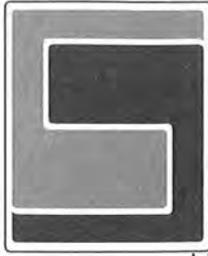


FIGHTING 69TH INFANTRY DIVISION

★★★★ Association, Inc.



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SEPTEMBER – OCTOBER – NOVEMBER – DECEMBER
2007

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

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

bulletin

The U.S. and Soviet Armies at Torgau



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*Deceased

On April 25, 1945, at Torgau, Germany, Lieutenant **William D. Robertson** of the First Army met a Red Army soldier. Germany had been divided! Immediately the Russians and the Americans began to celebrate. The Russians held a large red banner reading: OUR GREETINGS TO THE BRAVE TROOPS OF THE AMERICAN FIRST ARMY. Hundreds of Red Army soldiers found rowboats and rafts and crossed the Elbe to visit the American troops. A factory in Torgau produced harmonicas and accordions, so there was music and dancing.

First Army commander, **General Courtney Hodges** called his superior, **General Omar Bradley**, and told him the historic news. Gen. Bradley said, “Thanks, Courtney, thanks again for calling. We’ve been waiting a long time....” Gen. Bradley hung up, opened a bottle of Coke, and circled Torgau on his wall map. The end of the war in Germany was less than two weeks away.

Photo submitted by Casimir Krajewski. See his note in the Mail Box, Page 2.

THE MAIL BOX

By **Dottie (Witzleb) Shadle**
Editor



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

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E-Mail: danne345@comcast.net

George M. Haddad, 30180 Cheviot Hills Drive, Franklin, Michigan 48025-1552 — Co. E, 272nd: Many thanks for your publishing my letter in the last issue of the 69th Bulletin. I have already received some feedback. It was truly appreciated.

I don't know whether it's in the modus operandi of the Bulletin to do this but will inquire anyway.

After 62 years I finally came across a Bivouac Buddy with whom I shared camaraderie and a pup tent while on maneuvers at Camp Shelby and before I left for overseas. He never knew about the Association so I sent him a copy of one of my Bulletins. After the war he ended up becoming a doctor with quite an educated family.

Would it be an imposition to send him a copy of the latest Bulletin? I am hoping that we can induce him to join. He is **Dr. Roy Fielding, MD**.

Nathan J. Fullmer, 2802 Lancaster Drive, Salt Lake City, Utah 84108-2536 — Co. C, 272nd: I was very pleased to note that one of the events for the reunion is attendance at the Mormon Tabernacle Choir rehearsal on Thursday, August 23rd.

My mother used to sing in that choir and I am fond of some of its selections, particularly The Battle Hymn of the Republic.

We are looking forward to meeting you in person at the reunion. As of now, only one of the three survivors of my 12 man rifle squad (**John J. Surash**) will be attending along with myself.

Jeannette Shahan, 800 Ridgeway Avenue, Morgantown, West Virginia 26505, jlshahan@msn.com: Thanks for the awesome job you do with the 69th Bulletin! My Dad, **Alton G. Shahan** of the 69th, Company I, 272nd, really enjoys the pictures and stories.

He has been trying to recall more details of the circumstances of being in a marmalade factory. We would appreciate any information regarding that experience that anyone could share.

I would also enjoy hearing from anyone that participated in a fish fry with dad and the sergeant. By chance does anyone have a picture of my dad and his twin brother Allen?

Thanks so much!

Mrs. Anne M. Black, 1605 22nd Street, NW, Washington, DC 20008, anne.black@verizon.net: My name is Anne Moloney Black and I am the daughter of **Sgt. Edwin J. Moloney**, 273rd Company G, killed in action in Germany on April 14, 1945. **Chet Yastrzemski** suggested that I write to see if you remembered my father. (*EDITOR'S NOTE: Please write to Anne if you have any information for her.*)

Casimir J. Krajewski, 21810 Tuscany Eastpoint, Michigan 48021, Telephone: 586-779-1397 — Btry. A, 724th F.A.:

Several weeks ago I visited a WWII Armed Forces exhibit at a nearby college. While browsing through some of the memorabilia, I came across a book entitled, *The Good Fight, How World War II Was Won*, by war historian Stephen E. Ambrose.

One section described the U.S. Army linking with the Soviet Army in Germany Upon closer examination of the accompanying photo, I noticed our "Fighting 69th" insignia on some of the helmets. As usual, our Division is not mentioned as being the first to meet the Russians, but this candid photo does indeed show our guys right in the forefront of the celebration!

(*EDITOR'S NOTE: See Casimir's photo on cover. This actual shot I haven't seen before.*)

Brenda High, 7624 Deseret Drive, Pasco, Washington 99301, Telephone: 509/547-1052 — Co. H, 272nd: This picture was taken in Shelby, Mississippi approximately May or June of 1944, right after an all night long training march. The soldiers were relieved that the approximate 17-mile march was over and stopped at an arcade that took pictures. The chosen background is a fake bar scene perfect for GIs.

The name of the soldier on the left is unknown. The soldier on the right is my dad, **Private Albert Stevens** of Company H, 272nd. If anyone recognizes the soldier on the left, please call, write or e-mail me at Brenda@jaredstory.com. They were stationed at Camp Shelby.



A Message from Paul and Dottie Shadle Membership Chairman and Editor

Paul Shadle, *Company E, 271st Infantry*
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Paul: pauls1504@comcast.net



*Membership Chairman Paul Shadle
and Editor, Dottie Shadle*

The Salt Lake City reunion is now history and although the attendance was down, we had a good time. The Mormon Tabernacle Choir rehearsal was one of the highlights of the week. The mother of **Nathan Fullmer**, a member of Co. C-272nd, was a member of the choir at one time. Members of the 69th Division Association veterans were honored during the choir's presentation. It was quite a moving experience. A visit to the Big Dig Copper Mine was also very impressive.

Next year's reunion (2008) will be held in the Washington, D.C. area from August 12th until August 17th, 2008. Tours will start on Wednesday, August 13th. The plans are not all finalized as of yet but will be in the next bulletin. Some of the activities may include "Shear Madness at the Kennedy Center." The dress code is casual and a cash bar will be available.

The Spirit of Washington Lunch Cruise is a two hour lunch cruise with live entertainment and a lunch buffet. We will also be including a city tour and a visit to the National World War II Museum.

We wish all of you a Merry Christmas or Happy Hanukkah. We also wish all A Healthy, Happy and Prosperous New Year.

HAVE YOU PAID YOUR DUES! DUES YEAR FOR 2007-2008

August 1, 2007 to July 31, 2008

Regular Membership \$10.00
Ladies' Auxiliary \$ 5.00
Bulletin Donation Up To You

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Do not send dues to Paul Shadle.

69th Infantry Division Association 61st Annual Reunion

WASHINGTON, D.C.

August 12th thru 17th, 2008

**More information and registration forms
to follow in the next bulletin.**

MOVING

Please print your new address below:

Name: _____

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**Please send this form
and your old address label to:**

PAUL SHADLE

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New Kensington, PA 15068-4069

Please allow six weeks advance notice.

Russo's memories . . .

Submitted By: **James V. Russo**

Company A, 272nd Infantry Regiment

2104 Coolidge Drive, Arlington, Texas 76011

My name is **J(ames) Vincent Russo**. (I don't use the James, but Uncle Sam did.)

I was looking at some of my old WWII photos after reading a recent 69th bulletin column regarding the 69th's link-up with the Russians, and came across two photos which were taken by a member of our unit (Company A, 272nd Regiment) with a "liberated" camera. I sent the photos with a note to my son, and he wrote back that it might be something you might want to include in the "bulletin" some time.

My note to him is below the photos.



.....That's a foxhole in the front left - don't know who did the digging - we never had to use foxholes while in this area since the German military were nowhere to be seen. The bikes on the right were left by the Germans, and although they left the sign intact, I don't think their intent was to help the 69th locate Torgau, which as shown was only 8 km away.

I can't pick up any markings on the jeep, but do recall some high brass coming through. When the Jeeps returned from Torgau, I clearly remember a driver holding onto his front seat passenger to keep him from falling out of the jeep - evidently the Russians could hold their vodka better than our guys.

While in the area, we stayed in a small town (Klitzchen) near the road where the photo was taken. I recall meeting a few Russians who came into the town. One had what looked like a sub-machine gun from a Dick Tracy comic strip although it was painted a bright green. My guess was that he had run across a can of paint in some German town and decided to "spruce up" his gun.

Using sign language and some Polish a sergeant from another squad knew, we asked him to show us what the gun could do. He immediately aimed it skyward and pulled the trigger. Nothing happened, so he proceeded to check the chamber. He turned the gun over and to our amazement, out fell a large amount of "debris." In a few seconds and while we were still laughing in disbelief, he managed to get off several rounds, and then a Russian officer came running over and "chewed him out royally."

I recall, too, our "next door" German neighbor. She was a relatively young lady and made French toast for three or four of us whom she invited for a visit. I tried to tell her that the French toast tasted good, and although it took a while, she finally understood what I was trying to say and came out with the German equivalent - "schmeckt gut." I should add that I remembered the sounds and their meaning over these 60+ years, but never bothered to check the spelling out. Since I'm writing this on my PC, I decided I would check with the "Free Translation" website before writing the German words here to make certain I would get them right. (Check done: I only missed the "t" on "schmeckt," so have to say she was a good teacher as well as a good French toast cook or "cooker" as you used to say.)

There were two other memories of the "schmeckt gut visit."

Actually, our visit was with the neighbor plus two young attractive frauleins. I say "young" although I guess they were about my age - 19 at the time. I want to assure you, that we GIs behaved in a gentlemanly manner, but have to add in all honesty that that was, in part, because our hostess watched us like a hawk and gave us clear "don't get any ideas" signs.

Finally, I can remember that just before leaving, our conversation/sign-language turned to the fact that the "Ruskies" would soon be replacing the Americans. I guess she had figured that out and had imagined the worst consequences, for her fear of the Russians came through even though we were unable to understand her words. Unfortunately, it was on that unpleasant note that we returned to our "next door home."

Times issue of April 28, 1945, which reported the link-up - the one I framed and hung on the wall? No? Well, here's a refresher.

By the way, do you remember the reprint of the NY Times issue of April 28, 1945, which reported the link-up - the one I framed and hung on the wall? No? Well, here's a refresher.



That's a "69er" in the photo on the right with the Russian's arm around him. The American is identified as Lt. William D. Robertson.

Have to go now. And by the way, I hope the statute of limitations has run out on the fraternization ban in effect at the time. If I got hooked on that after 60+ years, it wouldn't be a "schmeckt gut" occasion.....

A Message from our President David J. Theobald

Company F, 272nd Infantry Regiment
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ON THE ROAD AGAIN

What a wonderful choice the Board of Directors and Past President **Paul Shadle** made when they selected Salt Lake City for the site of our last convention. Several locations and events will remain in my memory forever.

1. The Great Salt Lake itself.
2. The Kennecott copper mine.
3. The temple square and the Mormon Choir.

The lake and the Salt flats were unique geographical features seen nowhere else in the western hemisphere. The tiny brine shrimp that inhabit the Lake are quite noteworthy. Our guide brought along a glass jar that she used to scoop water so the tiny shrimp could be observed swimming around in the salty water.

The copper mine is such a large hole it is one of two man made features that can be observed by satellite. (The other is the Great Wall of China). The giant off-road trucks that handle the ore from mine to crusher use tires eight feet in diameter. The giant tires are stored near the mine. Manufacturing of the tires is so time consuming that a year's worth of replacements are in place for the 14 mammoth trucks. The mine is in full operation 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Copper is in such great demand and the price so high, robbers are stripping the wiring from unoccupied homes just to retrieve the copper.

At the Temple square in downtown Salt Lake City, we visited an amphitheater that seats over 20,000, for a rehearsal of the **Mormon Tabernacle Choir**. The choir consists of 360 voices and is accompanied by a full symphony orchestra and a huge pipe organ. The 69th infantry was acknowledged by the leader and a

song, "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," was played and sung in our honor. If that didn't send shivers up your spine, nothing would. The enormity of the huge choir and orchestra is almost overwhelming. Just that one experience made the trip well worth the cost.

Speaking of attendance, plans are already underway for our next convention in **Washington, D.C.** Since this is an East-coast location, we expect a much larger turnout than we had in Utah. Our stops will include a visit to the new WWII monument. Make your plans now.

Don't forget to get your dues in and register for the reunion as early as possible.

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(Continued on Page 6)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

(Continued from Page 5)

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NOTE

The bulletin has been reduced to 24 pages to save on postage and printing costs. If you did not see your article or photos in this issue, we hope to publish them in the next issue. We apologize for any inconvenience but we need to cut costs where we can.

69th Infantry Division Reunion Attendees August 20th-26th, 2007

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 Verl Jacob Service Company
 Ernest Krause Co. B, 269th Engineers
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 Russell and Rosanna Meinecke Co. L, 272nd
 John Melanson Btry. C, 879th F.A.

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 Ed and Dolly Sarcione Anti-Tank, 272nd
 Kenneth Sawyer Co. D, 273rd
 Ralph and Cecilia Scholtz Hq., 273rd
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 John and Marlyn Surash Co. C, 272nd
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 David and June Wittman Hq., 272nd
 Alice Wolthoff Co. M, 272nd
 Chet and Barbara Yastrzemski Co. E, 272nd
 Kenneth Ziems Co. L, 272nd

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Past Presidents Rear: Raymond Sansoucy and James Boris. Front: Robert Pierce and Paul Shadle



New 69th President David Theobald (F-272) and Vice President Robert Crowe (E-273)



Bing Poon E-271 and Raul Nava M-273



Chet and Barb Yastrzemski E-272



Veto and Sula DiPento H-272



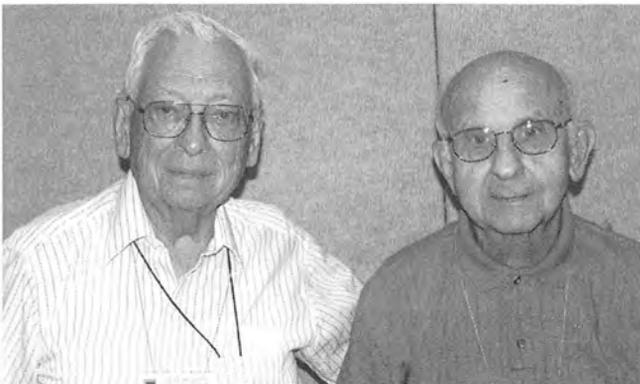
Fuzzy, Neil and Lila Mae Spangler, E-272



Mary Wilmot, mother Jean Ross, Warren Wilmot A-271



Ed Lucci A-273 and Bill Nettles A-273



First-Timers Nathan Fullmer & John Surash, C-272



Janet Houssel I-273 and Carmen Sanborn I-273

Photos By: Chet Yastrzemski



Chaplain Bill Snidow and wife, Ellen



Treasurer John Barrette and Secretary Joe Huber



Editor Dottie and Membership Chairman Paul Shadle



*Front: New President Dave and wife, Jeanne Theobald
Rear: Neil Shields*

Photos By: Neil Shields



*Here's a Group that
really seems to be
enjoying the Reunion.
They are:*

*Left Side:
John Barrette, Hq., 271
Grant Brown, 69th Q.M.
Bill Duncan, Hq., 271
Dorothea Duncan*

*Right Side:
Edward Ambrose, I-272
Jennie Ambrose
Glorida Czyzyk
Stanley Czyzyk, C-273*

*Photo By
John Barrette*

Another Sad-But-True Tale

From an Old Dog Face as I Remember It

Submitted By: **Bill Drugg**
Company K, 272nd Infantry
211 N. 14th Avenue
Altoona, Pennsylvania 16601

It's me again. Another memory string was pulled, and I find myself writing another story. I keep thinking I am all out of stories but then something happens and away we go. Again, hope you don't mind, this may be my last. I keep thinking one of my old buddies may remember some part of the story and maybe get a kick out of it.

Thank you Dottie. Keep up the good work.

P.S. I tried to get a picture of the ship SS LLE DeFrance to send along but had to get a release so -

The ship was launched in 1926. Taken over by the British after the fall of Paris, converted in 1940 to a troop ship, and scrapped in 1959 after starring in the movie "The Last Voyage."

The last "Victory Ship" that brought a lot of us home is now in Baltimore harbor being used commercially.

* * * * *

As any old railroader will tell you "To get a loaded train movin' from a dead stop you have to back-up to get a start (removing the slack in the cars) Soooo-- Allow me to backup to tell you a tale of my experience starting as we got on board the El-de-France. (*My memory was jogged by the homecoming troops pictured on the back cover of the last issue of the Bulletin*).

A former luxury liner of the French Fleet. Nothing on this ship had anything that vaguely resembled the word luxury. It was a Troop Carrier pure and simple. The way this ship was converted to a troop carrier must have been to get rid of anything having to do with luxury and replace it with anything that was crude, old and uncomfortable. Install hammocks floor to ceiling and wall to wall and as close together as possible, allowing just enough space to squeeze into if you are less than 5 foot tall and weigh less than 50 pounds.

The toilets are another thing dreamed up by a deranged person looking for section 8. A trough with water flowing from one end to the other with hardwood rough hewed boards across, so another lonesome seasick soul can find a friend to console them in their time of need. This latrine has been designed so that when you have no other place to go for a break of fresh air and one of your Buddies has just been sick on you and his Bunk, you have somewhere to go. These facilities are for dog face only. Officers need not apply.

The mess they serve, at mess time, was a mess. There may be too many messes in that sentence but

they are all needed. It was a mess. The meals were greasy and when you are trying to keep your tongue in your mouth, the absolutely last thing you want is GREASY FOOD. Nuff said. The major part of the day was spent bent over at the waist, looking at your shoes. Nuff said.

Now and then we found fresh OCEAN AIR, outside the curtained doorway. The curtains, as many as three sets on each door, were there to keep the light in so the U-Boats could not see us as we sped by. Some of the sicker comrades thought a well placed torpedo would be a welcome site. After a vote was taken, the nay vote won out. The curtain not only kept the light in, it kept the air out, the Good Air, Fresh Air, Sweet Air, Life Giving Air. A plan was made to meet at an hour when most of the brass were asleep in their comfortable sacks dreaming the dreams of the innocent. We air starved souls would venture into the night and get some Fresh Air.

Well we met and parted the three layers of curtains and ventured into the night and Fresh, Fresh, Sweet Ocean Air. Under the December fresh star-filled night. We were living it up and were just appreciating how the other half was living when someone suggested how good a cigarette would taste. What an idea. Yeah, a cigarette, wow. Anybody have a match? A light would be the answer, what to do? The fresh air versus the Mighty Cigarette. The answer to our problem. Then the answer to a prayer or so we — thought. If we had just known. But our poor nicotine clouded brains were not operating on all our brain power.

Well, my mother and father had bought me a Fox Hole Lighter for Christmas. It was a treated cord lighter that when the flint was struck it lit the cord, the cord glowed like magic. We all gathered around the lighter waiting for a light. When the flint was struck, we were all blinded -- the sky lit up the outline of the ship. It was the brightest light I had ever seen. My buddies faces were a scared ghost white. There was a silence, then we all panicked at the same time as we all headed to safety and the door. Ship personnel pushed bells, whistles, horns and adding to the excitement by joining us (the Invaders) in running around and yelling things to scare us. All this was done in total darkness.

Every one of us escaped any punishment, the only thing that was done I threw the Mighty Fox Hole Lighter into the brine briny deep. REST IN PEACE

THE AUXILIARY'S PAGE



Dottie (Witzleb) Shadle

By Dottie (Witzleb) Shadle

Ladies Auxiliary Editor

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A Message from your Auxiliary President, Dorothea Duncan

Hello to the Ladies of the 69th Infantry Auxiliary,

When the call came for a new President at this year's meeting, it was not my intention to be your next President, but when it seemed the group would disband, I thought if we only met once a year, and only had to write a few articles, it might be "doable." So with a little encouragement from others around me, I raised my hand and said yes.

Jane Matlach assured me that it wasn't much work, as she handed me a huge suitcase, one without wheels. I asked if we had to keep this one or could I get one with wheels. She told me to do whatever I thought best, as I was now the President.

When we returned home and looked over everything in the suitcase, here is what I did. There was a 69th Division logo afghan inside that has not been used in a long time. It seems it is carried back and forth, so I donated it to a retired Army Veteran, a woman, here in a small care facility in Alameda, Ca. The suitcase was donated to a woman's shelter who accept suitcases for woman as they leave the shelter with there few possessions. The rest can fit in my own suitcase and can be brought to the meeting next year.

Please continue with your knitting and crocheting the lap robes for the Veterans. Thank you all for your vote of confidence and I wish you all a happy holiday season.

A Message from your Past President, Jane Matlach

Dear Ladies of the 69th Ladies Auxiliary:

The 56th meeting of the auxiliary was held on Saturday morning, August 25th, 2007. First-timer **Marilyn Surash** from Rochester, New York and 27 members attended the meeting.

Sunshine Lady **Edith Zaffern** sent her annual report to the meeting. She mailed 1,561 cards to our members, and the total cost of printing and mailing was \$1,093.15. Our special thanks are sent to **Edith** for her work during the year.

Members and friends donated 26 lap robes to the Veterans Hospital of Salt Lake City.

Plans are being made for the 2008 reunion to be held in Washington, D.C., and a suggestion was made to donate lap robes to the Walter Reed Army Hospital.

Please keep creating those wonderful 35"x45" blankets. They are appreciated by the veterans and staff of the hospitals.

New officers were elected for the next two years. They are: **President** **Dorothea Duncan**
Vice President **Jeanne Theobald**
Recording Secretary..... **Carmen Sanborn**
Chaplain **Jennie Ambrose**
Sunshine Lady **Edith Zaffern**

The meeting concluded with entertainment from a wonderful Barbershop Quartet.

Thank you to all the volunteers who assisted me during the last two years, and I look forward to seeing you in 2008.

Annual Meeting of Officers and Board of Directors 69TH INFANTRY DIVISION ASSN. Thursday, August 23rd, 2007 THE RED LION HOTEL SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

Call to order: The Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Fighting 69th Infantry Association, Inc. was called to order by **President Paul Shadle** at 3:00 p.m., Thursday, August 23rd, 2007, at the Red Lion Hotel, Salt Lake City, Utah.

Pledge of Allegiance was led by **President Paul**.
Invocation by **Chaplain Bill Snidow**.

REPORTS

President's Report and Membership Chairman's Report by President-Membership Chairman Paul Shadle: He reported that presently there are 1,665 active members of the Association; 114 associate members; 46 honorary members and 238 widow members. **Paul** also reported that as ordered last year, he sent letters to those members who were two years or more delinquent in dues stating that if they did not remit dues they would be dropped.

He said that in many cases he received letters stating that the member had died some years ago. One member had died 31 years ago. Some delinquent members indicated that they were no longer interested in receiving the bulletin. Some members brought their dues up to date and there were donations from some others. In the future, members delinquent for two years will be dropped.

He further stated that he and **Association Treasurer, John Barrette** will keep current lists as to dues positions.

Vice President's Report by Vice President David Theobald. He reported there was a good chance that the California Group of the 69th Division was going to disband due to lack of interest.

Secretary's Report by Association Secretary Joe Huber: **Joe** reported that he has the pleasure of acknowledging the gifts of the association by survivors of members. He also reported on the Memorial Day wreaths and flowers were placed for 2007 and that the same decorations have been ordered for 2008. Moneys are in hand with the Memorial Management group in Paris.

Treasurer's Report by Association Treasurer John Barrette: **John** presented a two page report showing the status of the Association's finances. He noted that he and **Membership Chairman Paul** will keep in touch as to the dues status of all members. The two-page report covered the periods of January - December 2006 and January - July 2007.

Report of the Nominating Committee

The nominating committee presented the following slate:

Officers 2007-2008

President **David Theobald**
Vice President **Robert Crow**
Secretary **Joe Huber**
Treasurer **John Barrette**

Board of Directors, Class of 2010

Ed Hill *881st Field Artillery*
Edgar Parsons *272nd Infantry*
Robert Pierce *273rd Infantry*
Bing Poon *271st Infantry*
William Snidow *661st Tank Destroyers*

These nominations will be placed before the General Meeting on Saturday.

Moved, seconded and adopted that the reports be accepted.

NEW BUSINESS

There was a spirited discussion on the status of the associate members of the Association in that most of them had not been approved by the Boards of Directors over the years as required by the constitution of the Association. The consensus was that as these associate members have been paying dues and are up to date in their dues that we will accept them but in the future all new associate members must be nominated to and accepted by the Boards of Directors in future years.

In addition there was a discussion as to Honorary Memberships in the Association by the two gentlemen in Europe that have "adopted" graves of members of the Division in Europe. Here too the consensus was that this should not be done and that the Secretary was asked to write, thanking them on behalf of the Association.

There were two requests by **Joe Lipsius**. One that the 69th Division web site be the official organ of the Association, and the other that he be name the Official Historian. Here too, both of the requests would need changes in the Constitution.

It was the consensus that we do not want to go through changes in the Constitution at this time.

Moved by **Ray Sansoucy**, seconded by **Mel Schulz** that we do not make the necessary changes. Carries on a voice vote.

President Paul appointed the members of the Directors Class of 2008 as the nominating committee for the 2008 meeting.

Paul also announced that the 2008 meeting will be in Washington D.C. in August 2008. Dates and location to be announced at a later time.

Moved, seconded and voted that we adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,
Joseph F. Huber
Secretary

Annual Meeting of the General Membership 69TH INFANTRY DIVISION ASSN. Saturday, August 25th, 2007 THE RED LION HOTEL SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

Call to order: The General Membership meeting of the Fighting 69th Infantry Division, Inc. was called to order by **President Paul Shadle** at 9:00 a.m., Saturday, August 25th, 2007 at the Red Lion Hotel, Salt Lake City, Utah.

Pledge of Allegiance was led by **President Paul**.

Invocation by **Chaplain Bill Snidow**.

Minutes of the 2006 meeting were posted in the Bulletin and were approved on motion, second and vote.

REPORTS

Presidents and Membership Chairman's Report by President Paul Shadle: Paul reported that we have an active paid in roster of 1,665 members; 114 associate members; 46 honorary members and 238 widow members.

Paul spoke of the 1525 first class letters he sent to non-dues paying members stating that if dues were not paid they would be dropped from the membership. Most of the replies, he said, were telling us that "dad had died" some years ago, one 31 years. Some also indicated that they were no longer interested. Others paid in dues and some sent donations. The big plus, he said, "is that we have a clean mailing list." The gifts were placed in the publication fund to help with the increasing postage and production costs.

Vice-President's Report: Vice President **David Theobald** reported that it looked as if the California Group may be disbanding due to lack of interest.

Secretary's Report: **Joe Huber** reported that he had the pleasure of writing thank you letters for the donations to the publication fund. He also reported that the floral pieces for the cemeteries were in place for memorial and that photos were on display, along with copies of the Memorial Day programs at the cemeteries in the Welcome room. Memorial Day 2008 displays and flowers have been ordered and monies sent to Paris. We expect that by 2009 there will be an increase in costs.

Treasurer's Report by Association Treasurer John Barrette: John handed out a two-page report detailing January-December 2006 and January-July 2007. He noted that there was a drop of \$5,000 through 2006, which was about the same as 2005. The association is in good financial condition he said.

Moved seconded and voted to approve the reports.

NEW BUSINESS

The question was raised as to why, when many of us pre-pay our dues on reunion registration, we still get dues bills in October-November. It was noted that these dues notices are sent out bulk mail and that it would be too costly to remove the paid members from the non-paid members.

On the matter of dues: **Membership Chairman Paul** and **Treasurer John Barrette** have set up a program that will track the dues payments on name-by-name basis so that delinquent members can be spotted.

There was a discussion as to how to honor the two gentlemen that have "adopted" graves of our fallen comrades in European cemeteries. The Board of Directors discussed this at their meeting and resolved that in place of Honorary Memberships in the Association, letters of commendation be sent.

Moved, seconded and passed that the Secretary be ordered to send letters of commendation to the two gentlemen involved and state in the letter that this action took place at the Association's annual meeting.

Report of the Nominating Committee:

Officers 2007-2008

President, 2 year term **David Theobald**
Vice President, 2 year term **Robert Crow**
Secretary, 2 year term **Joe Huber**
Treasurer, 2 year term **John Barrette**

There was a call for nominations from the floor. There being none, a motion was made to close nominations and that a ballot be cast in favor of the persons nominated. Carried on a voice vote.

Board of Directors, Class of 2010

Ed Hill *881st Field Artillery*
Edgar Parsons *272nd Infantry*
Robert Pierce *273rd Infantry*
Bing Poon *271st Infantry*
William Snidow *661st Tank Destroyers*

There was a discussion on the "Legacy Group." It was noted that they use the name 69th Infantry Division but that they MAY NOT use out corporate registered name. Those at the meeting favored the startup of the organization and it was moved, seconded and passed that we "Give our Blessing" to **W.M. Sheavly** and **Connie Brough** who are heading up the group.

Incoming President David Theobald stated that in his working days he had a great deal of experience working with the government bureaucrats and that he offered his good offices in helping any member of the association in dealing with them.

It was noted from the floor that each county has a veterans' service office that can and does offer effective service to us veterans.

Chet Yastrzemski introduced the 2008 69th Division Trip to Europe. He outlined the tour and told of the costs involved. He recommended that anyone interested get a \$500 deposit to American Express to reserve a spot in the tour as soon as possible.

First timers **John Surash** of the 272nd Infantry and **Nate Fullmer**, 272nd Infantry were introduced.

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ANNUAL MEETING OF THE GENERAL MEMBERSHIP (Continued on Page 14)

The Board of Directors of the Class of 2008 were appointed as the nominating committee for the 2008 reunion. The secretary will advise them of the appointment.

The location of the 2008 Reunion will be Washington, D.C. Dates and other information will follow.

Question from the floor as to any other cities that may have been looked at and why Branson was not chosen. **Paul Shadle** answered that Branson and New Orleans had been looked at. New Orleans was not a good choice at the present time, he said. He also said that while hotel rates in Branson were great, there were problems with bussing costs and with

Army Day - April 6, 1945

Submitted by: **William (Bill) Nettles**

Company A, 273rd Regiment

2800 W. Main Street, Cottage 303A

Tupelo, Mississippi 38801

FORT EHRENBREITSTEIN - GERMANY

The 69th Infantry Division was established on May 15, 1943, at Camp Shelby, Mississippi. The Division trained at Shelby until October 1944, when it moved to England, France, and Belgium, preparing for an attack on Germany.

Two incidents, the capture of Fort Ehrenbreitstein and the link-up with the Russian Army at Torgau, established the 69th Infantry Division as a part of World War II history. It is noteworthy that the First Battalion of the 273rd Infantry Regiment created both events.

On February 10, 1945, the 69th Division entered combat with the Germans after relieving the 99th Infantry Division at the renowned Siegfried Line. It remained in combat until the war ended on May 8, 1945.

After seventeen days of extensive patrols, infantry attacks on pill boxes and bombardment by Air Force, artillery, and self-propelled weapons, the Division, on February 27, 1945, went on the attack. Advancing eighteen kilometers to the east toward the Rhine River, over 300 concrete pill boxes were destroyed, or made ineffective, and 42 towns were overrun, resulting in the capture of over two hundred prisoners.

On March 7, 1945 the advance stopped in the vicinity of Schmidheim, Germany. The Division had to await its turn to cross the great Rhine River.

On March 8, 1945, the Ludendorff Bridge across the Rhine was captured by the 9th Armored Division; thereby establishing the Remagen bridgehead. Although the Ludendorff eventually collapsed, the Engineers had rapidly established bridges for motor vehicles and equipment throughout the combat zone. By the end of March, it was reported that more bridges across the Rhine were available to the Allied Forces than the Germans had ever constructed. Foot soldiers crossed the Rhine by motor-driven landing craft.

getting from Springfield, Missouri, the closest airline connection, to Branson. What had been a \$50.00 round trip rate from Springfield to Branson had been raised to a cost of \$100 per direction.

Mrs. Jane Matlach of the Auxiliary appeared to invite the membership to hear the Barber Sharp Quartet that was entertaining the Auxiliary.

There being no further business, it was moved, seconded and carried that we adjourn. Passed on a voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,
Joseph F. Huber
Secretary

On March 21st, 1945, after regrouping and rest, the 69th Division was again on the move. A regimental task force commanded by **Colonel Walter D. Buie** crossed the Rhine River - wheeled vehicles over Victor Bridge, 1,370 feet long and said to be the longest tactical span in the world. Foot soldiers crossed by motorized assault boats after donuts and coffee were served by the Red Cross girls.



The Task Force consisted of the First and Second Battalions of the 272nd Infantry Regiment and the First Battalion of the 273rd Infantry Regiment.

The support units were the 406th Artillery Group, 955th Field Artillery Battalion, Company B, 661st T.D. Battalion, 102nd Cavalry Squadron, 2nd Ranger Battalion, 62nd Field Artillery Battalion and the 777th Tank Battalion.

The mission was to drive south and secure the southern boundary of the V Corp Zone. The remainder of the Division was to cross the Rhine after the objective was attained.

On March 27th, 1945, the First Battalion of the 273rd Infantry Regiment, commanded by **Major W.D. (Wild Bill) Salladin**, crossed the Rhine, just south of Remagen, and after a pause, joined the wheeled vehicles headed South. In its path was the formidable Fort Ehrenbreitstein, located on the Rhine at the junction of the Rhine and Moselle rivers. The fort, rising over 500 feet above the river, was designed for defense in one direction only. Recognizing the danger of encirclement, many of the garrison fled. The remaining resistance soon surrendered, resulting in numerous prisoners.

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ARMY DAY - APRIL 6, 1945

(Continued from Page 14)

The capture of Fort Ehrenbreitstein by the First Battalion, 273rd Regiment, set in motion a chain of events which would culminate in a celebration of Army Day, April 6, 1945.

First, went out the call from the Supreme Allied Headquarters, European Command, for THE FLAG to be sent by air from the War Department, where it had been stored since January, 1923.

The following General Officers planned to attend the Army Day ceremony:

- General Omar N. Bradley, Commanding General, 12th Army Group
- Lieutenant General Courtney L. Hodges, Commanding General, 1st United States Army
- Lieutenant General George S. Patton, Commanding General, 3rd United States Army
- Lieutenant General William H. Simpson, Commanding General, 9th United States Army
- Lieutenant General Leonard T. Gerow, Commanding General, 15th United States Army

Other invited officers were Major General Reinhardt, Major General Allen, Major General Vandeberg, Major General Quesada, Major General Cota, Brig. General Moses, Brig. General Perry, Brig. General Kibler, Brig. General Blakely, Brig. General Sebree, Brig. General Sibert, Brig. General Nugent, Brig. General Weyland, Brig. General O'Hare and Brig. General Ryan.

The 12th Army Group was to be represented at the ceremony by a platoon of enlisted personnel selected from each major unit. The 28th Infantry Division was chosen to provide the Guard of Honor for General Bradley and to make all arrangements for the ceremony. Lieutenant Colonel William F. Train, of the 112th Infantry Regiment, was selected to command the Guard of Honor.

Company E, of the 2nd Battalion, 110 Regiment, was selected as the unit to be the Guard of Honor. The 28th Infantry Division Band was chosen to provide appropriate music for the ceremony. Some of the band instruments were reported to have been captured from the German army.

The 103rd Combat Engineer Battalion of the 28th Division, among other support requirements, received instructions to replace the destroyed flag pole at Fort Ehrenbreitstein immediately. Where they found a new flag pole is still a mystery.

The 4th Infantry Division was called to provide two platoons, one from Company D and one from Company M. These platoons were responsible for providing the colors at the ceremony.

The 4th Division was led by Major General Raymond D. Barton until December 27, 1944. Due to illness, he was unable to attend the ceremony. On January 23, 1923, Major Barton commanded the last American unit to garrison Fort Ehrenbreitstein and was responsible for the lowering of the American flag, signaling the end of the American occupation of Germany following WWI.

Sergeant Charles Horwatt and Technical Sergeant Vega B. Lasseter, members of the 8th Infantry Regiment, 4th Division during WWI, were expected to be present at the ceremony.

The 69th Infantry Division was selected to provide two platoons, one from the 272nd Infantry Regiment and one from the 273rd Infantry Regiment, for the ceremony. The units were given the responsibility of raising the colors as presented by the units of the 4th Division. All units of the two regiments were to be represented by one or more enlisted soldiers selected for height, appearance, conduct and decorations.

The two platoons of the 69th Division arrived a few days before the ceremony. Billets for the enlisted personnel had been prepared at the Fort and included a well-staffed mess. Officers and the Press Corp were housed at a nearby hotel in Bad Elms.

After a good night of sleep, the first order of the day was a shower, a shave and a hair cut. Not bad for individuals who had not experienced any of this in some time. Next came the issue of new clothing and equipment: combat boots, shirts and trousers, battle jackets, belts (cartridge or pistol), steel helmets and liners, first aid pouches, ribbons, badges, insignia, shoulder patches and stripes, all of which were to be returned after the ceremony.

The next two days were spent in organizing the units and in preparation for drills to be executed at the ceremony. The day before the ceremony included a dry run of all procedures.

April 6th, 1945 finally arrived. A little overcast, but, otherwise, cool weather prevailed. Nothing could, however, dim the presence of one General, four Lieutenant Generals, five Major Generals and approximately eleven Brigadier Generals who were viewing and conducting the ceremony.

Fighter planes of the 9th Tactical Air Force provided air cover throughout the day.

The dress rehearsal took place on the morning of April 6th, 1945. Everything went as scheduled except the reviewing officer arrived 15 minutes late, in a black, four-door army sedan, with all wheels locked in a sliding stop before the assembled troops. Out stepped none other than Lieutenant General George S. Patton, armed with pistols and ready to go.

At 1400 hours, the ceremony, broadcast and recorded, began with the following assembled units:

- Representatives of the 12th Army Group
- Company E, 110th Infantry Regiment, 28th Division
- The 28th Infantry Division Band
- Two platoons, 8th Infantry, 4th Division
- Two platoons, 272nd Infantry, 273rd Infantry, 69th Division

After presentation of the units, General Bradley inspected all assembled units. Color bearers of the 8th Infantry presented the colors to the color bearers of

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ARMY DAY - APRIL 6, 1945

(Continued from Page 15)

the 69th Infantry Division, who raised the colors high on the new flag pole. All of this, performed to a stirring rendition of the Star Spangled Banner and played by the 28th Division Band. The flag was lowered from Fort Ehrenbreitstein on January 23, 1923.

General Bradley then delivered to the Allied Forces, The American Homeland, and to listeners throughout the world, a message of hope and encouragement that victory in Europe was not far away. He thanked and praised the soldiers of the 12th U.S. Army Command for their contributions to defeating the Nazi Forces and their allies.

661st Tank Destroyers Mini Reunion

Submitted by: **Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Slopek**
2515 Shade Road • Akron, Ohio 44333-2058

September 20th thru 23rd, 2007

The reunion this year took place in historic **York, Pennsylvania**, with the **Mellinger** family hosting our event. **Ruth** and daughters **Dawn** and **Karen** planned a lovely reunion that included a tour of the U.S. Army Ordnance Museum in nearby Aberdeen, Maryland as well as a warm and home cooked meal for our banquet at the local VFW.

On the topic of the local VFW, an event occurred that can be said to be nothing more than divine provenance. It seems that when **Dawn** was making arrangements there for our banquet, she had the opportunity to speak with the Commander of the hall, a gentleman by the name of **Robert Molin**, who, when inquiring as to which specific unit would be gathering, was stunned to discover that it was the 661st that would be visiting.

You see, it so happens that the 661st was his father's unit! Needless to say, he was very excited to meet everyone, and paid us a visit to the hospitality room on Friday night. In the way that some things happen, the most recent 69th Infantry Bulletin (Volume 60, No. 3, Page 20) happened to be lying on the table in the room, and incredibly, displayed an open page photograph that featured none other than his father, **Lt. Harold Molin**! Needless to say, Bob was thrilled, as were we, to experience this very meaningful occurrence. At the banquet, Bob spoke to us as a group, recalling his fathers experience as well as his own experience in Vietnam. Others who addressed us at the banquet included **Dawn, Chuck Yannul** and **Ruth Mellinger**, all of whom spoke thoughtfully about the meaning that the 661st camaraderie has meant to them, and a touching benediction was delivered by **Bill Snidow**.

York, a beautiful and historic area of the country, offered us all plenty to do, and many people took trips to Gettysburg, and nearby Lancaster County, an idyllic Amish settlement.

The ceremonial units saluted General Bradley and then marched off the parade grounds.

The Signal Corps did its usual good job of broadcasting the event, but also captured the event on film.

It may be of interest that the ceremony made the newspapers and theaters throughout the United States. Ruby Nettles, attending a movie in Cleveland, Mississippi, upon seeing the news of the day, suddenly arose and loudly proclaimed, "That's Bill, my husband!"

NOTE: The "Combat Video" which has been for sale in the Bulletin by Joe Lipsius has a good view of this ceremony. Please see last bulletin page 13 for full info on the Combat Action DVD or VCR. Limited space has not allowed us to print this in full in this issue.

Of course, we were all thrilled and grateful that this year saw the attendance of **Fran Yannul**, who looks great and was feeling well enough to join us again!

In addition to many extended members of the **Mellinger** family, this year's reunion again saw a good turnout of sons, daughters, and grandchildren of all of the veterans.

And it seems that the 661st reunion will go on. Next year's reunion was decided by the **Wahl** family to be hosted in their hometown of Chagrin Falls, Ohio! Watch the bulletin for details!

This year's attendees included:

Bill and **Mary Wahl** and family: **Bill** and **Jan Wahl**
Bill and **Ellen Snidow** and grandson **Nate**
Ken, Wilma and **Randy Gillette**
Mike and **Dorothy Kotnick**
Marie Mackey (George Mackey)
Arnold Mackey (son), **Nena Dresser** (daughter)
Chuck and **Fran Yannul**
Pat Slopek (Jules)
Tom and **Tammy Slopek**
Nelson and **Betty Leaman**
Bill and **Margaret Dawson**
Vince and **Linda Puccio** (Dawson daughter)
Tony Puccio (grandson)
Ralph and **Vera Chase**
Charlie and **Norma Englar**
Ellen Levie (Leo Levie)
Michele Heckman (daughter)
Laura Kolarek (granddaughter)
Randy Markle (Donald Markle)
Bob Molin (Harold Molin)
Wiley and **Jane Keel** (Bill Dawson's daughter)
John and **Eva Golden**
Charles and **Carol Rodgers**
Chris Puccio (Bill Dawson's grandson)
Ruth Mellinger and Family: **Dawn Kilhefner**
Karen and **Dave Royer, Diana** and **Frank Baum**
Joshua and **Jennifer Mellinger**
Jeff and **Stephanie Mellinger, Sherri Mellinger**
June, Rodney and **Aaron Grim**
Ruthann Palacios
Marlin, Rachel and **Suzannah Mellinger**

Machine gunner was one of few left unscathed

Submitted By: **Harold R. Sprang**, 192 Street Route 603 W., Shiloh, Ohio 44488 — Company E, 273rd Infantry

FROM THE MANSFIELD NEWS JOURNAL

Monday, August 6, 2007

By **Ron Simon**

News Journal Correspondent

Ashland - The first thing **Clarence Goon** will tell a person is, "Call me Mike. Everyone calls me Mike."

Goon, 86, of Ashland, was a member of the "Fighting 69th Infantry Division" that fought its way from Belgium to the River Elbe.

"We were the first American unit to come in contact with the Russians," he said.

Members of his unit were part of a famous photo of U.S. and Russian soldiers meeting on a bridge over that river, just a few miles south of Berlin itself.

That moment in history was recalled when a Soviet Army colonel came to one of the 69th's annual reunions a few years ago, **Goon** said.

Goon was a regular at these events until he lost his wife, **Lena**, a couple of years ago.

Another regular was retired **Gen. Charles Bolte**, the man who commanded the birth of the 69th at Camp Shelby, Mississippi.

"I remember during basic training when he rode his horse up on a hill to address the troops," **Goon** said. "One of the things he said was "The sweat will come now. The blood will come later."

And he was right, **Goon** said.

"He lived to be 95 and came to our reunions and danced with all the women," he said.

But **Bolte** moved up in rank, and the man who would take the 69th into war was **Gen. Emil Reinhardt**. "He was our combat leader," **Goon** said.

And there was combat aplenty for this unit.

After a long spell of training in Mississippi, the 69th was shipped to England and then to France.

Goon, a staff sergeant, was in charge of the heavy weapons platoon in Company G of the 271st Regiment of the 69th Infantry Division.

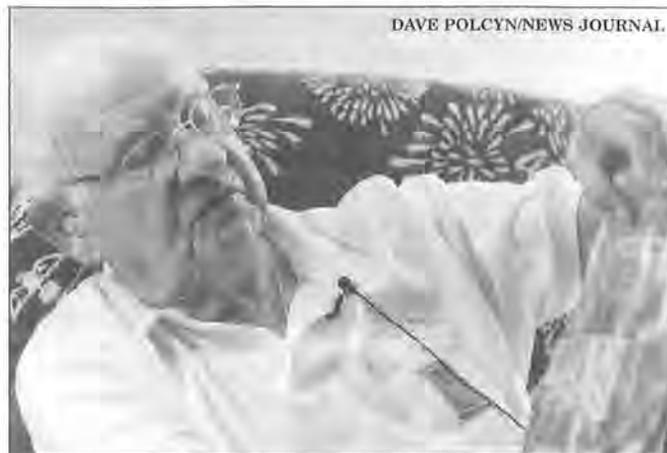
"I was in charge of a machine gun. I had 12 men. Some were ammo bearers. There were two gunners and a runner between me and our captain to keep me informed on what the captain wanted," he said.

The unit relieved a division that had been through the Battle of the Bulge, then headed east into Germany.

"Our first battle was at **Dickerscheid**," **Goon** recalled. That was February 27, 1945.

After that, the 69th would be in nearly continuous combat for 90 days and 90 nights, he said.

"Sometimes the Germans were retreating so fast we had to ride tanks to keep up with them," **Goon** said.



DAVE POLCYN/NEWS JOURNAL

Clarence Goon, of Ashland, served with the U.S. Army's 69th Infantry Division in Belgium and Germany during WWII.

When the 69th reached the Rhine River, the troops crossed under fire aboard small Navy landing craft.

Goon said men standing on either side of him during that ride were killed by enemy fire.

"We lost a lot of men in that crossing," he said.

Actually, very few of the men who landed in France in February 1945 would survive the fighting route to the Elbe. **Goon**, who was never wounded, was one of them.

He does recall that a sniper's bullet glanced off his steel helmet when he peered out of a window during street fighting in the village of **Wessenfels**, Germany.

Of all the fights, he said the taking of the city of **Leipzig** was the unit's hardest battle.

"There were a lot of monuments in the city and those SS men were inside them. Our shells would just bounce off them," he said.

Street by street and monument by monument, the 69th cleared the city.

There were American wounded laying in the streets, and **Goon** said German POWs were forced to go out and bring them in. "The Germans wouldn't fire on their own," he said.

Once they reached the Elbe River, **Goon** said, German soldiers swam across the river to escape the oncoming Russians.

"They preferred surrendering to us," he said.

During the fighting, **Goon** was awarded a Bronze Star for service above and beyond the call of duty.

"I think every man that fought had one coming," he said.

Soldiers are trained to kill or be killed, he said. As a machine gunner, he was on the killing end, and he recalls taking one German soldier out with his M-1 rifle.

(Continued on Page 18)

MACHINE GUNNER ONE OF FEW LEFT UNSCATHED (Continued from Page 17)

But Goon won't dwell on that side of the war. "If I did it would just drive me crazy. I'm a Christian and I believe in the Commandment: Thou shall not kill."

When he came home, Goon spent many unpleasant nights reliving the fighting.

"I'd wake up and fly out of the bed and Lena would have to talk to me," he said. I've talked to ministers, and they say I can't be held accountable for what happened.

"I just don't know how those boys coming home from this war now can live with it. They don't even know who their enemies are. At least we knew who they were."

A native of the Mifflin/Lucas area, Goon was one of 13 children. "Only myself and a brother are left," he said.

His mother died when he was 14, so he went to work and never finished school.

He and Lena had two little girls when his draft notice came in early 1943. "My youngest girl was just 6 months old when I went in the Army," he said.

After the war, he and Lena had three more children, all boys. In order, they are Janice, Karen Sue, Larry, Michael and Jeff.

The Goons have 18 grandchildren, 28 great-grandchildren and five great-great grandchildren.

Goon worked for a dairy company for many years, then became superintendent of the Ashland County Children's Home. Later he started and ran two county detention centers; one for boys and one for girls.

He retired in the 1980s, and Lena passed away two years ago.

Goon is a member of Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion.

Clarence Goon

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~ **New Link-Up Book** ~
Elbe Begegnung Link-Up
Photo Report 25/26/27 April 1945
Der Osten trifft den Western - East Meets West
By Dr. Uwe Niedersen



There are one hundred and ninety-four pages of English/German text of the link-up days including full examination of The Fox Report, exhaustive studies of American, Russian and German archives which were only made available in recent years, accompanied by many photographers and maps.

Also interviews with participants in the 1960s and until their demise, and present living Patrol members. Book size - 9 3/4 inch square x 1/4 inch.

Dr. Niedersen was the leading historian to promote the Elbe Days festivities at the Memorials on the meadows of the Elbe, in Torgau and Strehla, until this function was taken over by governmental facilities. He organized the parades over the bridges. He invited American, Russian and German soldiers to attend, and take part in forums to fully discuss the happenings of those historic and eventful days. This is his second and much more detailed book available in English to the American public.

The three soldiers on the cover of ELBE BEGEGNUNG LINK-UP are left to right, Russian Lieutenant Alexander Silvashko, Russian Major Anafim Larionov and American Lieutenant William Robertson. Silvashko and Robertson met on the damaged Torgau Elbe River Bridge, April 25, 1945.

Silvashko was a guest of The City of Torgau, along with other Russians, at the 60th Anniversary Link-Up activities, and forums conducted by Dr. Niedersen, April, 2005. Also attending were 69ers who were on the 2005 Guided Tour conducted by the 69th Infantry Division along with **Edgar A. "Bud" Parsons** and **Joe Lipsius** who were City of Torgau guests.

The price of the book, ELBE BEGEGNUNG LINK-UP, is \$30. It will be shipped from Germany but ordered from:
Joe Lipsius
6314 Deerings Hollow
Norcross, Georgia 30092-1800

All proceeds go to Dr. Niedersen. He and I decided it would be easier to order and pay for the book here. I will send the money to him in an agreed manner.

Disbanding the Association

Submitted by: **Robert L. Pierce**
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President **Paul Shadle** had previously assigned **John Barrette, Joe Huber, Robert Pierce, Mel Schulz, David Theobald, and Bernard Zaffern** to study a plan for the eventual disbanding of the Association.

Since I had not heard from the other members, I prepared an overview of a draft plan with my personal opinions, options, and considerations. This information was presented at length to the Board of Directors with copies given to **Paul Shadle** and members of the study group.

In my opinion, we are a long way from disbanding the Association. Every member who talked to me agreed that we should continue with the Association as long as we have sufficient paying membership, and reasonable attendance. Printing and distribution of the bulletin is driven by dues paying members and contributions. Control of book-length war stores should be limited in length unless the "member" is willing to pay the extra per page printing and distribution cost. Non-dues paying member stories should be rejected! I strongly recommend the reducing the bulletin to two (2) issues: One in spring to advertise and register for the reunion; and one after the reunion to distribute meeting minutes and highlight the reunion results.

Time precluded a lengthy discussion at the membership meeting, particularly since the other study group members had not had sufficient opportunity to prepare for the discussion. I agreed to summarize the information and prepare an article for the next issue of the bulletin.

I am requesting written comments regarding any subject, opinion, or recommendation related to disbanding the Association. Further, I must have all input prior to Feb 16, 2008 in order to compile, coordinate with the study group and have something for the May-August Bulletin.

OPTIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

1. What is the criteria for disbanding the Association: "When cost of operation exceeds income without increasing the dues; and, austere budget controls no longer work." Should minimum be established for making the decision, if so, how many?
 - A. Minimum quantity of dues paying members _____.
 - B. Minimum attendance at reunions _____.

2. Cost Exceeded Income.

- a) Reduce expenses by eliminating paid rooms; except comp suite and/or room credits and upgrades. Authorized room assignments to single rooms unless comp suite or comp upgrades: President, Treasurer, Editor, and Souvenir Sales
- b) Change Bulletin to two issues yearly.
- c) Change hospitality room to beer and wine only.
- d) Change reunion to Thursday through Saturday.
- e) Eliminate coffee and danish on Saturday morning.
- f) Eliminate banquet table gift.
- g) Eliminate flowers at banquet; except the roses for Memorial Service
- h) Place cost constraint limits on musicians/entertainment for PX, Banquet, and Ladies Auxiliary, (limited to Aux due's receipts).
- i) Absolutely eliminate distribution of the Bulletin to non-dues paying members.
- j) Stop further purchases of souvenirs; and, close-out by attrition.

3. Reunions

- A. Confine the location to maximize attendees. Use a corridor from the Mississippi River to the Atlantic Ocean; and generally from I-80 North, South to I-10.
- B. Use mid-size cities to reduce cost and entice members to new locations.
- C. As memberships dwindles; establish two (2) or three (3) best suited (by past attendance) locations and rotate annually.
- D. In some future point we may have our annual reunion fixed to one most central location until we finally disband, estimate 2020.

DRAFT PLAN EVENTS

Introduce the plan to the BOD with options to be considered. Open floor for specific comments; invite members to send written comments to **Bob Pierce** for consideration and/or coordination.

Put an article in the Bulletin summarizing the BOD presentation with an overview of pros and cons. Further, request members written comments not later than February 16, 2008.

Compile a first draft to be presented at the 2008 reunion; the draft will then be updated and distributed via the bulletin, with an applicable questioner.

Present the results at the 2009 reunion; and publish results in the September-December 2009 bulletin. Advise members at large, that at some future reunion, perhaps as early as 2010, a membership vote will be taken to establish the criteria and time line for disbanding the association. Ballots will be distributed with the dues notice. Further, only dues paying members will receive a ballot with their dues envelopes. If you are not a member in good standing, you do not have the right to vote! A simple majority of the dues paying members will decide our future.

Sam Lewis Writes . . .

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Hello again Dottie,

I received the latest Bulletin a few days ago and I was delighted to see that Heinz Richter was still alive and well. He played an important role in the Strehla Memorial Project. He was our host in our 1992 trip to Torgau. He found the company there which built and erected my Three Peoples Flagpoles in Strehla. He also made arrangements to get my bluebonnet flower seeds planted in a local greenhouse, and placed in the row of pots at the bottom of the earth bank under the flagpoles. That replanting was done the day before the 50th Anniversary Program.

He had been hospitalized due to a light stroke and had checked himself out to do the job. He had also befriended **Bud Parsons** and other 69ers in their earlier visits. And I was very pleased that Andrea Haberland is still mayor of Strehla. He was the prime mover in getting the Strehla Memorial erected. He also had made plans to stage a re-enactment of the Strehla link-up, using local actors and equipment. He, Bud Parsons and my wife Lorraine and I were having dinner with him after the 50th anniversary program, and the subject of its cancellation and the cause came up. And I said how disappointed I was about that. Andrea looked straight into my eyes and said, "I am too; but you and I know what we have accomplished, and that is good enough for me."

Now about the article **Bill Nettles** had in the last bulletin. He must have made copious notes during that time. He sure had a lot of information to pass on. I did spot a couple of mistakes though. On the bottom of page 14, I think "March" should be April. Near the end of the article starting with the word, "Noteworthy," he says his unit was the only one on the east side of the Mulde on April 25. He is in error. The photo of me here was taken that day in front of the two houses on the east bank that I had taken for my platoon and my C.P. I don't know who else from B Company was there. I do remember it was **Captain O'Donovan** who told me to try to get the recently released Russian prisoners rounded up and taken back to their camp. If allowed to roam loose, there could be trouble.

The pages here will give a good account of what I experienced that day. They are from my book, "*Sam, The War Years*" which I wrote in 1981. They, and the photos taken that day, give a good account of what was a most interesting and hectic day for me.

I believe that photos 5,6,7,8, & 9 must have been taken in Leipzig or on our way to Bennewitz on April 24th with the Leica camera I had "liberated" in Holhausen just before we went into Leipzig on April 18th. Those shots were made before we reached Bennewitz.

Excerpt from "Sam, The War Years"

About the 24th of April, we moved on to the town of Bennewitz across the Mulde River from Wurzen. Here we first saw a large number of Allied P.O.W.s who the Germans had released. I didn't know it at that time, but the Russians were near Torgau on the Elbe, some 15 miles East and the Germans caught in between were trying to get to the Americans to surrender before being captured by the Russians. The Germans, it seemed were deathly afraid of being captured by the Russians, and for good reasons. The Russians and their lands had been brutally torn apart by the Wehrmacht earlier in the war.

The newly released allied prisoners had to climb over a blown up railroad bridge across the Mulde River to get to us. The first ones across were met by our company. One G.I. came up to me, all excited and with such joy and happiness as I had never seen a grown man show. He hugged me and danced around, then asked if I had a cigarette. I didn't have one as I didn't smoke. I did have a candy bar and I offered him that and he stopped still and stared at it for a second, eyes real wide and then took it as if it were a precious jewel. He told me he had been captured two years earlier in Africa in 1943.



Allied prisoners climbing over the railroad bridge.

The next day we made it over to Wurzen on an Engineers bridge and there was bedlam. All sorts of P.O.W.s were loose, roaming the streets. Lots of Russian slave labor from Southern Russia had been interred in Wurzen.

The day, as best I can recreate went something like this but maybe not in the sequence I tell now.

I think we were there about 9:00 a.m. I was told to send a patrol of one squad South of town to see what was down there. I did that and then I found a couple of houses near the river and took them for my platoon's quarters.



Sam in Brussels

(Continued on Page 21)

EXCERPTS FROM SAM LEWIS' BOOK

(Continued from Page 20)

A little later I was told to help gather up the newly freed Russians and get them back into a camp where they could be cared for and not run loose in the town. These poor people were more like animals than humans. I guess that's the way they had been treated. There were hundreds of them. Although I don't recall how I got there, I was soon on the back of a horse yelling something like, "Alles Ruskies, geh essen," which I intended to mean. "All Russians, let's go eat." It was all I could think to say, that I knew how to say. Anyway I guess it worked. I think most of them followed me to the camp, but I don't know if they got to eat or not.

The patrol I sent out was not back yet and I set out to find it. But I didn't want to do it on foot. I soon found a car that had some gas in it and I commandeered it and drove around town a little looking for my men and didn't see them so I headed down the road they took - and ran out of gas. I was near a man on a bicycle so I "borrowed" it and took off down the road. There my "snapshots" stop - I have no memory of the next hour or so. I don't know where I found the men.

The next thing I remember was being in our platoon quarters when my sergeant tells me there is a German officer outside who wants to speak with an officer. I went out and he was a warrant officer who spoke English well enough to explain that he had made his way all the way across Wurzen, trying to find someone to surrender himself and fifty other soldiers to.



Three of my men and I got a jeep - I don't know where from. It had a fifty caliber machine gun mounted on it and our company vehicles had no such armament, and with the Warrant Officer, we went back across town to capture some Germans. A mile or so out of town we came upon five officers, including a colonel and forty-five or so soldiers. The officers had their long coats on. They had a car and several trucks.

The colonel spoke some English so I explained to him that our orders were to take from prisoners we captured, all knives, guns and anything that might be used as a weapon against us. From him I took a silver colored pocket knife which he didn't want to give up as it was a present from his wife. I took it anyway and I don't recall being apologetic about it. I still have it. I think they had already discarded their weapons.

We marched them back to town leaving their trunks and the car there in the field.

I wonder who got all that stuff. I also wonder what we did with those fifty Germans. More of my mental "snapshots" are missing.

I have some real snapshots taken with my newly liberated Leica and they show a large field with a lot of debris scattered as though hundreds of soldiers may have been there; and a large group of prisoners and marching down the road - much larger than the group I captured - I think. I can't reconcile my memory with the pictures I took.



I still have the negatives of 15 or so rolls of 35mm black and white pictures I took at this time and the months to come and when I reprinted them in 1980 for the first time, I was surprised to see what the pictures taken that day showed.

While I was busy riding cars, bicycles and horses on this 25th day of April, 1945, three different patrols from our 273rd Regiment were making contact with the Russians forces.

The first was one led by a **Lt. Kotzebue**, a fellow student from Texas A&M. Two others, one led by **Lt. Robertson** and one by **Major Craig**, came later by several hours.

Lt. Robertson, our battalion S-2, was initially credited with being first, as he brought back four Russians to verify his meeting. The mistake was corrected the next day.

We stayed in Wurzen several days and our duties consisted of guarding a P.O.W. camp of Russians and others who had been held by the Germans. On one occasion I, with a few men, took to the camp a load of feed sacks of corn, beans, etc. As we unloaded the sacks, the people tore open the sacks and grabbed a

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EXCERPTS FROM SAM LEWIS' BOOK

(Continued from Page 21)

handful of grain and began eating it raw. I had never experienced such a site. They acted like wild animals and I remember being upset by the sight. They wore the striped uniform worn by all prisoners of the Concentration Camps. I guess when humans are treated as animals long enough they become as animals.

Our Battalion was moved next to Grimma about 15km up the Mulde River. Our company occupied several buildings at the West end of a bridge over the river. By then the Russians had advanced to the East side of the Mulde and for a while our company guarded one end of the bridge and the Russians guarded the other. Germans were not allowed to cross either way.



We had other places where guards were stationed. One was a mile or so out of town where the railroad crossed the river and we kept two men there at all times. It was a dull duty. Nothing was happening and the men out there for four hours at a stretch would get bored. The Army had recently issued orders that we were not to mix or associate socially with the Germans. "No fraternization" was the law of the times and the Army was dead serious about it. Of course that kind of policy is in direct conflict with a soldier's natural instincts. The American G.I. is a naturally friendly guy as long as he isn't being shot at. And all soldiers are naturally interested in being friendly with the girls they meet; rule or no rule. The Army also takes Guard Duty very serious. Any goofing off while on Guard Duty is about two notches below Treason in the Army's book. I'm telling all of this to illustrate one aspect of the problems an officer in command of soldiers must face at times.

Two of my men were on duty at the railroad bridge. My duty is to check the guards at frequent intervals - and they know I'm going to show up. Well, I did and found both men with a German girl in their arms; and they hadn't even seen me coming. I don't recall exactly what I said - I wasn't at the time, given to cursing or swearing - but I'm sure I made some reference to the Almighty, and how could they be so stupid. Didn't they know if it had been another officer instead of me, they would be put away for years? My attitude toward that sort of thing was first to protect my men from getting in trouble from their own dumb mistakes. I didn't want anyone to have to remain over there any longer than necessary. Certainly not in prison. I was probably no more than four years older than they, but I acted like an upset father finding his children playing with matches near a can of gasoline.

We were still in Grimma when I was told I would be awarded the Bronze Star Medal. The ceremony was held on a vacant lot across from our quarters. I think the whole Battalion was there and there were a number of other awards made at the same time. The award is dated May 8, 1945 and I don't know if that was the date of the ceremony or just the date the citation was typed. On that same date, the Germans officially surrendered at Rheims, France to end the war in Europe. * * * * *

How "Sam, The War Years" Came to Be

Near the end of 1983, after I had told of one of my wartime experiences, Lorraine said she thought I should write it all down; the entire 41 months I was in the Service. Then when our grandchildren were old enough to be interested in such things, if they were, they would have an account of it. I might not be around to tell them myself. And I thought, yes that might be a good idea; so I have.

This is just a simple narrative of events, as I have been able to recall them, of the time from January 1943 until June 1946. And I suspect it is very much like what happened to thousands of other young officers who answered their country's call. I was in a combat situation for just under three months where others were in much longer. Some were never in a life threatening situation. Most of us accomplished no great individual deeds of warfare. But as an army we managed to bring about the defeat of two of the most hated and evil regimes in history.

War is a terrible thing. I remember thinking when I finally returned home that I wouldn't take a million dollars for my experiences but if I had that much, I would give it all not to have to go through it again. One day, one close call, is enough war for any man. And although my own contribution was small by comparison to others, I am none the less proud of what I did during this time. I did what I was asked to do. I was shot at and endured shelling, but I never quit, never turned tail and ran, and I believe I had the respect of the thirty-five men under my command. They followed where I led and did what they had to do.

In the final analysis, I can honestly say that I was an Officer and a Gentleman and I was a good soldier.



“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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Salt Lake City Reunion Photos

Robert Weinstock, 3620 N. 6th Avenue, Apt. 218, Phoenix, Arizona 85013
 Group photos show bus trip to Kennecott Copper Mine
 Both Robert Weinstock and Ralph Scholtz are from H1, 273rd



Robert Weinstock



Ralph Scholtz



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