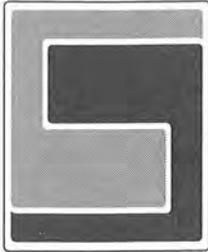


# FIGHTING 69TH INFANTRY DIVISION

## ★★★★ *Association, Inc.*



VOLUME 60, NO. 2

www.69th-infantry-division.com

JANUARY – FEBRUARY – MARCH – APRIL  
2007

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

P.O. BOX 4069  
NEW KENSINGTON, PA 15068-4069  
724/335-9980

# bulletin

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The Old Man “General Reinhardt” Crossing the Rhine  
Note the streamlined Jeep



Aerial View of the Dragon’s Teeth at Umbreth  
Introduction to the Siegfried Line

# THE MAIL BOX

By **Dottie (Witzleb) Shadle**  
Editor



*Company E, 273rd Infantry Regiment*  
P.O. Box 4069

New Kensington, Pennsylvania 15068-4069  
Telephone: 724/335-9980  
E-Mail: danne345@aol.com

**Mr. Stanley Eskin**, 1074 Exeter E, Boca Raton, Florida 33434-2973 — Co. A, 269th Engineers: Every time I read an article where a 80+ year old veteran is found and then given an overdue medal of some kind, I find myself thinking back to an incident which happened back in 1944/1945.

It was while our unit was in Germany and I was giving my first and last haircut to **Sgt. Joe Monteleone** when I walked a T/5 with a pencil mustache (I have forgotten his name) and said to Joe, "Look what I've got here." He showed him a box full of medals - Bronze Stars, Silver Stars and I don't know what else was in the box. I've often wondered what became of these medals and how they were distributed.

Were these medals given out for valor, for deeds performed, to deserving men or were they just given out? I sometimes wonder.

**Paul P. Blitz**, 318A Savannah Road, Baltimore, Maryland 21221-4812 — Hq., 271st: I did not go overseas with the 69th but trained with it for over a year before going to Europe as a replacement. I was assigned to the 30th Infantry Division and I stayed with them until the war ended.

My former unit was Hq. Company, 2nd Battalion, 271st Infantry. I read the Bulletin thoroughly hoping to find news of my old buddies and my former unit. So far I have not been able to learn anything from them.

My service with you began on May 10, 1943 and ended in June 1944 when I was shipped out. In closing, I want to wish you a Happy New Year and eagerly await the next issue.

**Robert Martinelli**, 60 Hagen Oaks Court, Alamo, Colorado 94507 — 69th Quartermaster: I was a Buck Sergeant in the Q.M. Company. I'm still looking for some of my pals. I went on the internet and it only talked about the 271 Infantry. The web site had a picture of 69th Q.M. Company but no names! If there are any Quartermaster guys out there, please contact me.

**Richard W. Bramble**, 226 Conover Street, Burlington, New Jersey 08016 — Hq, 273rd: I enjoy reading the Bulletin; I hope the Association does not break up. I would miss the news about the 69th and people who were part of my life during WWII.

**Carl Fitchett, Jr.**, 801 West Pearsall Street, Dunn, North Carolina 28334-4733 — Btry. D, 461st AAA: Please accept my thanks for your 69th Infantry Bulletins. Our small separate unit traveled with you from your entry in Europe until the end at Torgau.

**Mrs. Ilse Gordon**, 1016 La Corte Terrace, Cranford, New Jersey 07016 — Widow, Btry. C, 881st F.A.: I must compliment you on the great job you are doing keeping the Association going. Your publication is terrific. I am the widow of two 69th members - **Nat Suckerman** and **Issac Gordon**.

**Leroy Goetz**, 152 Glen Hill Drive, Slinger, Wisconsin 53086-9652 — Btry. C, 880th F.A.: I was **Lt. O'Brien's** jeep driver. Started at the Battle of the Bulge and ended meeting the Russians on the Elbe River.

**Dr. Frederick Hauser**, 1255 N. Gulfstream Avenue, Sarasota, Florida 34236-8931 — Co. E, 271st: Ever wonder why that sergeant squad leader of Company E never got to go overseas with you. Since I'm that guy, I know you've been curious about that for the past sixty plus years.

I trained with you at Shelby and a day or two before you all shipped to Kilmer and then England, head-quarter division ordered me to report to tell me that as a psychologist (M.A. in psychology), I was to be kept at Shelby and given a commission since I knew guys at AG Division. I thought they were pulling my leg and in my state of shock asked, "One of my bags has already been picked up. You mean you can actually yank me now?" The answer, "WD21 directs us to hold you guys who have served as clinical psychology technicians." That's why I was pulled at the last minute.

How did the direct commissioning go? It didn't. After hanging around Shelby for weeks, I got the word that it was denied due to age - not old age, but insufficient age. More of GI efficiency. Trying to reorganize my military affairs, I figure that if I could get into some OCS, that perhaps I could get back into psychological work. So I applied for infantry (required) and the medical administrative corps, in which psychologists were assigned. That finally worked and after 4 months of OCS, those of us who were general service were immediately assigned to another school (Battalion surgeon assistant), because there was a serious shortage of MD battalion surgeons in overseas battalion aid station.

So, what next? Graduation from that six week course and orders to ship overseas (what again!) and then orders rescinded due to declaration of VE Day.

So I owe all you guys a major debt for the sacrifices you made and my admiration for the great job you and the 69th did for our country.

## Looking for Info on **Bernard J. Dukowitz**

*Sergeant — Company D, 271st Infantry*

**Please write to his son: Rick Dukowitz**

1431 Northway Place

St. Cloud, Minnesota 56303

Telephone: 320/253-5699

E-Mail: rrdukowitz@charter.net

# A Message from Paul and Dottie Shadle President and Editor

Paul Shadle, Company E, 271st Infantry  
P.O. Box 4069 • New Kensington, PA 15068-4069  
Telephone: 724/335-9980



President Paul Shadle and Editor, Dottie Shadle

As everyone is aware the cost of printing and mailing the bulletins and dues notices have risen in the past few years. We understand that postage is also scheduled to go up again this spring. With the approval of the Board of Directors, we sent out 1,525 first class letters to members that have not paid their dues in the past three years. We have received responses that range from "Deceased for the past 31 years," "Please delete my name from the roster because I did not know I had to pay dues," and "Please remove my name for various reasons."

As a result we are in the process of removing approximately 1,100 members from the roster. If you know of any member that received this notice and is still interested in receiving the bulletin, please have them notify Paul Shadle. It will be required that they pay dues. We are keeping a list of the members that are being removed.

We are looking forward to seeing you at our 60th Annual Reunion in Salt Lake City, Utah.

## NOTICE

**If you are NOT interested in receiving the Bulletin in the future, please let us know.**

**If you are still interested in receiving the Bulletin, please make sure you dues are paid in full and are up to date.**

## HAVE YOU PAID YOUR DUES! DUES YEAR FOR 2006-2007

August 1, 2006 to July 31, 2007  
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:

**TREASURER**

**John Barrette**

P.O. Box 215

Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin 54495-0215

Telephone: 715/423-4921

**Do not send dues to  
Paul and Dottie Shadle.**

## 69th Infantry Division Association 60th Annual Reunion SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

August 19th thru 27th, 2007

*See Pages 10 & 11 for Registration Forms*

## MOVING

Please print your new address below:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please send this form  
and your old address label to:

**PAUL SHADLE**

P.O. Box 4069

New Kensington, PA 15068-4069

Please allow six weeks advance notice.

# The Night I Was Wounded

*The story of a night that I will never forget  
as a young man of nineteen years of age.*

**Submitted By: Charles Otto**

*Company E, 271st Infantry*

1664 Fry Court, Dunedin, Florida 34698

**April 18, 1945**

It was in the evening, only eight days before my division would meet up with the Russians at the Elbe River and end the war for our division.

I was in the 69th Infantry Division, 2nd Battalion, 271st Regiment and E-Co. as a BAR Man (Browning Automatic Rifleman) in an Infantry Squad.

The sky was overcast and it was beginning to get dark. E-Company had been sent to clear the small town of Pulga, Germany. When this was done, G-Company was rushed through to hit Zwenkau from the South. The attack was successful and E-Company was freed to tackle six-inch and 88 artillery pieces, with sandbags around each, which had stopped F-Company from advancing.

It all started when we were coming out of the woods and came into a very large clearing. As was the practice when this would happen, an officer, who in this case was our Captain, would check the clearing with his binoculars. In doing so he spotted some 12 to 18 artillery positions, which were all sandbagged in.

Captain gave an order that we were going to take their positions with the principle of marching fire and assault. This meant that all three platoons were going to get up, start walking and as soon as we were fired upon we were to hit the ground and commence firing. While firing, we were to start walking across the open field about five yards apart and overtake their positions. I was the sixth man from the end of the left flank. Doing this, there was a price to pay.

By the time we had reached the artillery positions it was totally dark and since it was already overcast, we could hardly see a thing. I heard **Lt. Sharp** yelling for **Bob Ort** and I to throw a couple phosphorus grenades. We threw them high enough so that when they exploded, it would be about 10 or so feet above the ground. When they went off we could see the Krauts ducking their heads down into their foxholes. We hollered to each other, "Watch out! They're in their foxholes."

At this point I was firing quite a few rounds of ammo. As a BAR man, I was firing a tracer about every third round. This was a problem for me as well as a problem for them. It revealed my position.

As I was loading a new clip in my BAR - I had two left besides the one I was loading - I suddenly became numb all over my body. I thought, "Is this the way old people feel when they are having a stroke?" I didn't know what had happened. Since I was firing from my right side, the weight of the BAR pulled me down on my right side.



I realized I was hit because of the terrible pain, but I didn't know where. I felt my head and thought, "If I'm hit in the head I wouldn't know what was happening." I felt my chest and thought, "If I'm hit there I'm going to die." Then I felt my back and my hand was all wet, so I put my hand up to my mouth and realized it was blood. By this time the pain was so great I couldn't think straight. I started crying out to the Lord to take me home to be with Him. I had been hit with a German rifle in the lower right side of my abdomen and the bullet had gone through my body and came out about four inches above my left hip joint.

It had started raining pretty hard. Everything seemed to happen all at once. My First Sergeant came to me and knelt down. He told me that he had been helping censor our mail and said, "Otto, if you hang on to that faith that you write home about He'll see that you get home." I haven't seen or heard from him since that night of April 18, 1945.

I faded in and out of consciousness and so the things I tell about now were related to me by my close buddy **Bob Ort**, who received a flesh wound in his thigh the same night that I was wounded. Someone in our squad was told to bring Bob over to where I was laying so they could find me when the firing stopped.

Bob said that it was raining and that my head was in a low spot and that water was starting to run into my mouth. He yelled for someone to come and get me before I drowned. I don't know the time frame but soon after the gunfire stopped the medics carried Bob and I over to a little shanty.

As he tells it, "While we were lying in the shanty, the medic stuck his head in and asked, "How is Otto?" Bob replied, "I think he's dead." Bob told me later, at a reunion of our Division in the late 1980's, that while we were laying there - before he thought I was dead - that I had asked him to pray for me. He replied, "Otto, I don't know how to pray but you've been praying, so

*(Continued on Page 5)*

## THE NIGHT I WAS WOUNDED

(Continued from Page 4)

just keep it up.” Then he said that I had asked him to, “Hold my hand.” He said that he put my hand up on my chest and kept his hand on mine. In a few minutes he said that he felt my hand go limp so he tried to get my pulse and tried to feel if I was breathing. He was sure I was dead and that was why he said that to the medic.

It wasn't until the next morning that I was taken back to the aid station. I was in a field hospital, an evacuation hospital and then an Army hospital in Paris, France.

On July 7, 1945, I was flown back to the States. After a year and four months in Army hospitals in Rome and Augusta, Georgia, I was discharged from Oliver General Hospital in Augusta, Georgia. I have been on crutches most of the time since the war and for several years I have been wheelchair bound.

Sometime in 1987, I was taking a shower when we received a phone call. My wife took the phone call. It was my good buddy **Bob Ort**. When I returned his call he couldn't believe I was alive. He cried over the telephone when he heard my voice. Later, in Pennsylvania, at one our 69th Division reunions we met again for the first time since that night we were both wounded.

I turned 79 on January 23, 2005 and wouldn't want to close this without giving thanks to my Savior for sparing my life and for being with me all these years. I praise Him that, He never fails and has always supplied our needs. I also give thanks to my dear wife of 59 years, Anita, for always being by my side through many surgeries. We met each other at church, in our young peoples group, when we were 16 years of age.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Attn.: Co. I, 273rd Men Anyone Recall Fred Peiffer?

Submitted By: **Jeffrey Peiffer**

4707-B Charles Road

Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania 17050-7710

Telephone: 717/761-1531

Dear Friends of the 69th Division:

My father **Fred Peiffer** was a Bar Man in the 3rd Squad, 3rd Platoon, Company I of the 273rd. He was a replacement who joined the company in January 1945 just before the 69th went on the line. He was with Company I until he was wounded at Colditz on April 15th, 1945. The picture I am enclosing was probably taken after the war of the 3rd Platoon, where and when I don't know but would like to find out.

The picture is a blow-up of a small snapshot I found after Dad's death June 18, 2005. I brought the original to the 2006 reunion and have been able to find a few things out. I have able to identify **Carl McNair** (1st left, 1st row), **Glen Oliver** (4th left, 1st row) and my dad (4th left, 2nd row). **Mr. McNair** believes the building in the back was a sawmill.

My dad was always proud of his service although he seldom talked of it. He did say he doubted many would remember him as he was usually on patrol and not in bivouac, except for **Mr. Meick**, **Mr. McNair** and his 3 friends from Franklin County, PA with whom he was inducted, trained and serviced with in the 3rd Platoon. **John Loeb**, **Glen Oliver** and **“Shorty” Oberholzer**. If anyone can help me in my quest please write or call. (I don't have email).



*3rd Platoon, 3rd Squad of Company I, 273rd Infantry*

## South Carolina Holocaust Archives Seeks WWII Liberators and Witnesses

From: **Karen Tannenbaum**, Field Researcher  
Holocaust Archives Project  
College of Charleston  
Charleston, South Carolina  
or  
100 Aberdeen Drive  
Greenville, SC 29605  
Telephone: 864/232-4480  
E-Mail: ktann@charter.net

I am sending this communication because the 69th Division appears on the list of liberator units provided by the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum and other sources. I am hoping you can assist my research by taking one or all of the following steps.

I am writing on behalf of the Holocaust Archives, a project of the Jewish Heritage Collection at the College of Charleston, Charleston, South Carolina. The Holocaust Archives is collecting artifacts from survivors and witnesses to the barbarity of Nazi rule in Europe from 1933-1945. We have limited our search to people who grew up in South Carolina, lived here at some time during their life, or are now living in our state. We are interested in the experiences of all people who had first-hand contact with the effects of the Holocaust, not just Jewish victims. Consequently, we are trying to contact U.S. Army veterans or their descendants who were liberators or visitors to concentration camps in the final weeks of the war or in the days following the end of hostilities.

We are interested in material related to the veteran's firsthand experience seeing a Nazi concentration camp either as a liberator or as a witness in the days following liberation. We are interested in knowing if the veteran spoke about the experience, wrote about it, had photographs or other memorabilia.

Also, many family members of veterans have documents, photos, or memoirs written by their liberator relative and many are happy to share this information with the archives.

Please contact me by e-mail, phone or mail if you have any questions. Thank you in advance for your attention to this matter. I look forward to hearing from you.

## Anti-Tank, 272nd Infantry

**Mr. Russell Koch**

*Anti Tank Company, 272nd Infantry*  
14054 German Road  
Bucyrus, Missouri 65444-8924

I appreciated the article about **Bruno Stefanoni**. I didn't know him while I was in the service, but got acquainted during 69th reunions. A real nice guy and a lot of fun.

Enclosed find picture and obituary of Staff Sergeant **Dallas Shelton**, member of A.T. Co., 272nd. I also got acquainted with **Dallas** at a 69th reunion when a number of men from Anti-Tank Company, 272nd met. Dallas was a real gentleman and a good friend who enjoyed the get together.

**Ray Sansoucy** who was a member of **Dallas'** squad and I attended the funeral of **Dallas**. Ray and I were part of the closing service to remove the American flag from the coffin and present it to his wife, Laura Nell.

We enjoy the bulletin and look forward to each issue. You do a fine job, Dottie. We missed the reunion last year, high gasoline prices scared us out. We are looking forward to seeing everyone in Salt Lake City.

Best wishes to all.



*Photo taken at Dallas' farm in Dahlgren, Illinois.  
Left to right are: Dallas, his wife, Laura Nell, my wife Betty, and myself, Russell Koch.*

**DEADLINE FOR MATERIAL FOR NEXT BULLETIN IS**

**MAY 31st, 2007 • Volume 60, No. 3**

**May, June, July, August 2007**

***Get Your Material In On Time! Write those stories!***

**69th INFANTRY DIVISION ASSOCIATION  
AUGUST 20 - 26, 2007  
RED LION HOTEL – SALT LAKE CITY, UT**

**Monday, August 20**

Early Bird arrivals

**Tuesday, August 21**

Hospitality and Souvenir Rooms open

3:00pm - 5:00pm **Reunion Registration open**

Dinner and evening on your own

7:00pm - 11:00pm Hospitality Room open

**Wednesday, August 22**

8:00am - 8:30am **Reunion Registration open**

9:00am - 4:00pm HILL AIR FORCE BASE AEROSPACE MUSEUM /  
ANTELOPE ISLAND (description follows)

12:00pm - 5:00pm Hospitality Room open

2:00pm - 5:00pm **Reunion Registration open** (additional hours will be  
posted at the reunion, if needed)

6:00pm - 7:00pm Cash Bar

7:00pm - 10:00pm Dinner Buffet

**Thursday, August 23**

9:00am - 12:30pm KENNECOTT COPPER MINE (description follows)

12:00pm - 5:00pm Hospitality Room open

2:00pm - 4:00pm Board of Directors' Meeting

Early dinner, on your own, before tour departure

7:00pm - 9:30pm MORMON TABERNACLE CHOIR REHEARSAL  
(description follows)

**Friday, August 24**

10:00am - 4:30pm CITY TOUR / GARDNER HISTORIC VILLAGE  
(description follows)

12:00pm - 5:00pm Hospitality Room open  
Dinner on your own

8:30pm - 11:30pm PX Beer Party

**Saturday, August 25**

8:00am - 9:00am Continental Breakfast in the Hospitality Room

9:00am - 12:00pm Membership Meeting

9:00am - 12:00pm Ladies Auxiliary Meeting

1:00pm - 4:00pm Hospitality Room open

6:00pm - 7:00pm Cocktail Hour with Cash Bar

7:00pm - 7:30pm Memorial Service

7:30pm Banquet served, followed by music and dancing

**Sunday, August 26**

7:30am - 9:00am Breakfast Buffet

**CANCELLATION AND REFUND POLICY FOR ARMED FORCES REUNIONS, INC.**

For attendees canceling reunion activities prior to the cut-off date, Armed Forces Reunions, Inc. (AFR) shall process a full refund less the non-refundable AFR registration fee (\$7 per person). Attendees canceling reunion activities after the cut-off date will be refunded to the fullest extent that AFR's vendor commitments and guarantees will allow, less the non-refundable AFR registration fee. **Cancellations will only be taken Monday through Friday from 9:00am until 5:00pm Eastern Standard Time, excluding holidays.** Please call (757) 625-6401 or email [cancel@afri.com](mailto:cancel@afri.com) to cancel reunion activities and obtain a cancellation code. Refunds processed 4-6 weeks after reunion. Canceling your hotel reservation does not cancel your reunion activities.

## 69th INFANTRY DIVISION REUNION - TOUR DESCRIPTIONS

### HILL AIR FORCE BASE AEROSPACE MUSEUM / ANTELOPE ISLAND

**Wednesday, August 22**

Hill Air Force Base Aerospace Museum is home to one of the finest collections of old and current military aircraft in America. On this tour, you will see over fifty aircraft including the B-17G "Flying Fortress," C-47 "Sky Train," P-51D "Mustang," and many more. Also included at the 40-acre museum is a film and gift shop. Lunch will be at the Hill Air Force Base Officers Club and will consist of a deli sandwich, pasta salad, fruit, dessert, and a beverage. Proceed on to Antelope Island, the largest of the Great Salt Lake's ten islands. Rich in scenic beauty and natural features, Antelope Island is home to deer, bobcats, coyotes, many varieties of birds and waterfowl, and a small herd of elk. The most famous inhabitant is the American bison. Originally introduced in 1893, this world-renowned herd now numbers 600, and is managed by the Utah Division of Parks and Recreation. As you drive the 7.2-mile causeway, take in the serene beauty of the lake as you approach the island. Upon arrival, stop at the Visitor Center, which includes interpretive exhibits, and a bookstore/gift shop. Snacks are available at Buffalo Point near the Visitor Center. Time permitting; your guide will take you on a short driving tour of the island. Please do not approach bison, as they are unpredictable animals and can be quite dangerous if they feel threatened.

**9:00am board bus, 4:00pm back at hotel**

**\$51/Person includes bus, guide, lunch, and admission.**

### KENNECOTT COPPER MINE

**Thursday, August 23**

Kennecott Copper Mine is the world's largest man-made excavation. One-half mile from top to bottom, this magnificent expanse could easily shelter two Empire State Buildings stacked one on another. Observe an operation whose cumulative sales from extracted ore exceed, eightfold, the yields of the Comstock Lode, the Klondike, and the California gold rush combined. On the way, learn about the Great Salt Lake, the Dead Sea of the Americas, and the explorers who discovered it. You'll also stop at the House of Copper Gift Shop.

**9:00am board bus, 12:30pm back at hotel**

**\$23/Person includes bus and guide.**

### MORMON TABERNACLE CHOIR REHEARSAL

**Thursday, August 23**

Temple Square is the most popular attraction in Utah with several million visitors each year. The tour will head to the intriguing domed Tabernacle, home to the world renowned Mormon Tabernacle Choir and the 12,000-pipe Mormon Tabernacle Organ. Though the building has a somewhat understated exterior, it is truly splendid inside. It has such extraordinary acoustics that a pin dropped on stage with a full crowd can be clearly heard in back – 170 feet away. Enjoy the world famous Mormon Tabernacle Choir weekly rehearsal.

**7:00pm board bus, 9:30pm back at hotel**

**\$22/Person includes bus and escort.**

### CITY TOUR / GARDNER HISTORIC VILLAGE

**Friday, August 24**

Salt Lake City is a thriving cultural center and is a beautiful and vibrant city. Board the bus for a tour that will include stops at some of Salt Lake City's most famous sites. You will see Brigham Young's homes, the historic Union Pacific Railroad Depot, and the Utah State Capitol. Visit Temple Square, the symbolic heart of the world-wide Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the Mormons. The Square includes the six-spired Temple Tabernacle, Assembly Hall, monuments and the elegant gardens for which the area is known. You'll also see the Governor's Mansion and some of Utah's most opulent homes, built nearly a century ago. Lunch on your own at Trolley Square, a high fashion shopping, restaurant, and entertainment complex located in buildings that once housed the city's trolley transit system. Reboard the bus and drive through the University of Utah campus, home of Olympic Village and the ceremonies for the 2002 Winter Olympics, and enjoy the spectacular views of the city, valley, and Great Salt Lake. Visit the military museum located at Fort Douglas. There you will see displays tracing the history of the military in Utah. Our last stop will be Gardner Historic Village, a nostalgic cluster of old-time stores and a museum. From sofas to souvenirs, Primitive Country to Victorian, you'll find the goods to be of excellent quality and reasonably priced. The original mill is listed on the National Historic Register. *Note: Depending on the actual number of people registered for this tour, the route may differ for each bus.*

**10:00 board bus, 4:30pm back at hotel**

**\$33/Person includes bus and guide. Lunch on your own.**

Driver and Guide gratuities are not included in the tour prices.

Please plan to be at the bus boarding area at least 5 minutes prior to the scheduled time.

All trips require a minimum of thirty people, unless otherwise stated.

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intentionally.*

## 69<sup>th</sup> INFANTRY DIVISION ACTIVITY REGISTRATION FORM

Listed below are all registration, tour, and meal costs for the reunion. Please enter how many people will be participating in each event and total the amount. Send that amount payable to ARMED FORCES REUNIONS, INC. in the form of check or money order (no credit cards or phone reservations accepted). Your cancelled check will be your confirmation. Returned checks will be charged a \$20 fee. All registration forms and payments must be received by mail on or before July 19, 2007. After that date reservations accepted on space available basis. Please make a copy of this form before mailing. Please do not staple or tape your payment to this form.

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**69<sup>th</sup> INFANTRY DIVISION ASSOCIATION - HOTEL RESERVATION FORM**  
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# OF ROOMS \_\_\_\_ # OF PEOPLE IN RM. \_\_\_\_ HANDICAP ACCESS \_\_\_\_ SMOKING \_\_\_\_ NONSMOKING \_\_\_\_

KING BED \_\_\_\_ 2 DOUBLE BEDS \_\_\_\_ If room type requested is not available, nearest room type will be assigned.

**RATE:** \$89 (single/double) + state and local taxes (currently 12.46%) . Reservations must be guaranteed by credit card (information below) or first night's deposit enclosed.

**CUTOFF DATE:** 7/19/07. Reservations received after this date will be processed on space & rate availability.

**CANCELLATION POLICY:** Deposit is refundable if reservation is canceled 24 hours prior to date of arrival.

**RESERVATION BY PHONE:** (800) 733-5466. Please inform the hotel that your reservation should be under the 69<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division Association reunion.

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SIGNATURE (regardless of payment method) \_\_\_\_\_

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# Tanker Stories

By: Charles Ray, Jr. (Billy Ray)

Honorary Member, 777th Tank Battalion

12622 Huntington Field Drive

Houston, Texas 77099

Dear Dottie,

First of all, thank you so much for posting my stories in the last bulletin. The men that those stories are about makes a boy like me proud to tell their story for them as they probably never told the story before. Thank you for all the extra work you put in preparing those stories for the bulletin.

The story I am sending today covers the "last battle" our men fought in WWII. I have done my best to tell the story using every point of view I could find...from unclassified WWII documents to personal interviews with men who were there.

I sincerely hope the men and their families will enjoy these stories "they never told."

\* \* \* \* \*

## - The Last Battle - The Battle At Eilenburg

**Note:** Although the original "History of the 777th Tank Battalion" does not indicate that any Company of the Battalion, other than B Company, 777th Tank Battalion, participated in the attack and securing of Eilenburg, the 271st Infantry Regiment's History indicates that A Company, 777th Tank Battalion was also there supporting the infantry.

The following is quoted from the 271st Infantry Regiment History. *"In most of our encounters [with the enemy] we were fortunate in having attached companies A and C, 661st Tank Destroyer Battalion and Company A, 777th Tank Battalion. Each of these units earned the respect of our officers and men, especially for their work in Weissenfels, Beichlingen, and Eilenburg."*

There is no detailed account as to what action A Company was involved in at Eilenburg. The quote above continues with: *"At Eilenburg, effective fire was delivered on vital targets in the city at the extreme range of 3000 yards. The value of AT guns as direct support weapons and the aggressive spirit of the men who manned them, both were proven to the grateful dough boys."*

### The Battle of Eilenburg

There are numerous accounts of the Battle at Eilenburg. In an attempt to retell the story about the battle without leaving out any information or details, I have chosen to use the information from all versions. The most complete and accurate account of this battle is attributed to **Captain Jarratt**, B Company Commander. **Captain Jarratt** wrote a very concise, four page, hand written document. It is the account of these last days of the War and his Company's participation

in the battle. It is entitled, "Company B, 777th Tank Battalion, After Battle Report." The information from accounts in the 69th Infantry Division Association Bulletin, Vol. 48, No 1; The Tramp Script of the 724th Field Artillery Battalion, and a few personal diaries were all used to retell the story here.

Eilenburg lay directly in the path of the 777th Tank Battalion's march to Torgau and the eventual link-up with the Allied Russian Forces. Reconnaissance revealed that the area just West of Eilenburg was heavily defended. In order to reach Torgau, Eilenburg had to be cleared and its defenses neutralized. The defenses lay in the triangle area between Pressen, Jesewitz, and Eilenburg. In order to take Eilenburg, these outer defenses had to be neutralized.

**Note:** There is no mention as to what action had been taken to soften up or neutralize these defensive positions prior to the arrival of the 777th Tank Battalion. These defensive positions were still active when the tankers arrived on the outskirts of Eilenburg from the South.

**Note:** The following information is quoted here from the 271st Infantry Regiment History and may fill in some blanks as to what action A Company, 777th Tank Battalion saw at Eilenburg.

"On 21 April, the first battalion became attached to the Fifth Corps, while the other two battalions were defending the west bank of the Mulde River [south of Eilenburg], and first battalion moved out to take the city of Eilenburg.

This was probably the most difficult battle the battalion had yet been in, since the town was held by some 1200 Germans soldiers, well dug in. Also the natural characteristics of the town definitely favored the defenders.

With B Company out in front, C Company on the left and A Company on the right, the battalion moved forward meeting heavy resistance. Company B, heading down the main street was finally pinned down by sniper and machine gun fire, and was temporarily stranded there by itself, since A and C were working along the sides of the town.

Having pushed as far as the stream [the Mulde River] in the center of town, Company B was thrown back by a strong enemy counterattack. They withdrew 500 yards and reorganized.

It was not until the next day [22 April] that they were again able to advance when five battalions of light and medium artillery started pounding the city continually, at which time all three companies were able to advance and secure the west bank of the Mulde River in the center of town.

Company A was successful in establishing a bridge-head and the remainder of the city was quickly secured. The Battalion remained in Eilenburg for several days before continuing the advance." END

(Continued on Page 14)

## **TANKER STORIES** (Continued from Page 13)

21 April 1945: At 1300, B Company, 777th Tank Battalion was notified to prepare to move out from Naunhof and advance for an attack on the town of Eilenburg.

21 April 1945: Then at 1547, B Company, 777th Tank Battalion was prepared to start the Eilenburg Offensive. B Company departed Naunhof to set up for an attack on the town of Eilenburg. The tankers moved North out of Naunhof to Brandis.

**Note:** Orders came down for B Company to move from Taucha with Company A, 271st Infantry Regiment in the attack on the town of Eilenburg.

### **Brandis**

At Brandis, the tankers saw the oil fires set at the German Military Air Base. Several planes were burning on the ground.

B Company left Brandis and passed through Cunnersdorf, Sehlis, and Dewitz before arriving at Taucha and there meeting up with the infantry.

### **Taucha**

At Taucha, B Company tankers load up the infantry on their tanks and move out toward Eilenburg.

#### **The Initial Attack**

**Note:** The area between Pressen, Jesewitz, and Eilenburg was heavily defended. In order to take Eilenburg, those defenses had to be neutralized. After clearing these outer defenses, B Company's plan was to enter Eilenburg on the west end, attacking to the East until the town was secure.

21 April 1945: After picking up the infantry, B Company proceeded to Jesewitz, which is about 7 kilometers southwest of Eilenburg. Here, they halted their advance in order to give the infantry time to overrun the defenses outside the town.

21 April 1945: The infantry of A Company, 1st Battalion, 271st Infantry Regiment began to attack the defenses surrounding the south side of Eilenburg near Jesewitz.

By 1700 though, the infantry was only able to advance about 200 yards out in front of the tanks before they became pinned down by enemy rocket and mortar fire. The tanks of B Company, 777th Tank Battalion were unable to support the infantry here because their "range of fire proved too limited to be effective."

A Company, 271st Infantry Regiment managed to withdraw back to the tanks and B Company, 777th Tank Battalion moved back out of range to Wedelwitz, located about 2 kilometers south of Eilenburg.

The initial attack to secure the outer defenses at Eilenburg had not succeeded and the tankers and infantry were forced to withdraw.

**Note:** There is no further reference concerning the outer defenses at Eilenburg.

**Note:** I made two trips to Eilenburg (2001 and 2002) and surveyed the town but only remember seeing one cemetery. Therefore I cannot explain the difference in the references I used to write this part of the history. I am thinking there must be a Catholic and a Protestant Cemetery. I went to the cemetery at the T-intersection and visualized the attack. On my next trip over to Eilenburg, I will take more time and visit the cemetery on the east side of town.

### **First Withdrawal to Wedelwitz**

21 April 1945: At 1930, after regrouping at Wedelwitz, the Commanders planned a new strategy. The tankers split up into two columns, A and B, and would attack Eilenburg from two directions. A Column would move forward from Wedelwitz and approach Eilenburg from south. B Column would then move west to Wolpern just to the north of Jesewitz and the move northeast into Eilenburg. Once inside Eilenburg, the two columns would move toward each other until the town was secured.

### **Second Attack on Eilenburg**

#### **A Column Action**

After picking up the infantry, the 5 tanks of A Column approached Eilenburg from Wedelwitz and moved into Eilenburg and began attacking the defenses on the eastern outskirts of Eilenburg. They were to move west through the town and link up with B Column.

The second attack on Eilenburg began. The enemy defenses that the tankers faced were much stronger than anticipated. Their second attack was quickly repelled. Due to darkness, the tankers withdrew from the Eilenburg area and proceeded south and back to the town of Wedelwitz.

#### **B Column Action**

After picking up the infantry, B Column advanced toward the west side of Eilenburg. Once again the infantry advanced in front of the tanks. When they were approximately 200 yards in front of the tanks, the infantry became pinned down again. It was getting dark. When artillery was called in to support the infantry, the infantrymen suffered casualties from their own artillery rounds exploding on and near their position. Due to darkness, the tankers withdrew from the Eilenburg area and proceeded south back to the town of Wedelwitz.

### **Wedelwitz**

21 April 1945: At Wedelwitz, the commanders determined that the third attack would commence again in the morning. The tankers and infantry remained in Wedelwitz for the night. During the night, the tankers received several concentrations of HE. No casualties were reported.

22 April 1945: At 0500, a sudden barrage of approximately 60 rounds of high explosives, HE, from rocket and mortar fire began exploding in the vicinity of the tanks. The majority of these incoming shells fell short of their targets. No casualties or damage was reported.

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## TANKER STORIES (Continued from Page 14)

### The Third Attack on Eilenburg

22 April 1945: B Company, 777th Tank Battalion was split again into two columns. Once again, they would attack the enemy in Eilenburg from two directions. One column moved in from the south and the other column came in from the west.

At 0600, B Company, 777th Tank Battalion moved out from Wedelwitz for their preset positions for the attack on the resistance at Eilenburg.

#### From the South

22 April 1945: At 0600, 3rd Platoon tanks and infantry from B Company, 1st Battalion, 271st Infantry Regiment moved out to the north from Wedelwitz. They were heading for the east end of Eilenburg.

At 0900, 3rd Platoon, consisting of 5 tanks, moved into position on the east end of Eilenburg.

The infantry moved out in front of the tanks and met up with the enemy at the cemetery. This column made repeated attempts to breach the defenses but was denied. The enemy was giving the doughs a hard time.

Upon contacting the Battalion Commander, 271st Infantry Regiment, he ordered the tanks from 3rd Platoon to move up and aid the infantry. The tanks arrived on the scene and **S/Sgt. Bylan's** tank crew quickly destroyed one anti-aircraft gun and killed 6 enemy soldiers.

There is no record of enemy captured at the cemetery on the east side of Eilenburg. The defenses on this approach to Eilenburg were now clear and 3rd Platoon moved west through the town to link up with the other platoons that were approaching from the west side of town.

At this time, 3rd Platoon tanks and the infantrymen held their position and waited for the other platoons and infantry to arrive and move abreast of them.

#### From the West

22 April 1945: At 0900, the remainder of B Company which consisted of 15 tanks from Headquarters, 1st, and 2nd Platoons moved from Wedelwitz around the south side of Eilenburg in order to attack from the west moving toward the east end. The defenses and resistance on the west outskirts of Eilenburg between Jesewitz and Eilenburg had been previously eliminated and the tankers and infantry moved quickly past these towns. Once in place to the west of the resistance (possibly 750 meters from the cemetery) on the south-west side of Eilenburg, they attacked.

This column moved forward under heavy resistance from enemy artillery and panzerfaust fired from the second floors. The infantry accompanying this column moved out in front of the armor and quickly became pinned down by enemy small arms fire. The tanks also came under heavy fire.

Another platoon on infantrymen was attached to 1st Platoon, B Company, 777th Tank Battalion. 1st

Platoon, B Company and the infantrymen were to move into Eilenburg behind 3rd Platoon, then turn to the right and proceed two blocks and then turn left and hold. This put 1st and 3rd Platoons two blocks apart and heading the same direction.

"The 1st Platoon tanks, on making their movement to the left, ran into about 40 Germans, one anti-tank gun (Pack 40, 75mm). (The Germans opened fire on the tanks but little damage was done.) The anti-tank gun was knocked out by **Lt. Goodwin** and **Sgt. Eschelman**."

The infantry that was attached to the 1st Platoon tanks, for some unknown reason, did not move in on the same street with the tanks. Consequently the buildings along their route of advance had not been cleared. The tankers proceeded forward and in line for about a block when **S/Sgt. Bylan's** position spotted an anti-tank gun. He directed the fire and the anti-tank gun was knocked out. It was soon discovered that the infantry had only cleared one side of the street while going into town.

The infantry that was moving in ahead of the tanks met up with the enemy at the cemetery on the western outskirts of Eilenburg. The road the 1st Platoon tankers advanced on came to a "T" intersection at the cemetery. In the cemetery, at the T-intersection and unknown to the tankers, there stood an 88mm gun aimed straight down the road the tankers were approaching on.

**Note:** In a recent (2003/2004) 69th Infantry Division Bulletin, there is a photograph which shows the gun at the cemetery and damage done to the wall when the gun emplacement was attacked. In a photograph that I took of this same wall in 2002, it is evident from the different shade of brick that this area of the wall had been repaired. It is possible that this is the gun that **S/Sgt. Bylan's** tank took out from his position on the other side of the cemetery.

As the tankers approached the cemetery on the west side of Eilenburg, the enemy fired on the infantry and tankers and a battle erupted. Two tanks from 1st Platoon were hit.

In the first tank from 1st Platoon were **1st Lt. Clinton Goodwin**, **Pfc John T. Roche**, **Alex Zubrowski**, **T4 William C. Albert** and **Psaltas**. "When **Lt. Goodwin's** tank moved in close to a house for a safe firing position, a German stepped out of the house and fired a panzerfaust grenade which hit the turret and burned through the thick armor and exploded inside." The explosion killed **Pfc John Roche**, the Tank Gunner immediately. **1st Lt. Goodwin** was seriously wounded. **T/5 Alex Zubrowski**, the Tank Gun Loader received facial lacerations and other non-life threatening injuries.

**1st Lt. Goodwin's** tank was on fire but in a valiant effort to save his life, **T/4 Albert**, the Tank Driver, took off for the town of Wolpern where he hoped the

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## TANKER STORIES (Continued from Page 15)

medics could save **1st Lt. Goodwin's** life. Upon arrival at Wolpern, the fire in **1st Lt. Goodwin's** tank was extinguished and **1st Lt. Goodwin** was removed from the tank and placed on the ground near the tank where medics administered blood plasma. **1st Lt. Goodwin** died shortly after being taken out of the tank. **Alex Zubrowski** survived his wounds and has contributed much to this history.

In the second tank were **Sgt. Hall** and his crew. **Sgt. Hall's** tank was also hit by a panzerfaust at the same time as **1st Lt. Goodwin's** tank took the hit. **Sgt. Hall's** tank was put out of commission but was still maneuverable. **Pfc. Robert E. Baggett**, the Tank Gun Loader, sustained a broken arm when the grenade exploded. When the grenade exploded against the side of the tank, the explosion caused premature detonation of a round loaded in the breech. The explosion of the shell in the breech caused the cannon to recoil into **Pfc. Baggett's** arm. **Sgt. Hall** remained in position and directed fire for the Company on an anti-tank gun which was then destroyed.

This column, now consisting of three tanks, **Hall**, **Eschelmann**, and **Minnuchi**, withdrew at this point to a defensive position at Wolpern and "looked for the doughs that were supposed to be with them."

At Wolpern, **Pfc. Baggett** was evacuated and treated. **Sgt. Hall** turned his tank in to the Company Maintenance Section for repairs.

"The 3rd Platoon continued down the street to the creek but were forced to move back by heavy fire from enemy panzerfausts."

"During this time, C Company of the 271st Infantry Regiment with 4 tanks from C Company, 777th Tank Battalion (possibly Task Force Sikes) approached the city from the Northwest. On the way into town, one tank was lost to an anti-tank mine. The infantry of C Company were coming into town to assist the infantry of B Company. The tanks were unable to pass the tank that was put out of commission. (Reasons were not given) Because B Company "doughs" were not assisted, they were unable to hold their position at the creek which runs through Eilenburg. Therefore B Company infantry had to withdraw back to the cemetery.

"During this time, there was considerable fire from small arms and rockets."

**Note:** "Baby Don," **1st Lt. Goodwin's** tank, was recovered and repaired. I was told that **Sgt. Raymond Eschelmann**, Platoon Sergeant for 1st Platoon, was given a battlefield commission and **1st Lt. Watson** was called up to replace **1st Lt. Goodwin**.

"At 1700, 3rd Platoon, B Company, 777th Tank Battalion attempted again to breach the enemy defense and succeeded in moving forward for five blocks where they ran into a road block they could not pass."

"At this time, tank 33, commanded by **Sgt. Ghindes**, was struck by a panzerfaust causing the engine to stop. The crew abandoned the tank under covering fire after the driver started the homelite. Fifteen minutes

later, the crew returned with the 1st Sergeant and the Company Commander, **Captain Jarratt**, and the driver succeeded in restarting the engine, whereupon, the 3rd Platoon withdrew back to the cemetery."

**Note:** **Lt. Watson**, who was with B Company at Ft. Knox was sent to England on the advance detail and was in England when the rest of the 777th Tank Battalion arrived at the end of December 1944. It is unknown whether or not he traveled with the Battalion as it crossed the channel to France, Belgium and Germany. He may have moved forward later on and was moving with Battalion Headquarters in reserve.

Both columns were kept from reaching their objective, the Mulde River. One additional tank, and the 3rd to be hit, was knocked out but was recovered and turned over to maintenance. There was no report of casualties. **Sgt. John Minucci** lost a tank during the war. Was his the third tank to be hit at Eilenburg?

Between attacks, artillery was brought to bear on enemy positions. During the night, heavy concentrations of 4.2 mortars were used to dislodge the enemy.

"As it was growing late in the day, the Battalion Commander, 1st Battalion, 271st Infantry Regiment suspended operations for the day."

At this point, the tanks and infantry withdrew some and took up defensive positions. During the night, two or three tanks at a time withdrew to Wolpern to refuel and reload with ammunition.

*22 April 1945:* During the night, intermittent enemy rocket fire fell in the vicinity of B Company tanks and the accompanying infantry. Between the enemy rocket attacks, artillery was brought to bear on enemy positions. Heavy concentrations of 4.2 mortars were also used to dislodge the enemy.

*23 April 1945:* At 0600, Eilenburg was attacked once more. The tankers and infantry moved again toward the creek. On the way, they took a considerable number of prisoners. A and C Company infantrymen were able to reach the bridge. B Company tanks were still being stopped by panzerfaust and small arms fire. The engineers were called in to blow out the roadblock that was keeping 2nd Platoon tanks from reaching the creek. Eilenburg still held and the enemy refused to give in.

### Last Bid To Save Lives in Eilenburg

*23 April 1945:* At 1200, **Colonel Dunlap**, Battalion Commander, 271st Infantry Regiment, in a humane effort to save many lives, sent ten women and the burgermeister to the defending forces of SS, Wehrmacht, and sniping civilians, with an ultimatum: "Surrender or the city (Eilenburg) will be annihilated." The answer was an emphatic "NO." It was decided that an example would be made of a city refusing to surrender and the artillery was given the order to fire.

At 1300, when the time period given to surrender passed without the surrender, Colonel's forces opened

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## TANKER STORIES (Continued from Page 16)

fire with everything they had. A considerable artillery barrage was placed on the city. The barrage on Eilenburg lasted two hours.

Following the barrage and the "cease fire," the tanks and infantry moved back into Eilenburg and to the creek bridge. After the bridge "was cleared of enemy and checked for mines, the 3rd Platoon tanks moved across the creek bridge and proceeded to the Mulde River."

Shortly thereafter, the town of Eilenburg was surrendered to the 69th Infantry Division. The city of Eilenburg on the Mulde River at Eilenburg was now under American control.

### The Battle Of Eilenburg

*Reprinted here from the 69th Bulletin, Vol 48, No 1.  
Also from the Tramp Script, 724 Field Artillery Bn.*

As we dashed across Germany, the towns in our path surrendered with sporadic resistance to advance units of Armor and Infantry. It wasn't until we reached Eilenburg, at the end of the line, that we were forced to apply the full power of our threatening Artillery. Among other things, Hitler had promised "nothing but ruins, rats and epidemics," and "Give me 5 years and you will not recognize the face of Germany." In Eilenburg, these promises were fulfilled in a short two hours of the most devastating barrage ever fired by our Artillery.

After two days of limited advances, strategic withdrawals, and mounting casualties, the attacking forces, consisting of one battalion of Infantry supported by 4.2 mortars, tank destroyers, tanks, and six battalions of Artillery, held the western edge of Eilenburg. This was the beginning of the bloody battle for the city on the Mulde River.

### Mission Annihilation!

Promptly at 1300 as the warning expired, the first shell whistled over **Col. Dunlap's** withdrawn forces. It was the harbinger of over five thousand rounds of death-dealing high explosives. Shells rained down on the city and burst with one intense continuous roar, as each Artillery piece fired on its 5-mile zone.

After two hours, the barrage lifted and the doughs cautiously advanced through the ruin and rubble that was once buildings. Only four shots were fired by snipers who were quickly eliminated by incendiary grenades thrown by the GIs.

This was Eilenburg! A short time before it had been a seething, working city: now it was a crumbling mass of ruin with no house standing, and no roof intact. The dust settled slowly on the heads of the cringing supermen as they marched, hands upraised, to the rear."

**Note:** The following account of the battle at Eilenburg comes from a diary entry made by **James R. Reading** and passed on to the 69th Bulletin Editor by his brother **Joseph**.

Apparently James had passed through Eilenburg three days after the fight on April 23rd or made the entry in his diary three days after he participated in the attack on Eilenburg.

On 26 April 1945 he entered the following notes in his diary: "Passed through the town of Eilenburg approximately 30 kilmos (kilometers) west of Torgau on the way to meet the Russians. Taken after a hard fight by 271st Infantry. White flags hung from windows; infantry went in. Flags withdrawn; MGs opened up. Infantry withdrawn; flags come out. Infantry went in again and same thing happened. The CG ordered all artillery in the Corps laid down in a two hour barrage. Town kaput, just one pile of rubble now." End

23 April 1945: On this day, a raid at one of the hospitals in Eilenburg by the 69th Infantry netted 23 S.S. Storm Troopers who had changed their identity to soldiers of the Wehrmacht.

**Note:** After the town surrendered and it was safe to survey the damage, some of the tankers went in for a look. One of the tankers that I spoke with while gathering information for this history told me that he took photos of the people who committed suicide in the city hall at Eilenburg. Bloody Eilenburg!!!

23 April 1945: According to **Major William C. Sylvan's** Diary of the First Army, all resistance to the First Army's front was over and all organized resistance in Eilenburg ceased.

**Note:** While talking with someone from the City Hall in Eilenburg in 2002, I was told that "the town's citizens left the battle areas of Eilenburg and crowded into an underground bunker which housed the water works for Eilenburg and were therefore not subjected to the barrage that destroyed their city."

### Mulde River

23 April 1945: B Company, 777th Tank Battalion reached Mulde River. One enlisted man was wounded while trying to leave his tank.

In 1997, a written document found in the National Archives stated, "Yesterday, 23 April 1945, tanks 14 and 15 with "G" Co., 271st Infantry Regiment were assigned mission of guarding approaches to the town (Eilenburg) on the left flank. **Cpl. Francis Bohmann**; tank 14 was shot after leaving the tank for a moment."

**Note:** I was told, by **Ray Eschelmann**, that **Frank Bohmann** had to leave the safety of the tank for a few minutes. He decided after many protests from the rest of the crew that he couldn't wait and about 25 feet from the tank he was hit by shrapnel in the knee and stomach. He made it back into the tank and was taken to safety. He was transferred back to the hospital and to the States. After recuperating from his wounds, he was discharged. In 1995, someone mentioned that **Francis Bowman** passed away in the 1990's and his wife died a few days later.

**Please get your reservations  
in EARLY for the reunion.  
This is the last bulletin you will  
receive before the reunion.  
SEE FORMS ON PAGES 10 & 11.**

## Dennis has adopted the grave of Milton Ulfeng

Submitted By: Dennis Notenboom

Molenzicht 114

Dirksland

The Netherlands 3247 VA

E-Mail: d.notenboom@chello.nl

My name is Dennis Notenboom. I live in Dirksland, a small village on the island of Goeree, Overflakkee, about 30 miles from Rotterdam in The Netherlands. I live 125 miles from the Margraten Cemetery where many American soldiers killed in action in WWII are buried. I am 30 years old, married, with two children. I am a process operator at one of the world's largest petroleum companies and have been attending engineering school.

When I was 11 years old, I had a project in school on WWII, and ever since, I have done many activities related to the war – building model planes, playing war games on the computer, reading books, seeing movies such as “Saving Private Ryan” and “Band of Brothers,” and collecting war DVDs and memorabilia.

My latest project is to adopt the grave of soldier, **Milton J. Ulfeng**, Co. F, 271st Infantry, 69th Infantry Division – to see that it is honored with flowers on Memorial Day and other times. Along with adopting his grave, I am trying to find out about **Milton Ulfeng**, before the war, his military action and where he was killed on February 19, 1945, probably on a patrol or by a sniper.

If you were a member of Co. F and remember Milton, or know the circumstances of his death, I would like to hear from you with any information you have.

Also, realizing that families of many of the men of the 69th who are buried at The Margraten Cemetery have never seen their loved one's burial plot, I have decided to photograph each of the 101 graves and send the photo on request. Please write with your family member's name, or e-mail to d.notenboom@chello.nl.



*My wife Renate, my daughter Sanne, my son Brent and myself, Dennis Notenboom*

## Hans Wienke adopts graves of his namesake

Submitted By: Hans Wienke

Amazonestraat 63

Spijkenisse

3027na The Netherlands

hans@wienkes.nl

I send photos of two graves adopted for care, one in The Margraten Netherlands Cemetery where American soldiers are buried; the other in the Yesseleyn German cemetery. Both graves are burial sites for men of his namesake.

The American soldier was **Harold H. Wienke**, state of Montana, Co. B, 272nd Infantry Regiment, 69th Infantry Division, killed in action, April 6, 1945. I visited his grave on March 3rd and it was raining all day. For me, my wife and my children it will not be forgotten.

I would like to hear from anyone from the Company who might recall details of the action on that date. In adopting the graves, I agree to see that extra care for the graves are taken above that rendered by the cemetery. I do this, for both graves, to show his respect and to honor men who gave their lives for their country.

We also went to the German war cemetery in Ysselsteyn where all Germans are buried that died during WWII and WWI in the Netherlands almost 31000 victims of madness rest there. That is why I also send you the picture of **Wilhelm Wienke**.



*Left: Grave of American soldier Harold H. Wienke*



*Right: Grave of German soldier Wilhelm Wienke*

# THE AUXILIARY'S PAGE

By **Dottie (Witzleb) Shadle**

*Ladies Auxiliary Editor*

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**Ellen McCann, Chaplain**  
39 Mayflower Road  
Woburn, Massachusetts 01801

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## A Message from your Auxiliary President, Jane Matlach

Dear Ladies of the 69th Ladies Auxiliary:

Last month the daughter of a deceased 69er called to tell me that her mother had also died. She wanted to be sure that her mother's name was also posted in the bulletin, and she wanted copies of the Taps column to give to each of her siblings. She was very proud of her father's service, and said she will place the 69th symbol on their gravesite.

I have received a thank you letter from the Medical Center in Philadelphia, PA for our donation of \$200. It was deposited into their Television General Post Fund which supports the initiative to purchase brand new flat screen televisions for every resident in their Nursing Home Care Unit.

Our reunion in August will be in Salt Lake City, and our donations will be given to the Veterans Hospital of Salt Lake City, 500 Foothill Drive, Salt Lake City, Utah 84148, Telephone 801-582-1565.

Please keep creating those wonderful 35"x45" lap robes and bring them to the reunion. Other useful items are toiletries, t-shirts, stationery, and disposable razors.

I hope to see all of you in August during our 60th reunion.

### - In Memoriam -

#### "LADIES' TAPS"

**BETTY MEYER**

widow of

**Lee Meyer**

*Battery C, 880th Field Artillery Battalion*

117 Grandview Road

St. Mary's, Pennsylvania 15857

**MARGARET MARY FLANAGAN**

wife of

**Mark O. Flanagan**

*Company M, 273rd Infantry Division*

11313 Kings Xing

Fort Wayne, Indiana 46845



**Cannon Company of the 273rd Infantry Regiment - Camp Shelby, October 1944**

Submitted By: Lee Wilson, 207 East Downs Street, Stockton, California 95204-2005



**Reconnaissance Company of the 661st Tank Destroyer Battalion**

Submitted By: Christina Thomas, granddaughter of Burnell Timothy Scott. He is located in the top row, third from the right.

# John B. Durst Memoires

## Part II

Company A 273rd Infantry Regiment  
1832 Alta Street  
Redlands, California 92374-1718

As a platoon guide in Leipzig, **Major Salladin** carried four guns marching to Lake Fort Ehenbreitstein, snipers ahead of us fired at us. Finally a German speaking Sergeant got them to surrender, I didn't see the fort for some reason.

April 23, 1945 - a letter home when we were taking Leipzig:

"I guess you were wondering why I haven't written for awhile (until just a few days ago). Well, we've been traveling at a terrific pace for the last three weeks and I just haven't had the time. Don't think we haven't made some long marches either (Oh, my aching back!) One was from about 8:00 all one day until 1:00 a.m. all the next! That one put us four miles ahead of the rest of the army. We stopped in a town and took 45 prisoners, 3rd platoon was shelled by mortars, too. We stopped on the Kassel - Berlin super highway and Patton's tank came in that morning. That afternoon we crossed a river, secured a bridgehead and took a town, trying to surround the German Army in the Ruhr.

I've got a Luger and a good pair of Zeiss binoculars which have 8x30 power (they'll be darn good for hunting or watching birds, etc.), which I got when we captured a lot of officers in a big city we cleared. I also got a couple of good cameras, but two sergeants in my platoon got Reicas and the captain and a supply sergeant have Contax IIs. Maybe I'll get one yet. (I bought a Contax III long after the war, it was stolen in a burglary in 1982. This stuff couldn't be mailed home. I could have sent rifles, helmets, flags, etc., but our APO (Army Post Office) was full and wouldn't take packages. I also have a fancy air corps dagger (German) in a silver case with an ivory handle which I got while guarding an air field. It was full of wrecked planes (strafed) and one new ME 109 in very good shape. We all sat in it and played with the controls.

Well we A Company have been recommended for a Presidential citation by the colonel so I hear, for the city clearing job in Leipzig. How do you like this ersatz pen I'm using? I lost my good pen in the forest the first week.

My PFC (Private First Class) grade finally came through.

So long, John

\* \* \* \* \*

After the war ended we got a Major nine months out of West Point. He went to three post graduate schools for three months each. One was the General Staff School. After the first one he was promoted to 1st Lieutenant, after the second he was promoted to Captain and after the third to Major! Ace was very tall, handsome, and intelligent!

I ate evaporated milk and sugar at night while on guard duty from the mess table in a small town, while waiting to cross the Rhine River.

In basic training at Camp Roberts they had enemy guns and enemy planes fly overhead to familiarize us with their particular sounds, a few seconds of recognition can save your life. An old rifle I had cleaned carefully the night before was said by an inspecting Lieutenant to be very dirty! Once while wearing a back pack and carrying a rifle on my shoulder, I could not raise my rifle. The Lieutenant at Inspection said, "Well exercise it!"

Another time, on a march, the man ahead of me ran a short distance. I didn't run to catch up because I was carrying my BAR, and it was too heavy. The sergeant said to the leading sergeant, "Look at your squad."

After the war a tank was stuck in a big hole. A wrecker tried to pull it out but the cable broke.

After going up to the front in the Ardennes, two G.I.'s were captured by the Germans. Two days later we captured German prisoners. They knew all about our Division, it's history, commanders, dates arrived overseas, etc.

In Kassel, each man was called in to see the 1st Lieutenant, the head of the Company of Ordnance. He read my record of 4 quarters at UCLA and said, "You could do my job in this company."

**Kassel:** One night English bombers came over. It was thought the bombers were going on to Berlin; thus 20,000 people were killed in one night. The whole city was completely pulverized. The only walls left standing were the ones hit by incendiary bombs. This could be told by the black smoke marks left all over the windows. The other buildings hit by high explosive bombs were just a large pile of bricks. Even the streets were covered with bricks. Only one main road had been cleared through town for the traffic to get through to the hospital on the other side of the city.

At Camp Roberts, California, a medical officer looked at us nude in a circle in a room and asked, "How are you doing?" I said, "O.K." So I stayed in the infantry. A coward complains of a backache, even has a strap made; finally he was sent to the air corps (what irony).

At Camp Roberts, our captain was a former PX officer at Honolulu. Once while walking down the street with another trainee, I didn't salute him. I was looking at the ground as I usually do! He passed us by without saying anything.

The U.S. Army Air Corp must get great credit for winning the war, especially the fighter pilots who gained control of the air.

During the surrender of German aircraft in England, the pilots were supposed to come in with their landing gear down. One pilot apparently forgot, and was blasted out of the sky by anti-aircraft guns.

(Continued on Page 23)

**JOHN B. DURST MEMOIRES**

*(Continued from Page 22)*

**Herb Nagel**, formerly of the 28th Infantry Division, landed at Normandy beachhead before St. Lo. Dead soldiers' bodies were piled up four stories high. You couldn't see over them. They were doused with gasoline and burned. I asked him why they didn't throw them in the ocean? He told me, because they would just float.

When he was caught on a hill 600 yards from his outfit, he ran like hell through enemy fire. The heels of his shoes were shot off and he covered the last six feet in one big leap. He was wounded in the left leg in France, awarded the Baggewel by the French government for taking a town.

Two men in the company in the Battle of the Bulge were sent back with 60 prisoners and told to be back in 20 minutes. It was 20 miles to go and get back. They came back within the 20 minutes. The Germans had

tried to escape. There were only two guards so they made a break for it - apparently they were all shot!

In combat everyone wears their mental problems of combat on their sleeve. Everyone is a Freudian. We all use real therapy on each other which we were the true experts at. We talked to each other all the time. I was a psychology major at U.C.L.A. for four quarters before I went in the Army and I had eleven years of psychology and speech pathology and audiology. I was good at it. The mental problems of combat were with us all the time.

The excitement of combat made everyone very intelligent. It would be good if people in civilian life could get this ability! They could get it by drugs, in 30 to 50 years all drugs could be side effect free and everyone in the world could take them without dangerous side effects! There would be no more wars and it may be heaven on Earth!

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## **Company D, 273rd Infantry Regiment at the 2006 Reunion - King of Prussia, PA**

Submitted By: **Kenneth Sawyer**, *Company D, 273rd Infantry*  
2207 Country Club Road, Melbourne, Florida 32901-5233



*Photo Left:  
Our tireless group -  
left to right:  
Allan Blackmar,  
Ed Case,  
Ken Sawyer,  
Art Ayres,  
and George Johnson*

*Photo Right - Family Group:  
Kenny, Art, Jr., Art II and Art Ayres*



Ken states that they are hoping to have a good turnout at the 2007 Reunion in Salt Lake City. If there are any Company D, 273rd men out there, contact Ken and let him know you are coming.

# Denmark Tour

## After the Shooting Stopped

Submitted By: Glenn L. Felner

Company E, I&R Platoon, 271st Infantry

666 Dundee Road, Suite 1401

Northbrook, Illinois 60062

### April 22, 1946: My First Furlough

As soon as I crossed the German-Danish border, I felt as though I were in a new world in comparison with my role in combat and as an occupation soldier.

It all began with the assembling of troops at the Danish Leave Center, located in the Bremen Enclave. The expeditiousness of the cadre in processing for the tour was very creditable, but there was no excuse for the arrangements of billeting. All that was furnished were bare mattresses.

At 1800 hours, the same night of arrival, processing was accomplished by the payment of the \$25 expense fee, which takes care of transportation and billeting. The conversion of currency from German marks to Danish kroner, with no limit as long as a substantial balance in one's currency control book is evident, is handled at the same time.

Early the next morning at 0800 we boarded the train for the first leg of the journey to Copenhagen. A peek at army "chicken" was made available by the choice of coaches accorded to rank.

The train ride came to an end just a few miles from the Danish frontier. Here we were met by trailer trucks which carried us over the line into the town of Kulland, Denmark. The two hotels reserved for furlougees awaited us with full tables of fresh milk, cheeses and other dairy products, all of which did the trick as far as recuperation from traveling discomforts goes. The GI's eyes almost popped out as they gazed spellbound at the luscious array of food that they haven't seen since leaving the states.

The rest of the day is spent in hiking along a picturesque lake, which was a stone's throw from the hotel. Horses may be obtained from the riding stables located near the hotel, and you can take the horses anywhere around the vicinities that you choose to go, as there are no bridle paths restricting your ride. At night a truck carried those of us that weren't worn out from the trip, into the nearest big town called Sonnenberg.

We boarded the trains at 0800 the following morning for the last ride to reach Copenhagen, the beautiful capital city.

Buses took the EM from the station in Copenhagen to Grundvighaus to headquarters of the Danish Allied Committee, whose business is to make the GI's every wish a reality.

The choicest rooms, ones with the fewest occupants, were numbered in quantity; the rest were on the fashion of huge dormitories, with anywhere from ten to forty beds packed as closely as possible. The furnishings of each room contained one tablecloth, in lieu of a sheet, and one pillow and no blankets.

Breakfast was served at the hotel with an unvaried menu of delicious Danish fresh eggs, toasted buns and plenty of fresh, cool milk. Seconds could be had for the asking. The usual orders given were for four eggs and slightly over a quart of milk.

Dinner and supper were served at the National Scala restaurant. The restaurant has the reputation of being one of the finest in the world. All who ate heartily agreed with this testimonial, however, since there was no change in menu, even good food becomes tiresome. At dinner we had our choice of a table set in true Danish smorgasbord style. This is a layout of all types and varieties of appetizers. The first look at this array of delectables is almost enough to floor the mess hall raised GI. A bottle of good beer is set at each plate and milk for the cow-starved soldier.

After settling down, the first thing we do is to go sightseeing and to make a reconnaissance of the shopping facilities. The stores and store windows are stocked with items that the ETO GI hasn't set eyes on for a long time. But the Germans did leave their mark when they were forced out of their role of occupiers by taking with them as much merchandise as they could get their hands on. The well-handled Danish underground slowed them down enormously with unexplained nightly railroad explosions.

The tours offered are very scenic and included taking in the king's palace which is the most beautiful structure of that type that I have set eyes on. Added atmosphere was felt by the knowledge that the king was living in the palace at the same time you were being conducted through.

*(Continued on Page 25)*



*Left to Right: Unknown, Eric Elton from Canada, girl from Special Services, unknown, Glenn Felner*

## DENMARK TOUR (Continued from Page 24)

North Zealand and the enchantment of that section of the country gave the amateur photographers ample opportunities to shoot a pictorial record of their vacation. This could be taken in as one of the well-conducted tours.

The finest meal that I have consumed overseas was at a little Hungarian restaurant named Ungerak-Vinhaus. Service was A-1...atmosphere couldn't have been better...the cuisine equal to the best of the states. The main course consisted of beef steak brought in by the waiter on a wooden carving block and cut and seasoned to taste by the waiter in your presence. Fixed up with all the garnishings from potato chips, all varieties of vegetables and the rarest of wines. Soup that would make the finest French chef envious was the beginning of this gastronomical feast.

For the finishing touches to a romantic evening those desirous of dancing or listening to dinner music were well taken care of through the strains of a soft combo of balanced violins and saxes. No one could ask for a nicer evening with the girl of your choice to say goodnight to...

The adoration of the Danes here for their king, Christian the Tenth, is something to marvel at and admire. Everyone wears a lapel emblem with the initials of the king.

A very proud story about Christian was told to me by one of the guides as I was being shown through the palace. The story itself seems to be becoming famous as a legend of the Danes under the rule of the Germans.

One morning on his usual ride through the city, King Christian saw a German flag flying from a tall flagpole in direct violation of Nazi occupation promises, that no Nazi swastikas would be flown from Danish public buildings. At once the king trotted over and told the German officer of the guard to lower it immediately.

"No, sir," replied the Nazi. "It flies by military order."

"Then, in that case, I shall have a Danish soldier remove it," the King said.

"We will shoot him," the German officer retorted.

Without a moments hesitation, Christian said, "I shall be the soldier."

Needless to say, the flag came down with no blood shed.

That incident was only one of the many reasons why his people love him as much for he would have absolutely nothing to do with any German except in necessary business dealings for the good of Denmark.

Danish girls are quite similar to Americans in many ways. The majority have blonde hair and are blue eyed. Their methods of applying cosmetics are more Americanized than most European countries. They could do a lot better in taking care of their shapely figures when it comes to clothing themselves, but the Germans saw to the reason that they haven't enough clothing material to make a chic appearance. On the whole they do rather well for what they do have.

Most of them can speak good English and dance the American style along with jitterbugging.

Six Danes out of ten speak English and it isn't often that you come across the four that don't in one place at the same time. The larger department stores seem to be manned by English speaking personnel.

On your first shopping spree your eyes may be larger than your pocket book, for they have things that you probably thought never existed in war-torn Europe.

Jensen's silver store, which supplies their famous establishment in New York, has a very lovely selection of merchandise at reasonable prices. If you intend to buy excellent gifts for the folks back home, make this a must on your shopping list. The New York firm hasn't been supplied with genuine Jensen designs and silver since before the war and probably won't be for several years.

In the china department, for which Copenhagen is famous all over the world, we have Royal Copenhagen china. It is not uncommon to see the GI's preparing for their return to Germany laden down with huge cardboard boxes denoting their purchases. Anything from a \$20 dish to a \$2 salt cellar can be purchased, bearing the stamp of Royal Copenhagen china, for a perfect souvenir.

One will find that even though you can convert all the balance on your currency control book into kroner, the money will literally fly away. There are so many objects to attract the shoppers' eye in the well-stocked store windows. The female personnel on the tour bought civilian apparel even though this left them almost, if not completely, broke. They fitted themselves out with beautiful spring fashions and styles to take back to Germany to wear during off duty hours.

Another detail you will note about the Danes is their love for flowers. Almost every street corner contains a stand selling freshly cut bouquets of fragrant flowers.

The canal system, that is used, allows ships to anchor almost in the center of the city, and many barges pull up to the street and display fresh seafood for direct sale to customers at reduced prices. Enormous cheeses and slabs of butter show that truly, Denmark is the land of dairy products. The waterfront is typically of a rough appearance with the sailors and stevedores getting up a drunk before going to work in the daytime. The air is alive with the action of moving steamers in and out of the docks on schedule and loading and unloading cargoes with the help of screaming foremen.

At the end of the allotted five days and six nights in the capital city, tired, well-fed soldiers prepare to return to the duties of occupation in Germany. This part of the furlough is extremely difficult, for by this time many friendships have been formed with the inviting Danish folk and you have become familiar with the sights of the city and the places to go for the best time.

But, all good things must come to an end and perhaps, some day...

# With Bob Walton and Company A, 272nd

Submitted By: Robert H. Walton  
Company A, 272nd Infantry Regiment  
1702 Ivie Lee Street  
Baytown, Texas 77520-3623  
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## Incident at Klitzschen, Germany

The 272nd Infantry including Company A arrived in England along with other units of the 69th Infantry Division on November 27, 1944. We no sooner began to settle down in camp when bad news broke. On December 16, 1944 a German breakthrough occurred in Belgium (Battle of the Bulge). A large number of replacements were sent directly to Belgium. Other units, including Company A, left England by ship and entered the continent January 21, 1945 via Le Havre, France (**photos 1, 2 and 3**) and turned north through France into Belgium and east across Germany contacting the Russians at Torgau on the Elbe River.

Company A was billeted (**photos 4 and 5**) in the small town of Klitzschen several miles from Torgau. I and several others from the 4th platoon were staying in the house shown in **photo number 4**. We were lounging around and sitting on the floor in a room, with our weapons and I, as a 1st gunner, had my unloaded machine gun. It had turned dark when all of a sudden the back door flew open and several armed Russians came charging in. The stress level went up in a hurry but our guys did not move for a few seconds and then every one slowly got up and shook hands. The Russians did not know we were there and left. WOW, that meeting could have been a disaster.

The morning after this incident more Russians began moving into town. One of our men had liberated a camera and took several pictures with the friendlies. I am 2nd from left in **photo number 5**. The house upper right in the photo is where the incident occurred.



More Russians began moving into Klitzschen. Our unit packed up and started to move west towards the U.S. Occupation Area. First stop, Weissenfels, Germany on May 10/11, 1945 to guard a U.S. German PW discharge center.

## The Landing at Le Havre France

From Weissenfels, I continued on westward via Kathus near Hersfeld, Germany and on to Kassel, Idstein, Germany and finally arrived back in Le Havre, France and the beaches where we started. On December 9, 1945 I was assigned to 104 M.M.ORD. Company as company clerk and mail clerk. That gave me the opportunity as T/5 to take after the fact photos 1, 2 and 3. Gentlemen, it sure was nice to have my own private Jeep. Although, I do at times miss that thirty pound gun I carried.

Back on January 21, 1945 I was 21 years old when elements of the 272nd Infantry including Company A left Southampton England during bad weather (snow) aboard the ship MS Sobieski headed for Le Havre, France. I climbed in a hammock and slept most of the time until we dropped anchor about one or two miles from the beach out past the breakwater on January 24, 1945. From somewhere I do not know, a large landing craft tank pulled along side our ship and we off-loaded to the LCT. Darkness was approaching as we headed

through the port's entry breakwater to the beach (**Photo number 1**). I will never forget that beach or the building in front of us as the LCT scraped bottom (**Photo number 2**). No sign was on the building. We were in France but the British sailors could not get the front ramp to lower. It was stuck! After their hard work and noisy encouragement by the American GI's, the ramp was lowered. We left the LCT, marched into

(Continued on Page 27)



**WITH BOB WALTON AND COMPANY A, 272nd**  
*(Continued from Page 26)*

Le Havre, climbed into open semi-trucks and disappeared into a cold winter night on our way to northern France. It was not "D" Day. That had taken place on June 6, 1944. But it was our "D" Day. As we passed through Le Havre at night, there was little sign of destruction. However, **photo number 3** indicates that destruction was considerable. Material of all types is reclaimed, salvaged and classified for future use. Photos number 1, 2 and 3 were taken February 18, 1946.



# A Castle in a Time Warp

Written By: Gus R. Wiemann

Company L, 271st Infantry Regiment  
and Headquarters Division

7126 Canella Court  
Tamarac, Florida 33321



While looking for a pencil in my desk recently I came across my favorite kind, a Number 2 Faber-Castell. As I looked at the name with the Number 2 beside it, I forgot what I wanted to write and lost myself in a reverie or time warp. Suddenly the year was 1947 and I was billeted in a small room of a castle on the property of the A.W. Faber pencil factory in a suburb of Nuremberg. My civilian job then was with about ten American, Dutch, English and French nationals preparing about 52 volumes of the major Nuremberg trial record. By the time I arrived here, the international press corps that had covered the trial had departed.

Above is a snapshot of the castle built in 1850 by Baron Lothar Faber and enlarged 50 years later by Count Alexander von Faber-Castell.

While employed here by the United States Government Printing Office we received liberal vacation time. My favorite trip with others of our office was over Christmas and New Year, 1947-'48.

We traveled by train to Genoa, Italy where we boarded a former Allied troop transport, the Sobieski. Our first port of call was on the French Riviera at Cannes. On arrival we piled into a waiting bus for a ride to Monte Carlo and its famous casino. Unfortunately, the gaming rooms were closed or, maybe, fortunately.

Our bus then returned us to the Sobieski and in the evening we began our voyage across the Mediterranean. Our next visits were to Tunis, Tripoli and Malta, that small British island that underwent continuous bombing by the German and Italian air forces.

After Malta our ship's captain gave us two choices: we could disembark at Naples and return to Germany from there; or we could continue to Genoa. Our group opted to leave the Sobieski in Naples and explore the city.

Following lunch and a few hours of wandering through the city, we climbed a hill to the small village of Die. Besides a panoramic view of Naples, in the distance loomed Mount Vesuvius which smothered Pompeii with ash in 79 A.D. As we looked down over the area someone mentioned that old saying: "See Naples and Die."

As evening was beginning to fall, we decided to get our luggage at the hotel, check out and catch a late train for Rome. Upon arrival, we found a small and fairly inexpensive hotel which also offered a light breakfast. We decided to start our sightseeing early as this was our last vacation day.

Luckily, we met a German friend who worked with us in Nuremberg and who was visiting his family in their Vatican apartment. He had been a member of the German Embassy at the Vatican and when the Americans captured Rome, they extradited him to Germany. However, the Pope granted his family permission to continue living in their apartment.

He took us on a tour of the Vatican gardens and said that the Pope usually took his rest here this time in the afternoon. When he offered to introduce us to the Pope we happily agreed and our tourist group with our friend in the lead began a search for the leader of the Catholic Church.

We hadn't been following our leader more than two minutes when a small gentleman in civilian clothes emerged from nearby bushes, approached us and asked where we were going. Our friend explained that he had been with the German Embassy in the Vatican during the war, knew the Pope quite well, just wanted to say hello and introduce his American friends. Somehow that explanation failed to impress the gentleman, who suggested that the Pope needed rest and that we should go away.

Acting on the suggestion, we turned around, again following our friend who invited us to his apartment where we met his wife and two handsome sons. Before we left I took a few snapshots of the family, thanked them for their hospitality and returned to our hotel.

[Incidentally, over a decade later I learned that our friend was the brother of Wernher von Braun, Director of NASA. I forwarded the pictures of our friend with his family to him at NASA. A cordial thank-you letter arrived shortly with the news that his brother had become Chief of Protocol of the West German Government in Bonn, Germany.]

Getting back to the year of 1948, with our bags packed for the last time, we headed for the train and our return to the castle.

## How I Captured a Nazi Camp

It was only a short time after the 69th had dug into the Siegfried Line. A warm temperature began to melt the snow which dripped through the vents in our concrete pillbox. Our intelligence and reconnaissance squad slept in waterproof zip-up sleeping bags on a concrete floor covered with an inch of the melted snow. In the morning Lieutenant Werts, who led the squad, assigned each of us to take turns in crawling out to a lookout foxhole and search with binoculars for enemy activity.

One day after I had squatted in the foxhole for about an hour without seeing anything suspicious, I reported that to the Lieutenant. Then with some time on my own I headed into another direction through a wooded area toward the front lines. As I walked warily and quietly along a path between the trees, a GI sentry stepped out from behind a tree.

"Where are you going?" he asked.

"I'm with I and R and want to see if there's anything ahead of us."

His face smeared with black camouflage and showing a light-blond stubble, broke into a grin. "Just see them first, buddy," he advised and left.

I followed a stream for about five minutes and suddenly, from behind several trees, I noticed a clearing in the woods. In the middle of the clearing hung a huge black kettle propped up by metal rods over burned-out ashes. Waiting behind the trees a few minutes, I took my M-1 off my shoulder and advanced over to the kettle.

No one appeared. Looking into the kettle, I found it contained a grey porridge that had congealed. Apparently, this was intended to be the breakfast of our enemy. Mauser rifles lay scattered nearby, perhaps a clue to a rapid evacuation at the approach of our 69th.

Maybe it was because I was in my early twenties or had not had training about booby-trapped weapons. Maybe it was because I was basically stupid, but, whatever the reason, I picked up one of the Mauser rifles. Nearby was a tall package of ammunition.

I dropped into a nearby hole and using a shell from the ammo package, loaded the Mauser. Aiming at the ammo package, I fired. A wisp of smoke drifted from the ammo and I ducked deeper into the hole, expecting a fireworks display.

No fireworks erupted. As I considered firing one more shot, I heard the whistling sound of a mortar

round. Scrunching down into the hole as far as possible, I heard an explosion nearby and suddenly dirt showered on me, almost burying me.

Apparently, from the direction of the incoming mortar round, it was obviously fired by men of the 69th. It was then that I laid the Mauser down and waited a few minutes in case the men of the 69th tried again to hit me.

Fortunately, they may have felt that they eliminated me. I crawled out of the hole and raced back through the woods. Also, fortunately, the sentry recognized me and let me through.

Within a short time I reported to Lieutenant Werts that my reconnaissance showed that there was no enemy directly nearby.

\* \* \* \* \*

## German POWs

One evening in the fall of 1944 just after chow in the mess hall, I headed for the PX. On the way I passed a chain-link fence topped with barbed wire. Although I had passed this fence many times, I had never seen anyone near it except on this evening.

As I glanced at it, I noticed two men in German uniforms watching me from the other side as I walked by. For some reason I went up to the fence so that only about a foot separated us.

"Guten Tag," I said as they eyed me suspiciously. When they answered the greeting I asked them where they were from in Germany. By coincidence they hailed from the same area where my father was born, East Prussia. I asked them where they had been captured and they answered, "North Africa."

One of them appeared to be in his middle or late forties, about fifteen years older than his companion. With apparent dejection, the older one described his home area as "alles kaput." He studied me for a moment and then added, "And now you must fight against your relatives." I nodded and walked away from the fence as the two watched me.

What triggered the memory of the two prisoners was an Associated Press item in the Miami Herald some time ago. A former POW named Hans Schmid wrote a letter to Mayor Paul Schell of Seattle. Enclosed were two fifty-dollar bills.

"I would like to thank you for my good time in Seattle," Schmid wrote. "Please give the amount to a family for Christmas."

According to the story, Schmid was imprisoned in the United States from 1944 until 1946 where he lived in barracks and ate in American soldiers' dining halls. Schmid added that despite many starving in Germany during the war, POWs were well fed in America.

(Continued on Page 30)

## GUS R. WIEMANN STORIES

*(Continued from Page 29)*

*This is about the atmosphere of the city of Nuremberg in 1948 when GIs were using American cigarettes to barter. Also it's about a circumstance of misunderstanding involving a Provost Marshall and myself.*

### Steve

If I hadn't answered the telephone when it rang at 7:00 a.m. on May 15th, 1948 in the Eisenhower House, part of the Stars and Stripes complex in Altdorf, Germany, there would be no story here. And if I had known what would happen if I answered, I would have packed my duffel bag, hijacked a jeep to a port and stowed away on a States-bound ship.

What did happen when I answered is I found myself talking to my boss. He told me to pack my clothes and go to the paper's Circulation Office in Nuremberg, about a half-hour away, to replace the manager there. Even though I had an Army discharge and worked in civilian status, I had learned not to ask questions.

Within twenty minutes a motor-pool driver with a jeep arrived. I threw my bag into the back, hopped onto the front seat and we headed to Nuremberg.

In a way, I was glad to leave our secluded complex and, as we entered the city in the early morning, to see people hurrying through the streets to work. Some were clearing bombed areas, preparing for new construction. It reminded me of a German expression of camaraderie, "We knocked the stones together," referring to removing old cement from salvaged bricks for use in rebuilding. According to Allied bombing records, Nuremberg lost more than 60 percent of its built-up areas.

Ironically, even as an American, psychologically I blended into this atmosphere. Probably that was because my parents were German immigrants and as a child, German was my first language. Then in 1943 the Army sent thousands of us GIs to universities where we studied not only Germany's language, but also its history, literature and people. So, in a way, Nuremberg, which existed as a city about 300 years before Columbus discovered America, was a postgraduate course.

Suddenly we pulled up in front of the railroad station of Bahnhof, a sprawling grey-stone building with occasional wooden planks covering bomb damage on its facade. Quickly lifting my bag from the jeep and handing it to me, the driver said, "See ya," gunned the engine and disappeared into traffic.

"Good morning," I called out.

"Oh, good morning. Sorry, I didn't hear you come in."

I gave him my name. He introduced himself as Mr. Lippert, the bookkeeper, and he seemed like a genial, good-natured fellow. I noticed that he had an accent and asked where he was from. He said that his home was in Prague, Czechoslovakia.

Later as we learned to know each other better, he told me that he had been a university professor. Under the German occupation he was placed into a factory where he had to mix paints six days a week. However,

even though his country now was free of Germany troops, it was behind the Russian Iron Curtain and he felt wary about returning. I told him that I was sent to be the Circulation Manager and would appreciate whenever he had time to give me a briefing on office procedure, employees and so on.

He explained that this office uses three Polish drivers to deliver the paper to various PXs and GI clubs in Bavaria. They leave early in the morning and often one or two do not return until the following day, depending on their routes.

He added that they range in age from eighteen to twenty, are learning English quickly and, like himself, hesitate to leave the American Zone to return to a Russian-dominated homeland.

Each of the drivers is furnished GI pants and shirts dyed black. Steve, the chief driver, is bright, eighteen years old and a pleasant take-charge type.

Although the bookkeeper and driver are paid in German marks, it is hardly enough to rent scarce housing and pay for meals. As a result, American cigarettes have become a kind of unofficial currency. For example, I pay a German woman a pack to wash my laundry and do whatever mending is necessary.

Another instance, when a friend and ex-GI, who was studying in Zurich, Switzerland under the GI bill, invited me for a weekend, I bought a round-trip ticket from Nuremberg to Zurich for four packs. A carton containing ten packs and shipped from the States cost two dollars. So actually my round trip train fare cost eighty cents.

Across the street from the Bahnhof stands the Grand Hotel, Nuremberg's finest, and formerly the temporary quarters for the top Nuremberg Trial prosecution staff and other VIPs. Our paper rented a room for me here and usually I had my meals in the hotel's dining room. I have a haunting suspicion when I am served by the young German waiters that during the war, they may have been shooting at me.

American and Allied night life focuses on the Grand Hotel. A recurrent entertainment is the parties as soon as the American and Allied personnel's monthly liquor and wine rations are pooled.

An excellent orchestra plays in the ballroom on weekends. One Saturday night I dated an English girl who is working with a group on the American record of the Nuremberg Trial. While we were sitting at our table during an orchestra break, she revealed a bit of gossip circulating among her friends. It seems that the wife of the German orchestra's leader left him for an American officer. If true, you speculate about the wife's motivation. There are many here who look at the States as a comparative paradise and would gladly leave Germany for a better life.

In Nuremberg there are two movie theaters, one for Germans and the other for Americans and Allied personnel. Last week I visited the German cinema and wore civvies so that I could mingle with the locals. "Laura" was the feature, starring Dana Andrews and Gene Tierney speaking in dubbed-in German.

*(Continued on Page 31)*

## GUS R. WIEMANN STORIES

(Continued from Page 30)

One evening I took two sons, ages seven and nine, of a German family I knew, to the other theater. This time I wore my uniform with civilian insignia and the boys were admitted as my guests.

"Song of the South," the first Disney film using live actors with animated characters, was the attraction. I watched the boys more than the movie. Their eyes popped and their mouths never closed.

Often when I had to run an errand for our office, instead of using one of the jeeps, I would hop onto a streetcar. As an American, I showed the conductor my pass and the ride was free. Again I wore civvies so that I was not the conspicuous outsider. If you want to hear free thoughts of the public, this is the place to listen to conversations. They range from girl teenagers commenting on fashion to adult political appraisals.

Three girls happen to see an American woman wearing a white dress and entering the courthouse. "Look at her," says one. "Wearing white in the winter?"

A group of probable college students stands with an apparent professor in the rear of the streetcar and listens intently as he counsels them, "Money lost, much lost; courage lost, all lost."

Also there is the heavy cynicism of the grey-haired conductor as the streetcar squeaks to a stop in front of the courthouse, site of the Nuremberg Trial, and he calls out, "Nuremberger Show Place."

Actually, the conductor was not only a cynic, but a prophet, too. Thirteen years later that courthouse became the stage of the American film, "Judgment at Nuremberg," starring Spencer Tracy as the presiding judge and Judy Garland as a witness. In the film's script was reference to the infamous Nuremberg Laws of 1935 which in part read: "A Jew cannot be a citizen of the Reich. He cannot exercise the right to vote. He cannot hold public office. Jewish officials will be retired as of December 31, 1935."

One day my boss called to inform me that a Mr. March, supervisor of all the paper's circulation offices in the American Zone, would visit our office shortly. He added that the gentleman had worked in the States many years in streamlining magazine and newspaper circulation methods.

To prepare for Mr. March's arrival, Steve, the other two drivers and I in our spare time swept and cleaned our Bahnhof room as much as possible, hoping to make the best impression.

Then one morning Mr. March, a white haired man in a dark suit, white shirt with black tie, and highly polished shoes strode into the office. After all-around introductions and surveying us and the office, he told us to continue with our usual tasks.

That morning Steve was to prepare his drop-offs at the various clubs and PXs on a day-long trip. As Mr. March watched us, I handed Steve a carton of cigarettes as customary for any personal expense. Out of the corner of my eye I noticed Mr. March watched us especially closely as I gave Steve the carton. Then for a few days Mr. March assumed supervision of Steve and the other drivers.

One day I received a telephone call from Mr. March that he would pick Steve and me up the next morning in his automobile and take us to the Provost Marshal in Bamberg to answer the charge that I was using Steve to sell cigarettes on the black market.

During our approximate one-hour ride the next morning to Bamberg not one word was exchanged among the three of us. Arriving at a courthouse, we entered a courtroom where a stern-faced Colonel seated at a desk awaited us. Mr. March pointed at me and announced, "This is the man I told you about, Colonel." For a moment the Colonel studied me and then said, "You wait outside." Mr. March and Steve remained in the room.

I left the room and sat on a bench in the hallway opposite the courtroom. That morning I wore my uniform with civilian insignia plus my Combat Infantry Badge, hoping that at sometime the Colonel had been an infantry officer. Even though I was a Civilian, I remained under the Colonel's jurisdiction.

As I awaited my fate, I remembered reading a Stars and Stripes story about some officers and enlisted men from the 716th Operating Battalion who had stolen cigarettes by the case and sold them on the black market. Four accused received prison terms of forty years at hard labor. Another was sentenced to forty-five years at hard labor. All received dishonorable discharges.

Just then the courtroom door opened and Steve came to me saying, "Boy, I told that Colonel."

I knew that I wasn't to speak to Steve as he was a witness, but in that moment all I could say was, "Steve, what did you tell the Colonel?" "I told him Mr. March say to me, Steve, you take papers here. Steve, you take papers there. He never say, Steve, you have place to stay? Steve, you have food to eat?"

Then the Colonel look at Mr. March and say, "Is that true?" Mr. March say, "Yeah, I guess so." "Then the Colonel see what kind of man Mr. March is."

As Steve finished, an MP came out of the courtroom, walked over to Steve and me, saying, "The Colonel said there are no charges. You can go now."

Steve and I walked out of the courthouse and hitched a ride on an Army truck headed for Nuremberg. I decided to quit the circulation business and applied for passage home. Within a week orders to return to the States came through. I packed my duffel bag once more and on the day set for boarding a train to the port, I headed for the Bahnhof.

As I entered the Bahnhof I thought I'd say good-bye to Mr. Lippert, Steve and the other drivers. When I entered the Circulation Office, I noticed that with the exception of an American Circulation Manager, there were only German employees. When I asked him what happened to the former employees, he replied that Mr. Lippert had found work as a teacher in a German elementary school and that the Polish government had ordered Steve and the other drivers repatriated.

I thanked the Circulation Manager for the information and within a few minutes boarded the train. I took a window seat and had a book on my lap, intending to read. But I couldn't concentrate. Suddenly the train jolted and began to leave Nuremberg. I couldn't hear the train. All I heard was Steve saying, "Then the Colonel see what kind of man Mr. March is."

(Continued from Page 31)

## Germany's Loss, Our Gain

Stories about Allied armed forces invading Europe in World War II focus usually on the military. Often overlooked are the frantic forces of civilians fleeing from the Russian troops and heading toward the American lines.

A recent book about a ten-year-old German boy gives us a vivid look into the world of a child struggling through chaos to reach safety. Its title is "German Boy," authored by Wolfgang W.E. Samuel.

Shortly after the war's end and arriving in the American Zone, the boy's mother meets and marries an American sergeant, who eventually takes his war bride and stepson to the States.

Ironically, Samuel Wolfgang, whose father had been in the Luftwaffe, decided to fulfill a childhood dream and as a young man, joins the United States Air Force. In the years that follow he pilots a Boeing "Stratojet" along the border of the Soviet Union. His mission in a plane that can travel 610 miles per hour at a ceiling of 39,300 feet, is to collect intelligence about the size and capability of Soviet radar networks.

Now retired as a Colonel, Samuel provided this photo of what he described as "my plane - now in a museum." Incidentally, his son is also in the United States Air Force, following his father as an officer.



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## New Book on Eilenburg

Submitted By: **John S. Tounger**

Company D, 271st Infantry

#1 Pine Hills Court, Oakland, California 94611-1530

Andreas Flegel  
Hans Fröhlich  
Rolf Schulze

# EILENBURG

## April 1945



**Chet Yastrzemski**, Co. E, 272nd, put me in touch with the author of this new book, "Rolf Schulze," who requests more pictures for their WWII museum. He told me that they are going to publish this book in English.

When I received the book, the article below my two pictures started out "Der US-Soldat Tounger." I was curious what the rest of the article said. My neighbor is German and she translated the article. The last sentence read, "During the fighting for these positions, many German soldiers were killed."

I had sent Rolf Schulze the article you published of my account that all this fighting would have not occurred had the German officers obeyed the white flags that were displayed when we started to enter Eilenburg. When I receive the book in English, I will notify the bulletin.



*This is me showing off. I was just 19 years old and had more guts than brains.*

# Your Battery's War Battery B, 881st F.A.

- Part 4 -

As Recorded By: George N. Custis

85-59 87th Street, Woodhaven, New York 11421

## The Radio Section in Combat

By Sgt. E. V. Boucher

On arriving in England the radio section consisted of the following men: T/4 **Boucher**, chief-of-section, T/4 **Frazier**, T/5 **Starkey**, T/5 **Matys**, and last but not least, T/5 **Struewing**. A more closely knit group of men could not be found, in the battery, due to, for the most part, the numerous beer calls that we enjoyed together in the States.

Each man knew his job and there was no need to remind any of them of what they had to do. **Boucher** was the Battery commanders operator, **Frazier**, the Executive's, **Starkey** the RO's, **Matys** the FO's, while **Struewing** operated for the detail truck. This setup continued through England, France, Belgium and into Germany where he lost **Starkey** to the instrument section and received **Pfc. Hill** in his place.

We had many good breaks as well as bad, but as all good men do, we took them in our stride and went on to correct the mistakes that we had made. Picking them out at random, one particularly bad break was the time when we had to keep a 24-hour guard on the radio with only three operators available, out in the open in freezing cold weather.

Another incident occurred when **Starkey** was crawling on his stomach with the set strapped on his back, and enemy shells and mortars were dropping like rain all around him. He called for an emergency fire, on the enemy, and the operator at the other end told him to authenticate the message. **Boucher** was so mad that he ran clear to Headquarters Battery to find out who was responsible for that, when the party obviously was in trouble up on 'the line.' Nothing could be done about the situation, however, as the man who was responsible outranked him by seven grades. **Boucher** did express his opinion of a person who would do such a thing, in a very loud voice, to no one in particular, but for the benefit of all concerned and to this day no one has ever asked Baker Battery to authenticate a message.

We had to sit in the rain, snow, mud, and freezing cold to operate, but always came up with a grin when our time was up and we were relieved. Some of the good breaks occurred when the wire section put in all the wire needed for communication, and then the radio section was able to close down their stations and take it easy, which by the way, was quite often. There were days like that to compensate for the hard ones that we had.

Of all the time spent in combat, we lost only one radio due to enemy action, but we saved the operator. True, **Starkey** did have his antenna shot right off his set, but he managed to bring the set back in one piece and in working condition, a feat that deserved the recognition, as anyone knows the story of his dash across the plain in front of Gescheid will tell you. He remarked that the radio was so heavy that it kept him running, or he would have fallen. I wonder just how many people he thought he fooled with that. The radio we lost was in the Battle of Leipzig. The chief of the radio section was the one concerned in that, so there was nothing said about it.

I don't know where I could have gotten a hold of a better radio crew than I had in these combat missions. Some day, I hope, the radio section can get together once more and have a beer call as we used to, the best of luck to everyone.

The section now consists of:

T/4 E.V. Boucher	T/4 E.T. Frazier
T/5 E.H. Matys	T/5 A.R. Struewing
T/4 E.V. Hill	

\* \* \* \* \*

## The Wire Section in Combat (cont.)

By Pfc Ray Derr

I recall one incident when **Clay**, **Critchfield**, and **Dettmer** had to dig the switchboard in. The ground was fairly good spading for about two feet and then they hit almost solid rock. After they hit the rock, **Ritter** and **Trimble** were called in to help them. After several hours of hard work, they decided that the hole was deep enough, so they placed the switchboard in the hole and gathered overhead coverage to put over the hole.

Another incident I remember happened near Cologne. **Cpl. Hobbs** was with the forward party at the time. The battery was firing across the Rhine River. After four days, the FO party was being relieved. While **Hobbs** was loading up the equipment on the jeep preparatory to leaving, a mortar shell landed right by him, shrapnel hit him in the arm. He was evacuated to a General hospital and dropped from the roster of the battery. T/5 **Ritter** was made wire corporal and chief-of-section.

The battery supplied a forward observation party to the 9th Armored Division when they were spearheading the First Army's great drive through Germany. Middleton was with the FO as a wire man. He had just been transferred to this battery shortly before the attack started.

During the attack on Leipzig, **Weltman** was forward with the FO once again. Their jeep was put out of action when shrapnel from a Panzerfaust shell punctured a tire. The party was captured by the enemy. They were taken as prisoners into the great Napoleon Monument

*(Continued on Page 34)*

## **YOUR BATTERY'S WAR, BATTERY B, 881st F.A.** *(Continued from page 33)*

in Leipzig where they were held until the surrender of the stone structure, twenty-four hours later. The fall of this monument ended the resistance of Germany's fifth largest city.

The above are just a few of the many incidents that the wire section took part in. There are many, many, others, too numerous to mention, but these will serve to bring back memories to:

Cpl. "Boss" Hobbs	Pfc. "Ray" Derr
Cpl. "Bob" Ritter	Pfc. "Speedy" Dettmer
T/5 "Larry" Trimble	Pfc. "Charge" Middleton
T/5 "Pop" Owens	Pfc. "Two Nine" Slimmer
T/5 "Frank Buck" Critchfield	Pfc. "Cordell Hull" Clay
Pfc. "Fats" Weltman	Cpl. "Woody" Woods

\* \* \* \* \*

### **The Mess Section in Combat**

**By S/Sgt Vernon Anderson**

We are, no doubt, the most criticized section in the Battery. Nevertheless, about 90 per cent of the time it really isn't our fault. One thing we do is work seven days a week, whether the battery has a day off, or not. Most of the other sections do get a day off, once in awhile.

When we left Shelby, the section was made up of **S/Sgt. Anderson, Mess Sgt., T/4 Schackman, T/5 Hans, Pfc. Morgan**, and the driver of the mess truck, **Pvt. Cody**.

As a section, we really haven't had as many exciting experiences as some in the battery, but I will try to relate some that we have had, during our time on the continent.

In our journey from Camp Renikhet, England, to the chateau in France, we had hot coffee all the way. The men were very thankful for this, as it was freezing cold, day and night on that trip. The only excitement that we experienced during that ride, was almost running out of gas, and being the last vehicle in the column, made it a very complicated affair. I thought we would never stop for a break. Finally we did, and after we gathered all the gas we could find, and filled our stoves, put what we thought would be enough in the truck tank, we found out that we were only a short distance from our destination.

When we arrived at the Chateau, we unloaded all our equipment from the truck and set up a kitchen in our new home. On the rest of our travels through France, Belgium, and Germany, we left the kitchen on the truck. And every time that we were moving, we were also cooking, even though the traveling was mighty rough going at times.

While we were at the bivouac area near Schmidt-heim, Germany, I carefully reloaded my trailer, and thought it to be loaded so that it wouldn't be top heavy.

Much to my surprise, however, and I believe to everyone else who witnessed it, when we were pulling out of the position, our very capable driver, **T/5 Cody**, then a brand new Pfc., upset the trailer. It was just like Fibber McGee's closet, when that happened. But we gathered it all up and started on our journey. We caught up with the battery shortly before they pulled into position.

The day we crossed the Rhine, we were following the "Great Buck Barone's" fifth section, and made a left turn, when we should have made a right. We ended up on Hitler's Autobahn, almost on the front line. After some deliberation, we decided to turn back, and we rejoined the battery near Koblenz.

From there on we stayed with the battery, except when we were left behind at Borna, Germany. We followed later, with the ammo train and the other kitchens of the battalion, but this time it was legitimate.

At Altenhain, Germany, **Sgt. Schackman** decided to give the battery a treat with some delicious venison. He promptly went into the woods and got a six point buck, the largest ever shot in the battalion. And also a medium size doe. We've had venison often, the total number of deer being about 27.

We have received several commendations from the Divarty Surgeon for the condition of our kitchen. I believe that we have the best cooks in the battalion. (Note: We do have, Andy).

At the present time, we are in Leuna, Germany, and here we have the best set-up since leaving the States. We are using one of the first floor rooms, of the administration building of the I.G. Farben's great Ammonia Works, for a kitchen, and three other large rooms as dining rooms - one for the officers, one for the sergeants and the rest of the enlisted personnel in the last room. It is as near a garrison set-up as it can possibly be without actually being one.

At Altenhain, Germany, **Pfc. Morgan** was transferred to Service Battery, where he made T/5. Our handsome driver, **Cody**, also made T/5, so that now the entire mess section is a rated section.

\* \* \* \* \*

### **Our American Flag**

**By George Custis**

The war ended while we were at Grethen, Germany, and **Pfc Ike Eisenberg** decided that the American flag would be just the thing to fly over our battery area. No flag was available so he decided to make one.

All the necessary material was obtained by the process of "boodle hunting." The stars were cut out of a bed sheet, the blue background from a shawl, the red stripes from a dress, and the white stripes from a pillowcase.

He also found a broken down Singer sewing machine, and after a lot of tinkering, he was able to get it going.

*(Continued on Page 35)*

## **YOUR BATTERY'S WAR, BATTERY B, 881st F.A.**

*(Continued from page 34)*

After working for two days and being ably assisted by **George Danziger**, he produced a professional looking 3 x 5 flag.

It is the first flag to be flown over a battery area in this battalion. The battalion staff was very much impressed and they are considering doing the same thing in all batteries.

It is a wonderful feeling to see OLD GLORY waving over our battery area. She is the thing that makes this part of Germany our "AMERICA" here in Germany.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Three small sections written by*

**By Pfc Ike Eisenberg**

### **The Maintenance Section**

There is one section in our battery that certainly deserves mentioning, and that is our Maintenance Section. In our days of combat here in the ETO, that section was really "on the ball." Our vehicles were kept in the best possible condition because of the tireless efforts of this crew.

I can remember one specific incident in Martainville, France. A Fifth Section truck suffered a broken axle. It was a bitter cold day with snow piled deep on the ground. As we were subject to move at a moment's notice, they worked on that truck until the wee hours of the morning. There are numerous other incidents, but to mention them would be merely repeating, for in every instance, their work was excellent. Yes, I am sure that the battery agrees when I say 'hats off' to the maintenance section.

At this writing, the section consists of the following: **Sgt. George Newman, T/4, Omar Adkins and Pvt. Lothar Davidson**. However, they are better known as Hammer, Chisel, and Screwdriver.

### **The Supply Sergeant**

It is truly hard to visualize "Baker" Battery, without thinking of our dapper, little supply sergeant, **Jean L'Anglais**. He has made himself beloved to everyone through his congenial manner of playing square and fair when it becomes time to sign some statement of charge. I say 'beloved', well, a little snow in the right place never hurts. Seriously, Jean did a wonderful job during our combat days. I can truthfully say that we never had to wait tooooooo long before we received a change of clothes. Of course, there were a few in the battery, such as **Georgie Custis**, who could never get the correct size. But then, that was the fault of the mess sergeant. He feeds 'our boy' too well.

### **The Medics**

We thank God that we came through our combat days with very little casualties. However, when the need for a medic arose, he was always there, willing and able, to do his share to help the injured person. I

remember those cold and wet days we spent in France and Belgium where Trench Foot was running wild. Our medic, **T/5 Kay** and later **T/4 White** worked hard to stop this malady. They did many things, such as give foot baths and lectures in the preventative measures necessary to overcome this disease. We had a case here in Leuna, where **T/4 White** was awakened late at night to take care of a German civilian. I could go on and on telling of the many instances where the medic came through, but to sum it all up, a medic is a handy person to have around.

\* \* \* \* \*

### **Rhine Crossing**

**By Danny Dowling**

On March 28th, 1945, we left the little town of Sechtem, Germany with the knowledge that we were to cross the Rhine. As the vehicles moved out, each driver was given an overlay by **Captain Barry** and at the first stop, we all gathered around the driver, eager to see where we were going. The overlay didn't tell us much.

In a few minutes we were in Bonn, the first large German city that most of us had seen. It was battered all right, but it looked good after seeing Ramscheid and Hellenthal. There was another good point, the absence of odorous manure piles.

As we left Bonn, we caught our first glimpse of the Rhine on our left. It didn't look as broad as we had expected it to. We followed the river to Bad Godesburg, a city with many hospitals. American artillery had purposely spared it, but later German artillery had battered the city from across the Rhine.

Here we turned left and fell into the line of vehicles waiting to cross the river. A number of vehicles from an engineer battalion edged into our convoy. The Rhine was not nearly as wide as we had expected but it was wide enough. There were AA guns set up at each end of the bridge. Up the river, we could see another pontoon bridge carrying west-bound vehicles. Lining the banks were boats and barges of every description. As we left the bridge, we made a column right and followed the river.

A few days before, "Stars and Stripes" had published a picture of the Remagen bridge and we were all looking for it. We didn't have long to wait. We passed directly under the towers on the east end of the bridge. The approaches had been heavily shelled and the bridge looked beat up too. The Ludendorf bridge had collapsed several days before and was now lying in the water.

Most of the towns along the Rhine were badly battered, but the Rhine valley itself was beautiful. The steep hillside rising up from the valley were covered with vineyards. All along the river, green grass flourished and peach trees were beginning to bloom.

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## YOUR BATTERY'S WAR, BATTERY B, 881st F.A.

(Continued from page 35)

As we left the bridgehead area, we passed through town after town in which white flags were flying from all the windows. In one of these towns, the engineers pulled out of our column when we made a right turn. The kitchen truck continued to follow the engineers and we had a few bad hours worrying about them and chow.

A little later a large city appeared on the far bank of the Rhine. We soon discovered that it was Koblenz. At the junction of the Moselle and Rhine rivers stood a large statue of Kaiser Wilhelm. Our artillery had unseated the Kaiser and both he and his horse were dangling from the east side of the pedestal. Here we turned from the river and climbed the hill on which the Fortress Ehrenbrietstein stands. Our infantry had captured it the previous day. At the top of the hill was the little town of Arzheim, where we stopped for the night. The kitchen finally caught up with us and we ate chow.

*(This section was missing a page  
and is therefore, incomplete.)*

\* \* \* \* \*

### The Trials of a Mail Clerk

By Danny Dowling

When we were in England, **Sampson** had an idea that his job as mail clerk was getting a little rough, but he hadn't seen anything yet. This is where it all started though.

Censorship regulations brought new headaches and on the many mailless days he was hounded incessantly. England was also the first place where he was to confront the air mail stamp and money order problem.

While there, he built a small O.D. mailbox, guaranteed to be waterproof. To this day, it hasn't leaked a drop, except when it rains, but as I said, his troubles were only beginning.

When we moved into combat, his tribulations really began. We started to lose personnel, but their mail still came in. Sammy beat his brains out deciding which letters to hold, and which to forward. Then the packages started to come in. They always came after dark, and he would trudge through the snowy, muddy, Ardennes and pack bag after bag of mail.

While at Hellenthal, he received two mail clerk calls after we had received CSMO.

One of his hardest battles came at Schmidheim, when he was informed by **Lt. Bell** that he would have to obtain a smaller mailbox. But Sammy wouldn't give up his pride and joy just like that. After some fast talking, he managed to retain his waterproof mailbox in which he had neatly camouflaged his extra cigarettes with V-Mail forms.

After we were well inside Germany, the men began picking up Mausers and bayonets, which they wished to send home. Finally, after half of the battery had

been at his throat for nearly a month, the opportunity came to ship the guns out. When he had delivered the last one to Message Center, he felt greatly relieved.

But, as always, another problem popped-up again. The men wanted air mail stamps. Now if you just look at him crosswise, he'll ask you how many you want.

They say it is a lot rougher on mail clerks in the CBI than in the ETO.

\* \* \* \* \*

### The Outpost

By Pfc. Bruce Walker

On Friday, 11 May, 1945, the first section of the firing battery was sent to take over the road block on the road between Merseberg and Weissenfels. We had our quarters in a house along the road and we had merely to step out of the front door and we were on duty.

Not a dozen people passed before dark that day and we looked forward to an easy forty-eight hours. That first night we played the phonograph and the accordion, made a little coffee and had a good night's sleep.

Saturday dawned clear and promised to be uncommonly warm for May. By that time we had instructions to pick everybody without AMG passes. Riding in for chow, we passed the advance party of what we'd soon know as the damdest array of homosapiens we had yet encountered.

Before eight o'clock we were back from breakfast to find probably 20 people being held by the guards. They were loaded up on the truck and hauled to the CP. After that usual wait, they were interrogated and the 'prisoners' were hauled to the MG headquarters. There we found out that they had no pass blanks and they instructed us to turn back those with improper passes picking up only those men of military age who were suspicious or were discharged after 1 January of this year.

This time when we arrived back at the out-post, we were amazed at what we saw. The road resembled Cheyenne's Main street on Frontier Day. There were wagons lined up along the road, at least three score bicycles were leaning against the house and trees, and untold numbers of men, women and children resting and milling around. As none of them had AMG passes, the boys held them up. Every European nationality was represented, and everyone had his own story. But in an hour we cleared it out and the place seemed deserted.

Then for two days we settled down to asking for passes and explaining in G.I. German that the Deutsche passes were "kaput." We steeled our souls to bawling women and kids and learned to control ourselves and not shoot some irate Herr: "Vo-hin comen zee," and "Vo-hin Gay-en zee," and a few other phrases formed our vocabulary. A few pretty girls and prostitutes added a little color, but it was all nothing but a big pain in the neck.

Two days later we were relieved by the second section, and we went back to the battery to enjoy a life of ease (?).

*(Continued on Page 37)*

**YOUR BATTERY'S WAR, BATTERY B, 881st F.A.**  
(Continued from page 36)

**An Unforgettable Night  
Behind the Siegfried Line**

By George Owens

One morning in February, a jeep crawled through the mud of the Ardennes. The occupants were **T/5 Hurley**, **T/5 Owens**, and **Pfc. Young**. They were going back to Mirfield to recover some small items that the battery had left behind when we moved up to the front. After picking up the items, they headed back for the battery area at Murrigen.

It was not long before they discovered that they were lost. All of the roads looked the same and they seemed to take the wrong one every time. Each time they ran into a convoy, the confusion was doubled. Finally they reached a point where they had access to a map, and slightly oriented, they turned around and headed for the gun position.

It was dark now and the jeep was just crawling through the night. They came upon a lieutenant who informed them that three enemy tanks had broken through in that area and advised them to proceed with extreme caution. Soon, a huge tank appeared on the side of the highway. The men could plainly see the turret and a man standing beside it. Grenades were prepared immediately and a carbine was leveled at this figure. To their great relief, the guard challenged them in good old English, and they found the tank to be friendly. The guard also informed them that they were on the right road back to the battery area.

The jeep took off once more but once again they missed the boat. Due to the extreme blackness of the night, they bypassed the road which led back to the battery and once more they were lost.

Several times, they were halted by guards and each time given directions. And each time they became more and more confused. Finally they came upon the 273rd Inf. Reg't. C.P. Here they met a **Captain McFarland** and told him the situation. When they identified themselves as members of the 881st, he was pleased as he had a sketch of the enemy positions which he wanted to deliver to **Colonel Brooks**.

After getting our directions, they headed back for the battery once more and this time found the correct road. The Engineers had laid a wire mat over the road and the jeep became hung up on it. They worked unsuccessfully to free the jeep from the muck. Finally **Major Ross** came up and they told him about the sketch. Taking one of the men with him for a guide, he trudged down to the Regimental C.P.

The party waited at the jeep until daylight, when the jeep was pulled out. By this time, the little party was plenty wet, cold and tired. They later discovered that they had wandered through the dragon teeth of the Siegfried Line and considered themselves fortunate that they did not run into the enemy. They were later told by Major Ross that the position shown in the sketch had been fired upon by our artillery. But that he did not know the results of the firing.

**How It Feels to Have More Than 85 Points  
or "Hurray, I'm Going Home"**

By Sgt. E.V. Boucher

Asked by many of the men, both in this battery, and in others, just how it feels to know that you have enough points to go home, well, here's how it is.

On the day that the Army announced that a soldier needed 85 of those precious points, I tried mentally to add up mine. However, this was impossible, as I was too excited. I then wrote them down and added them up. What do you know, I had 119. Boy! What a feeling. I sat down on my bed and tried to visualize just what I would do out of the Army for good. Just think, no one to tell me when to get up in the morning, when to do this, and when to do that. It seemed too good to be true, but I guess it is going to happen and soon, I hope.

When I was called down to Headquarters to sign that very important little piece of paper, I was really elated as they said that it might be only a matter of days until we were called to leave. I could hardly eat any dinner for I almost expected them to call us at any time.

One day passed, then two, and finally three, until by now, I am once more resigned to waiting for that fateful day when the call will come. I'll be waiting and ready as I have all of my equipment packed and most of my "boodle" sent home. Everything is placed so that I can be ready to leave in five minutes, and if you don't believe it, watch me the day they call me.

I wish that the entire battery was going home with me, but some day we'll look at all of this as a bad dream and remember the friendships we made while members of 'Baker' Battery.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Combat Diary of Trawler Baker Clerk  
or Behind the Front**

By Cpl. Thomas E. Fink

"Due sol add pay for foreign service fr 1 Dec 44." This masterpiece of abbreviation, which I dutifully entered in each man's service record, told me that it was no longer a rumor, and that it did happen to me. I was on my way overseas. My next payroll bore the address APO 417 c/o Postmaster NYC, NY. The typewriter was the same and so was the field desk but the locale was Camp Renikhet with its chills and gales.

After enscribing "23 Jan 45 left Weymouth England & 24 Jan 45 arr LaHavre France" on each and every Service Record I stopped and thought for awhile, "Hm," I said to myself, "We are now on the continent. I wonder what place we will occupy?" Then, on the 12th of February's Morning Report, the Record of Events section contained the casual announcement, "Enemy engaged by artillery fire." As tough this was the signal, our section, after a short stay with Service Battery at Bulligen, Belgium, became a part of the 69th Division Rear Echelon.

(Continued on Page 38)

**YOUR BATTERY'S WAR, BATTERY B, 881st F.A.**  
(Continued from page 37)

Our first stop was Montenu, Belgium. We didn't get much work done here. Our office was set up in a building that was about a mile west of where we lived. And the mess hall was located about two miles east of our billets. Most of our time was spent on the road. One day **Mr. Miller** and I took off for the battalion and the front. We found it all right, but I still insist that we went into enemy territory. We had to; Germany is not that big. The PTA and Soldier's Deposits collection was very good that day and it can be attributed to the lack of bright lights and "Gin Mills," I suppose. That was at Hellenthal, Germany.

The next stop was at Schmidtheim and I remember most of all, the show that "Baker" Battery put on, starring **Cpl. George (Stuff) Kahn**, and his "American Beauties." I also had a bath there.

After a three week stay there, we moved on to Ahrwiler, Germany. It was here that the wine flowed as it should (like wine). Our office was set up in the town's largest winery. To say the least, it was all very convenient and besides I was tired of Halazone flavored water. The mess sergeant started serving us wine with our meals, but while very much in favor of the idea, I did think that he went just a little too far, when he also offered wine for breakfast.

Niederlahnstein was next on our itinerary. We were given a very nice office on the third floor of the Police Station. We moved in as fast as we could, and it was always a race with the other sections to see which would get done first. The theory being, first done, first loot. Well, we got done and set out to see what we could procure. Pfc. (then Pvt.) "**Shaky**" **Reeves** of Hq. Btry, spotted a cellar full of libations and the race was on. We made off with one case and while going back for the second we were told to load up the truck, as we were leaving. So down three flights of the narrowest of stairs went our stuff. In case anyone is interested, an Air Corps case of papers is not the lightest of things and neither is a field desk laden with various odds and ends of records and loot.

A stop at Bad Ems was followed by a stay at Bad Wildung. This time the day was bright when Mr. Miller and I went up front to the Battalion. The Battalion was at Lutterberg and we had no trouble finding it. Instead of using the GI map, we followed a captured map of the sector that was distributed to the German motorists for free, by the Standard Oil Company. I will remember Lutterberg, for it was while here that I saw my first and last, one and only bit of action. A German plane came down out of the clouds for a look at our position. From where I stood it looked as though he was looking down my throat.

Our last "position" before returning to the battalion was at Naunhof. We really had a deal there. We all had nice beds, there was hot water and a tub and we had all the comforts of home. I "zeroed in" my typewriter, out on the veranda and really spread out. The house,

as most houses do, had a kitchen equipped with all the necessary gadgets. "Mrs." Miller took over and produced some swell meals. There was a woods nearby and I took quite a lot of exercises there. The swimming pool will never be forgotten, either. But all good things must end and so we sadly left Naunhof behind and joined the Battalion at Leuna.

We had our hard times and our good times. I would not want to do it over again, but I have memories that I will enjoy in days to come. There are two entries that I am waiting to make in the Service Records. The first is "Arrived in New York," and the other is the filling out of the final endorsement. Well, that's about all there is to the story of the "Fighting Personnel." Not very interesting, but it may serve to show how the other half lived.

The 881st Field Artillery Battalion Personnel Section, otherwise known as "Trawler Personnel" or "Trawler Rear" consisted of the following men:

Mr. Herbert L. Miller .....	WOJG Personnel
Tec/sgt. William D. Wilcox .....	Personnel Sergeant
Cpl. Lawrence Boyer .....	Hq. Btry
T/5 John J. Mockler .....	Hq. Btry
Pfc. James E. Reeves .....	Hq. Btry
Cpl. Okey E. Russell .....	Hq. Btry. clerk
Cpl. Earl E. Smith .....	"A" Btry. clerk
Cpl. Thomas E. Fink .....	"B" Btry. clerk
Cpl. Edward W. Newstead .....	"C" Btry. clerk
Cpl. Joseph Koepfer .....	Service Btry. clerk

\* \* \* \* \*

I want to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to the men who gave up many of their off duty hours, and worked tirelessly to help prepare this history of your battery.

To the Battery Commander, **Captain Louis D. Mills**, for the many liberties he extended me.

To the First Sergeant, **Walter W. Haag**, for making available many of the battery records.

To Pfc. **Dan Dowling** and **Phillip Sparacino** for their good work in cutting the stencils used in the printing process.

To **Pfc. Ike Eisenberg** for his tireless efforts in cutting red tape and surmounting every obstacle that stood in the way of getting the book actually printed.

To **Pfc. Al Glatfelter** for his excellent sketches.

And to the many other men who wrote articles or contributed their share to make this journal possible.

When we arrived at Leuna Werks, Germany, there was a printing machine available, and it was decided to be printing here. However, it was a race to see which would come first; the completion of the book, or the order to CSMO. Luckily, the book was completed first.

My best wishes to every officer and man in the battery. In your every venture, may the sensing always be, "Range correct, deflection correct."

**Cpl. George N. Custis**



# "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.

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*(Continued on Back Cover)*



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