visited with us for three weeks in August and we took them to Busch Gardens, Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia, Tangier Island, Virginia Beach, Washington D.C., Skyline Drive, and the mountains of Virginia. They visited two nights with **Bill** and **Ellen Snidow**, then off to West Virginia and the West Virginia State Fair. Then they returned to West Point.

The second two young ladies, Kerstin and Beate Koehler are sisters and could only visit for two weeks in October. Kerstin was studying Hotel Management,

has completed her studies and is employed at a hotel in Leipsig. Beate is a first assistant Chemist in Gottenberg, Germany. We also took them to the previous places we had taken Konstanze and Jana.

The final two days of Kerstin's and Beate's visit, Herbert and Edith Schedina, son Peter and another friend Karl-Heinz Lange, all of Torgau, had been visiting the Washington D.C. area, and parts of Virginia and **Bill** and **Ellen Snidow**. They came to West Point accompanied by Bill and Ellen. We took them to visit Chelsea Plantation, the Museum at Fort Eustis and a cruise on a schooner in and around the Chesapeake Bay.

The four young ladies must have enjoyed their visit, because they did not want to go home to Germany. They are welcome again.

Now if you don't think it will make you feel young again, try it. It will also tire you out. I must make it clear now. If it had not been for our granddaughter Christie Craft, our grandson Michael Blake and two young neighbors, Jessica and Megan Nicholas, I don't know how we would have made it. We have not had teenagers staying any length of time for over twenty five years. It is a different lifestyle. If you don't believe it, try it.



*Jana Richter, Jo Beswick,
Konstanze Albrecht and Bill Beswick*



Beate Koehler, Jo Beswick and Kerstin Koehler

Activities of the 69th Infantry Division Memorial Fund

Submitted by: **Dillard M. Powell**

Attorney at Law

Anti-Tank Company, 271st Infantry Regiment

203 New Edition Court, Cary, North Carolina 27511

Telephone: 919/467-6327

The 69th Infantry Division Memorial Fund, Incorporated, a North Carolina non-profit corporation, was organized pursuant to a Motion approved at the General Membership Meeting of the 69th Infantry Division Association on September 21, 1991, at the Biloxi Reunion. The objectives were to provide funding for the erection and maintenance of Link-Up Memorials at Strehla and Torgau, Germany, Camp Shelby, Mississippi Museum, and other locations, honoring members of the 69th Infantry Division for their distinguished service in World War II.

The Strehla, Germany Link-Up Memorial was designed by **Sam Lewis**, (B Co., 273rd Inf.), Mayor Haberland of Strehla and Vladimir Surovtsev, a Russian sculptor, after consultation with **Bill Beswick**. It features a three flag pole design by **Sam Lewis** flying United States, German and Russian flags. A 7x21 foot wall mounted bronze sculpture designed by Vladimir Surovtsev features Pegasus the Flying Horse symbolizing that it came down from the Heavens to carry the "Fallen Heroes" back to the Heavens for eternity. On the wall adjacent to the Surovtsev sculpture is a bronze plaque, provided by the President's 50th Anniversary of World War II Committee from the United States, describing the Link-Up event in English, Russian and German languages. The Memorial is located on the West bank of the Elbe River at Strehla, Germany on the site of the April 25, 1945 first meeting of Allied and Soviet forces. The 69th patrol was commanded by **Lt. Albert Kotzebue** of G Co., 273rd Inf., and the Soviets by Sgt. Alexander Olshanski, of the U.S.S.R. 58th Guards Division, 1st Ukrainian Front. They toasted each other from Olshanski's canteen, which he recently donated to the President Bush Library, and is now on display in the Bush Library on the campus of Texas A.&M. University, College Station, Texas. The funding for this Memorial was provided by the Soviet War Veterans Committee, 69th Infantry Division Memorial Fund, Inc., Texas A. & M. Alumni and Vladimir Surovtsev.

The Torgau, Germany Link-Up Memorial was designed by the Officers and Directors of the 69th Infantry Division Memorial Fund, Incorporated. It is located on the East bank of the Elbe River, adjacent to the blown out bridge on which **Lt. William "Bill" Robertson**, Hq. Co., 1st Bn., 273rd Inf., and Lt. Alexander Silvasenko, of U.S.S.R. 58th Guards Division, 1st Ukrainian Front met on April 25, 1945. The Memorial features three flag poles, located in a triangular fashion, flying United States, German and



The Officers and Board of Directors of the 69th Infantry Division Memorial Fund, Incorporated, pictured above, left to right, are Dillard M. Powell, Vice President and Secretary (A.T. Co., 271st Inf.) Cary, North Carolina; William R. "Bill" Beswick, President (B Co., 661 T.D. Bn.) West Point, Virginia, and Edgar A. "Bud" Parsons, Vice President and Treasurer (A Co., 272nd Inf.) Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

Russian flags. Located at the base of each flag pole is a stone monument from the 1945 Elbe River bridge on which the Link-Up occurred. Bronze engraved plaques, one in English, one in German, and one in Russian are mounted on the stone monuments with the following inscription:

SPIRIT OF THE ELBE

The World War II Link-Up of Allied and Soviet Forces occurred here April 25, 1945, with units of the United States 69th Infantry Division, and U.S.S.R. 58th Guards Division, 1st Ukrainian Front.

This resulted in creating the "SPIRIT OF THE ELBE" dedicated to the peoples of all nations resolving their differences without war, and should be an eternal beacon to light the future courses of all Nations working together for the mutual benefit of all people.

Erected in gratitude to the peoples of the Elbe River area for their kindness and friendship, by the 69th Infantry Division Memorial Fund, Inc. and Soviet Elbe River veterans.

Dedicated June 12, 1998

The Funds for the Torgau Link-Up Memorial were provided exclusively by the 69th Infantry Division Memorial Fund, Incorporated.

Vladimir Surovtsev, the Russian Sculptor from Moscow, prepared two one-third scale, bronze statues of an American and Soviet soldier to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Link-Up of the 69th Infantry Division and 58th Guards Division. The Officers and Directors of the 69th Memorial Fund presented these statues to former President George Bush and is on display in the Bush Presidential Library and the other was presented to Russian President Boris Yeltsin at a ceremony in the Kremlin.

(Continued on Page 21)

69th INFANTRY DIVISION MEMORIAL FUND (Continued from Page 20)

All funds received by the 69th Infantry Division Memorial Fund, Incorporated were used exclusively for the Strehla and Torgau Link-Up Memorials and to purchase a plaque for the Camp Shelby, Mississippi Museum, honoring the members of the 69th Infantry Division, and attached units.

The Officers and Directors of the 69th Infantry Division Memorial Fund, Incorporated paid all administrative expenses, including the expenses for their numerous trips to Germany, Russia and within the United States, from their own personal funds, and no Memorial Funds were used for those purposes.

The Officers and Directors of the 69th Infantry Division Memorial Fund, Incorporated wish to express their thanks and appreciation to the members of the 69th Infantry Division for their donations and to **Ed Lucci**, CPA, (A Co., 273rd Inf.), for his annual audit of the Memorial Fund books.

These Link-Up Memorials should be a lasting tribute to the members of the 69th Infantry Division; properly commemorate their place in history, and should be honored and appreciated by future generations.

The remaining objectives of the Memorial Fund are to provide replacement flags, and funds for the perpetual maintenance of the Strehla and Torgau Memorial.

A Short Story of Life

(Anecdotes of World War II)

Written By: **Corporal Seymour F. Kuvin**

Company H, 271st Infantry Regiment

49 Clarkson Drive, Toms River, New Jersey 08753

We are talking about a heavy weapons company (81 mm mortars and water-cooled machine guns). I was a squad leader for eight men and carried the sites and bi-pod, and six shells (three front and three back) hand pack, canteen, dinnerware, and a pistol (.45 caliber). Here is an 18-year-old kid weighing in at 140 lbs. trying to command a Squad. Number 2 carried the tube - Number 3 was baseplate man. The others were ammunition carriers, but the others had a carbine. It shoots better. The pistol was a joke, but I did qualify with it at the range.

I learned why it was called "The Infantry." The reason was because that's where you learned to walk - in infan(cy)try I walked and walked, except for a few times we rode in the truck. I actually learned to drive in the Infantry, but I'll tell you about that later. There were trucks around, but most of the time we walked.

As a matter of fact, we had a jeep, and a truck, and a trailer assigned to our Squad. I rarely sought it out. It was usurped by the Platoon for various transportation reasons. This time, however, we had it in our possession. Most of us rode into town atop the jeep. On the road we had discovered a cache of three star Hennessy Cognac marked "Fur Deutsche Wehrmacht" and it was loaded on the truck. The booze displaced a few shells, but we had a great supply and we could

always supply our company (sure!). Anyhow, we parked the jeep and trailer (tarp concealed the booze). That night, the Germans pulled an air raid. "By the bombs early light-" through the noise and the clatter one could hear the platoon sergeant lying under the jeep trailer shouting, "Lie on your backs and open your mouths - Don't let this stuff go to waste." Shell fragments had struck the cache and the trailer and it was dripping through the trailer floor. Many of the personnel were well under the influence and I'm afraid the German raid had a negative effect. Did you ever see cognac in the gutters of the street? It was a bit of levity alleviating the misery of serving in this active Infantry.

Murder, He Wrote: Let me skip for a moment to a severe depression I suffered when I was released from Service. I did nothing but sit at home all day long. My mother told me to do something work, school, etc. and psychiatrists weren't in fashion then; so I had no benefit from that end. Actually, I had killed two German youths - I plain stabbed them with my bayonet when I confronted them in the fields. They kill you, or you kill them was the rule. However, they were only teenage kids and I had to be the one that killed them. They stuck in my mind (and even still do).

So my mother gave me the ultimatum and got me a job with the Newark Police Department as assistant chemist. I made casts of footprints; tested panties for semen; put shattered headlight fragments together; checked hamburgers for horsemeat; and on and on. I didn't like working, so I went back to college and went on to graduate medical school, and here I am.

When you look back on it, War is simply legalized murder. The guys on your team are the good guys. The guys on the other team are the bad guys. Get them before they get you - put in the Infantry, you had to walk there.

The Service Did a Lot For Me, Though: Growing up, the Service did a lot for me, though. I learned independence; how to solve problems; how to get along with others; and all of the properties of manhood. However, it was a hard way to learn. I graduated from Mama's boy to a grown-up through the war years. There is no need to describe them here to other fighting men. You all know what it was like. Let us pray, however, that it will not happen too often, as it has in subsequent wars. I have often said in the recent Bush-Gore fiasco in Florida, "Thank God that there was a collection of attorneys rather than guns."

About That Driving: I was only 17 when I enlisted. I never drove nor had a license. One day I was ordered to drive a truck in a convoy from Kassel to Paris. I tried to protest that I didn't know how. My sergeant ordered me to drive, no matter what. Who knew from double clutching - eight speeds forward - several reverses. Anyway, I drove. I started in first gear, and after some hours managed to get into second. Needless to say, by the time we arrived at our destination, I needed a new transmission. They put me in the carburetor shop after that. I knew nothing about mechanics, but after a time I knew how to replace carburetors. Soooo, every truck that came into my shop got a new carburetor - I couldn't fix the old one.

On the Lighter Side . . .

Submitted by: **Steve T. Lenkevich**

Cannon Company, 273rd Infantry Regiment

1723 Warren Street

New Cumberland, Pennsylvania 17070

Telephone: 717/774-6665

As the 273rd Cannon Company of the 69th Division entered the beautiful city of Weissenfels, **Captain Negley**, Company Commander, approached me and said, "Come with me." It was a nice day as we walked down Main Street, when we approached a barber shop and entered it. The two German barbers snapped to attention. The captain instructed them to leave, but not to take their barber tools with them. The barbers objected to leaving their tools there, but they obeyed the command. Yes, I was the company barber.

The captain sat in the barber chair, and I proceeded to cut his hair. Many GIs came to get their hair cut that day, and it was not long before they found a storage room full of three or four star cognac. In order to get to the storage room, they had to go through the barber shop, down the basement steps, through a tunnel under the main street, and into a very large storage room. The GIs came up with bottles of cognac, and sat in the barber's chair with a bottle in each hand. As I was cutting their hair, I nipped at their bottles. It wasn't long afterward that we got daring. As the barber, I would ask what kind of haircut they wanted. The GIs would say a pony tail, bald head, crown bowl, crosses, or even X's, anything imaginable. So that is the style they got. We got so drunk that we could not make it out of the shop.

That night we laid on the floor and slept it off, with hair, spilled cognac, vomit, blood, and glass from broken mirrors all around us. We awoke to a shrieking whistle, and a call, "Let's Go!" It was about 5:00 a.m. We were all sick, had headaches, stomachaches, and hangovers. As we were walking into the breaking of

daylight, the GIs began giving me dirty looks as they took off their helmets and looked at each other. I figured I was in big trouble. But, it all ended up as a big joke and everyone laughed. Nobody cut my hair.

If anyone relates to this story, I would like to hear from you.



One of the destroyed German fighters at the Polenz Air Field. Apparently, the surrounding camouflage didn't work too well.

**NEWS MATERIAL AND PICTURES
FOR THE BULLETIN SHOULD BE MAILED TO:**

DOTTIE WITZLEB

FIGHTING 69th BULLETIN, P.O. Box 69, Champion, Pennsylvania 15622-0069

**ADDRESS CHANGES, NEW MEN AND TAPS SHOULD BE
MAILED TO OUR**

NEW MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN

PAUL SHADLE

1504 Greensburg Road, New Kensington, Pennsylvania 15068

DUES SHOULD BE SENT TO OUR TREASURER:

JANE MATLACH, P.O. Box 474, West Islip, New York 11795-0474

DO NOT SEND DUES TO DOTTIE OR PAUL!!

DUES GO TO OUR TREASURER ONLY.

Neil D. Johnson writes...

*Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion,
A&P Platoon, 272nd Infantry Regiment
2439 Middlesex Road, Columbus, Ohio 43220
E-mail: njohnson@infinet.com*

I first discovered the 69th website last March and I have yet to find any of my old buddies listed on it, and I check it every day. I have found a lot of interesting material on the site. I have been in contact via e-mail with **Joe Lipsius** on many occasions and am quite impressed with the job he has done with the website. I made a small financial contribution to help support the website. I also sent Joe a contribution for the bricks he wanted to order and I coordinated the purchase I made of a memorial brick for the Camp Shelby Museum with Joe because I wanted to make sure there were no duplications of names, etc.

In the last issue of the Bulletin, my name was mentioned as being a newly located veteran of the 69th. Shortly after I received the Bulletin, I got a telephone call from one of my old platoon buddies. It turns out he lives in a small town about forty miles from Columbus and comes here for specialty medical care. Shortly after the call we got together at one of the local malls here in Columbus for a nice long visit. We plan to stay in contact.

My kids have been after me to write about some of my experiences during WWII. I have been rather hesitant to do so as I have learned that veterans have the tendency to either embellish or downplay their stories. I have often wondered how many of the things I remember are from actual fact, or are from my dreams or stories I have heard or seen on the media. Some times it is confusing. I have written about some of my experiences that I have no doubt about, but I decided not to share them with my kids at this time. They can read them after I am gone. However, after reading several articles in the last Bulletin, I decided I would like to share one of my writings with your readers of the 69th Bulletin.

The SS Santa Maria

The SS Santa Maria (yes, that was it's real name) was a converted freighter used to transport troops to England. I have no idea what it carried on its return trip from England, but from the condition of the ship, it must have been something that caused it to smell - of what I had no idea, it just stunk. Out of our Regiment we were the only Battalion on board, plus the Anti-Tank Company. It was very crowded to say the least. I was on board this bucket of s--- for eighteen days, and at the time it was the worst days of my army duty. I was always cold, wet, dirty, half sick and hungry, not unlike combat conditions, so perhaps it prepared me for being shot at as I could always remember how miserable I was on the SS Santa Maria.

Apparently there was not ample time to properly re-supply the ship before we sailed from the New York harbor. Food rationing began about five days after

leaving the harbor. Rationing was achieved by reducing the serving sizes a little each day. By the time we docked at Southampton, England we were down to two meager meals a day. Needless to say, we were all very hungry, at least the enlisted men were. I am not sure about the officers as they had their own mess.

The evening of the first night in port we were issued three boxes of K-rations, breakfast, lunch and dinner. These rations were packed in wax coated and sealed boxes approximately 2"x4"x6." We were given strict orders not to eat any of the rations until we were told. Seems the powers-to-be had no idea when we would be departing the ship for quarters in England, nor where or when our next meal would be. Issuing these rations to us was like putting food down in front of a starving dog and telling him not to eat.

When I went up on deck the next morning all I could see were hundreds of empty wax coated K-ration boxes floating on top of the water all over the Southampton harbor. So much for a "strict order." We disembarked later that morning and boarded a train for Winchester, about twenty-five miles south to a quonset hut type English camp; complete with elongated burlap sacks stuffed with straw for mattresses and an out-house latrine.

The next day we were ordered to report to the supply room at 1000 hours and turn in the K-rations we had been issued on board ship. I had eaten two of the three and I could see no point turning in the last one since I reasoned that no matter how many I had eaten, I still had disobeyed an order; so I did not report to the supply room with my one remaining ration. One of my buddies had only eaten one, so he was going to turn in the other two. I tried to tell him it would not make a difference, but he took them to the supply room anyway. I was a lowly Private at the time. It turns out that the only enlisted men that had not eaten any of the rations were the First Sergeant, the Mess Sergeant and the Supply Sergeant. All the rest of us were guilty of disobeying a direct order.

That evening the Company Commander called a meeting in the mess hall where we were informed that all enlisted men who had disobeyed the K-ration order would be reduced to the rank of Private, and the Privates who had disobeyed the order would serve seven days of hard labor starting tomorrow morning at 0600, including my buddy who had turned in two.

The next morning at 0600 we boarded trucks and were driven to the Winchester rail yard where we spent the day unloading coal cars from the train onto trucks. The English coal was not of the lump variety, it was like crushed gravel so we had to use large scoop shovels to do the unloading, etc. Shortly after 6:00 p.m. we got back on the trucks and returned to camp. A twelve hour work day was considered hard labor. We did this for four straight days.

On the evening of the fourth day the C.O. called a Company meeting in the mess hall. He and the other Company officers informed us that the Regimental

(Continued on Page 24)

THE S.S. SANTA MARIA

(Continued from Page 23)

Commander had decided to rescind the order and restore all enlisted personnel to their former rank. We were going into combat very soon and the Regimental C.O. had decided this episode had been very bad for morale. In other words, all was forgiven. However my 6'4" Texas buddy stood up and told the C.O. "This was all fine and dandy for the non-coms but how was he going to make up for the Privates having just spent four days at hard labor?"

The officers were rather surprised about this question as apparently they had not anticipated it, or even given it any thought; so they got their heads together and after a short period of time, they came up with an answer. It seems there were going to be a limited number of three day passes to London and they agreed the Privates would be the first on the rotation list, which meant with any kind of luck, we would get more than one weekend pass. I did get two, and an extra day.

My brother, who was a 1st lieutenant in the Air Force (B-17 pilot,) came down to camp one morning and requested the 2nd lieutenant duty officer to issue me a pass so I could go back with him to his air base for a visit as we had to be back on duty at 2200 hours. On our way up to his base, which was located north-east of London, we stopped in London and had a great time before going on to his base.

The first two London passes were the direct result of the hard labor detail; the third was a case of an Infantry 2nd lieutenant following military procedure and honoring a 1st lieutenant's request, even though he was an Air Force officer and not of his command. This showed me, for the first time, that the army commissioned officers were much more rank conscious than the enlisted men were.

Unit Histories Wanted

The Fighting 69th Infantry Division web site, www.69th-infantry-division.com, is seeking a loan of each unit history, except the infantry regiments, printed in Germany covering the unit's movement across Germany for use on the web site.

The web site already has copies of the infantry regiments.

This request includes the 461st AAA, 661st Tank Destroyers and the 777th Tank Battalion Artillery, Combat Engineers, Medical Detachment, Signal Corps, Recon Troop, Quartermaster, Ordnance, MP Platoon and other special units.

Before mailing your history, write to:

Joe Lipsius

6314 Deerings Hollow
Norcross, Georgia 30092-1800
annejoelip@earthlink.net

to see if a copy has been offered for use. Histories will be returned immediately intact in the same condition as received.

"POP"

Written by: **Robert Crowe**

Company E, 273rd Infantry

14 Beaver Brook Road

Burlington, Massachusetts 01803

On 28, February, 1945 E Company, 273rd Infantry made its first attack on a German village.

This village, Rescheid, was approximately one mile east of our position in the Siegfried Line. The last 800 yards before the village was low rolling cleared farmland with scattered tree branch type fencing. The attack, scheduled for noontime, was changed to 11:30-11:45 a.m. with the first and second platoons on line and the third platoon following in support. The company entered the village, cleared it and set up defensive positions on the east side. A head count was taken and some men were missing. A patrol was formed to go back over the attacking area. I was a member of that patrol.

We spread out and began walking west toward the jump off point. Being cleared farmland, there were few if any objects that needed to be checked, but off to my right front there was a small mound that seemed to be out of place. As I approached I saw that it was a man. He was perched on his toes and knees while his head and shoulders were flat on the ground. I knelt down next to him, touched and spoke to him - there was no response. I gently rolled him onto his left side and looked into his face. It was "Pop."

I first met Pop on the troop ship Ill de France that sailed from Boston in mid-January, 1945. The ship left the harbor, turned south and somewhere down the east coast turned east toward Africa. Later it turned north and eventually northwest around the west coast of Ireland. As we approached Ireland the troops were not allowed on the open decks. My replacement company was given the duty to guard all openings onto the open decks. As an acting squad leader, I had to go from place to place checking on the assigned men there. At one sheltered place I stopped to talk with the guard stationed there. He was an older man.

I guess all outfits had a man who was or could be called "Pop." Whether he was 25, 30 or 35. He looked old to us 18-20 year old kids. This "pop" had been draft deferred for some reason I cannot recall. The only family he had was a son who was a bomber pilot flying out of England toward Germany. He gave up his deferment because, as he said, "Why should I be safe when my son was in danger." We spoke for a while longer then I said 'goodbye' as I moved on to the next station.

Six weeks later as I knelt there I looked at his dog tags, copied his name and serial number, covered him with his poncho and performed the ritual of the bayonet tipped rifle stuck in the ground with his helmet on top of it.

I stood there and for the last time said goodbye to "Pop," **Pvt. Charles B. LaGrone**, and then said a prayer.

Annual Meeting of Officers and Board of Directors

69TH INFANTRY DIVISION ASSN.

SEPTEMBER 13TH, 2001

DRAWBRIDGE INN

FORT MITCHELL, KENTUCKY

Call to order: President **Harold Ruck** called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. The invocation was given by **Chaplain Snidow** and the Pledge of Allegiance was made by the entire group.

Secretary's Report: Secretary **Goebel** said that the minutes of the annual meeting of August 31st, 2000 had been published in the Bulletin for January-February-March-April 2001. Motion was made and seconded that the minutes be accepted. Motion carried. Secretary **Goebel** reported that a rose and a flag were placed on each of the overseas graves of our 69th Infantry Division comrades on April 25, 2001. A total of 159 graves were decorated at a cost of \$3 per grave. Thus the total cost for the year was \$477. There is a balance of \$204.68 remaining in the flower fund account.

Report of two-man committee: At the Annual Meeting of Officers and Board of Directors held on August 31st, 2000 President **Ruck** appointed Secretary **Goebel** and **Bill Sheavly** to be members of a two-man committee to look into the possibility of a single floral piece at each cemetery in place of individual grave decorations. The Committee recommended the following:

1. *Our fallen comrades who are buried overseas should be honored on Memorial Day in place of on April 25th. With the change of date our comrades will be paid homage, along with other soldiers, with a color guard and the playing of taps. (See Note at completion of recommendation)*
2. *Instead of placing a flower and a flag on each grave, a floral wreath would be displayed in a prominent place at each of the two principal cemeteries, namely Henri-Chapelle and Netherlands American. This is especially appropriate now that it is unlikely that any 69th groups will be visiting these two cemeteries again in the future. A flower would continue to be placed on the one grave in Ardennes American and the one grave in Cambridge American.*
3. *A trust fund should be established to ensure the honoring of our fallen comrades long after the Fighting 69th Infantry Division Association ceases to exist. At the present time costs are \$477 per year (159 graves at \$3 each). With the use of wreaths at the two principal cemeteries, costs will drop to around \$180 per year. The committee suggests starting the trust fund with*

an initial deposit of \$5,000 subject to further refinement by taking into consideration the level of interest rates likely to be credited and inflation.

Initially floral wreaths could have ribbons recognizing the 69th with the display refined in future years using plaques or medallions, costs of which are not known but, hopefully, such one-time costs would not be more than \$100 at each of the two principal cemeteries.

(Note for item 1 above: On September 20, 2001 **Bill Sheavly** received a letter from an official of the Henri-Chappelle Cemetery in which he stated that, on Memorial Day 2001, 74 wreaths were laid on behalf of various groups On Memorial Day, as a matter of course, an American and Belgian flag are placed on each grave. They do not place or order flowers for every grave on Memorial Day.)

Then an extensive discussion ensued. There was a great deal of opposition to taking roughly \$5,000 out of the Association's treasury at this time in order to establish a trust fund in perpetuity with the American Battle Monuments Commission. There also seemed to be a leaning toward keeping the April 25th date, although a formal vote was not taken. On the other hand, there did seem to be an inclination toward use of wreaths instead of flowers at the two principal cemeteries, but no formal vote was taken. However, **Bill Matlach** was of the impression that on Memorial Day flowers were placed on all the graves at no cost. This matter should be investigated. The committee was asked to submit an expanded report to the members of the board prior to the next meeting.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer **William Matlach** submitted three reports. The first report covered the period January 1, 2000 to December 31, 2000. It showed receipts of \$88,145.30 and disbursements of \$116,387.12 for a net of -\$28,241.82. The large negative net change is due to two things: Donations of \$5,000 each to the Camp Shelby Museum and The World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C. and the deficit incurred at the Atlanta Meeting where receipts were \$49,445.88 and disbursements were \$68,296.61 for a shortfall of nearly \$19,000. At Atlanta attendance was below expectations and we did not meet the minimum requirements in our contract with the hotel. In addition, the hotel made rather heavy charges for hospitality room supplies. The second report covered the period January 1, 2001 to August 31, 2001. Receipts were \$76,179.90 and disbursements were \$41,962.79. The Treasurer also referred to the terrorism attack of September 11. He said that a number of reservations might not be picked up, leading to a substantial deficit for this reunion. The third report was a compilation of yearly financials for the years 1994 through 2000. The last line for each year gives the Total Resources as of December 31 of such year. Total Resources trend upward through December 31, 1997 and then begin a

(Continued on Page 26)

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

(Continued from Page 25)

decline, part of which was by design. **Treasurer Matlach** also pointed to the decline in our roster (year in parentheses) as follows: 5095 (1996), 4919 (1997), 4721 (1998), 4528 (1999) and 4343 (2000). All these financial reports become part of the minutes of this meeting. Motion was made and seconded to accept the reports as submitted. Motion carried.

Auditor's Report: Auditor Edward Lucci reported that he had examined the financial records and all funds were properly recorded. He also remarked that the Association is too charitable and can't afford to continue giving money away at the current (year 2000) rate. He said a trust fund would be out of the question considering the current state of our finances. Motion was made and seconded to accept the Auditor's Report. Motion carried.

Membership Report: Membership Chairman Bob Kurtzman reported that the membership roster which was 4,356 as of September 2000 is now 4,238. There have been 225 taps offset by 107 new members some of whom are wives, sons and daughters of deceased 69ers. Motion was made and seconded to accept the Membership Report.

President Ruck then reported that **Bob Kurtzman** had resigned his position of Membership Chairman for health reasons. **Paul Shadle** has been appointed to take his place.

President Ruck then noted the outstanding jobs that have been done by Treasurer **Bill Matlach**, Membership Chairman **Bob Kurtzman**, Bulletin Editor **Dottie Witzleb**, Reunion Chairman **Bob Pierce**. **Bob Pierce** received a rousing hand of applause for his work as Reunion Chairman.

Web Site: President Ruck then asked **Joe Lipsius** to report on the 69th's Web Site. **Joe Lipsius** asked for a show of hands of those who have used our web site. Less than one-half of those present had visited the Web Site. He said that he had explored the matter of using a laptop computer and visual aids at this meeting but the high costs involved made this impractical. The Web Site is a convenient resource and a meeting place in cyberspace for 69th veterans, their families and anyone who wants to find out about our great division - from wonderful old photos of Camp Shelby, a detailed combat narrative, a map of our route across Europe and a photo album of the scenes of the war to the latest about reunions and local events. One thing on a web site is a guest book. This is where people can sign in with their name and unit, etc. So far over 300 people have signed the guest book. He especially noted two 69th related individuals. The first is **Amy Rose**, daughter-in-law of **Major Morton Rose**, now deceased, who was the battalion surgeon of the 3rd battalion of the 273rd Infantry. She was looking for information

about her father-in-law and ended up agreeing to be the Web Site's assistant editor, putting to use her journalism experience. The other individual is **James K. Richardson** who was Communications Sergeant of Company B, 272nd Infantry. **Jim** came to the site last December seeking information on the 69th web site. He is a computer expert and he offered his talents to our site. It is due to his efforts that our site has been so expanded the past few months. At a future reunion **Joe suggested having a web site tour of three or four hours using rented equipment, the cost of which would be defrayed by charging a fee of, say \$8, to each participant.**

Nominating Committee: The Nominating Committee consists of Directors of the Class of 2001. Its Chairman, **Chet Yastrzemski**, presented the nominations:

Nominations for the Board of Directors, Class of 2004, are as follows:

- 271st Infantry **John Barrette**
- 272nd Infantry **Frederick Butenhoff**
- 273rd Infantry **James Brooks**
(added after meeting)
- 661st Tank Destroyers **William Snidow**
- 881st Field Artillery **George Vasil**

Nominations of Officers for two-year terms are as follows:

- President **Raymond Sansoucy**
- Vice President **William Ruebsamen**
- Treasurer **William R. Matlach**
- Secretary **Ralph H. Goebel**

The motion was made to accept the recommendations of the Nominating Committee. Motion carried. These will then be submitted for ratification at the Meeting of the General Membership.

The Secretary notes that the nominating committee in the year 2002 will consist of the members of the Directors of the class of 2002.

Other Items: President Ruck asked **Bob Pierce** to say a few words about his work on the Reunion. **Bob** said he was concerned about the real lack of support. He said he was unable to get much support from local members of the Association. He said the only people he has who are committed to work at the Hampton reunion are members of the permanent committee. He pleaded for those who will be attending the Hampton reunion to volunteer for work in the registration and hospitality rooms so that we will not have to hire paid help.

President Ruck asked **Bud Parsons** for a report. **Bud** said that back at the Biloxi convention the general membership authorized the formation of the 69th Infantry Division Memorial Fund. He said the following (not a verbatim quote):

The Fund was incorporated as a non-profit organization and we used our money to help the Soviet government to pay the by far overwhelming cost of the

(Continued on Page 27)

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

(Continued from Page 26)

Strehla memorial park and also for Torgau for a much smaller memorial park The fund is, frankly, looking forward to going out of business. We have very little money left. We feel, very strongly, that we have one remaining task to do and we are hopeful that the 69th Infantry Division Association, which up to this time has provided no funds of any kind (all our funds were raised voluntarily through solicitations primarily in the Bulletin), will take on the one task remaining which is to set up a fund, in perpetuity, so that a new American flag will be given to the town of Strehla and a second flag to Torgau. The German government flies our flag from April to October each year. We would like to have a brand-new flag supplied. Heretofore new flags have been supplied by the Memorial Fund but we are looking for the Fund to go out of business. We have explored with the Camp Shelby Museum to see if they would be willing to undertake that task of taking a chunk of money in perpetuity and each year sending flags to the two governments. The Museum had given an oral "OK" but it has not gone through its board of directors. Conversations with them have been exploratory without a commitment of any kind. We don't know where the chunk of money is coming from and the chunk of money we are talking about is essentially \$5,000.

President Ruck then asked **Bill Sheavly** to give a report on his son's project. **Bill** said his son did not realize how vast a project he had undertaken. He said his son is working very diligently to try to get it done. He has between 37 and 40 years of the Bulletin and you can visualize what is involved in reading various stories. He will read a story by **Joe Smith** and then along comes **Pete Jones'** story that should be put in front of that. There is a problem of trying to get this in continuity and he hopes by next year to be at the reunion in Hampton and have something in at least manuscript form. He appreciates everything that has been sent to him and if any one has any war stories, please send them off to him.

President Ruck said that **Bob Kurtzman** has a friend in Ohio who is a school teacher. She teaches in the middle class section. She has a project, as far as her class is concerned, of trying to find out what happened during World War II. She is interested in her children learning how soldiers were drafted, how they got into different units, what they did during the war, what they have done after the war. They want to put it all in writing and make a publication out of it. She asked him yesterday, by fax, if she could come here and attend our meetings with the idea of recruiting members of the 69th Infantry Division to be interviewed by her students. You would sign up giving your name, address and telephone number. Then students would

be in touch with you and ask you specific questions about what happened to you during this period of time. **President Ruck** then told the teacher that he would present it to the membership. Two of the school teachers will be at the Drawbridge Inn on Saturday morning and time will be given to them either before or after the General Meeting to make their presentation.

Bill Beswick said the following (not completely verbatim): *I received a telephone call on the morning of May 3 from the First Secretary of the Russian Embassy. He asked two questions: "Can you go to Russia?" and "Will you go?" Then it was my turn to ask a question: "Will I be able to see two friends that I have in Moscow? He said that will be arranged. One was the sculptor that did the work for us in Strehla and the other was the man who asked how I felt about building a memorial in Strehla about World War II. I did go to Russia. I enjoyed it. I asked how much is it going to cost me? He replied, "Nothing." They paid for my Russian visa, my transportation, meals. I met and dined with President Putin - lunch twice and dinner once. They think there is nothing like an American World War II veteran.*

Then **Bob Pierce** spoke about the souvenirs that are being lugged around. It was left in **Pierce's** hands to do something about getting rid of the combat infantry badge belt buckles.

There being no further business, **President Ruck** adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Ralph H. Goebel
Secretary

**Annual Meeting of
the General Membership
69TH INFANTRY DIVISION ASSN.
SEPTEMBER 15TH, 2001
DRAWBRIDGE INN
FORT MITCHELL, KENTUCKY**

Presentation prior to call to order of the Annual Meeting of the General Membership: At the Annual Meeting of Officers and Board of Directors held on September 13 everyone agreed that this presentation should not take place at the business session of the Annual Meeting of the General Membership - hence the timing. **President Ruck** introduced the subject by saying the following (not a verbatim quotation): *Bob Kurtzman has received information about a sixth grade class of 55 students that would like to start a project that involves the 69th Infantry Division. It could possibly involve all of us. We have here two teachers who would like to start a project where students would interview*

(Continued on Page 28)

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE GENERAL MEMBERSHIP

(Continued from Page 27)

some of us - one soldier, one student. The purpose is instructional for them to help the students and also to acquaint them with what went on with individuals during World War II. It also will help build patriotism within our younger generation. What they would like to do on a one-on-one basis is to ask you what you did before you were drafted or enlisted, secondly what happened to you while you were in the service, thirdly what did you do when you got out of the service. This would be very instructional to them and might be enlightening to you. The program is not going to stop there. The idea is to take the interviews with 55 veterans and write a script of what they have heard. They have already planned to come to our next reunion and put on a play for us.

President Ruck then asked the two lady teachers to give their specific ideas on how this would be handled. The one lady is Terry Baum Cartner of Massillon, Ohio. The other lady is Kathy Brand of Canton, Ohio. They said that they would like to match up one student with one soldier. Their presentation was an expanded version of what **President Ruck** had said. Then **President Ruck** asked for a show of hands from all those who were in favor of participating. The vast majority raised their hands. Then sheets of paper were passed around so that those interested in participating could furnish their names, addresses and telephone numbers.

Call to order: **President Ruck** called the meeting to order at about 9:30 a.m. Then **Chaplain Snidow** asked that the members observe a moment of silence in recognition of the tragedy that terrorism had caused. He then gave the invocation. The Pledge of Allegiance was made by the entire group.

President's Comments: **President Ruck** then commented about the empty chair at the dais. **Bill Matlach** is in the hospital. His wife, **Jane**, said that he has a blood clot affecting the area from his ankle to his hip. Hopefully he will be well enough to return home in a few days.

Secretary's Report: **Secretary Goebel** stated that the minutes for the Annual Meeting of the General Membership held on September 2, 2000 were published in the Bulletin for January-February-March-April 2001. Motion was made and seconded that the minutes be approved as published. Motion carried.

The Secretary then reported that a rose and a flag were placed on each of the overseas graves of our 69th Infantry Division comrades on April 25, 2001. A total of 159 graves were decorated at a cost of \$3 per grave. Thus the total cost for the year was \$477. There is a balance of \$204.68 remaining in the flower fund account.

President Ruck asked the first-timers to go to the microphone and give their names and unit. Several men came forward and introduced themselves and were given a round of applause.

Treasurer's Report: In the absence of **Treasurer Bill Matlach**, **Ed Lucci**, our Auditor submitted two reports. The first report covered the period January 1, 2000 to December 31, 2000. It showed receipts of \$88,145.30 and disbursements of \$116,387.12 for a net change of -\$28,241.82. The large negative net change is due to two things: Donations of \$5,000 each to Camp Shelby Museum and The World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C. and the deficit incurred at the Atlanta Meeting where receipts were \$49,445.88 and disbursements were \$68,296.61 for a short fall of nearly \$19,000. The second report covered the period January 1, 2001 to August 31, 2001. Receipts were \$76,179.90 and disbursements were \$41,962.79.

Auditor's Report: Then **Auditor Edward Lucci** reported that he had examined the financial records and that all funds were properly recorded. Then, motion was made and seconded to accept the Treasurer's Report. Motion carried.

Membership Report: **President Ruck** said that **Bob Kurtzman**, because of his physical condition, would no longer be able to function as Membership Chairman. He said that a presentation was made to **Bob** at the Early Bird Dinner since **Bob** had to return home early. **Paul Shadle** has agreed to take his place. He then mentioned a study that **Treasurer Matlach** had made of the decline in our membership over a period of years. The figures are as follows: 5095 (1996), 4919 (1997), 4721 (1998), 4528 (1999), and 4343 (2000). The latest figure is 4,269. The trend is definitely down.

Bulletin Report: **Bulletin Editor Dottie Witzleb** was attending the meeting of the Ladies Auxiliary. **President Ruck** commented on the great job she was doing as Editor. He says the Bulletin is the lifeline that really holds us together.

Legal Advisor's Report: None.

Nominating Committee Report: In calling for this report, **President Ruck** praised **Chet** for the exemplary work he and his committee had done. The Nominating Committee consists of Directors of the Class of 2001. Its Chairman, **Chet Yastrzemski**, presented the nominations:

Nominations for the Board of Directors, Class of 2004, are as follows:

271st Infantry	John Barrette
272nd Infantry	Frederick Butenhoff
273rd Infantry	James Brooks
	(added after meeting)
661st Tank Destroyers	William Snidow
881st Field Artillery	George Vasil

Nominations of Officers for two-year terms are as follows:

President	Raymond Sansoucy
Vice President	William Ruebsamen
Treasurer	William R. Matlach
Secretary	Ralph H. Goebel

(Continued on Page 29)

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE GENERAL MEMBERSHIP

(Continued from Page 28)

It was moved and seconded that nominations be closed. Motion carried. Motions were then made separately to accept the two sets of recommendations of the Nominating Committee. Motions carried.

Future Reunions: **Bob Pierce** mentioned the problems he is having dealing with cancellations due to the World Trade Center disaster on the one hand and the ability to accommodate late requests for the dinner dance on the other hand. He commented that if we did not have permanent people we would have no one to do the job. He said we were in a real bind for help. He had real problems staffing the hospitality room and the registration room. We really need "worker bees." If he doesn't get the help, he is going to have to turn it over to contract help. He did say that the Hampton Visitors Bureau would be able to provide help in the registration room. He said we have a great package in Hampton. The facilities are beautiful and the hotel dropped the price of the rooms to \$55 per night. The reunion will take place the first full week after Labor Day. He finished his comments by pointing out that in the past the selection of reunion sites has been the responsibility of the Vice President. He will need to talk to the new President and new Vice President to see how they wish to proceed. He said he is getting a lot of mailings from organizations that are trying to get our reunion in their localities. He specifically mentioned the city of St. Louis, Missouri and the D.C.-Baltimore area. He also said that if we contract out the entire management of a reunion we will be faced with huge costs. He closed by mentioning the meeting of the California-Western Chapter of the 69th Infantry Division that is slated to take place in Laughlin, Nevada from April 14-18, 2002. Room rates are \$24 per night! He said it is a beautiful area. All sixty-niners are invited.

Web Site: **Joe Lipsius** asked for hands to be raised by those who have visited the Web Site. Less than 50% had done so. He also said he had no success in getting equipment to demonstrate our Web Site at this reunion. He said our Web Site is a convenient source of information about the 69th Infantry Division. It contains photos of Camp Shelby, a detailed combat narrative, a map of the route across Europe, a photo album with scenes of the war, the latest of our reunions and local events, a membership form. It is all available to you on the Web Site. The Web Site is like a book. It has chapters and each chapter has pages. In addition, there is a guest book on the Web Site. You can scan the guest book or sign it. If you do not have a computer you can get help using a computer at the public library.

Jim Boris reported that there were 14 men and 2 ladies who participated in the golf tournament on a

challenging course. He repeated his recommendation from last year's reunion that all of us should go to our local VA hospital to get registered, even if we never take advantage of the benefits. He said we need to get ourselves registered in order to dissuade the powers that be in Washington from closing lesser-used VA hospitals.

New Business: **President Ruck** said that we had now finished with old business and were now going to new business. As the first item of new business, **President Ruck** asked **Secretary Goebel** to write a letter to **Bill Matlach** and tell him we are sorry about his illness and wish him the best.

As a second item of new business, **Bud Parsons** mentioned that at the Biloxi convention, about 10 years ago, the general membership had authorized the formation of the 69th Infantry Division Memorial Fund. That Fund was incorporated as a non-profit organization under the laws of the state of North Carolina. It was understood that no money from the 69th Infantry Division would be used to finance the Fund. However, use of the Bulletin was permitted to raise money. The efforts of that corporation were very successful. There is a memorial park at Strehla on the Elbe River which is the location of the first link-up. In the park is a very large mural supplied by the Soviet Union. Our fund provided a small portion of the amount necessary. Also there is a bronze plaque provided by the President of the United States. A duplicate of that bronze plaque is in the Camp Shelby Museum. A similar almost identical plaque is in the equivalent of the Arlington Cemetery in Moscow. There is also a memorial plaque in Arlington Cemetery. In addition, there are in Torgau three flag poles with appropriate plaques in the three languages. The two local municipalities of Torgau and Strehla will fly our flag each year from April to October. The fund raising activity has concluded and the bank account has been closed. However, we have one serious omission, namely to provide a fund for the flying of the American flag every year. Exploratory conversations with the Camp Shelby Museum have indicated that they would be willing to undertake the responsibility of replacing our flag each year for an amount on the order of \$5,000. He hopes some how we can get the \$5,000.

Bill Beswick reported on his trip to Russia this last May. Most of what he said can be found in the minutes of the Annual Meeting of Officers and Board of Directors dated September 13, 2001. The two friends in Moscow that he saw were General Olshansky who is in bad health with Parkinson's disease and the man who is the sculptor of the Strehla memorial.

Adjournment: There being no further business, **President Ruck** entertained a motion to adjourn. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Ralph H. Goebel
Secretary

Company C, 661st Tank Destroyers

Submitted By: **Charles H. Griffith**
 944 Somerset Street
 Gloucester City, New Jersey 08030-1857



Big mouth guy is me, Charles Griffith and driver Sam Weaver. Reason for open yap was I was singing about reaping when WWII ended. Yeah!



Left to right: Andersen, Griffith and Marchant. Photo taken in Bad New Haurer (we called it Bad Noon Hour). Must not cross the Rhine River with a dirty T.D. Might fall off pontoon bridge and muddy the water.



*Photo left:
 Tall guy on left - Chuck Yannul
 Middle man getting
 a haircut is Loflin.*

*On the right is Jukes Slopek.
 Two dead men (dead tired)
 are - nearest Len Marchant
 and driver Sam Weaver.*

*Bottom left: Charles Griffith
 pretending to be ferocious.
 (German tommy gun.)*

*Bottom right:
 Gun Commander Slopek
 Security men are
 Loflin (nearest) and
 Squinty (far side)*



Robert Banser writes . . .

12209 Tompkins Place, Crown Point Indiana 46307
Telephone: 219/662-7774

Son of **Richard O. Banser**

Company B, 273rd Infantry Regiment

13629 108th Drive, Sun City, Arizona 85351

Telephone: 623/972-8071 • E-Mail: robanser@aol.com

Dear Fellow 69ers:

My dad was drafted on May 3, 1943, and was one of the new troops for the newly created 69th Division. **Sgt. Richard O. Banser**, serial #35143143, was a mortar man of the 4th Platoon, 273rd Regiment, Co. B, 69th Division.

He was stationed at Camp Shelby, Mississippi, when the enclosed picture was taken (spring/summer, 1944). It intrigues me that after 57 years he can still recall most names. I have the original at home that he labeled for me this past summer. Although he served with the 1st Division, 16th Infantry in Europe, I think his fondest memories come from the 69th. He fought in the Huertzgen Forest and The Battle of the Bulge. His third wound on January 15, 1945 took him out of combat duty.

Since becoming a WWII re-enactor, I've been able to get more information out of him. But, like most of you, he keeps the war "locked away." I'm so proud of my dad and each and every one of you that served our country. God Bless America and God Bless You.

My mom (Margarette) and dad have been married 57 years. They have 5 children (I am number 5), 10 grandchildren, and 6 great grandchildren. They are retired and live in Sun City, Arizona.

Regretfully, my mom's health is not the best and my dad cannot attend the reunion. I know he would be so pleased and surprised to hear from any of you.



*Richard and Robert (Rusty) Banser
May 5th, 2001 - Lowell, Indiana
Rusty is active as a WWII re-enactor*



Camp Shelby - Back: Unknown, Richard Banser, Dominic Lattaco, Unknown, Sgt. from Ohio, Unknown, Unknown, Sgt. Stewart - Machine Gun Sergeant. Front: Valentine Maciag, Unknown, Unknown, Charles L. Parker, Johnson, S/Sgt. Ekpohn - Mortar Section Sergeant.

**Division Association Chapters, Units, Companies,
 and Group Mini-Weekends Across the United States**

We are interested in all news from Chapters, Groups, Branches, Companies, Battalions, Regiments, Recon, Artillery, AAA, Units, T.D.'s and minis for this column. Mail your date(s), location, banquet cost, activities and room rates, plus a good write-up to **Fighting 69th Division Bulletin, P.O. Box 69, Champion, Pennsylvania 15622-0069 or 183 Pineslope Road, Acme, Pennsylvania 15610-9606**, as early as possible. Then follow through with a write-up immediately after the event(s).

Mid-West Group

Fran and Zita Enright, News Reporters
 7304 West Georgia Avenue
 Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53220

2001 SPRING MEETING

The Mid-West Group met at the Fox Hills Golf Resort and Conference Center in Mishicot, Wisconsin from May 23rd through May 26th, 2001. Fifteen people were present, down six from last year. However, the weather was good, so we visited some of the local attractions which included the Maritime Museum in Manitowoc for a tour of a World War II submarine and the National Railroad Museum in Green Bay. We also went shopping at Two Rivers.

Gene Mischke will try to set up a meeting for 2002 in northern Illinois, perhaps at Starved Rock State Park. Watch for a notice in the bulletin.

Those who attended were:

- John Barrette** Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin
Headquarters, 271st Infantry
- Richard and Marge Bichler** Belgium, Wisconsin
Guests
- Fred Butenhoff** Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Company E, 272nd Infantry
- Nancy Eisenreich, Guest** Milwaukee, Wisconsin
- Fran and Zita Enright** Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Battery A, 881st Field Artillery
- Eugene and Marilyn Mischke**.. Spring Valley, Illinois
Company B, 273rd Infantry
- Gene and Ethel Pierron** Belgium, Michigan
661st Tank Destroyers
- Gaylord and Ruth Thomas** Waupun, Wisconsin
777th Tank Battalion
- Chuck and Pat Walsh** Glendale, Wisconsin
Company B, 271st Infantry



Marilyn Mischke, Gaylord and Ruth Thomas



Pat and Chuck Walsh



Chuck Walsh, Fran and Zita Enright



Ethel Pierron, Gene Pierron, Richard Bichler

**DIVISION ASSOCIATION CHAPTERS, UNITS,
COMPANIES AND GROUP MINI-WEEKENDS
ACROSS THE UNITED STATES**

(Continued from Page 32)

Company D, 273rd Infantry

Kenneth A. Sawyer, *News Reporter*
2311 Skywind Circle
Melbourne, Florida 32935

There were 16 of us at the recent reunion in Fort Mitchell, Kentucky. We managed to enjoy the camaraderie despite the somber news in New York and Washington. The air traffic shutdown caused cancellations for those planning to arrive midweek. **Ed Klein**, who recently learned about the 69th Association, would had been a first-timer, but Ed was forced to cancel. Next year, Ed.

Those present were: **Bob and Betty Ammon** from Michigan; **Art Ayres** and son Art Jr. from New Jersey; **Alan and Mary Blackmar** and daughter-in-law Marva Blackmar and grandson Mike Blackmar from New York; **Edgar and Mary Case** from Pennsylvania; **George and Barbara Johnson** from Virginia; **Betty Jo McCarty** and son Dodd from Texas and Alabama; **Ken Sawyer** and guest Fran Collard from Florida.

Our numbers are diminishing. Age is taking its toll. Make the effort to attend next year's reunion in Hampton, Virginia in September. The weather is likely to be pleasant as it was in Kentucky this year. The price of accommodations is most reasonable. Block out that third week on next year's calendar as soon as you get it. See you there.

Battery C 880th Field Artillery

Lowell McFarlin, *News Reporter*
89 North High Street, Box 236
Jeromesville, Ohio 44840
Telephone: 419/368-7363
E-Mail: lowmarmcf@bright.net

2001 Reunion - Wingate Inn, Latrobe, PA

Enrico and Anne D'Angelo were on hand to welcome the arrival of each of us as we checked into the motel, and it wasn't long before all of us were feeling right at home. The afternoon was spent getting caught up on the happenings of the past year and getting everyone up to date. The hospitality room was soon stocked with the usual goodies, and the visiting got into full swing. Anne had planned a pizza party with salads and other things she had brought along for our evening meal. Their daughter, Anita, came and brought a delicious Hawaiian cake for dessert. It was very comfortable in the hospitality room and we were happy to stay there the rest of the evening.

The next morning we gathered in the big dining room for a very abundant continental breakfast. The food was good and neatly displayed. Willie found the exercise room and worked out for his daily routine. The rest of us passed on this. We gathered together at the Blue Angel for a buffet luncheon. The food there was plentiful and very tasty. The view looking out over the airport is always fascinating and we watched many smaller planes taking off and landing. We all recalled watching **Bob Sullivan** and **Ben Tobias** coming in and landing and then joining us several years ago. What a thrill that was! After lunch we toured the Rolling Rock Brewery and gift shop. In the evening we had a real treat. We were able to visit St. Vincent College and attend one of their theatre productions, "A Tuna Christmas." This comedy was performed to a full audience, but we had choice seats and were able to see and hear very well. Afterwards, there was an outdoor party. It was a beautiful night and we all enjoyed it.

Thursday morning the men had their memorial service and meeting. The rest of the day was spent with everyone pretty much going their own way and touring the area. Several enjoyed visiting the museum in Ligonier - the one where **John Wallace** was interviewed at by the press several years ago. Anne had brought enough food along that we didn't need to go out for lunch, so we continued our visiting and eating.

The banquet was held at DiSalvo's Station. It is a national registered historic landmark. This historic railroad station was saved from demolition and converted into a very unique fine dining restaurant. We entered through a tunnel which runs under the fully operating Amtrak main line rails. The tunnel led us into a huge room with a cobblestone floor and a huge limestone fountain in the center. There was a passenger dining car set with tables for diners in the room. The room was beautifully decorated with greenery and small twinkling lights. Our table was decorated with two red, white and blue arrangements that Anne and Rico's daughter had made. Each plate had a "survival kit" as a favor. The food was delicious and again served by friendly and accommodating waitresses. It was another memorable evening.

Friday morning after breakfast we packed and headed home after another great time together. We enjoyed having **Stan and Georgia Bratt** join us this year. They came from Illinois.

Those attending were: **Lee Meyer, Enrico and Anne D'Angelo, Robert and Irene Williams, Lowell and Marjorie McFarlin, Leroy Goetz and Bernice Vanderheiden, Frank and Marie Habay, Stan and Georgia Bratt** (guest from Headquarters Battery), and stopping in for lunch at the Blue Angel was **Paul Shadle**, the 69th's new Membership Chairman.

(Continued on Page 34)

**DIVISION ASSOCIATION CHAPTERS, UNITS,
COMPANIES AND GROUP MINI-WEEKENDS
ACROSS THE UNITED STATES**

(Continued from Page 33)

Anne received cancellations before the reunion from **Bill** and **Inez Sells**, and from **Al** and **Marge Kormas**. They were all planning to attend, but **Bill** fell and was not able to make the trip. Also **Marge** fell and broke her leg, so that settled their plans. Hopefully they are both doing better now and are on the road to recovery.

Thanks to **Anne** and **Rico** for the great time that was had by all.

269th Engineers

Frank Nemeth, News Reporter

66 Gaping Rock Road

Levittown, Pennsylvania 19057-3410

Hi Engineers,

Just got back from the last Reunion in Fort Mitchell, Kentucky and had a good time. Hope you all found your way out of the maze when leaving the hotel.

It was good to see everyone again, whether they were in the 269th Engineers or one of the other outfits. We had a nice turnout, one of the best in a long time. Hope we do better in Virginia next year and I think we can, since a lot of the guys have a short ride to get there. Not sure where in Virginia it'll be, but I think they said Virginia Beach, the same time maybe a week later in September.

I've enclosed a couple of photos of those who attended in Kentucky. In the one photo I apologize to **Ernie Krause** for almost leaving him out of the photo. Also, **Bill Riggle** and Son (Bill, Jr.) attended and left early.

If anyone remembers **Fredrick Hunt** of Company C, please write to **Jim Clegg**, 3780 Lisa Kim La, Nashport, Ohio 43830. He would like to hear from you.

It was nice to see the turnout of the **Sholtis** family and hope to see them next year in Virginia .

Your Ole Buddy,
Frank Nemeth, *Company B*



Front: **Ernie Krause** (Co. B), **Lloyd Roth** (H&S Co.), **Steve Sholtis** (H&S Co.). Back: **Ward Peterson** (Co. B), and **Frank Nemeth** (Co. B).



The Women of the 269th: **Mary Krause**, **Ted Nemeth**, **Dottie Eibling**, **Mrs. Roth** and **Marion Peterson**.

461st AAA Battery

2001 Reunion Report

Quality Inn - Salem, Virginia

October 12th and 13th, 2001

Mac and Madge Morris, News Reporters

630 North Oakland Street

Arlington, Virginia 22203-2221

Telephone: 703/527-2796

The Quality Inn had the conference room available for us on Friday evening and all day Saturday. The Continental breakfast is now served in the dining room - much more room with more tables.

We met at 6:00 p.m. on Saturday evening for a delicious brunch. Thanks, **Pat!** You had a good variety. **Ed Moore** opened our evening with a prayer before dinner. The children of **Mac** and **Madge Morris** had a 55th Anniversary cake for them; also a bag of goodies for each person. This was a fun time. Also, **Mac** and **Madge** had in attendance 8 month great-grandson, **Chayton**.

We thank **Steve** for the yearly mugs. The colors are so varied and it is such a nice collection with good memories. After dinner, **Mac** had a prayer for the members present and also for the families of the three who died this past year - **Conley Gamble**, **Roy Currier** and **Ralph Yingling**. It was good to hear **Louis Jones** and his jokes. We are so glad he felt like attending. Visitors were recognized; Ruth read an article for Louis; we thanked Pat for arranging this excellent dinner and rooms that were reserved for the 461st. Dinner cost \$744.80; each one attending paid \$20.00.

Discussions and motions regarding next year's meeting. It is becoming difficult to make the drive here from various locations; should we schedule a yearly meeting? The final motion was to meet next year, October 11 and 12, 2002 and try to decide on the future dates. Please contact anyone of our members about attending. We had nine veterans present.

(Continued on Page 35)

**DIVISION ASSOCIATION CHAPTERS, UNITS,
COMPANIES AND GROUP MINI-WEEKENDS
ACROSS THE UNITED STATES**

(Continued from Page 34)

Paul agreed to set up for next year and perhaps have a special event. He will be sending out a letter.

Linda had gifts for the ladies. You are very thoughtful, **Linda!** We all enjoy your gifts. Thanks to **Louis Jones** for being master of ceremonies.

We missed **Cecil Twigg**, our professional photographer and **Allen Whitley** and his delicious apples.

Attending were: **John and Connie Lane; Bill and Romona Gravett; John and Elsie Chambliss; John, Judy, Trey Chambliss; Ben and Linda Truitt; Joe Bryson; Mac and Madge Morris** and children **Ken and Faye Morris, Barbara Morris, Jim and Andrea Morris** and baby **Chayton, Becky** and **David Carson; Louis and Ruth Jones; Steve Lucas; Edward and Belle Moore; Wallace and Betty Ullery; Maxine and Howard Sandefur; Bertha and Paul Kowalchek; Pat, Brenda, Frances Musselwhite, Betty Sue Short; Marsha and Michael Hicks.**



Back Row: Mac Morris, Ed Moore, John Chambliss, Paul Kowalchek, Howard Sandefur. Front Row: Johnny Lane, Joe Bryson, Louis Jones, Wally Ullery

**Battery C
724th Field Artillery**

Coy and Erline Horton, News Reporter
1705A Highview Street
Burlington, North Carolina 27215-5652
Telephone: 336/227-7785

Battery C, 724th Field Artillery Battalion met with the rest of the 69th Division September 9th-16th 2001, in Fort Mitchell, Kentucky.

We had dinner on Friday September 14th. It was real nice to get together with our friends again. We hope to meet again in September 2002 in Hampton, Virginia. It is hope that other buddies can attend.

Our prayers go out to those who lost loved ones September 11th, 2001.



724th Field Artillery: Libby Inyart, Bob Inyart, Polly DiLoreto, Al DiLoreto, Coy Horton, Erline Horton



Lois and Stan Hawk



Lois Hawk, Libby Inyart, Polly DiLoreto



Erline and Coy Horton

A Soldier to his Girlfriend

(One of Al's Army Jokes)

Submitted by: **Ethel Glaser**
Wife of **Al Glaser**

Company I, 273rd Infantry Regiment

38753 Ryans Way, Palm Desert, California 92211

My Dear:

I am one of the fellows who made the world safe for democracy. What a crazy thing that was. I fought but I had to go away. I was in Class "A." The next time I want to be in Class "B." Be sure when to go and be sure when to come back. I remember the day when I was registered. I went to the desk and my milkman was in charge. He said, "What's your name?" I said, "Young man, you know my name." He barked, "What's your name?" so I told him, "August Childs." He said "Are you alien?" I said, "No, I feel fine."

Then he said, "When did you first see the light of day?" I said, "When I moved to Philadelphia from Pittsburgh." He said, "How old are you?" So I told him "Twenty-three the first of September." He said, "The first of September you'll be in Australia, and that will be the last of August."

A veterinarian started to examine me. He asked me if I had ever had the measles, small pox, St. Vitus Dance, and if I took fits. I said, "No, only when I stayed in the saloon too long." Then he said, "Can you see all right?" I said, "Sure, but, I'll be cockeyed tonight if I pass." Then he listened around my chest and said, "I think you have a wart some place." I said, "Wart, my neck, that's a button in your ear." The doctor said he never examined a more perfect physical wreck. Then he handed me a card-Class "A."

Then I went to camp and I guess they didn't think I'd live long. The first fellow wrote on my card, "Flying Corps." I went a little further and some guy said, "Look what the wind blew in." I said, "Wind nothing, the draft's doing it." On the second morning they put these clothes on me. What an outfit. As soon as you are in it, you think you can lick anybody. They have two sizes - too big and too small. The pants are too tight. I can't sit down. The shoes are too big ... I turned around three time and they didn't move. And what a raincoat they gave me, it strained the rain. I passed an officer all dressed up with a fancy belt and stuff. He said, calling after me, "Didn't you notice what I have on?" I said, "Yes, but what are you kicking about - look what they gave me."

I landed in camp with \$85 - in ten minutes I was broke. I never saw so many 3's and 12's on a pair of dice. No matter what I did, I went broke. Something went wrong even in the cards. One time I got five aces and I was afraid to bet. It's a good thing I didn't for the fellow next to me had six kings. Finally, I said, "This is a crooked poker game." They said, "We're playing Pinochle." Everything was crazy. If you were a delivery hand you were put in the Medical Department. If you were a watchman, you were made an officer of the day.

There was a guy with a wooden leg and I asked him what he was doing in the army. He said, "I'm going to mash the potatoes."

Oh, it was nice. Five degrees below zero one morning they called us out for underwear inspection. You talk about a scenery - red flannels, BVD'S of all kinds. The union suit I had on would fit Tony Galento. The lieutenant lined us up and told me to stand up. I said, "I am standing up - these underwear makes you think I'm sitting down." He got so mad he put me at digging ditches. A little while later he passed and said, "Don't throw dirt up here." I said, "Where am I going to throw it?" He said, "Dig another hole and put it in there." Finally Jones acted so funny, I ran to the doctor and told him Jones was going blind. He asked what we were doing and I told him. So, he asked me if Jones was seeing pink elephants. I said, "No, that's just the trouble. They're there and he can't see them." Three days later we sailed for Australia. Marching down the pier, I had some more bad luck. I had a sergeant who stuttered and it took him so long to say, "Halt" that 27 of us marched overboard. They pulled us out and the Captain came along and said, "Fall in," so I replied "I have just been in." I was on the boat 12 days and seasick all the time. Nothing going down and everything coming up. I leaned over the railing all the time. In the middle of one of my best leans, the Captain rushed up and said, "What company are you in?" I said "I'm all by myself." He asked if the Brigadier was up yet. I said, "If I swallowed it, it's up." Talk about dumb people. I said to one of the fellows, "I guess we dropped anchor." He said, "I knew we'd lose it - its been hanging out ever since we left New York." We had a life boat drill and when the boat was being lowered over the side of the ship it spilled some men into the water. Only the second lieutenant and I were left on the boat. The lieutenant gave orders to pull the men out of the water by the hair of their heads. I was struggling with a man when one fellow with a bald head yelled, "Pull me out." I said "Go down again and come up the right way."

Well we landed in Australia and were immediately sent to the trenches. After three nights in the trenches all the cannons started to roar and the shells started to fall. I started to shake with patriotism. I tried to hide behind a tree but there weren't enough trees for the officers. The Captain came around and said, "Haven't you got any red blood in you?" I said, "Yes, but I don't want to see it." He said, "Where do you want to go?" I said, "Anywhere it's warm." So he told me where I could go. Five o'clock and we went over the top. 10,000 Japs came at us. They all looked alike. They looked at me as if I started the war. Our captain yelled, "Fire at will." I didn't know any of their names. I guess the fellow behind me thought I was Will. He fired his gun and shot me in the excitement. On my way to the hospital I asked a fellow where they were taking me. He said, "Lie down, you are going to the morgue." I said, "There's some mistake, I'm not dead." "Lie down!" he shouted. "Do you want to make a fool out of the doctor?" Finally a pretty nurse came in and said, "Move over." Oh well, that's another story.

I Wish I'd Kept A Diary

Written by: **Robert A. Heisler**
Company B, 2nd Signal Battery

1104 Chemawa Loop N.E., Keizer, Oregon 97303-3739
E-Mail: rbrtheisler@cs.com

I joined the army on August 15th, 1944 and was sent to Fort Lewis, Washington where I learned a couple of new words: fatigues and duffel bags. Before that, the only fatigue I ever knew was out in the hop yard, hoeing hops, and if you wanted to keep your pants and shirt nicely pressed you did not put them in that duffel bag.

After a few days we boarded a train (not an Amtrak Superliner) and headed for Camp Hood, Texas. From there trucks picked us up and took us to our new home and I learned some more words, among them was cockroaches. Up in civilized Oregon we had never heard of them. It was so hot some of us would sit in a mud puddle just to get out of the sun.

I won't go into detail on my basic training except to say I did plenty of "KP." When we came back after a couple days on bivouac, the cockroaches had taken over and no matter who we asked what to do about them, we got the answer, "You leave them alone and they'll leave you alone."

After basic we moved to different quarters and began our special training which was the 37mm anti-tank gun. In mid December we were told to pack up and head out with full packs for two weeks of maneuvers, and a twenty mile hike back to camp to end our training.

Suddenly around Christmas red flares were shooting up all over, we were told to assemble and were given the news: The Germans were pulling away from the Russian front in a last ditch effort to stop the Americans. Eisenhower asked Roosevelt for 50,000 troops pronto! They scraped the bottom of the barrel and took some that were not quite ready (us).

We were given five days emergency furlough (we got out of the 20-mile hike anyway). The first day was spent at Waco, Texas, waiting for the fog to lift. Then to Douglas, Arizona, Las Vegas, Nevada (population 9,000), on to Boise Idaho, all of this in C-47's. At Boise the pilot was given a choice of taking us to Portland, Oregon. He declined because of the weather, even after we offered him \$20 each (\$400). Another kid and I decided to take a Trailways bus (18 hours) to Portland. I hitched a ride to our farm, 40 acres 12 miles north of Salem, Oregon. My folks about fell over when I popped in the door unexpectedly. I had twelve hours at home and was taken to the Portland airbase, said goodbye, and got

back on another C-47. We stopped at Santa Barbara, California. We were given a lot of oranges and apples, and got other goodies from the Red Cross. Then we headed for Kansas City, Kansas. But soon one of the guys passed out, his legs were frozen. There was no heat on the plane. We had to make an emergency landing at Amarillo, Texas. They rustled up some food and we spent the night, then went to Kansas City for New Year's Eve. Naturally we went to Kansas City, Missouri to celebrate the New Year. At Indianapolis, Indiana we were served a delicious New Year's day dinner.

On to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Washington D.C. and then Fort George G. Meade, Maryland. There we were outfitted with gas masks, overcoats, blankets, rifles and a new word "Combat Boots" (Goodbye leggings - they were a pain in the ankle anyway). We boarded a train and somehow ended up in Boston, Massachusetts. We were told to get on this big boat, "The Isle De France." It was a converted French luxury liner. We were herded down to "F" deck; a few hours later we were served a bowl of soup. Some of us thought it was the appetizer but found out it was our banquet. After 18 hours or so, some of us decided to go up on deck and see what the ocean looked like. There were people throwing up down in that hole from seasickness.

To our surprise we had not left Boston yet and two days later they were still loading troops from all over the U.S. There were 17,000 on board when we finally left on January 7th, 1945. The captain refused Navy

(Continued on Page 38)



*April 1945, about 10 miles from the front line in Germany.
Anyone who can identify these fellows, please write to Robert.*

I WISH I'D KEPT A DIARY

(Continued from Page 37)

escort saying he could make the trip to Glasgow, Scotland in 5-1/2 days, but with navy escorts it would take 6 days. We zigged and zagged trying to outfox the Nazi subs. It would have been a big feather in their hat to sink our ship and I couldn't swim. The food was rotten; it consisted of two meals a day, mostly soup and tea. The promenade decks were 20-30 feet wide and littered with GI's who couldn't stand it below. The scum on the side of the ship down to the water was about an inch thick. I wondered if they ever washed that off? Everyone was glad when we docked in Glasgow.

We boarded a train and were expecting to see some beautiful scenery - ha - impossible with the windows boarded up for obvious reasons. It takes a lot of time to load and unload large groups of people. I imagine in about 48 hours we ended up at Portland, England and then we boarded LST's to cross the English Channel. The Navy promised us a good meal. I was about 10th in line to be served when all hell broke loose. We were told to hit the deck or get below if possible. It was rumored that one of the ships was hit with a bomb or torpedo. We docked at La Harve, France and marched for miles to a tent city and finally got a fairly decent hot meal. Then back on another train. These French trains were something else. There were few vehicles on the country roads, some horses pulling wagons. I thought it was odd that the train would stop for these wagons, but what the hey, we were not in any hurry, just going up to the front to fight the war. It seemed like ages till we got to Givet, a small town in northern France, a humungus staging area. By this time I did not recognize anyone from Camp Hood, Texas. I wish I'd have kept a diary.

By now I figure it was about January 25. There were thousands of soldiers coming and going. I had no idea what outfit I would be assigned to. It was very cold. They kept us busy by marching. There was snow on our shoes and steam coming out of them.

After a couple of days about ten of us were ordered onto a truck. We didn't travel far and somebody said we were in Belgium. The trees were getting taller - they looked like Douglas fir. We were in the Ardennes or the Argonne forest. We were dumped off at a very temporary encampment; it was getting dark, cold, and snowy. Two of us were grabbed and given a password and told we were on guard duty in 30 minutes. If you didn't have the correct password you were in trouble. There was string or wire going all around the area with tin cans and noisemakers so that if anyone walked into it we were alerted. We had some K- rations. By now it was pitch dark and we were standing back to back at the entrance to our camp.

Soon a soldier approached us carrying a GI gas can. We halted him and he gave us the password. He said

his jeep ran out of gas, could we help him? We didn't know if there was gas available or not. The soldier suggested we ask our captain. We knew where the lieutenant's tent was, so we got his attention. He came out, looked us over, grabbed the gas can from the soldier and flung it over into a bomb hole and it exploded. WOW - the soldier was gone. The lieutenant grabbed us by the arm and said, "I hope you boys learned something, you could have got us all killed!" Later we were relieved and spent the rest of the night sleeping up against a tree. Those GI blankets sure came in handy. Daylight finally came and we had a fairly decent breakfast. The next night my guard duty buddy and I pitched our tents together and finally got a good night's sleep.

The war seemed to be at a standstill, there were many other encampments but nobody moving. We had a lot of free time. We were warned about picking up brightly colored objects. They could blow up in your face. We were also warned about castration mines, and doors and windows on buildings that could be bugged, and set off with a small detonator. I thought the Japs were sneaky, but the Krauts were good at it, too. Their intention was to wound our soldiers so it would take 4 or 5 people to care for them. If you kill someone, no one has to take care of them.

Later I was told to pick up my stuff and get into a jeep. You're going to a signal outfit. "But I trained as a 37mm anti-tank gunner. I don't know anything about signals." He said, "The 37mm is a piece of junk and not efficient and **Sergeant Boyd** is short one man and you are it."

The driver said he was taking me just this side of Bastogne to my new quarters. To get there we had to go through some terrible scenes. The further we went the worse it got. Trucks, tanks, jeeps, guns burned up, blown upside down, horses and wagons. American and German soldiers littered the area on both sides of the muddy road, dead and frozen. Hundreds of coated phone lines were mixed in the mess, it was horrible. When I think about it, this part of the country was fought over three times and called the Battle of the Bulge. The worst thing I saw was a German soldier blown out of a tank and slammed up against a hog wire fence, arms outstretched, no head - his body was still smoldering, scorched to the fence. Tops were blown out of some trees. These trees were planted like rows of corn. It seemed like a waste of ammo hitting the tops of trees and igniting shells. Maybe someone had an answer to that.

I am guessing I arrived at my new assignment about February 4th. **Sergeant Boyd** introduced himself; he had a full heavy red beard. (a few weeks later it was shaved off. Volunteer or Demand?) I also met **Corporal Clutter** and **Pfc. Charles Hunt**.

(Continued on Page 39)

I WISH I'D KEPT A DIARY

(Continued from Page 38)

I am going forward now, about 56 years. I bought a computer and didn't know diddly squat about it. In playing with it, I thought I'd look up **Corporal Clutter** from Paint Lick, Kentucky. Come to find out **Pfc. Hunt** was from Paint Lick, not **Cpl. Clutter**. The friends of Paint Lick put my letter on a bulletin board and got the attention of Geraldine Hunt, wife of Charles, of Lancaster, Kentucky. She called me and we had a good chat. I sent her the only picture I had of our 9-man squad and she identified one of the men as her husband, **Charles**, now deceased. Thanks to Geraldine Hunt, I am now a member of the 69th Division Association. That picture appears on the first page of this article and I am hoping that someone out there can identify some of the men. The names **Reisberg** and **Babcock** stick to my mind. I am still at odds trying to figure out why there are no records of our squad and the men in it. The sergeant took orders from higher-ups, so there must be some records someplace.

Back to the War.

They gave me a pair of climbers and taught me how to splice wire. They introduced me to a pair of clines (not pliers), to cut and skin back the coating for splicing and taping the wire. In most cases we did not retrieve the wire, we just opened up another spool. Much of the wire was laid on the ground but when necessary we used existing poles. What do you do when you are wearing a pair of climbers and you come to a steel or cement pole? The Germans had a contraption that you could strap to your legs and climb a metal pole. Our climbers had a sharp metal piece on the inside that you jabbed into the wooden pole as you worked your way up. It was very hard on the ankles. The Germans had a rounded beveled hook-like affair with teeth that when you put your weight on it, it would not slip and when you got to the top and had to spend some time, they were quite comfortable. However, they were terrible compared to ours for walking, as you had to have your feet about 14 inches apart. Try it sometime.

I am trying to recap all this. I wish I'd have kept a diary. The name Bestogne, Malmedy, and Verviers are quite vivid in my mind. After a few days in these areas, we headed for Aachen. It was mostly destroyed. We were in Germany! Seems like we were in this area of Aachen for a week or so. German screaming 88's would cause a person to get down from a pole in no time. Somewhere along the line we went through Cologne, we stopped in front of a famous cathedral, we were told to stay out. Since I was the only Catholic no one else was interested, but I just had to take a peek inside and it was a shambles.

We crossed the Rhine River on pontoon boats, which were side by side all across the river. Heavy wide metal plating over the boats made a neat bridge. We

headed south to a town called Bad Ems. We stayed all night in a 3 or 4 story house, or should I say castle, that was recently vacated. The night before we slept on the ground and tonight we were living like kings. Someone found a chicken, so we had baked chicken and wine for dinner. I remember when we finished eating some of us flipped the dishes over our shoulders and listened to them splatter. Seems kind of crude but after seeing a lot of American soldiers killed and all the destruction, you get to where you don't give a dang. These Germans really consumed a lot of wine, the basements were full of it.

It must have been around April 1st by now and we left Bad Ems and headed east. Things are a little fuzzy here, but in a couple of weeks we were in Kassel. Not much left of this town. You could always see fireplace chimneys and smokestacks in these bombed out blown up cities.

One city was declared "open city," preserved for some reason where both sides agreed not to destroy. I guess a lieutenant was driving through town when a sniper shot him. His driver raced back to Patton's headquarters and Patton said something like, "O.K. boys, let 'em have it!" We went through there in a day or two and nothing was left, not even a chimney, everything kaput. The war was going fast by now - hard to keep up. We usually did not know if we were in Patton's army, Hodges' army, or Bradley's army and really didn't give a darn.

One day we were motoring along and our convoy of three vehicles - a jeep, a three quarter ton weapons carrier, and a 6x6, entered this small town. People were sticking various white things out of the doorways and windows like sheets, shirts, bras - anything white. Two things the Germans knew; anything white was surrender and hands up was don't shoot. We soon realized we had captured this town. A couple dozen German soldiers came running to our vehicles with rifles in the air, they were smiling. A crowd of civilians gathered to watch the show. Our language barrier was no problem; hand and motion signals were our communication. They laid their weapons in our trucks and we motioned them away and they took off with their hands behind their heads, happy that we got there before the Ruskies. We realized we were in enemy territory and I think we were as scared as the Germans. Soon other units were coming along and we got the h--- out of town.

In a day or so, we entered Leipzig and noticed the famous sign that said, "You are entering Leipzig through the courtesy of the 69th Infantry Division." It must have been May 9th or 10th when we arrived in Torgau. Earlier we were told that the U.S. would stay on the west side of the Elbe River and the Russians would stay on the east side. We'd both work our way up to Berlin. That was then. Now they said we were

(Continued on Page 40)

I WISH I'D KEPT A DIARY

(Continued from Page 39)

pulling out and were going to let the Russians have it all. I think when the Russians got together with the Allies with various pacts and agreements, the vodka flowed freely and most everyone got plastered, (but not old Stalin) and they would sign or agree to most anything. Why would anyone in their right mind agree to dividing up Berlin and then split the country and have Berlin in the east part of the country, so that the west had to travel through east Germany in order to get to Berlin? This idiotic blunder cost the Germans 40 years of misery! Another big blunder of the century was when we joined the United Nations. We have not won a war since! Enough of politics.

Back to Torgau. We had some free time and another kid and I decided we'd cross that bridge on the Elbe River into Russian territory and see what was going on. We were surprised to see soldiers in mixed uniforms, long hair, unshaven, women with kids, horses, cows, pigs, geese, etc. I guess if you want to eat in the Russian army, you bring your own food. We couldn't get back across that bridge quick enough - our soldiers looked great compared to the Russians.

I was asked if I would like to go to radio school and study Morse Code. I said yes and the next day I ended up in Spa, Belgium for six weeks. It was like being on R&R. One Sunday afternoon another soldier and I went to Liege, Belgium and saw a movie called, "The Clock." Graduation from Radio school and back I went to Torgau. This was around the 4th of July.

We were billeted upstairs in a large warehouse. One morning at about 8:00 a.m. we were rudely awakened by a sergeant accompanied by a captain. We tried to stand at attention. I had never stood at attention while practically naked. The sergeant was told by the captain to put these men to work. The sergeant said he'd be back in three minutes, be dressed. We were handed a couple of hammers and showed a pile of lumber and nails. We were told to pull the nails and stack the boards over there and don't quit till we were finished. I wasn't feeling worth a darn and had a headache. I went on sick call to get a couple of aspirins when they checked my blood pressure another doctor was called in. After much discussion, they said I was going to Frankfurt to a hospital for more tests. They said I had a heart murmur. I packed my bags and headed for Frankfurt. After a week or so, they said I had aortic insufficiency. I said, "I'm going back to Torgau," and they said, "No, you are going home."

I don't know where the time went. One day I went to Heidleberg to see the world's largest wine barrel. The boat didn't leave until August 23rd. I don't think I went back to Torgau. I was not in the hospital but in the annex. I can't imagine spending almost a month there and not remembering why I did. I wish I'd kept a diary.

On August 23rd, I boarded the U.S.S. Huddleston, a hospital ship with about 500 ambulatory patients. We were headed for Charleston, South Carolina. Many things happened on the trip home that went down in history. We had a daily 1-sheet newspaper. A B-25 bomber banged into the Empire State Building on the 86th floor and killed two in the plane and eleven in the building. A formal peace treaty was signed with the Japs. One day we hit a horrendous storm, with 110 mile an hour gales. The waves were so high that when the ship got over half of the wave and came down, the water came down with a terrific splash. You could hear the crinkling and I thought it was going to split in half (some of the liberty ships did). The back end would go up and our nose was way down and we thought we were sinking for sure. We played this game for two to three hours. The next day was calm and a soldier on a troop ship heading for Le Harve had an appendicitis attack. They decided to use our facilities rather than use their bandaid approach, so we waited while they brought the soldier over in a row boat. They parked about a mile away. Everybody wanted to watch the action but the ship began to lean, so some of us had to get on the other side. One day we changed directions and headed for New York. No one complained.

On September 3rd, we arrived in New York City. We stayed at Staten Island for five days. A buddy and I went to the Empire State Building and had to walk from the 86th floor as they were still repairing the damage from the plane accident.

We got on a train and headed for Fort Lewis, Washington where I started. I figure I was overseas one day longer than I was stateside

I haven't missed a day's work yet on account of my heart murmur. On November 30, 1945, I was given an honorable discharge.

Easy Money?

During World War II, it was claimed that when a 2nd lieutenant graduated, he had to give one dollar to the first soldier from whom he got a salute.

About twenty years ago, I had the 69th Infantry patch sewn on to the bill of my baseball cap in full prominence that all may see how proud I was of the 69th. I had vowed that whoever was the first to recognize that patch would get a dollar from me.

In all these years, I have not had one hit of recognition from anyone. So if any of you out there wish to earn a dollar, please recognize my 69th Infantry patch and I will happily hand one over to you.

Sincerely,

George M. Haddad

Company E, 272nd Infantry Regiment

30180 Cheviot Hills Drive

Franklin, Michigan 48025

E-Mail: gmhaddad@mediaone.net

Amateur Radio Station N8PKC

"I Guess We're Soldiers, Now?"

Oral History of Alex ("Howitzer Al") Kormas
Headquarters Battery, 879th Field Artillery Battalion
12500 Edgewater, #503, Lakewood, Ohio 44107

From the Book:

THE LONG ROAD • FROM ORAN TO PILSEN

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The Northern Appalachian Studies Center
St. Vincent College

"The dead must have been some part of a unit caught in the Bulge. We looked pretty dirty and crummy, but compared to these guys we dressed well. There was this one guy sharpening his knife on a whetstone. I'll never forget that sonofabitch. He said, "Half of you guys are going to be dead." When we got back, we rested for the remainder of the day and began combat after that. We learned that no matter how much training we had combat was different. I saw many frozen, dead Germans. That was the first big scare that I got. Another one was when I once went into the basement of a house. There were three young Germans laying under a couple of blankets. Their guns were upstairs. I noticed that their faces had a very pale, olive color, indicating that they had frozen to death. I got out of there. Really, I was down there looking for some wine, because every German house had great German wine."

They called my father Nick the Greek. He owned a couple of restaurants. He passed away just before the Depression. Who knows, we might have become famous restaurateurs. My people came from North Macedonia. There's Bulgarian Macedonia, Greek Macedonia, and Albanian Macedonia. They all hated each other! My mother was Stella Chase. It really couldn't have been that last name, but the immigration man just wrote down what he thought it sounded like.

I was just an ordinary kid. I thought that everyone was poor. When my dad passed away, we lost the business and had to move to a poor section. After that we'd move every couple months because we didn't have rent money. There was my mother and five kids dragging the furniture around.

School was a struggle. At the beginning of the year we got a new pair of pants, a couple pairs of shorts, and a sweater that would last until summer. In the summer, we would go to the barbershop and get "baldies," because the haircut would last longer. We got two pairs of tennis shoes, a cheap pair for week-time use and a pair of Keds for Sundays. The cheap shoes cost forty-nine cents; the Keds cost eighty-nine cents.

The Shopping News came out two or three times a week advertising items from department stores. I got the route. One Christmas day, a woman on the route



Al Kormas and R.S. Hocht from Freemont, Ohio
Camp Shelby, Mississippi - 1943

gave me two homemade donuts. I took them home and they became part of our Christmas dinner! One Thanksgiving Day we had potatoes, onions, tomatoes and maybe a pound of hamburger. I don't know how many times we asked, "Aren't you eating, Mom?"

"No," she replied, "I ate mine already."

It took me a long time to realize what was going on. That was the reality in those days. We made it by hook or crook. I think it made us better people for it. We realized the value of the things of life.

When I was eighteen, I lived near a hospital and dated some of the nurses from the nursing school. There was a confectionary across the street. Drinks were a nickel. I took dates there, got one drink with two straws, and we would share the drink. I was in a booth with one of the nurses when news of Pearl Harbor came over the radio. There was dead silence. I looked at the girl and she looked at me. We realized that our lives were going to change forever. I will never forget that moment. I felt fear.

Before the war started for us, things were going pretty good. We all got jobs making supplies for Britain. I was feeling pretty good until I got my draft notice. I got a cheap, mimeographed paper saying that I had been "selected by your friends and neighbors." I had to report on a certain day. My brother had already gone in. I had a month to prepare.

I reported to an auditorium in Cleveland where they were examining 400 guys a day. They spent all morning examining you. Then they took you out for a lousy meal. On the way back to the auditorium, all the office girls were standing around. "Don't worry. Be quiet. We'll get you processed," they would say.

They called three or four guys out who looked like football players. They got rejected! 35% got rejected. The hours dragged. At about 5:00 p.m., the sergeant asked us to be quiet. After he swore us in, his attitude changed. He really spiled out a lot of cussing. We were in! They gave me a week to prepare. Whether or not you were ready by then, they shipped you out.

(Continued on Page 42)

"I GUESS WE'RE SOLDIERS, NOW?"

(Continued from Page 41)

My mom said, "Tell them that next week is your birthday, and you can't leave on that day."

I wasn't very bright. I told my sergeant about my birthday and he said, "Yeah! I'll speak to the major about it."

My mother asked, "Did you get the date moved back?"

"No, Ma. If I don't go on time, they are going to lose the war."

"Well, I'll call them!"

"Ma, please don't call them! I'm in enough trouble."

It was horrible when I left. My sisters had said good-bye early and headed off to school. My stepfather said good-bye and left for work. My mother and I just sat there at the table until it was time to go. I had my little brown bag and about three dollars in my pocket. They told us to take as little luggage as possible. I was trying to say good-bye and she was hanging onto me. She went down when my older brother left, but she realized that it was better to say good-bye at home. She wished me Happy Birthday. I got to the corner, turned around and saw her on the porch. I waved good-bye.

I was scheduled to leave Cleveland Union Terminal downtown at 12:30 p.m., but we left about 3:00 p.m. Some of these mothers were there for nearly three hours. The FBI was there to make sure nobody went AWOL. We finally got on the train. At the first stop a bunch of guys from Elyria, Ohio were waiting outside a saloon that was next to the station. It was a hot, muggy day, and they had been left unsupervised. They got on the train totally drunk. We got down to Columbus. We thought we were going to board some busses, but instead they walked us over to Fort Hayes, an old Civil War barracks.

We were still in civilian clothes. When we walked into the fort, we saw guys who had been there a couple of days. They assigned us to these big barracks. We had a couple tests and later some shots. Word got around, "Wait until they get you with that square needle."

They lined hundreds of guys up across the gym. They used the same syringe, but changed the needles. They said, "Keep your hands on your hips and just keep walking. If a guy falls down then just step over him." A few guys fell.

On the second day they gave us uniforms. By this time they had us singled out near this long table with rags and clothing on it. They gave us two empty barracks bags, one marked A and the other B, where we put all our stuff. They told us, "Stand back and don't dare touch that counter."

We moved along with our bags. If a guy told you to put it in your bag then that's what you did. Whatever you picked, that's the size shirt you got, and so forth. Most of the time the size was pretty close to your own. At the end of the line, they gave us ankle-high Army shoes. They were big and heavy. The test was to pick

up one foot this way and pick up the other that way and those were your shoes. We got two pairs. I went back to where I started and tried to sort some of this stuff out. I tried the clothes on for the first time. The uniform didn't fit. There were tags all over the stuff.

Then we went on to tests and interviews. A score of about 117 would qualify you for officer's school. I think that I hit a score of 127. It didn't mean anything because they had all the officers they needed. After a day they started calling guys out for KP. They had these tremendous mess halls which served a few thousand guys. Some guys were working and others were standing around with shotguns. The workers, we found out, were guys being punished for going AWOL or whatever. If you were there Friday noon and you were not called out then you could get a pass to go home for the weekend. On Friday morning we were sweating it out. Noon came around and I called my mother and told her, "I'm coming home for the weekend, Ma."

Half an hour later we got notice saying, "This whole area is locked off. You're shipping out. Listen for your name." The phones were shut down, too. There were hundreds of names there, including mine. Everything was a big military secret, so I couldn't call my mother back. I explained the situation to the sergeant and asked him if he would mind calling my mother. He said he would. So I wrote the number down and gave it to him, but he never called. I can imagine how she felt.

The train arrived Saturday, about 4:00 a.m. We sat on our A&B bags. At 8:00 a.m. we were still there. Finally we got on the train. All the shades were drawn. They told us, "Don't you dare pick up those shades."

We went south, south, south. We were all apprehensive, suspicious. The sergeant in charge of the train walked back and forth. They had a clever way of feeding us. The mess car was right in the middle. They would take the guys from one end and walk them all the way back to the other end and let them get their food on a paper plate as they were walking through.

We speculated that we were going to Keesler Air Field in Biloxi, Mississippi which was the basic school for the Air Force. I thought, "Well, okay, I'll be a live coward."

Carefully, we backed into the swamps. Then the sergeant came down and said, "All you guys thought that you were going into the Air Corps, but you're really going to the infantry in Camp Shelby, Mississippi."

We called it "giving us the shaft." It was crude humor. You could hear a pin drop on the train. They put us on trucks and took us to Shelby. The barracks were crude huts that held twelve guys. The sergeant in my barracks had just come back from the South Pacific and he was a little whacked. He told us, "In six months half of you guys are going to be dead. Then six months after that the other half of you guys will be dead. I'm lucky that I came back!"

(Continued on Page 43)

"I GUESS WE'RE SOLDIERS, NOW?"

(Continued from Page 42)

Shelby was known as the "Asshole of the Camps." We didn't know until later that it was the biggest Army camp in the country. It held about 70,000 guys. Hattiesburg was about twelve miles away. We weren't very welcome and the way some of the guys behaved, I could see why. It was a miserable area. A day or two later we started training. We didn't know how to put our leggings on or how to put our packs together. We wore our leggings over our boots. I don't know why the Army had them in the first place. Tents were this way and that way, falling down. It was like a Laurel and Hardy movie, but we soon learned. Eventually we got to the point that we could do things in the dark.

There was some crazy stuff going on at Shelby. "Streaky" Wilcox got the latrine detail. After cleaning the latrine, he assembled twine and nails and went to work rigging up all the toilet seats so he could yank these strings and all the seats would come to attention. At inspection he said, "Latrine ready for inspection, Sir!" All the seats snapped to attention. The officer said not a word nor did he change his expression. He and **Sergeant Ed Stark** quickly left. Nevertheless, Streaky was shipped out on the first opportunity!

I was put into K Company of the 271st Infantry. The first night I heard some guys crying in their sleep. The first couple of days we didn't talk to each other. We were all wondering what we were doing there. About the third morning the first sergeant called me out after breakfast and told me to come to his office. I was scared to go in since I thought that this meeting entailed some kind of punishment. He told me, "Look, you don't belong here. You belong in the artillery. It was a mistake. Here are your papers. Be up on the corner about 11:00 with your A&B bags and they'll pick you up." I went to the artillery detachment that was at Camp Shelby. The guys in the barracks wouldn't talk to me and I don't blame them. The truck was about a mile away and I sat up there in the corner sweating bricks. Later I was glad, because Company K got slaughtered in Europe! We backed them up with artillery.

I wanted to go home, but we knew we were going to be on our way. Everything was hush-hush when we left Camp Shelby. The whole town knew where we were going! The country had to make links for railroads, railroad cars, and trains. Word got around. The Army gave us a Thanksgiving dinner before we left. Since we were training for the Pacific, we figured that we were going to the jungles. Then we started going northeast. We thought that we'd probably go to New York then go around South America to the Pacific. We stopped in this small town to let a priority train go through. My buddies and I saw a liquor sign. **Juggy Powers** asked these sixteen-year-old colored kids, "Could you kids get us some liquor?"

"Yeah. We always get liquor for the troops. Just give us the money."

So we gave them about thirty bucks.

"We'll be right back."

The kids started running and kept right on going. They took off with all the money!

On Thanksgiving morning we pulled into Chester, Pennsylvania. It was a cold day and we were all homesick. There were all these homes along the tracks. Fathers were out there with bottles and mothers showed you big turkeys. We pulled into Camp Kilmer that Thanksgiving Day. They gave us twenty-four hours off in New York. One of my close buddies had a girlfriend who worked for the Manhattan Project. Nobody knew what it was, not even the workers. This girl had three friends, so my buddy arranged a gathering for all of us. We pooled our money, but one guy, who was at least slightly drunk, handled it. We got into a Packard and headed for New York City. Before we left they took all insignia away. It didn't matter. The civilians knew, anyway. The cabbie, a real New Yorker said, "Yeah, you guys from the 69th are from Shelby. Don't talk, that's okay."

My buddy told us to call him about 3:30. We'd meet the girls and go out for the evening. We didn't get a room. Instead, we got smashed! We were still smashed when we met the girls. He kept bawling us out. Then, once he started drinking, we went to Club 21 and enjoyed the rest of the night. People kept buying us drinks. My buddy proposed to his girl. She accepted. They never got married, but that was some night. He got a Dear John letter. He couldn't stand up. She said to me, "Honey, will you please take Dave to the men's room?"

We slept on the floors of this apartment. At 6:30 a.m. we were down at Penn Station where we said goodbye. It was emotional.

Our last night in Kilmer we were restricted to an area, but I, "Bigfoot" Parker, "Filthy" Gray, "Juggie" Powers and "Shorty" Hartman got caught drinking beer in an off-limits PX. We were marched under escort over to a large mess hall and put to work.

(Continued on Page 44)



Howitzer Al, Hank Parker, Shorty Hartman, and Earl Ramsey.

"I GUESS WE'RE SOLDIERS, NOW?"

(Continued from Page 43)

Every time the mess sergeant separated us, we would be together in five minutes retrieving pitchers of beer we had stashed in different places. Finally, in desperation, the sergeant told us, "I know you are shipping out tomorrow morning. I will give you an easy job. Just do that, and I will not bother you again."

To this we all agreed. We were in a room and we were to crack eggs into large GI cans for breakfast. This was for a few thousand men. Somebody yelled, "Fire mission!" We all proceeded to send a few eggs crashing into a wall. In the morning, none of us ate the scrambled eggs, since many went into the GI cans, shells and all. The men seemed to enjoy them!

When we left Kilmer, a train took us to the Staten Island Ferry out of Bayonne. We were so jammed together that if our noses itched we couldn't scratch. The officers were upstairs in RHIP (Rank Has Its Privileges). When we arrived at the dock there was a big ship called the SS Lejeune, a navy boat named after Camp Lejeune. It was a captured German liner from South America. When I looked at that thing I was shocked. The gangplank had a steep angle to it. **Sergeant Stark** blew his whistle and we formed ranks. "**Mail Call**" **Hoch**, the battery clerk, carried all of our 201 files in a box. He started to falter. I carried it the rest of the way. He never said, "Thanks Buddy!"

They got us in! When we got underway, everyone ran out to see the Statue of Liberty because we were afraid we would never see her again.

To speed things they had these sailors who would grab you and throw you in a bunk. The bunks were a little bit more than six-feet long, a couple-feet wide and maybe about fourteen-inches in between. We had to fit everything in there. They kept loading men for about three days and nights. We ate twice a day. It was a Navy ship, so we thought the food would be good. There were a couple-thousand sailors on board. These guys sat on benches where they got eggs, nice biscuits, and sausage. When they got to us, they gave us wieners and beans. By the time we got to England, the wieners were green and the beans were awful. The coffee was horrible. It was tough going through that darn Navy mess hall watching the sailors eat like that. We starved on that ship and when we'd look on the deck above, we'd smell food. Parker was an ox! He was about six-six and wore size seventeen-and-a-half shoes. He said, "Let's go get something to eat. Forget them!"

Five of us went up there. There was a sign that read, "Chief Petty Officer's Mess." When we opened the door, there was a passageway with paintings and lights all over. We went through some swinging doors. Four chief petty officers sat at each table. Filipino stewards were fixing their breakfasts. They looked at us, but we just picked up some food and left. We had toast, meat, and eggs. The next day they had a Marine guard on the door!



Dave Oberst, Hank Parker, and Howitzer Al in Bad Lauchstadt, Germany.

We were allowed to buy a box of Ritz crackers or Hershey bars daily to keep from starving. We had about 9,000 troops on board and facilities were very limited. If you wanted to go to the bathroom, you sat on something like a gutter on the roof. There was a long trough which moved right along with the ship. If you weren't careful then you would get a wet keister. Some guys sat and "things" dropped down on other guys, who would holler and cuss. The water was so hard you couldn't shower. We all smelled, anyway. The guys did things with grace and humor.

I got called to KP one day. They took two artillery battalions to do all the heavy work. So there were about three of us put down in a room with four-wheeled skids full of six-pound cans of Spam. We used meat cleavers to open the cans. It got to the point that we couldn't hold the cleavers because of the grease. I never ate Spam again!

We got into Southampton late in the afternoon. A bunch of English stevedores were working the docks. It finally sunk in that we weren't going to the Pacific. They blew a whistle and all of a sudden the dock-workers disappeared. It was tea time! They came back half an hour later. We stayed aboard that night. Some of the guys blew up their life preservers for pillows. Most of them leaked!

We finally debarked and got on a blacked-out train. We weren't supposed to touch the shades, but we peeked anyway. At the stops girls were laughing and giggling. We unloaded at night in the middle of nowhere, and around 2:00 a.m. we got to this old, castle-type place. It had no conveniences. The question was where were we going to sleep? The beds were made of two-by-fours, steel strapping tape, and old mattress covers full of moldy straw. That was it. There were no officers, so about 6:00 a.m. guys started to get up. My buddy, who had been in England before, said, "Let's go. Everyone else is going to town."

At 9:00 a.m. we went to a Barclay Bank and converted some money. At 10:00 a.m. he said, "Come on, Al, let's hit the pubs."

(Continued on Page 45)

"I GUESS WE'RE SOLDIERS, NOW?"

(Continued from Page 44)

When we walked into this pub, there was this old British lady playing the piano. As soon as they saw us the people said, "There's a couple Yanks." The lady played Roll Me Over in the Clover. I got embarrassed and laughed. We were gone all day and returned just in time for supper. The two guys that came in after us really got in trouble. That was our initiation in England.

Our enlisted men made more money than a British second lieutenant. Naturally, the girls hung around the Yanks because we had money, but also because we were very aggressive compared to the English guys. The English girls said that the Englishmen took them on six dates before they'd ask for a goodnight kiss. Americans would take six minutes. The pubs were fantastic, especially the dart games. Englishmen carried their own darts. The Yankees would go up there and beat them at their own game. Oh, they'd get mad! On top of that, our dates were British girls! The average British citizens, at any rate, were nice to us. Of course, they would tell us, "You Yanks! We've been carrying the ball for so long."

Our favorite pub was the "Jolly Bird." One night I was escorting an ATS girl back to her barracks. My buddies were following, catcalling. I yelled for them to wait while I walked the girl to her door, but they got lost in the fog. I couldn't catch up, and got lost myself. It was like a Sherlock Holmes movie. Finally, I heard footsteps. It was a policeman, a "Bobby." He took me back. I gave him some cigarettes for himself and some candy for the kids. I yelled at my buddies for leaving me. They only laughed.

We would go over to Newberry C-47 base. We got some old cargo chutes there that had two-inch felt bottoms. We converted these into our fartsacks. Stark came around and said, "I don't know where you guys got these, but I want one!" And he did!

I'd go to Newberry quite often because I drove our pilots there. I'd bring along some guys and park in front of a large mess hall where there were big signs saying "No Parking." There would be a hundred guys in line, but we'd just saunter in. The people in line just moved aside and avoided eye contact. I think they thought we were some sort of frontline killer troops. At our own mess hall it usually was a spoonful of this and a spoonful of that. But at Newberry we really ate. There was ice cream, bread, jam, anything you could think of, and as much as you wanted. When we left, we would fill our pockets and helmets.

On our last "raid" on Newberry, we put on quite a show. We mounted my .50, radio, gas cans, put shiny, new bullets in the gun. We also mounted a carbine rack and wirecutter. Those Air Corps men just wondered at us. We gave them no conversation at all!

Most of the time the English didn't have much food. I'll never forget Patricia Hutchinson, my girlfriend. Her mother worked in a cookie factory, and Patricia worked in a bullet factory until 9:00 p.m. I would pick

her up at work and buy her a single drink before the pub closed. Then we would go and buy some fish and chips, which her mother served up with some tea. They had a little fireplace and maybe two or three pieces of coal. They didn't have stockings and their legs were always blue. Her mother could really slice thin bread. I gave them some immense, orange, nylon, cargo chutes from the Newberry base. Pat's mother made underclothes from them.

On Christmas Day, Filthy and I had KP. We served mess for two battalions, about 1,000 guys. We had all the turkey we wanted. My buddy Gray got us some beer. We were doing pretty well, but what a filthy, depressing kitchen it was. **Sergeant Payne**, the mess sergeant, was exasperated with us. I still think **Fowler** the cook deliberately burnt the chocolate pudding in a large stone pot and made me clean it up. We had a lively discussion about it! That night I was going over to Patricia's house. I picked up a twenty-five pound turkey and threw it out in the snow in the back. I also threw out fruit and packages of tea. When I went to the girl's house, the mother asked, "Do you mind if I invite the neighbors?"

I said, "Bring in the neighbors."

The house was full of kids and people. One of the kids, about five-year's old, picked up a piece of fruit and asked, "Mother, what is this?"

They didn't have fruit! They used the whole turkey and drank the tea. Of course, we had a surplus of all that stuff. I don't know how those people did it. They took it for years. I don't think that the people in the States could have withstood it as much as they did.

We went to the Salisbury Plain on maneuvers. The moors on the Plain were home to the legendary Hound of the Baskervilles from the Sherlock Holmes movie. It was pitch dark, eerie and foggy. Some clown there used to howl like a mad dog. It gave us goose bumps.

It didn't take us long to find out that the Army would starve troops as they got closer to combat. It was suppose to make them "lean and mean." Parker and I got KP. We did our work and then disappeared. Payne would find us in the latrine, the barracks, wherever, and finally in empty huts back of the camp. He was so upset he couldn't talk. He just dribbled and walked out. This did not please our first sergeant. It was entered in the duty roster that Big Foot and I could no longer serve KP together!

Two of my friends from the Merchant Marine visited me at Salisbury. They spent a couple of days with me. When they left they said they would rather take their chances on the high sea than put up with our chow and living conditions.

I got a three-day pass and went to London with my buddy from the Air Corps. We had a wild time, sight-seeing and carousing. We went to Piccadilly Circus, which was filled with questionable ladies of the evening.

TO BE CONTINUED
IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE BULLETIN.

69th Represented at WWII Exhibit in Atlantic City, New Jersey

Submitted By: **Tony Bummara**
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The Tropicana Casino and Resort at Atlantic City, New Jersey put on an Exhibit Display from August 29, 2001 to December 9, 2001 called WWII Remembered. Displayed were Memorabilia of WWII for Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, WACs, and the Home Front including jeeps, tanks, planes, artillery pieces, bazookas, rifles, field units and hospitals, etc. of the Allies and the Axis countries. It was really something to see. It brought back many memories.

My wife, Doris, and I, and my son, Vince, visited the Exhibit on Sunday September 16th, and lo and behold, the last exhibit before exiting was the meeting of the 69th Infantry Division, 273rd Regiment and the Russians on the Elbe River April 25, 1945. There is a uniformed soldier mannequin with the 69th patch on his shoulder, the picture of **Lt. Bill Robertson** embracing the Russian soldier, the 50th Anniversary commemorative photo (shown below) of the three 69th Division Soldiers being greeted by the Russian soldiers, and write-ups of the meeting.



The officials would not permit me to take pictures inside so my son, Vince, took a couple of pictures outside, with me showing the 69th patch on my hat and the plastic bag from one of the reunions.

Then they had a Stage Production called Stars and Stripes, which we attended and starred Connie Haynes, of the Big Band era, who sang with Frank Sinatra with the Tommy Dorsey Band, and who is now 80 years old. She sang all the hits from the 40's in solo and some duets with a male singer today, Tony Bee, (my nickname) as luck would have it, plus a male and female chorus line dancing the dances of the 40s to



Tony Bummara shown outside the exhibit.

those numbers. For her age, she put on a heck of a show and still has an excellent voice.

Anyone coming to the Atlantic City Casinos during this period should stop at the Tropicana. It is well worth it.

Attention Members of Company G, 271st



Does anyone
remember
Arthur J. Kaptur
 2nd Lieutenant,
 1st U.S. Army
 Inducted:
 November 6, 1942
 Killed in Action:
 April 8th, 1945
 in Western Germany

How many of you remember **2nd Lt. Arthur J. Kaptur**? His sister, Pat Zuchnik and nephew, Jay, are very anxious to hear from members of his Company. **Lt. Kaptur** was killed in action April 8th, 1945. He was also awarded the Silver Star for action in Germany. Pat and Jay are attempting to gather any information available regarding the Division, and specifically, his unit's action in combat.

His sister says Art was very proud of being a member of the Fighting 69th Division. Please contact Pat to assist her and Jay in their quest for information.

Pat Zuchnik

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"And this one, we don't expect to make it"

Submitted by: **John S. Tounger**

Company D, 271st Infantry

1 Pine Hills Court, Oakland, California 94611-1530

Written by: **Walter Harpain**

Company F, 273rd Infantry Regiment

2274 West Dovewood, Fresno, California 93711-2810

On February 12, 1945 I was a soldier, age 19 in a Rifle Platoon of Company F, 273rd Infantry Regiment, 69th Infantry Division. On this cold blustery night we entered the Front Lines in the snow-covered Bullingen Forest close to the Seigfried Line on the border of Germany, replacing the battered 99th Infantry Division.

We began extensive reconnaissance patrols day and night into the German defense positions. Some of the things we encountered were contact with the enemy, mined fields, enemy mortar and artillery barrages, flares illuminating the night sky, and being very cold. Enemy shells fired at us included "Screaming Meemies," intended to demoralize troops with a terrifying shrill sound as they went through the air. Some artillery shells, both enemy and friendly, would go over us with a quick "swoosh, swoosh, swoosh" sound. We joked they were going end over end, and we were actually glad to hear them because if you can hear them, they are probably far enough away not to get you.

On February 28, 1945 our Battalion was advancing near the small town of Giescheid, Germany. It was a cold and dreary afternoon. We were on the forward slope of a hill facing the enemy and there was gunfire ahead of us.

While in a foxhole, a piece of shrapnel coming from behind buzzed closely past my left ear and neck, and imbedded into a patch of snow just in front of my face. I momentarily placed my rifle between my knees, and put my hands over the back of my neck thinking they would cushion the impact in case more shrapnel came in below my steel helmet and into my neck. As a soldier in combat often does, I was wondering, "Will I be wounded or killed, the next minute, next hour, next day, or when?" I prayed to God really hard, as I had done many times, that I would survive combat and return home safely.

A short while later another soldier, whom I believe was **Sergeant Glieves**, called and motioned for me to move forward to his larger two man foxhole. I moved forward and as I was preparing to get into the larger foxhole, three of our own Tank Destroyers that our platoon leader **Lt. Warren** had called for, came down and across the hill close to our position.

Suddenly, without first hearing it, an enemy "88" artillery shell exploded very close to us with a violent blast. My uniform slapped against my body from the concussion.



Walter Harpain on a jeep belonging to John Tounger. Note the license plate - GI John.

I was struck by something, and was lifted off the ground in a twisting motion. I was knocked unconscious. I said to myself, "Hmm, so this is what it's like to be dead, not bad!" When I came to, I was in the bottom of the foxhole, halfway laying down, with my head against the muddy side. I was bleeding from my neck and I could hear the blood running past my eardrum inside my left ear, and I could feel warm blood running across my neck and face.

Sergeant Glieves lifted me into an upright position in his lap. In a state of shock, I was looking into his face and I could faintly see blood dripping from his upper lip and nose area onto me. I don't know if he was wounded or if it was my blood on him from when he reached down to raise me up. Now being upright, I could feel my warm blood running down my neck and under my uniform. In a semi-conscious state, I heard **Sergeant Glieves** screaming, "Medic, Medic, for God's sakes, Medic!" Several soldiers in another platoon nearby heard him screaming. **Sergeant Elias Bloom**, at great risk to his own life, came across the hill to help. I heard **Sergeant Glieves** telling him, "I can't stop the bleeding. We've got to stop the bleeding." I also heard him say "There's something in there, I don't know what it is, it's as big as my finger." Now I was drifting in and out of consciousness.

I couldn't see, but now I heard new voices of the Medics that arrived. It seemed they were working quickly to get bandages on me to stop the bleeding.

Then, I had an unusual experience. I felt myself floating up and out of my body, in a wafting manner, up to about eight or ten feet above the ground. I could see the most beautiful scene. It was like a big valley out there, and the colors were pastel and soft, and very peaceful. It was so very pleasing to me, and I felt so good. I was just suspended there. It was such a calm

(Continued on Page 48)

AND THIS ONE, WE DON'T EXPECT TO MAKE IT
(Continued from Page 47)

and serene place. Then suddenly, I went back down, like in a quick twisting motion, as if I was being pulled back into my body. As I was returning to my body, I could see myself being worked on. I felt as if I was being roughed up, which was probably my being given artificial respiration.

Later, on a stretcher as I was being carried up the hill in a semiconscious state, the enemy shelling increased to a great intensity. I could feel the concussion on my body as the shells exploded. The Medics had to stop, and quickly dropped me to the ground so they could take cover in order to avoid becoming casualties also.

Suddenly, stooped down, looking at me on the stretcher was a good soldier friend, **Sergeant Alfred G. Ripley**. I could faintly see him, but his eyes got as big as golf balls, and with his New York accent asked, "Harpain, Harpain, is that you?" I couldn't respond, then he said, "Well anyway Harpain, you'll have clean sheets." This gave me comfort and I appreciated his humor. I knew I was seriously wounded, something awful had happened to me, but most important, I was grateful to still be alive and I thanked God for this. I lost consciousness again.

Some distance further away, I came to when my stretcher was hurriedly placed onto the back of an army jeep. I was receiving a plasma transfusion. I could see out of the corner of my eyes we were alongside a column of our own army tanks on a dirt roadway by the Prether River, an area I had been familiar with. On the tank that was closest, one of the crewmen standing on top yelled to the jeep driver, "Hey what happened to that guy?" The jeep driver replied, "I don't know, I just haul 'em."

I was taken to the Battalion Aid Station unconscious, and there a Catholic Priest awakened me pulling at my dog tags. He was having trouble getting them out from under my uniform because my neck was heavily bandaged. I faintly heard him say to me, "I'm a Catholic priest, you need the Last Rights. I'm checking your dog tags. Yes, you are Catholic. May I give you the Last Rights?" I tried to gesture my consent. While the priest was administering the Last Rights to me, I again lost consciousness.

Later it was dark, and on my stretcher I was being placed into an army ambulance. I passed out, but came to again when the ambulance was bouncing along on a rough road. This was very painful for me. I overheard the ambulance driver say to an Infantry Rifleman, who was riding with him for protection, that it was against the Articles of War for there to be a weapon or gun inside a military ambulance. The driver added, "But what are you going to do with snipers shooting at us?"

The next time I came to, I was being carried into a large tent field hospital, with a short canvas hallway entrance. The wind was blowing hard, and I could hear the canvas flapping. I could barely see, but there was lots of activity, and people talking hastily, it seemed trying to decide what to do with me. I lost consciousness again.

The next day in a hospital in Belgium, a nurse woke me up. I was surprised and didn't know where I was, or what happened. The nurse asked, "Are you all right?" I told her that I thought I was. Then she said, "I have something here that was removed from you that you may want to show to your grandchildren someday." She took the items out of the envelope and showed them to me. Incredibly, they were one of our own U.S. Army live rounds of 30 caliber rifle ammunition with a small fragment of shrapnel imbedded into the side of it. The live round, with the shrapnel embedded in it had not gone off - it was still live. It had entered the left side of my neck just below my steel helmet, cutting off the tip of my left earlobe, and lodged against my cervical spine with such great force, it caused a curve in it. The nurse commented, "I'll put these back into this envelope with your medical records, and they will be at the foot of your bed and go with you."

Later a Red Cross Volunteer came to my bedside and offered to write a letter home to my family for me. I replied, "Oh, I'll do it. My family will be too worried if someone else wrote a letter." She replied, "But you can't." I said, "I'll try." She held a clipboard upright on my chest and I wrote a short "V-Mail" letter.

My family saved this letter for me. Another Red Cross lady came by with a cart that had magazines and candy. I indicated my thanks to her, and that I was not ready to read, or eat candy.

Not aware of how I got there, the next time I came to was in a medical evacuation train. A nurse awakened me and said she had to give me a shot with a new medicine called Penicillin, that was supposed to prevent infection. She asked, "Can I give you this shot in the rump?" I was in a groggy state and motioned for her to go ahead. She raised the covers and gave it to me in my backside. The nurse commented it was handy I had been placed in an upper level berth. Sometime later, the nurse woke me again, and said, "I'm giving you another shot. You'll get these shots every four hours. From now on, is it O.K. to give them to you without waking you?" I indicated my approval.

The next time I woke up I was being carried on a stretcher by two German Prisoners of War, up a wide spiral staircase to the second floor of a hospital in Paris. They were running up the staircase. This jostled me, and my neck hurt. I was groaning with severe pain so they slowed down, and carried me more gently to a room with lace curtains, and nurses were at my

(Continued on Page 49)

AND THIS ONE, WE DON'T EXPECT TO MAKE IT
(Continued from Page 48)

bedside. I thought to myself, "I'm in a French Civilian Hospital, wounded, and I'm grateful to be alive and for this medical care." While thanking God, I lost consciousness again.

Later, I awoke as I was being jostled around quite vigorously. I was groaning with much pain. Barely able to open my eyes, I saw an Army nurse standing next to my stretcher. She explained, "You're all right soldier. You're in an airplane being flown back to England over the English Channel. There's a storm and we are going through a lot of rough air." I could faintly see her and the tiers of stretchers on the opposite side of the plane. I lost consciousness again.

The next day, having arrived unconscious, I was in a U.S. Army Hospital near Winchester, England. In this hospital, at the head of a ward across from the nurses station was a small Intensive Care room, which I was in. It had swinging bar doors. The night nurse was going off duty and the day nurse was with her making the rounds. As they walked through the swinging doors into my room, one of the doors snapped back and firmly struck the nurses clipboard. This awakened me. As they were approaching my bed, the night nurse told the day nurse, "**And this one, we don't expect to make it.**" I tried to open my eyes, but because they had been closed most of the time for several days and nights, my eyelids were stuck together. Excitedly the night nurse said, "Soldier, do that again!" I didn't know what she meant, and she repeated, "Soldier, do that again!" I still didn't know what she meant. Then she said, "Here, I'll help you soldier, I'll help you. Let me open your eye, let me open it." With her fingers she raised my left eyelid, then she said, "Now let's do the other one," and she opened my right eye.

Then, looking down at me she began to cry, and as she was crying lowered her head onto my chest and said to me, "**Oh soldier, you are going to make it!**" This was the beginning of my recovery.

Several days later, I was moved out onto the ward, and was able to talk with people and eat soft food with assistance. The first time I could comb my hair I discovered small clumps of dried blood and dirt on my scalp. I asked a nurse about this, and she told me there had been so many soldiers wounded they had time to only treat the injuries. Several weeks later the hair on the back of my head began falling out, and I asked the nurse, "Why is my hair falling out?" She answered, "Soldier, your injury caused so much fever in the back of your neck and scalp it damaged the roots of your hair." I asked "Gosh, will it come back?" She answered, "I think it will." And it did.

Due to the curve in my cervical spine caused by the injury, my hands and feet would get a numb sensation whenever I would bend my head forward or down, or my body got jostled. I was given extensive physical therapy and traction treatments on my neck. Within five or six months the numbness condition greatly improved, and finally went away.

I was in the U.S. Army Hospital Plant 4114 six weeks, and the U.S. Army Hospital Plants 4161 and 4123 eleven weeks for convalescing and rehabilitation. I was in the reassignment process for several months. During this time my own 69th Infantry Division was first to link-up with the Russian Forces at the Elbe River and the war in Europe ended. My reassignment was to duty in France for two months in the Transportation Corps. Then to Berlin for six months in the Army of Occupation in the Transportation Corps, driving a large tractor-trailer truck throughout Europe. I returned to civilian life June 3, 1946.

Awards presented to me included the Combat Infantryman Badge, The Purple Heart, Bronze Star, Presidential Unit Citation, U.S. Army of Occupation of Germany, WWII Victory Medal, European Campaign, and Good Conduct Medal.

Two years after my discharge from the Service, x-rays taken at a Veterans Hospital confirmed that I had a curve in the cervical spine. Also, five powder grains, and two metal fragments from when the shrapnel ripped into the softer metal of the live round of ammunition were clearly visible. X-rays of my neck taken in 1995 still show there are two metal fragments in the back of my neck.

I am grateful, and thank God for my recovery and returning me home safely from combat and to an active civilian life. I am blessed with my wife Shirley and sons Ty, John, and Jeffrey.

I give my sincere thanks and appreciation to **Sergeant Glieves** and **Sergeant Elias Bloom**. I am alive today only because of the first aid they gave to me immediately when I was wounded.

I also extend my sincere gratitude to the combat medics, jeep and ambulance drivers, Army Medical Aid Stations, the hospital doctors, nurses and staff in Belgium, France and U.S. Army Hospital Plants 4114, 4161 and 4123 in England. Their dedicated medical care enabled me to survive and recover.

My thanks also to those who corroborated with me in recent years on my recollections of being wounded on the hill at Giescheid, Germany, and for their assistance in my long term efforts to find **Sergeant Elias Bloom**, whom I recently located. Hoping I am not overlooking anyone, the following assisted me in my search: **Lt. Sam Warren, Samuel Woolf, Bill Powell, John Fain, Stanley Olsyg, Gilbert Clark, Dick Israel, and Robert Hill.**

Company I, 273rd Infantry

Submitted by: **Ethel Glaser**, wife of **Al Glaser**

Company I, 273rd Infantry Regiment

38753 Ryans Way, Palm Desert, California 92211

Written by: **J. Penny** (circa 1945)

Some of them fellows of Company "I" have asked me if I could write up some of the experiences that took place during our time overseas. I have endeavored to put it on paper and the results follows:

On the 14th of November 1944 the entire division embarked or rather loaded onto boats that were to make up the convoy to take us to Europe, or so we thought. We sailed early on the morning of 15 November and it was with a sad heart that we watched the New York skyline fade away. For the majority of the men of Company I, this was the first time aboard ship. Now this boat we were on was called a ship by the Navy, but it wasn't very large, at least we didn't think so, until they pushed and pulled nine companies aboard. Yes, the Santa Maria was ready. A number of men wondered if this was left over from the days of Columbus - the Nina, Pinta, and Santa Maria. As we left New York harbor, we wondered if we would ever see it again. We didn't know. Where were we going? Rumor had it for Europe, but no one was sure.

After twelve uneventful days we landed in Southampton, England. We were required to stay aboard ship until the 27th. After dark on the 27th we debarked and after coffee and doughnuts from the American Red Cross, we loaded onto a British train, compartments and all, and headed inland.

The Third Battalion of the 273d Infantry plus Anti-Tank and Cannon Companies stopped at the small town of Basingstoke, England. Here trucks were waiting for us and we hurriedly loaded onto these and were taken to camp. Camp did I say? There were some buildings, some cots, and some mattresses. What a let down to what we had expected. But in the next few days, conditions were made much better. We had a wash house and a shower house. The latrine was away from camp and was very open. No flush toilets here. The site of the camp was an old mushroom farm located about one mile from town. We stayed here about two months. Passes were quite limited and those who did get passes didn't have much time to do anything, but go to town drink a beer or two and head for home before their time was up. There were plenty of women if you looked hard enough. Most men looked pretty hard. Some people can remember the Cottage Hospital, The Grapes, The Red Lion and of course the American Red Cross Club. Dances were the chief form of evening entertainment. Some were held on the post and some in the Red Cross Club. Girls were recruited from various industries around town and the various forms of service camps around. Remember the RAF girls and the ATS? An NCO Club was promoted on the post. Beer and pastries were served but there was nothing for the privates. Strictly an Army camp.

While at Basingstoke, Camp No. 3, I think they called it, we took our training in the form of long hikes and volleyball. Undoubtedly the fourth platoon had the best volleyball team. Why not?, with **Marchetti**, **Johnson**, **Hegardt**, and **Niemi** to play the net, not to mention the spitfire of the team - **Glaser**. And of course **DiVirgilio** was there.

At Christmas time many of the men were invited out to spend the day with some civilians in town. This made it more home like. Gifts we took were in the form of candy, chewing gum, and perhaps an orange or some sugar from the kitchen. Christmas was enjoyed by all until we got a call to alert some sixty men for shipment to the front. It was with a sad heart and muddled mind the men we picked to go. The men left about the 27th.

About the second week of January we sent out a quartering party and because they received money of French denomination, we knew that our next stop was France. I think it was during the third week of January that we got orders and I, for one, was glad. I had enough of this practice moving. My back was sore from putting on my pack and taking it off.

We returned to Southampton to sail for France and got aboard the *Morowai*, or something like that. Anyway it meant only "one way." Some of the men wondered. We landed at Le Harve and had enough time to look some of the city over. One could practically stand up and look over it. It was pretty much devastated.

About 1700 came the most miserable moment most of us ever encountered during our entire period of war. We loaded onto big semi-trailers - about fifty men to a trailer, with pack and duffel bag. We had to stand up, there wasn't room to sit down.

Shortly after leaving Le Harve we ran into a snow-storm and it kept up all night and so did we. After getting lost several times, we finally arrived at our billets. We were frozen. What a night! No need for details. If you can't remember it, you weren't there. Anyhow, the place was called Gournay. "**Old Man Meyer**" was on the quartering party and other than seeing my folks after the war was over, I never was so glad to see anyone. The men had nice billowy haylofts for quarters. The officers, naturally, were billeted in a house. And the CP had a fireplace. Pretty nice. We stayed here a while and then took off by means of trucks and 40 and 8's to Sissone.

Here we encountered mud such as was never before seen. We had to shovel paths through the mud to get where we were going. And of course we had to live in tents and the floors were so muddy that the canvas on the cots were touching the ground. The legs were buried in the mud. The 82nd Airborne was resting at Sissone and we were about two miles out. But we were fortunate enough to get a shower.

(Continued on Page 51)

COMPANY I, 273rd INFANTRY

(Continued from Page 50)

It was here we received about forty new replacements including **Lt. Wessler** and **Pvt. Harper**, and **1st Sgt. Smith** who almost scared me to death thinking that someone was coming to take my place. By the way, I just recently read in a paper that Lieutenant or now **Captain Wessler** was one of the three officers killed in Passau, the first week of January.

In a few days we moved by truck and 40 and 8s to Pepinster, Belgium, and then by truck to Spa, Malmedy, St. Vith, and that country. We got lost several times again. It was here that we first heard the big guns of war. It is rather frightening when you hear them for the first time. Anyway we got off the trucks and then proceeded on foot to a little place near Heppenbach. We walked through snow, mud, swollen streams, water until we thought we would die and then "**Old Man**" **Meyer** showed up. We knew we were there. In the vicinity of our quarters dead Germans and livestock were still laying around. The war wasn't far away.

On the 11th of February 1945, some of the officers went forward to locate our new position and to get familiar with the lay of the land. **Lt. Pilkinton** of Battalion Headquarters must have got too close to a piece of shrapnel, as he was out of commission until after the war was over. **Lt. Sullivan** took his place on the Battalion Staff.

On the afternoon of the 12th we loaded on trucks and again there wasn't enough trucks to go around, and we found ourselves very crowded. We headed for the front lines. After dark we stopped and unloaded. Someone said, "Here it is," but I couldn't see much. No wonder we still had some way to go, and naturally we had to go on foot. Good Old Infantry! About midnight we found ourselves neatly settled in our new homes and sitting right in front of the Germans. We were on the front lines. We lived in pillboxes and in the basements of houses. Basements were all that was left. This was in Neuhof, Germany.

It was on the 13th that I got my first taste or rather "Baptism of Fire." I had asked **Reynolds**, Third Platoon runner, to take me to the platoon CP. He did and just before we got there I heard the damndest noise. That was enough, I knew what was coming - 88's. It didn't take **Reynolds** and me much time to reach the CP. Shortly after we left and visited the weapons platoon, we got shelled again and this time the Third Platoon caught hell. **S/Sgt. Kleinhenz** got hit by shrapnel and was sent to the car. **Pvt. Oresick** was standing guard on the Battalion CP and was hit by a piece of shrapnel in the hand. He went back. **T/Sgt. Norton**, Platoon Sergeant of the First Platoon, accidentally shot himself in the arm and was sent back. **S/Sgt. Villacci** took over the platoon. The First Platoon and part of the Second Platoon were occupying some front line pillboxes in "L" Company's sector

so we didn't get to see them. We had to take food, water and ammunition to them every night. This was called the "Milk Run." And so passed our first day. Oh, but wait a minute. We captured a prisoner that day. I got a call from the CP. **Pfc. Laubs** had captured a Jerry and wanted to know what he should do with him. Score - Lost 3, captured 1.

On the 14th about 0700 four Germans surprised and tried to capture **Conrad's** pill box. **Pvt. Savage** was on guard and although he shot one in the leg, he was wounded seriously. **Pfc. Sterman**, radioman, was fixing a telephone wire nearby and surprised the Germans and captured another one after a hand to hand struggle. By the way, the German had a **Schmieser** and **Sterman** was unarmed. For this action **Sterman** was later awarded the Bronze Star.

For the next few days things were pretty quite and we were getting our bearings. We had to change our breakfast hour to 0400 and our supper to about 2000. This was because the Germans would shell us at 0600 and at 1700. I think about this time **Pfc. Lelchuk** had been switched to jeep driver and had brought up a load of ammunition one morning, and about the time he parked the jeep, we got shelled. **Lelchuk** hid under his trailer which was loaded with ammunition. After the shelling lifted, he took out down the road on foot. When asked about his jeep, he replied, "To hell with it, if you want it moved, move it yourself." **Lelchuk** soon went back to the mortar section. On the 17th **T/4 Bledsoe**, a cook, broke his leg in a jeep accident. It was not possible to drive with lights on and the breakfast jeep collided with one from another company and Bert got a broken leg. No more combat for him.

On the 18th **Pvt. Brannon**, who was on guard at "L" Company happened to stumble and accidentally shot himself in the hand. **Branon** was an accomplished pianist. On the 19th, **Lt. LeRoux** was hit by shrapnel and had to be evacuated. He was repairing communication lines, and getting some water to his pillbox when a shell landed nearby. Incidentally, he saved the water.

On the 20th, we got our first KIA - **Sgt. Sam Tindell** of the First Platoon. The First Platoon CP and the room occupied by **S/Sgt. Bellerson's** squad was shelled by tanks. Everything was destroyed, even the morale of some of the men. **Pfc. Jones** and **F. Egan** suffered concussions and bruises. **Pvt. Orszulak** got a piece of shrapnel in the nose and cheek. All were evacuated. For the next few days everything was quiet. We were sending out nightly patrols and guarding against attack. On the 23rd, 17 more replacements arrived. It was on this day that **Captain Castrale** got sick and had to be evacuated. **Lt. Oliver** took over command of the company. On the 27th we received orders that on the 28th we would be Regimental Reserve and would be back near Regimental Headquarters before daybreak. We were and spent a very

(Continued on Page 52)

COMPANY I, 273rd INFANTRY

(Continued from Page 51)

quiet day. That night we returned to our quarters. The Germans had sent up some flares and we looked pretty silly, standing out like a sore thumb. When we got back, I learned that **T/5 Camtalupi** had shot himself in the leg with an M-8 as he was climbing into bed. Oh yes, I had almost forgotten about the great fire that swept through the CP on the 27th. It seemed that someone had knocked over one of our lights (canteens filled with gasoline with a sock as a wick) and it had been knocked again to the floor where the fire spread. It was a great sight with fragmentation and WP grenades going off all over the place. Not to mention the M-1 rounds. Fortunately no one was hurt, although we were all scared.

On the 1st of March we moved off in the attack to push the Germans further back into Germany. We attacked the German positions at Rauher "B" and found no one there, so we pushed on a few more miles just short of a place called Schonnerberg, where the second line of pillboxes that made up the Seigfried Line were located. We spent a miserable two days and nights there. Before we got into position it had started to rain and then at night it turned cold and froze. Actually our clothes were frozen stiff. We started a fire and the smoke attracted mortar and 88 fire, like honey does bees. As I remember **Lt. McGregor** was Exec Officer and he had built the fire. Between dodging shells we did get dried out, I should say thawed out. It was here we got our first pass quote. **Lt. Mac** and **Sgt. Smink** went to Paris and three other went to Brussels and Eupen. All they got in Eupen was clean clothes. We were relieved on the 3rd by Able Company of the 272nd. We were sure glad. At least we could go back to our safe and comfortable pillboxes.

On the 4th several of the men developed trench foot, from the exposure of the two days before. We also got orders to move out and go to Hellenthal. Some how all the officers took off and I was left in complete charge of the entire company. For some reason we moved quickly and efficiently. We stayed in Hellenthal for about one week, just resting and getting cleaned up. **Captain Castrale** returned from the hospital and the men were glad. We shot a cow and had fresh beef steaks, a little tough but fresh meat.

The new replacements (reinforcements they call them now) arrived on the 8th. One M/Sgt., a S/Sgt. and a Private. The men were all formerly artillery men, but now they were doughfoots. The next day they proved themselves worthy, because we got orders to walk to Hecken. Remember what a walk that was! Mud, snow and what have you. Wearing overshoes on level ground would tire out anyone, but we wore them up and down hills and every place that night. Hecken was a nice place. Here again we did nothing but rest and take care of equipment. We knew we were a long way behind the lines now because the Division band had came down and played for us. **Lt. Ryan** joined us to fill the vacancy left by **Lt. LeRoux**.

On the 17th we moved by truck to a place called Quekenberg and stayed only overnight and then we moved to a place called Mammzerhaim just outside Ollheim. This place can best be remembered by the "The Body." REMEMBER! We stayed here a week and worked on the highway leading to the Rhine River crossing. At supper time of the 24th while everyone was about half drunk we got orders to move to Bad Nuenhar. Bad Nuenhar was quite a resort town on the west side of the Rhine River. Here an assembly of troops were gathered. I guess the entire division was here. We stayed for three days and then on the afternoon of the 27th, we moved to Burgbohl. We got our first ration of Coca-Cola and beer on the 28th and before we had a chance to drink it, we got orders to move out. We did.

The Captain and **Glaser** went on pass to Paris and **Oliver** was running the company again. We crossed the Rhine just at dusk and then marched to a field outside of Blendorf and dug in for the night. Twelve replacements joined us before crossing the Rhine, and after crossing I checked up and found one missing. Fortunately he showed up two days later. I thought he had drowned. On the 28th we moved out by truck through Coblenz and up into the hills until the road became blocked.

So being infantrymen we naturally got off the trucks and walked to the town of Horhausen about twenty miles farther. What a walk, up hills and down hills. The up hills were long and the down hills were short. We made it and set up housekeeping. No sooner had we got settled when a shot rang out, accompanied by an anguished scream and I thought we were being attacked. All that had happened was that **Pierce** had shot (accidentally of course) **Arnold** in the stomach with a German pistol. That settled it. From now on we carry our loot in our bed rolls, if we can find them.

On the 30th we moved to Aumenau by truck and foot. Here **Lt. Oliver** led us over uncharted fields to our destination. How he found it no one knows. At Aumenau we rested some more, not from fighting, but from walking, and readied our equipment. Aumenau was too quiet so on the 2nd of April, we moved by truck to a place called Altenstadt. We arrived on the 3rd of April just about dinner time, so we opened up cans and sat down to enjoy a hearty meal. They said no rest for the wicked, so the next day we moved to Laar, this time by foot. Laar was a pretty good place. It was owned by a rich fellow and he had a nice mansion with lots of loot in it. He also had a nice collection of guns. When we left a day or so later he didn't have too much stuff.

Our next stop was Wahnhausen. What a walk to get there. They said it was thirty-five miles, but I think forty-five came closer. Early the next morning we moved across some river into a town called Speele. I thought we were going to stay here but as soon as our dinner was done, we got orders to move on. It began to rain and got miserable. We hadn't gone but a few miles when we encountered some resistance. In the town

(Continued on Page 53)

COMPANY I, 273rd INFANTRY

(Continued from Page 52)

ahead of us, Lutenberg, were three Tiger tanks and some German soldiers. We weren't afraid of the soldiers, but those tanks. We didn't even have a bazooka in the battalion. I said a prayer of relief when the tanks turned tail and ran.

We ate supper in Lutenberg and got orders to jump on some tanks and move on. Something got screwed up and half of the company got on tanks and half didn't. **Lt. Oliver** went to sleep and I had to find out what was cooking. I was told to catch "C" Company's tanks. Well after standing in the rain all night, the tanks came about daybreak. We rode tanks and stopped for a roadblock and had breakfast. We were on the Autobahn and these tanks, making about forty miles per hour and nothing to hang on to and shells buzzing around close, well a person thought of a lot of things. Without any trouble we arrived at a town called Laubach. The bridge was blown and we were trying to find a place to cross the river. A patrol was sent out to find a suitable place for crossing. The patrols went out of bounds and as a result one man was killed and two were injured. **Pfc. Williams Hodges** was killed and **Sgt. King** and **Cpl. Daunt** were injured. While here we ran out of cigarettes and were taking them away from the Germans we captured.

The Captain and **Glaser** came on the 8th and things began to happen. We crossed the Werra River after dinner and headed for Gretenbach, arriving in time for a late supper. On the 9th we were assigned to Combat Command R and moved by truck to Issersheilingen and spent the night. Then we moved to Bachra and spent the next night.

On the 12th we rode all night and by-passed Weissenfels. Early the next morning as we were still on trucks we were stopped by 88 shell fire. The entire task force was held up. "L" Company tried to break through. Result! About one platoon out of commission. We returned to Beersdorf and spent the night. Good old Company "I" got the assignment to clear the ridge of the 88s and permit the task force to continue. We did without suffering a casualty. We destroyed 23 88 guns that morning. We stopped at a place called Ramsdorf that night. The CP was set up in a place that was a former beer tavern. So we had some beer. About mid-morning of the 15th we got orders to move out and head for the north. We did and arrived at Colditz about dark. We had to take the town.

This was our bloodiest battle. We lost **T/Sgt. Hadaway** and **Gallaher**, **Pfcs M.R. Peterson** and **Whaley**. Those wounded were **Lt. Ryan**, **Donnelly**, **Merck**, **Smink**, **R.E. Miller**, **Peiffer**, **Craft**, **Riney**, and **Armstrong**. It was here that **Conrad** disappeared for a day and it was found out later that he had captured a castle in which Allied Prisoners had been kept. If I am not mistaken, I think there was about 400 prisoners released there. After a half day in Colditz, we moved to Hausdorf and set up a defensive position.

On the 20th we were relieved by Company "E," 9th Infantry, 2nd Division, and we moved to a place called Altenhan. Here we encountered a large ammunition storage and manufacturing plant. Quantities of poison gases were found. Under a hill near by was an underground jet plane factory, so they said. I never did see it. Although, there was an airfield nearby just loaded with burned airplanes of German manufacture.

On the 24th we moved to Bennewitz. Our job was to take care of German and Allied Prisoners of War. We also guarded the railroad bridge between Bennewitz and Wutzen. It was then that Germans surrendered in such great numbers that we had hardly enough men to care for them. On the 26th we returned to Altenhain just loaded with watches, rings, knives, and cigarette lighters that we had found.

On the 12th of May we moved about seven miles up the road toward Leipzig to Polenz. Here our job was to guard the airfield and to take care of DPs. What a job that was. This lasted until the 29th of June when the old company was split up and 3 Officers and 31 men were sent to join the 29th Division at Bremen. I was unlucky and had to leave the outfit, so what happened after, that I don't know.

Company H, 273rd Mortar Platoon

Submitted by: **Sylvan L. Katz**
111 Marguerita Avenue, #B
Santa Monica, California 90402



D-Series March to Gulfport, Mississippi, 1943: Al Francis, Ralph Weisband, George Bogdowicz, Sylvan L. Katz, Irv Rosenfeld, Phillip Graiff, John Mickles.

Looking for Old Buddies

Submitted By: **Park M. Fellers**
Service Company, 272nd Infantry

935 Jefferson, P.O. Box 396, Hillsboro, Illinois 62049

I'm wondering if anyone out there can tell me where Warrant Officer **Harvey Thayer** might be. Also Warrant Officer **Bickerstaff. Thayer**, I think, was from Kentucky. He and I made a trip into London once. As we were heading for the railroad station to return to Winchester, the air war siren sounded and we dove head first into a safety "dungeon." We were the only ones there, so we headed for the subway. When we arrived, there were no trains and no other men from our group - only a few British civilians across the tracks. **Harvey** inquired and he was told that during an air raid, the subway trains did not run. So we had to go upstairs and take a double decker bus back to the rail station.

Bickerstaff I believe was from down south, maybe Mississippi. We were rooming in a house directly across from the winery office in Arnweiler, I think. One day he asked me if I liked wine, which I did. He poured me a slug of what looked like white wine. Instead of sipping it as one is supposed to do, I took a big slug and went blind for a moment. It was kummel which was almost pure alcohol.



Who is the G.I. on the left? His first name was John and he was from New York. If anyone knows him, please let me know.

Pierce Rice, a member of the 69th for many years, is now in a retirement home. In years past, Pierce did a lot of artwork for the Association and was involved in many other areas. He was a member of Company A, 273d Infantry.

We are sure he would appreciate mail. If anyone would like to write to him, his new address is:

Pierce Rice
 Arlington Oak Springs Retirement Home
 2000 S. Fifth Street
 Arlington, Virginia 22204

Philadelphia Area WWI/WWII Monument

Jim Boris, *Commander, VFW Post No. 333*

Battery B, 881st Field Artillery

6800 Henry Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19128-1522

I am asking for your support in helping to build this monument, not as a past president of the 69th Infantry Division Association but as **Jim Boris**, Commander of Hattal-Taylor VFW Post #333. The Philadelphia area does not have a monument thanking the men who served in WWI or WWII. That is why I am asking for your support in this drive. I would suggest that, if you are donating, after your name put 69er to let them know where your donation came from.

Hattal-Taylor VFW Post #333 World War I/ World War II Monument Fund

376 Lyceum Avenue

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19128

In our community there is no monument honoring World War I or World War II veterans who returned from these wars. In Gorgas Park, the legends World War II, Korea, and Vietnam were added to the existing monument originally dedicated to the 63 men from our community who lost their lives in World War I. A free-standing small World War II monument was added to the Wissahickon Memorial Garden originally dedicated to World War I.

All across our country, most of the World War II memorials were added to existing monuments and most of the additions were dedicated to those who made the supreme sacrifice.

The Monument Committee is raising funds for two (2) monuments to be placed on the lawn at the Hattal-Taylor VFW Post #333. These monuments will honor all those who served their country in both World War I and World War II. Your support will enable us to correct this long overdue honor to these veterans.

Dick Bates (215) 482-3868 • Jim Boris (215) 483-2064
Co-Chairmen, WWI and WWII Monument Committee

Monument Programme

Full Page Ad \$100.00

Half Page Ad \$ 60.00

Quarter Page Ad \$ 30.00

Please include a business card or copy for your ad.

Subscriber to Programme

Gold Sponsor..... \$10.00

Silver Sponsor \$ 5.00

List name, as you would like it to appear in the programme: _____

Return this form with check payable to
WWI/WWII Monument Fund and mail to:

Hattal-Taylor VFW Post #333

Monument Fund

376 Lyceum Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19128

69th Infantry Division Association Financial Statements January 1 to December 31

Cash Receipts:	<u>1997</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>
Regular Dues	27,250.00	20,420.00	23,965.00	21,483.00
Auxiliary Dues.....	3,755.00	2,901.00	3,429.00	2,959.00
Postage and Bulletin Donations	11,022.00	8,594.67	10,292.00	9,739.70
Sub-Total	42,027.00	31,915.67	37,686.00	34,181.70
Atlanta Reunion 2000				49,445.88
Orlando Reunion 1999			58,761.30	421.00
Houston Reunion 1998		47,342.14		
Danvers Reunion 1997	86,353.65			
Souvenirs	2,108.00	2,221.11	2,295.55	1,188.25
Miscellaneous Income	492.00	100.00	6.82	19.32
Interest Income	3,219.33	3,615.08	3,432.26	2,889.15
Total Receipts	134,199.98	85,194.00	102,181.93	88,145.30
 Cash Disbursements:				
Bulletins	19,831.18	21,656.08	21,912.69	22,022.27
Dues Envelopes Printing and Addressing ..	1,008.35	392.12	2,508.16	1,500.07
Postage	7,401.64	7,187.95	7,756.41	7,112.81
Roster Maintenance	698.48	800.41	844.48	806.66
Sub-Total	28,939.65	30,036.56	33,021.74	31,441.81
Office Supplies.....	1,936.97	1,871.60	1,320.49	1,638.57
Miscellaneous Administrative Expenses ...	1,969.50	1,395.50	1,443.03	2,777.16
VA Hospital	500.00	500.00	500.00	500.00
Camp Shelby Museum				5,000.00
World War II Memorial				5,000.00
Sub-Total	33,346.12	33,803.66	36,285.26	46,357.54
Hampton Reunion 2002				580.12
Fort Mitchell Reunion 2001				1,091.13
Atlanta Reunion 2000			448.46	68,296.61
Orlando Reunion 1999		449.00	68,545.42	61.72
Houston Reunion 1998		55,520.75	282.35	
Danvers Reunion 1997	86,893.21	114.66		
Souvenirs	2,367.62	3,926.40	982.79	
Total Disbursements	122,606.95	93,814.47	106,544.28	116,387.12
Excess of Receipts over Disbursements	11,593.03	(8,620.47)	(4,362.35)	28,241.82)
Total Resources January 1st	74,490.83	86,083.86	77,463.39	73,101.04
Total Resources December 31st	86,083.86	77,463.39	73,101.04	44,859.22

69th Infantry Division Association

Financial Statements

January 1 to December 31

Cash Receipts:	1994	1995	1996	1997
Regular Dues	23,448.00	22,724.50	27,617.00	27,250.00
Auxiliary Dues	2,608.00	3,443.00	3,748.00	3,755.00
Postage and Bulletin Donations	7,994.00	8,173.00	9,679.48	11,022.00
Sub-Total	34,050.00	34,340.50	41,044.48	42,027.00
Danvers Reunion 1997				86,353.65
Schaumberg Reunion 1996			65,674.23	
Myrtle Beach Reunion 1995		70,116.00		
Nashville Reunion 1994	85,528.90			
Souvenirs	4,076.00	3,012.58	2,390.25	2,108.00
Miscellaneous Income		45.00	36.00	492.00
Interest Income	1,511.701	2,427.77	2,621.42	3,219.33
Total Receipts	125,166.60	109,941.85	111,766.38	134,199.98
Cash Disbursements:				
Bulletins	27,728.61	20,306.26	17,942.36	19,831.18
Dues Envelopes Printing and Addressing ..	1,210.22	1,099.98	1,102.77	1,008.35
Postage	6,248.88	7,073.72	5,938.89	7,401.64
Roster Maintenance	728.96	904.36	828.72	698.48
Sub-Total	35,916.67	29,384.32	25,812.74	28,939.65
Office Supplies	1,114.82	1,230.64	1,296.01	1,936.97
Miscellaneous Administrative Expenses	395.03	982.30	779.49	1,969.50
VA Hospital	500.00	500.00	500.00	500.00
Sub-Total	37,926.52	32,097.26	28,388.24	33,346.12
Danvers Reunion 1997			180.05	86,893.21
Schaumberg Reunion 1996		44.01	64,218.53	
Myrtle Beach Reunion 1995		66,507.39		
Nashville Reunion 1994	83,010.16			
Rochester Reunion 1993	83.28			
Souvenirs	3,304.16	926.83	2,709.99	2,367.62
Total Disbursements	124,324.12	99,575.49	95,496.81	122,606.95
Excess of Receipts over Disbursements	842.48	10,366.36	16,269.57	11,593.03
Total Resources January 1st	47,012.31	47,854.79	58,221.15	74,490.72
Total Resources December 31st	47,854.79	58,221.15	74,490.72	86,083.75

69th Infantry Division Association Financial Statements January 1 to December 31

Total Four Years 1994-1997

Total Four Years 1997-2000

Cash Receipts:

Regular Dues	101,039.50
Auxiliary Dues	13,554.00
Postage and Bulletin Donations	36,868.48
Sub-Total	151,461.98
 Danvers Reunion 1997	 86,353.65
Schaumburg Reunion 1996	65,674.23
Myrtle Beach Reunion 1995	70,116.00
Nashville Reunion 1994	85,528.90
Souvenirs	11,586.83
Miscellaneous Income	573.00
Interest Income	9,780.22
Total Receipts	481,074.81

Cash Disbursements:

Bulletins	85,808.41
Dues Envelopes Printing and Addressing ...	4,421.32
Postage	26,663.13
Roster Maintenance	3,160.52
Sub-Total	120,053.38
 Office Supplies	 5,578.44
Miscellaneous Administrative Expenses ..	4,126.32
VA Hospital	2,000.00
Sub-Total	131,758.14
 Danvers Reunion 1997	 87,073.26
Schaumburg Reunion 1996	64,262.54
Myrtle Beach Reunion 1995	66,507.39
Nashville Reunion 1994	83,010.16
Rochester Reunion 1993	83.28
Souvenirs	9,308.60
Total Disbursements	442,003.37
Excess of Receipts over Disbursements.....	39,071.44
Total Resources January 1st, 1994	47,012.31
Total Resources December 31st, 1997	47,854.79

Cash Receipts:

Regular Dues	93,118.00
Auxiliary Dues	13,044.00
Postage and Bulletin Donations	39,648.37
Sub-Total	145,810.37
 Atlanta Reunion 2000	 49,445.88
Orlando Reunion 1999	59,182.30
Houston Reunion 1998	47,342.14
Danvers Reunion 1997	86,353.65
Souvenirs	7,812.91
Miscellaneous Income	618.14
Interest Income	13,155.82
Total Receipts	409,721.21

Cash Disbursements:

Bulletins	85,422.22
Dues Envelopes Printing and Addressing ...	5,408.70
Postage	29,458.81
Roster Maintenance	3,150.03
Sub-Total	123,439.76
 Office Supplies	 6,767.63
Miscellaneous Administrative Expenses ..	7,585.19
VA Hospital	2,000.00
Camp Shelby Museum	5,000.00
WWII Memorial	5,000.00
Sub-Total	149,792.58
 Hampton Reunion 2002	 508.12
Fort Mitchell Reunion 2001	1,091.13
Atlanta Reunion 2000	68,745.07
Orlando Reunion 1999	69,056.14
Houston Reunion 1998	55,803.10
Danvers Reunion 1997	87,007.87
Souvenirs	7,276.81
Total Disbursements	439,352.82
Excess of Receipts over Disbursements.....	(29,631.61)
Total Resources January 1st, 1997	74,490.83
Total Resources December 31st, 20007	44,859.22

CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS AND COMMUNICATION SCHEDULE

May I just make note to all leaders of Chapters, Groups, Branches, Companies, Battalions, Regiments, Recon, Artillery, AAA, and T.D.'s to get your Activities Schedules to **Bulletin Headquarters, Box 69, Champion, Pennsylvania 15622-0069 or 183 Pineslope Road, Acme, Pennsylvania 15610-9606**, as soon as possible. We try to work at least a year ahead, as we only put out three Bulletins a year. When mailing in this information, do send your organization's name, person in charge (Chairman), address, city, state, zip, telephone numbers including area codes, dates, location, and anything else that you feel might be of interest for members to know.

2002

JANUARY 31st, 2002

**Deadline for news material and pictures for:
Bulletin Volume 55, Number 2
January, February, March, April 2002
Bulletin expected mailing date is late April or early May.**

* * * * *

April 14th thru April 17th, 2002

**CALIFORNIA WESTERN CHAPTER
2002 SPRING ROUNDUP**

**LAUGHLIN, NEVADA
Edgewater Hotel and Casino**

Room Rates: \$14 a night plus 9% room tax

Business Meeting: Wednesday, April 16th
followed that evening by a Cocktail Hour, Memorial Service, Dinner and an Open Speaker's session.

More details will be announced in a later bulletin.

For Further Information Contact:

Walt Harpain
2555 West Bluff Avenue, #112
Fresno, California 93711-0380
Telephone: 559/432-2133 or 559/432-3703
Fax: 559/432-2155

* * * * *

MAY 15th, 16th, 17th and 18th, 2002

**MIDWEST GROUP SPRING MEETING
MISHICOT, WISCONSIN
Fox Hills Golf Resort and Conference Center**
250 West Church Street
Mishicot, Wisconsin 54228

Reservations: Write to the resort or call toll free 1-866-308-0383. A block of rooms at reduced rates will be held until April 15, 2002, so don't delay. Mention the 69th Infantry Division when making reservations.

Rate: \$75.00 plus tax.

Location: North on I-43, East on State Highway 310,
North on County Trunk B to Mishicot.

Program:

Wednesday, May 15th: Check-In Time is 4:00 p.m.
Hospitality Room, Dinner at the Resort

Thursday and Friday, May 16th and 17th:

- Golf,
- Sightseeing for Non-Golfers
- Dinner to be Arranged.

Saturday, May 18th: On Your Own.

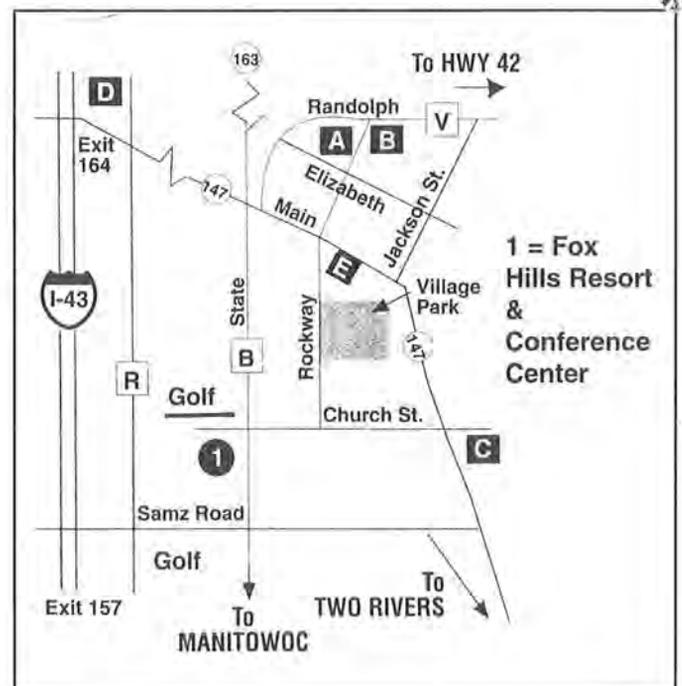
Check out by 11:00 a.m.

For Further Information Contact:

Eugene J. Pierron
2310 Highway D
Belgium, Wisconsin 53004-9754
Telephone: 262/285-3702

Fran and Zita Enright
7304 West Georgia Avenue
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53220-1114

NOTE: Any 69er can attend the Mishicot Meeting and friends of 69ers are welcome too.



MAY 31st, 2002

**Deadline for news material and pictures for:
Bulletin Volume 55, Number 3
May, June, July, August 2002
Bulletin expected mailing date is early to mid-July due to early reunion.**



“Taps”

The melody of TAPS was composed by a non-musical (musician with no formal knowledge) nor the technical names of any of the notes. Union General Daniel Butterfield whistled it for Brigadier General Oliver Norton who wrote the notes on the back of an envelope July 2, 1862. The plaintive bugle notes that bring an involuntary lump to the throat typifies our loss and feelings of these two great buglers.

THE WORDS TO “TAPS” SAY IT ALL

**Day is done, gone the sun
From the lakes, from the hills,
from the skies.
All is well, safely rest, God is nigh.
Thanks and praise for our days
'neath the sun, 'neath the stars,
'neath the sky.
As we go, this we know. God is nigh.**

Harry G. Austin
P.O. Box 827
Mars, Pennsylvania 16046
Anti-Tank - 272nd

Thomas F. Barrett
6205 W. Owen Lane
Homosassa, Florida 34446
Div. Hq.

Arthur D. Bartholomew
11881 Kensington Road
Rossmoor, California 90720
Btry. C - 880th F.A.

Raymond L. Clanton
196 Harris Bridge Road
Stony Point, North Carolina
28678
Co. A - 273rd

Jack Cohen
630 Sixth Street
Lakewood, New Jersey 08701
Btry. C - 879th

John S. Crabtree
HC 85, Box 156
Stearns, Kentucky 42647
Co. D - 369th Medics

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1302 S. Baylor Street
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Albert E. Desteuben
172 Forest Street
Saugus, Massachusetts
01906
Co. C - 272nd

Gerald Emmons
87 Burnside Avenue
Sharon Hill, Pennsylvania
19079
Co. C - 272nd

Ralph D. Fitzgerald, Jr.
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Sykesville, Maryland 21784
Co. L - 271st

Mark O. Glaser
824 Treasure Road
Venice, Florida 33595
Btry. B - 880th

*** **WILLIAM R. MATLACH** ***
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Funk, Nebraska 68940
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Co. F - 272nd

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28376
Co. A - 271st

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Bogalusa, Louisiana 70427
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Luther Lee
306 N. King Avenue
Dunn, North Carolina 28334
Co. D - 461st AAA

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6937 Chestnut Avenue
Falls Church, Virginia 22042
Div. Hq.

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Fresno, California 93704
69th Quartermaster

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Btry. C - 879th

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Belgrade Lakes, Maine 04918
Co. B - 271st

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2029 Country Club Drive
McKeesport, Pennsylvania
15135
Co. C - 271st

Richard J. Paumier
605 Bachtel Street E.
N. Canton, Ohio 44720
Btry. B - 724th F.A.

Rev. James Revis
2701 S. Linwood Road
Gastonia, North Carolina
28052
Co. D - 461st AAA

Irvin Richau
Box 157
Halliday, North Carolina
58636
Btry. C - 880th F.A.

Donald L. Say
R.R. 1, Box 140
Austin, Pennsylvania 16720
Co. H1 - 271st

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3374 Mildred Lane
Lafayette, California 94549
Hq. - 273rd

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Rowland, North Carolina
28383
Co. D - 461st AAA

George R. Smith
15345 W. Maple Road
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Btry. B - 879th F.A.

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Steamboat Springs,
Colorado 80477
Btry. B - 881st F.A.

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Lake Village, Indiana 46349
Co. K - 273rd

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Buffalo, West Virginia 25033
Co. H - 273rd

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Anti-Tank - 273rd

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Co. B - 269th

Harry N. Williams
1304 Wright Avenue
La Porte, Indiana 46350
Co. K - 273rd

Jack Woods
1206 South 10th Street
Las Vegas, Nevada 89104
Co. HS - 272nd

Ladies' Taps

JUDY SNEARY
Wife of John Sneary
Company H, 273rd



the 69th

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Company G, 271st Infantry



These buddies had a great time together at the 2001 Annual 69th Reunion

Standing, left to right: N.C. Harrison, Glen Hunnicut, Emery Jagy, Clarence Jensen, Verne Loveland, Cecil Fernandez. Kneeling: Scott Gresham, George Phillips, Ed Chando. Note: Zane Grey was present but is not pictured.

George Phillips, 259 Lexington Drive, Little Egg Harbor Twp., New Jersey 08087-1304

BULLETIN STAFF

Dottie Witzleb

Editor

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and Material*

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Treasurer

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Send Dues to Jane

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Telephone: 724/335-9980

*Send Address Changes,
New Members
and Deaths to Paul*

Dottie Witzleb

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*Send Ladies' Auxiliary
Material to Dottie*