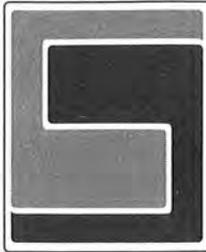


FIGHTING 69TH INFANTRY DIVISION

★★★★ Association, Inc.



VOLUME 61, NO. 2

www.69th-infantry-division.com

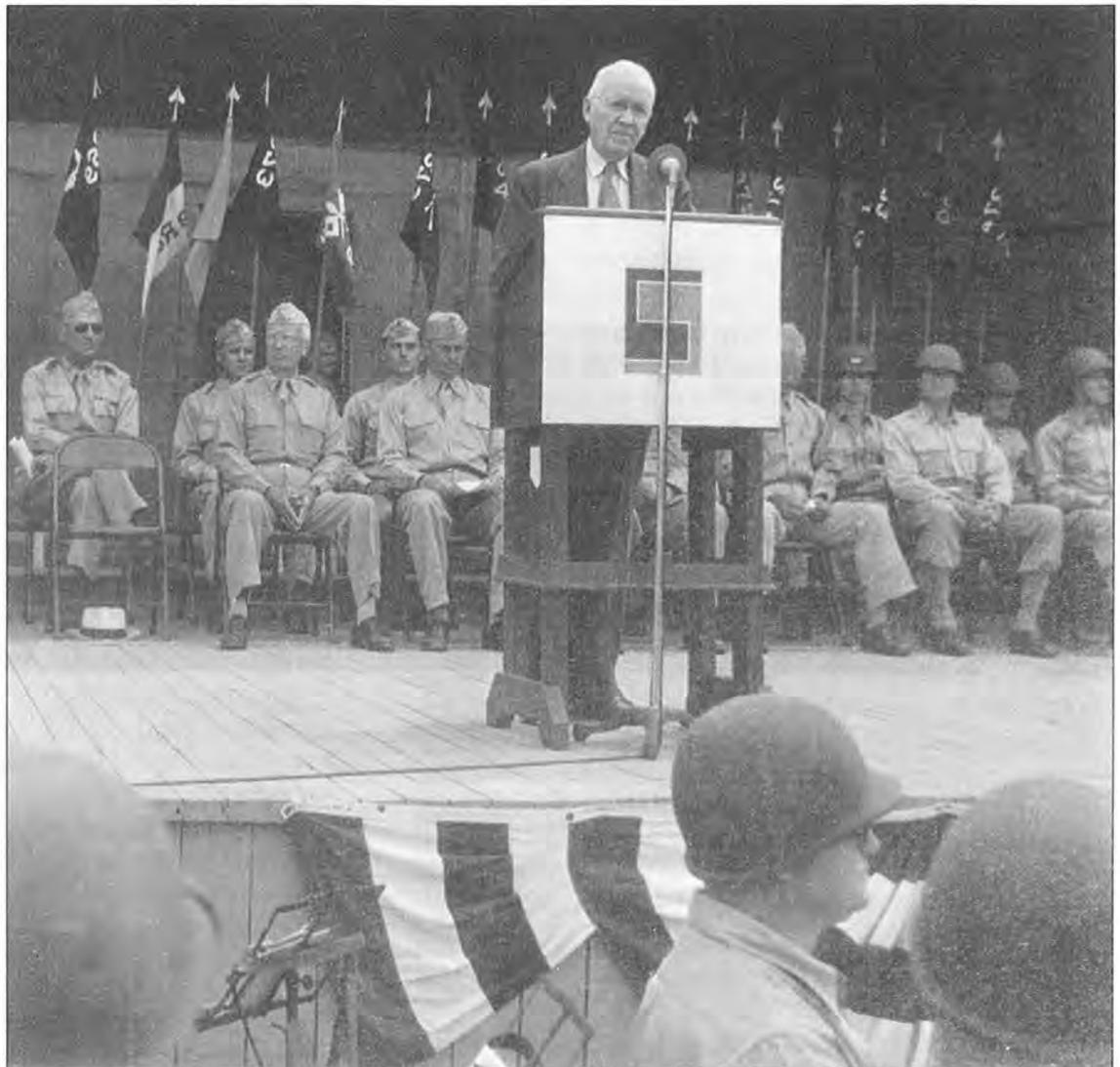
JANUARY – FEBRUARY – MARCH – APRIL
2008

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

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

bulletin

Activation Day of the Fighting 69th



Mayor Calhoun of Hattiesburg, Mississippi, extends his welcome and that of the city to the newly formed 69th Infantry Division at exercises on activation day of the organization.

May 15th, 1943 • Camp Shelby, Mississippi

Photo by Raymond D'Addario

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*Deceased

**Important Notice: This is the only bulletin
you will receive before the reunion.
Please get your reservations in as early as possible!**

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@comcast.net

Martin J. Connor, 14 Coury Drive, Acushnet, Massachusetts 02743-1972 – Co. E, 273rd: After reading the story by **Bill Drugg** I thought you could pass this info to him or perhaps in the bulletin. I food shop at the Stop & Shop food store and looking over the cheese display I found Brie cheese and it is made by the Company ILE DE FRANCE. I asked the clerk if I could have the container when it was empty and she emptied it right then and gave it to me and then she found another and gave me that also.

I have since given the second one to my buddy. It is a drawing of the ship on firm cardboard. I was lucky to be on the Promenard deck, but **Bill Drugg** was right about everything he said about the smell and the latrines. Thats about it for now.

I enjoyed having supper with you in Atlanta at reunion. Thanks for all your hard work for the association over the years.

Stephen J. Rojcewicz, 135 Endicott Street, Worcester, Massachusetts 01610-1944, Telephone: 508/756-3046 – 881st F.A.: My sincere gratitude to you for explaining the bulletin mailings. You are the epitome of courtesy and efficiency.

The latest issue of the bulletin, on page 7, had a most meaningful picture of four past presidents. We know of the outstanding work of **Robert Pierce** and **Paul Shadle** and **Ray Sansoucy**. He is from my city of Worcester, Massachusetts and **Jim Boris** and I worked in Fire Direction Center when our artillery had a fire mission.

It is easy to recall the San Francisco reunion's general meeting, when the Auxiliary was near the door. My motion to adjourn increased my popularity from zero to twice that amount.

Alas, dissolution of the 69th Division Association is inevitable. The human body is not made to live forever or terra firma. As the golfer said, "We are still on the right side of the grass."

Did you know your big city of Pittsburgh is one of the most misspelled cities? And Worcester is not only misspelled but also mispronounced.

A Message from Paul and Dottie Shadle Membership Chairman and Editor

Paul Shadle, Company E, 271st Infantry
P.O. Box 4069 • New Kensington, PA 15068-4069
Telephone: 724/335-9980
E-Mail - Dottie: danne345@comcast.net
Paul: pauls1504@comcast.net



Membership Chairman Paul Shadle
and Editor, Dottie Shadle

THIS WILL BE THE ONLY BULLETIN BEFORE THE REUNION IN ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA IN AUGUST, 2008. Please get your reservations in early.

Since this will be the only bulletin before the reunion in August, 2008, we suggest that you get your reservations in as early as possible. We feel we have an enjoyable time planned for this reunion.

We plan to attend a hilarious murder mystery on Wednesday evening. This **does not** include a dinner. Dinner will be on your own.

In place of an Early-Bird Dinner on Thursday, we have planned a luncheon cruise on the Spirit of Washington where we will be able to see the Washington Monument, General's Row, and Old Towne Alexandria' along with other parts of interest.

On Friday we will be taking a city tour of Washington, D.C. which will include a stop at The World War II memorial.

Saturday morning we **will not** be having coffee, tea, doughnuts, or rolls. Please plan to have breakfast on your own before the meetings.

We are looking forward to seeing you at the Sheraton National Hotel in Arlington, Virginia.

A Message from our President David J. Theobald

Company F, 272nd Infantry Regiment
8401 Moravian Court
Sacramento, California 95826
Telephone: 916/383-6592 • E-Mail: davidjtheo@aol.com



It looks like **Paul Shadle**, our Past President and Convention Chairman has set up another great convention, this time in Washington D.C. The City Tour that will include the National World War II Museum sounds like a must for all of us. I personally am looking forward to seeing this monument and see how I can get my name added to the list of veterans. Another trip I'm looking forward to is the Lunch Cruise especially to see all the big yachts used by lobbyists to entertain our elected officials. The last time I was in Washington was on a weekend just before we shipped out for Europe. There is so much to see and this will be my last chance to take in all the sights. Turnout should be great due to the nearness to all our east cost members.

Which reminds me, our 2008 Dues are due now whether you come to the convention or not?

I personally am looking forward to hoisting a few with the old gang and hearing some of the old war stories again. A former Air Force pilot from Sacramento was shot down by an anti-aircraft installation outside of Leipzig. He spent almost a year in a POW camp until the 69th liberated him. I was part of the Second Battalion of the 272nd Regiment that captured that AA Position the same day that FDR died, in April, 1945. The Sacramento Pilot was given a big write-up upon his death last winter.

Take advantage of this convention. None of us are getting any younger. Past President **Bernard Zaffern** is one of us that made the "Taps" Column. He passed away on February 5th, 2008.

All the Best,
Dave Theobald

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

*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 Shadle.

69th Infantry Division Association 61st Annual Reunion

WASHINGTON, D.C.

August 12th thru 17th, 2008

**More information and registration forms
on pages 7 through 11.**

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.

Next Generation Group Now Forming!

Submitted By: **William Sheavly, Jr.**

Son of **William C. Sheavly, Sr.**

Company M, 271st Infantry

5301 Weblin Farm Road, Virginia Beach, Virginia 23455

E-Mail: billsheavly@hotmail.com

The Board of Directors and the general membership of the Association have approved the formation of a "Legacy" group, and that group is now forming! The initial committee has selected the name, "**69th Infantry-Next Generation Group**" and it is already at work with a handful of volunteers to get their own website up and running.

The first meetings of the Next Generation Group will be held at the upcoming Reunion in Washington D.C. in August, where they will meet to write their own by-laws and elect officers. In the interim, the growing group of volunteers is hard at work on their own website which will be their primary communication vehicle. **Joe Lipsius**, who heads up the Division website, has been very helpful to the group and has established a link off of the site to go directly to the Next Generation website.

Membership will be open to anyone who has a love of the 69th and an appreciation of what the Division accomplished in World War II. While there are no dues yet, contributions are greatly appreciated and will go toward getting the organization going.

Some of the projects the Next Generation Group is looking at include:

- Establishment of an "Oral History" project to afford 69ers the opportunity to record their own videos at the D.C. reunion.
- An interactive "blog" on the website which will let members converse among each other depending on their interests in the group.

- The formation of a scholarship for Next Generation children, grandchildren and great grandchildren to attend college.
- An interactive website with easy tabs to search by unit histories, by soldier, by rank and by locale.
- An ongoing project of having special events to recognize the Elbe River crossing anniversary of April 25.
- Local involvement by members to help a veteran on Veterans Day.
- Establish links off of the website for individuals researching World War II history.

These are just some of the projects the group would like to pursue going forward. If you are interested, or have family members interested in the joining, please go to the 69th website and look for the link or go to www.69nxtgen.com for an application and membership information.

General Bolte and Colonel Bolte:

On behalf of those of us organizing the Next Generation Group, I want to thank you for accepting our invitation to serve on our Board of Directors as an "Ex-Officio" member. Since your father was a founding member of the 69th Infantry Division Association, I think it is altogether fitting that his sons become members of a legacy group from the very beginning. I enjoyed working with both of you on our past book project and look forward to continuing our relationship on this new venture. Having you both on our Board of Directors will be a real pleasure.

We are excited about the 69th Infantry Next Generation Group and are truly honored to have both of you as Directors of our association. On behalf of all of our members, we look forward to having you as part of our group.

Best regards to both of you!

Bill Sheavly, Jr.



A very youthful General Bolte.



Submitted By: **Edward Kline**
Company D, 273rd Infantry
9932 Arbuckle Drive, Las Vegas, Nevada 89134

This is a follow up report on an article published in the Bulletin on page 15, volume 56, No. 2, for January through April, 2003. I think it might be of interest.

JWV Post Receives Outstanding Achievement Award

The Murray L. Rosen Post 64 of the Jewish War Veterans of Las Vegas received an Award presented by Gordon H. Mansfield, Acting Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in San Diego, California on October 18, 2007.

The occasion was the celebration of 20 years of VA and community partnership in service to homeless veterans. It was attended by 500 professionals from about 70 VA agencies throughout the United States.

JWV Post 64 was the first and only Veterans Service Organization to receive this award. JWV Post 21 recently joined the coordinated partnership with Post 64 and the VA Community Based Outreach Clinic (CBOC) to help homeless veterans get off the street. In the past 5 years, since this "Independence Day" program was initiated, 650 veterans have been given this opportunity. In the past 2 months, of the 48 veterans who entered this program, 46 redirected their lives.

The Award was accepted on behalf of Post #64 by **Edward Kline**, formerly of Co. D, 273rd Infantry Division, and **Abe Efros**, formerly a crewman of the USS Levy.



Edward Kline and Abe Efros accepting the award.

The Isle de France

Submitted By: **Robert A. Heisler**
569th Signal Company
1104 Chemawa Loop N.E., Keizer, Oregon 97303
E-Mail: rbrtheisler1@netzero.net



*Isle de France, 5/55, sailing into New York
In my eyes this picture does not do this ship justice.
It seemed much bigger and uglier.*

Although I enjoyed Bill Drugg's story about the Isle De France, I was disappointed that he didn't mention any dates or places. I'll add my comments about this famous ship.

After being outfitted with the latest military gear at Fort George G. Meade, Maryland, we headed north to Boston, Massachusetts. We were herded into this big tub like a bunch of sheep. The stench was still there from the last trip. We were in F-Deck below the water line. It took two days to load this thing up as troops were coming from all over the U.S. Ike had asked for thousands of replacements as the Battle of the Bulge was not going well. We left on January 7, 1945 for Glasgow, Scotland. We had two meals a day with lots of tea (to this day, I can't stand to drink a cup of tea). It was rumored the Captain refused Naval Escort as he claims he could make the trip in 5-1/2 days zig-zagging, otherwise it would take 6 days. As you can imagine, you could hardly walk around the promenade deck as thousands of GIs were constantly vomiting all over the side of the ship. We were tickled pink (white) when we unloaded with all 17,000 soldiers alive.

By the way, Bill, what were you doing there? I thought you went over with the 69th Division as a group. Anyways, we took a train to the channel, then to Le Havre, France.

I don't think my dues are due, but I'm sending a check anyway just to make sure so that I receive my bulletin.

Disbanding the 69th Infantry Division Assn. ~ Second Study Group Report ~

Submitted By: **Robert L. Pierce**
Company I, 273rd Regiment
8295 Faldo Avenue
Hemet, California 92545-9312

Introduction and Overview

The resolution facing the Association for disbanding is unspecified, but eluded to in our Constitution, by constraints and controls for active membership. Specifically, to become an active member you must have served with the 69th Infantry Division, or an attached unit, during World War II. This constraint is generally accepted as Division Activation May 1943 through VE Day May 8, 1945.

By the established criteria, in 2010 the youngest active member could be 83 years old. It is not unreasonable that by 2020 we will still have enough of our 1665 active members, at 93 years old, who will still enjoy meeting once a year, if only for the Beer Party and Dinner.

Our Constitution only requires 45 active members for a quorum at a membership meeting. However, at the Salt Lake City reunion there were only 56 active members, but I can't believe we actually had 45 at the membership meeting; to my knowledge a head count was not taken. I accept that the location, price, and liquor laws were primarily responsible for the record low attendance.

There are two considerations required to maintain the Association reunion and bulletins: Membership and Income.

1. Membership

An integral function of the reunions is the annual membership meeting as defined by Article VII of the Constitution. Article VIII requires a quorum of 45 (active) members to be present at the meetings. This quorum must be acquired to conduct and/or vote on business actions and proposals that affect the Association. This constraint in itself establishes an absolute critical path for a decision. I would not advocate making an amendment to the Constitution in the twilight of our existence, but I believe we can work around it. We can still hold a Board of Directors meeting if we meet the quorum of (8) BOD members. Issues can be discussed and actions can be voted on and recorded that are within the responsibility of the BOD. A subsequent membership meeting with attendees can be held to communicate the actions of the BOD, even without a membership quorum. The constraint is that no motions can be made, actions taken or voted on by attendees. Actions must be deferred to the next annual meeting.

2. Membership Impact on Income

There are two (2) consistent sources of income: Membership Dues and, Donations for postage and admin expenses.

a) **Dues**

In 1994 we only had 2,350 members who paid dues (\$23,500) as opposed to at least 4,500 membership. In 2001 there were 3,700 members who paid \$22,300 in dues. In 2006 there were 1500 members who paid \$15,000 in dues from an active membership of 1665. This is an average annual drop of 120 dues paying members, with an annual loss of dues income of \$7,300. Printing and distributing the bulletin alone in 2006 was \$16,300.

b) **Donations**

Donations are not consistent in proportion to dues. In 1994 there were \$8,000 donated, in 2006 \$8,600 donated. Unrelated to the numbers of dues paying members, the last 6 year average has been \$9,000 yearly.

It's important to note that donations contribute 50% as much as members paid in dues; or, 1/3 of our annual income.

Conclusions

1. Memberships Meetings

If the Association has two (2) consecutive annual membership meetings without a quorum of 45 active members present, the Association is no longer a valid corporation and should be disbanded.

2. Dues

At the rate of membership attrition, 120 yearly average, in five (5) years the Association will no longer have the financial ability to stay in business. Active dues paying members will be approximately 1,000; with \$10,000 dues paid in 2012.

3. Donations

There is no viable method of projecting the expected impact of donations to membership attrition. Actuary tables after 72 years take an abrupt drop, and go off the graph after 84 years. In my opinion, both the membership attrition rate and income loss will be exponentially changed every year.

4. The Association can no longer live with extravagant expenditures without major cost cuts and controls starting with 2008. The reunions need to return to a policy of being self-supporting so membership dues can be used for basic administrative costs and the bulletin.

5. Bulletins

The purpose of the bulletin is to achieve the objectives of the Association as expressed in Article II (a), (b) & (c) of the Constitution. Specifically: Aid and Benefit Members; perpetuate the record and achievements of the 69th Division; and, promote social relationships between members.

(Continued on Page 13)

69th INFANTRY DIVISION ASSOCIATION
AUGUST 12-17, 2008
SHERATON NATIONAL HOTEL – ARLINGTON, VA (WASHINGTON D.C. AREA)

Tuesday, August 12

2:00pm - 6:00pm Hospitality and Souvenir Rooms open
Reunion Registration open
Dinner and evening on your own
7:00pm - 11:00pm Hospitality Room open

Wednesday, August 13

12:00pm - 5:00pm Hospitality Room open
3:30pm - 6:30pm **Reunion Registration open**
7:00pm - 10:30pm SHEAR MADNESS (description follows)

Thursday, August 14

9:00am - 9:30am **Reunion Registration open**
11:00am - 2:45pm SPIRIT OF WASHINGTON LUNCH CRUISE (description follows)

3:30pm - 5:30pm Board of Director's Meeting
3:00pm - 5:00pm **Reunion Registration open** (additional hours will be posted at the reunion, if needed)
12:00pm - 5:00pm Hospitality Room open
Dinner and evening on your own

Friday, August 15

10:00am - 3:00pm CITY TOUR (description follows)
12:00pm - 5:00pm Hospitality Room open
Dinner on your own
8:30pm - 11:30pm PX Beer Party

Saturday, August 16

9:30am - 12:00pm Membership Meeting
9:30am - 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 17

7:30am - 9:30am 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 8:00am until 5:00pm Eastern Standard Time, excluding holidays.** Please call (757) 625-6401 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.

New for 2008 !!
Register online and pay by credit card at
www.armedforcesreunions.com/69inf

69th INFANTRY DIVISION REUNION - TOUR DESCRIPTIONS

SHEAR MADNESS AT THE KENNEDY CENTER

Wednesday, August 13

The Kennedy Center is home to the entertaining show, *Shear Madness*, Washington's hilarious whodunit murder mystery. Someone's been killed in the apartment above a Georgetown hairstyling salon, and the police haven't got a clue... take a stab at catching the killer. It's a riotous, improvisational plot with topical humor where *you* spot the clues, *you* question the suspects, *and you* solve the crime! The ending is different every night so you'll never see the same show twice. If DC critic Arch Campbell says *Shear Madness* is "the most fun he ever had at the Kennedy Center," you are guaranteed to have a great time! Note: The dress code is casual and a cash bar will be available.

7:00pm board bus, 10:30pm back at the hotel

\$60/Person includes bus, escort, and show.

SPIRIT OF WASHINGTON LUNCH CRUISE

Thursday, August 14

Enjoy a two-hour lunch cruise with live entertainment, narration, and a bountiful lunch buffet, onboard the Spirit of Washington. While you relax on one of the three fully enclosed, climate-controlled decks, you will cruise the historic water of the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia. Your captain will point out landmarks – the Washington Monument, Ft. McNair, Washington National Airport, General's Row, and Old Towne Alexandria. After lunch enjoy a stroll and the fresh air on the outdoor decks.

11:00am board bus, 2:45pm back at the hotel

\$72/Person includes bus, escort, and lunch cruise.

CITY TOUR

Friday, August 15

See the sites of our nation's capital during a driving tour of Washington, D.C. Ride by the Lincoln Memorial, Jefferson Memorial, the Mall, Capitol Building, Washington Monument, White House, and other notable monuments and federal buildings. Free time will be allowed at the National World War II Memorial, the first national memorial dedicated to all who served during World War II. Afterward, stop at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center, which is the largest building (3.1 million square feet) in Washington, DC and is the first and only federal building dedicated to both government and private use. While there, enjoy lunch on your own at the Reagan Building food court - named one of the "best family food courts" in DC.

10:00am board bus, 3:00pm back at the hotel

\$36/Person includes bus and guide. Lunch on your own.

****While staying in Washington D.C., you may want to tour of the Holocaust Museum 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.*

69th 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. Your cancelled check will serve as your confirmation. Returned checks will be charged a \$20 fee. You may also register online and pay by credit card at www.armedforcesreunions.com/69inf. All registration forms and payments must be received by mail on or before July 11, 2008. After that date, reservations will be accepted on a space available basis. We suggest you make a copy of this form before mailing. Please do not staple or tape your payment to this form.

Armed Forces Reunions, Inc.
PO Box 11327
Norfolk, VA 23517
ATTN: 69th INFANTRY DIVISION

OFFICE USE ONLY	
Check # _____	Date Received _____
Inputted _____	Nametag Completed _____

CUT-OFF DATE IS 7/11/08

	Price Per	# of People	Total
<u>TOURS</u>			
WEDNESDAY: SHEAR MADNESS	\$ 60		\$
THURSDAY: LUNCH CRUISE	\$ 72		\$
FRIDAY: CITY TOUR	\$ 36		\$
<u>MEALS</u>			
FRIDAY: BEER PARTY	\$ 10		
SATURDAY: BANQUET <i>(Please select your entrée)</i>			
LONDON BROIL	\$ 45		\$
CHICKEN MARSALA	\$ 45		\$
CHILD'S PLATE	\$ 20		\$
SUNDAY: BREAKFAST BUFFET	\$ 20		\$
<u>MANDATORY PER PERSON REGISTRATION FEE</u>			
Includes Hospitality Room, entertainment, and administrative expenses.	\$ 15		\$
DUES – NEW DUES YEAR IS AUGUST 1, 2008 – JULY 31, 2009			
REGULAR MEMBERSHIP	\$ 10		\$
LADIES' AUXILIARY	\$ 5		\$
POSTAGE AND BULLETIN DONATION (UP TO YOU)			\$
Total Amount Payable to <u>Armed Forces Reunions, Inc.</u>			\$

PLEASE PRINT NAME

FIRST _____ LAST _____ NICKNAME _____

UNIT _____ NEXT GENERATION? _____ FIRST TIMER? (YES___) OR (NO___)

SPOUSE NAME (IF ATTENDING) _____

GUEST NAMES _____

STREET ADDRESS _____

CITY, ST, ZIP _____ PH. NUMBER (____) _____ - _____

DISABILITY/DIETARY RESTRICTIONS _____

(Sleeping room requirements must be conveyed by attendee directly with hotel)

MUST YOU BE LIFTED HYDRAULICALLY ONTO THE BUS WHILE SEATED IN YOUR WHEELCHAIR IN ORDER TO PARTICIPATE IN BUS TRIPS? YES NO (PLEASE NOTE THAT WE CANNOT GUARANTEE AVAILABILITY).

EMERGENCY CONTACT _____ PH. NUMBER (____) _____ - _____

For refunds and cancellations please refer to our policies outlined at the bottom of the reunion program. **CANCELLATIONS WILL ONLY BE TAKEN MONDAY-FRIDAY 9:00am-5:00pm EASTERN TIME (excluding holidays).** Call (757) 625-6401 to cancel reunion activities and obtain a cancellation code. Refunds processed 4-6 weeks after reunion.

You may also register online and pay by credit card at www.armedforcesreunions.com/69inf

SHERATON NATIONAL HOTEL
(703) 521-1900 OR (800) 325-3535

The Sheraton National Hotel is located at 900 S Orme Street, Arlington, VA 22204. Call the hotel directly for accurate driving directions. The hotel is on high elevation overlooking many Washington, D.C. famous landmarks and is just blocks from the Metro, The Pentagon, Ft. Myer, and Arlington Cemetery. Downtown Washington, The Kennedy Center, Crystal City, and the National Airport are just five minutes away. Complimentary shuttle van service departs every 30 minutes to and from Washington National Airport, Metro at The Pentagon, and Pentagon City Fashion Center. A pharmacy is conveniently located five blocks from the hotel. The hotel has handicapped accessible rooms along with many non-smoking rooms, which are based on availability. Please request these special accommodations when making your reservation. We recommend that you *reconfirm* these special requests before arriving at the hotel. The Sheraton National has 408 deluxe guest rooms with individual climate controls; color TV with in-room movies, and video check-out. Rooms offer in-room coffee makers, hair dryers, and irons/ironing boards. Guests can enjoy a rooftop indoor swimming pool (please check with the front desk for the hours of operation), sundeck (during the summer season), and an exercise room. The exercise room features Stairmaster, LifeCycle, and weight resistance equipment. The hotel is offering complimentary parking for all reunion attendees who are registered hotel guests. There are 390 parking spaces available with a six-foot ceiling height. Oversize vehicles or RVs can park in the hotel's satellite parking lot across the street from the hotel. Check-in time is 3:00pm; check-out is 12:00 noon. *Potomac Restaurant* is open for breakfast, lunch, and dinner for snacks and full course dinners. *Potomac Lounge*, in the Atrium lobby, serves regular cafe menu. Room service is available daily from 6:30am – 11:00pm.

Complimentary shuttle van service departs every 30 minutes from 6:00am - 11:00pm to and from Washington-Reagan National Airport. Go to the Ground Transportation area of the airport to catch the shuttle. SuperShuttle offers transportation from Dulles International Airport and Baltimore/Washington International Airport.

The hotel does have the space to park RVs, but if you require RV hook-ups please contact Harmony Place located on Rt. 1, Richmond Road, which is about 8 miles from the hotel. Call (703) 360-4460 for information, reservations, and directions. There are no campgrounds in Arlington County.

Should you require a wheelchair Zask Medical rents wheelchairs. Please call (703) 354-1266 for information and to make any reservations. Also ScootAround rents wheelchairs, please call (888) 441-7575 for more information and to make reservations.

Vendors, Schedules, and Prices are subject to change.

To make sleeping room reservations, please call 1-888-627-8210 & ask for the 69th Infantry Division Association group rate or mail the below form to the hotel.

----- CUT HERE AND MAIL TO HOTEL -----
69th INFANTRY DIVISION ASSOCIATION – HOTEL RESERVATION FORM
REUNION DATES: AUGUST 12-17, 2008

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____ ZIP _____

EMAIL ADDRESS (if available) _____ TELEPHONE # () _____

ARRIVAL DATE _____ TIME _____ AM/PM DEP. DATE _____

NUMBER OF ROOMS NEEDED _____ NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN EACH ROOM _____

SPECIAL REQUESTS: Wheelchair accessible room _____ Nonsmoking room _____ Smoking room _____
King Bed _____ Two Double Beds _____ Bed types are not guaranteed

RATE: \$99 (single/double) & \$119 (triple) & \$139 (quad) + tax (currently 12.25%)

CUT OFF DATE: 07/10/08. Reservations received after this date will be processed on a space available basis, at the prevailing public rate.

CANCELLATION POLICY: Deposit is refundable if reservation is canceled 24 hrs in advance of arrival date. Record your cancellation number. Call (703) 521-1900.

GUARANTEE: Reservations must be guaranteed by credit card or first night's deposit, enclosed.

MC ___ VISA ___ AM. EXPRESS ___ CARTE BLANCHE/DINERS ___ DISCOVER ___

CREDIT CARD NUMBER _____ EXP. DATE _____

SIGNATURE (regardless of payment method) _____

Mail to: Sheraton National Hotel, 900 South Orme Street, Arlington, VA 22204 Attn: Reservations

Hotel will send you a confirmation letter once the reservation has been made.

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DISBANDING THE 69th INFANTRY DIV. ASSN.

(Continued from Page 6)

Corporate Law requires an annual report to disseminate the business status, events, and a financial statement to all active members; the year end financial report should be published in the bulletin.

Generally speaking, we have met all the goals and objectives. However, printing and publishing those book length war stories and diaries from civilian life through basic training, Camp Shelby, etc., etc., are too verbose. We all did the same thing, fought the same war, and had the same line of march across Europe. Only the individual antidotes and circumstances are different, interesting, and worthy of a half page maximum plus photos.

Bulletin articles must be correlated with the dues paying/bulletin distribution list. If the sender does not pay dues, their article shall be returned unprinted. Further Unit two (2) page photographs will no longer be printed in the bulletin. After 60 years every Unit has already been published at least once or more. With the continuous degradation of the Association; and, restricting the content length of war stories, at some point we logically will only need two (2) bulletin issues per year. Bulletins must only be distributed to active dues paying members; honorary members, widows, dues paying associate members, other reciprocal Associations.

6. Reunions: Committee and Members Opinions

- a. Restrict locations initially to the Eastern states. As attendance diminishes, restrict to the Eastern states between Massachusetts and Virginia. Make more use of mid-sized cities.
- b. Continue Monday-Sunday schedule; but keep the hospitality room (our assembly area) open more often and longer regardless of tours, etc.
- c. Change membership and Auxiliary meetings schedules to 10:00 am-12:00 noon, and eliminate Coffee and Danish.
- d. Change hospitality room to beer and wine. Explore a hotel sponsored cash bar for liquor during peak hours, i.e., return from tours and nearly evening.
- e. Eliminate all gifts: Table gifts, awards, plaques, honorariums, and /or cash for minimal expenses. Officers and members need to be more charitable and donate time and minimal expenses.
- f. Eliminate flowers and decorations except for red roses for our memorial service.
- g. Souvenirs. Opinion was divided; consensus was to phase out souvenir sales by attrition, no longer purchase anything except hats, jackets and decals. A minimum buy quantity can be maintained with a projected close-out date of 2010. Unsold items at that reunion will be offered as door prizes and/or donated to the veteran's hospital.

7. Reunion Paid Hotel Rooms

- a. This was a disaster going way back when the insider's controlled the Association and divided the goodies like Presidential and executive suites with complete stocked bars and snacks. The spoils were not necessarily assigned to Association officers but "buddies" and even non-Association family members, using Association comps and room credits.
- b. In 1991 it became an issue at the membership meeting resulting from an insignificant, unrelated article in the bulletin. Also, the Association's cash assets were becoming a concern because of our non-profit corporation status.
- c. Prior to 1993 reunion, every activity had to be self-supporting: Reunion meals, Tours, Hospitality Room, Souvenirs, etc. At Biloxi members went wild, the theme was every officer or worker should be compensated by deluxe two room suites, full paid room, or at least a partial paid hotel room during the reunions – for up to 7 nights!
- d. We went from a self-support organization to an anything goes as long as there is money in the treasury. We must go back to austere responsible spending to extend the life of the Association a few more years. At the 2006 reunion the Association spent \$1400.00 for paid rooms for the souvenir sales people and the Sunshine Lady. Just these two activities have cost over \$16,000 in the past 15 years.
- e. We must eliminate hotel paid rooms and suites. Assignment of complimentary rooms, upgrades, and/or room credits is still the responsibility of the president and reunion chairmen (if he is an active member). The established precedence will prevail: President, Treasurer, Editor, and Souvenir persons until final close out sale. If the comp and credits are insufficient to cover the 3-4 standard rooms, the Association should cover the difference.

8. Ladies Auxiliary

Article XIII of our Constitution states in part: Auxiliary Branches associated with this organization are subordinate there to; and, are to be governed in accordance with the Constitution and by-laws of the Association. This extends to the cost of operation for the ladies auxiliary; they too much control their expenditures to stay within their income (member dues).

Since the auxiliary has no treasurer, I am proposing our Treasurer run an off-line ladies auxiliary balance sheet with line of credit based upon the year end auxiliary dues receipts. Use this total as their maximum allowable expenses for the following year. Every cost it incurs must be listed on the balance sheet and be sent to the auxiliary secretary on a continuous basis. During the past 15 years the auxiliary dues paying members paid \$2,600 yearly with an average of 520 members. With the exception of the Sunshine Lady's

(Continued on Page 14)

DISBANDING THE 69th INFANTRY DIV. ASSN.

(Continued from Page 13)

misc expenses and the VA check, their expenses are primarily hidden in the treasurers report complied with the Association expenses. Examples of the Sunshine Ladies' expenses: 2005, \$1475; 2006, \$709, 07/31/2007, \$598 (Treasurer's report does not include a 2007 auxiliary check to local VA). The Sunshine Lady's annual report given at the Salt Lake City reunion was an additional \$1,093 for printing and mailing 1,561 greeting cards. Assuming all things are equal, the greeting card activity alone in 2006 was at least \$1,800; plus paid hotel room \$672, total cost \$2,472!

Other Auxiliary reunion costs are: Rental for podium and floor microphone; amplifiers, speakers, and electrical installation costs (avg. \$250-\$300); temporary dance floor for entertainers (avg. \$150); entertainment (avg. \$300); and, VA Memorial Hospital \$500. Average annual cost for these items, \$1450.

Without considering the ladies pro-rata cost for Coffee and Danish at \$4.00 each, the cumulative auxiliary cost's average per year is \$3872, with income of \$2600. Their annual line of credit balance is (\$1272).

9. Finale

For the members who plan to attend the 2008 reunion, please plan on a long meeting. In my report, items from the introduction through item 2 define the problems of the Association. Items 3 through 6 are changes I am proposing, including some insight not previously discussed.

Please prepare your list based upon my study, regarding a vote for or against each item. It will save a lot of discussion time. My thoughts are to present each item as a motion.

Yes, there will be items tabled for next year though we must start somewhere now. The proposed plan schedule published in the last bulletin is still valid without change.

**Visit Us
On
The
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www.69th-infantry-division.com

or contact

annejoelip@bellsouth.net

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

The Major's Furnace

Written By: Gus R. Wiemann

Company L, 271st Regiment & Headquarters Division
7126 Canella Court, Tamarac, Florida 33321

That winter of 1944 in England was, to put it mildly, cold. How cold was it? Well, it was so cold that our battalion major ordered a soldier to be stationed in the cellar of his requisitioned house. This soldier's duty was to report to the cellar at 1800 hours or, more specifically, to the furnace in the cellar. This duty was ordered after falling out with his company for roll call at 0700 hours. It was following chow at 1700 hours that the soldier was to station himself next to the furnace until 0700 hours, at which time he was to report to his company for the morning roll call.

It was reasoned through command decision that if a soldier observed the furnace between 1800 hours and 0700 hours of the following day, the efficiency of the furnace's heating capacity would be maintained. Theoretically, the soldier would shake the grate of the furnace, causing all spent embers to fall out, and insert fresh pieces of coal.

Unfortunately, the soldier after more than 12 hours of duty fell asleep next to the warm furnace. Any spent embers were then not replaced by fresh coal, the warm furnace turned cold and so did the major's house.

In the morning an irate and cold major reported the soldier to his company commander with the instruction that this soldier was never again assigned to tend the furnace.

As a Scottish poet many years earlier wrote: "The best laid plans of mice and men go often awry."

* * * * *

Fighting Nazis from a London Hotel

While our 69th was on maneuvers on June 6, 1944 in the woods outside Hattiesburg, a boy of about 14 years came running through the pine trees. Under his left arm he carried a stack of newspapers. His right arm held up one as he called out, "Times-Picayune, Allies invade France, read all about it." Whether any of us carried change in our fatigues that day to buy a paper, I don't remember. But the kid telling us that D-Day had arrived was a high point in all our lives.

Over three-thousand miles away from us in a London hotel was a group of men broadcasting from a radio station named "Soldatensender Calais." Using anti-Nazi German speakers with up-to-date intelligence information, they broadcast facts suppressed by Goebbel's Propaganda Ministry not only to the German civilians, but also to the soldiers who were to face us when we entered the front lines.

For further details as to the methods and sources of information for "Soldatensender Calais," there are two books available by William B. Breuer and "Black Boomerang" by Sefton Delmer.

Tanker Stories

By: **Charles Ray, Jr. (Billy Ray)**

Honorary Member, 777th Tank Battalion

Proud son of **Charles W. Ray, Sr.**

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* * * * *

Dedicated to Company A

The stories I have selected for this bulletin are battle stories that the tankers never told themselves. I think the world needs to know how hard these brave men fought to secure the towns along the way. And more important, the world needs to know about the sacrifices they made.

These battles have been thoroughly researched using declassified (once classified SECRET) documents, some hand written, and printed materials given to me by men who were there. My thanks goes out to all the men who have shared their stories with me and for allowing me to tell their story.

Lutterberg

8 April 1945: Just passed midnight, 1st and 3rd Platoons, A Company, 777th Tank Battalion were relieved from 273rd Infantry Regiment at Oberode and ordered to return to Lutterberg.

8 April 1945: 1st and 3rd Platoons, A Company, 777th Tank Battalion left Oberode and returned to Lutterberg where 777th Tank Battalion Headquarters was located. **Captain Burson's** tankers arrived a 0200. It had been a long day. Here they rejoined A Company, 777th Tank Battalion which was now at Lutterberg.

Note: "On The Way" indicates that, at Lutterberg, **Captain Burson** liberated 40 dozen eggs from a chicken farm.

Shortly after returning to Lutterberg from Oberode and rejoining their Company at Battalion Headquarters, 1st and 3rd Platoons, A Company, 777th Tank Battalion were assigned to 1st Battalion, 271st Infantry Regiment which was now located to the East at Witzenhausen. Before departing though, the tankers enjoyed a fine egg breakfast.

8 April 1945: 1st and 3rd Platoons, A Company, 777th Tank Battalion departed Lutterberg for the town of Witzenhausen (2nd Battalion, 271st Infantry Regiment Command Post was at Allshausen) to link up with 1st Battalion, 271st Infantry Regiment.

8 April 1945: 1st and 3rd Platoons departed Lutterberg, heading down the Super Highway, for the town of Witzenhausen (2nd Battalion, 271st Infantry Regiment Command Post was at Allshausen) to link up with 1st Battalion, 271st Infantry Regiment at Witzenhausen. Witzenhausen is located on the Werra River.

Neunrode

8 April 1945: 2nd Battalion, G Company, 271st Infantry Regiment, attacked and secured Neunrode while E and F Companies secured two small towns in their sector. What action the tankers saw at Neunrode is unknown.

Note: Witzenhausen had been attacked by B Company, 777th Tank Battalion and the 272nd Infantry Regiment on 7 April 1945. Witzenhausen had already been secured by the time 1st and 3rd Platoons, A Company, 777th Tank Battalion arrived and passed on through the town.

Witzenhausen

8 April 1945: 1st and 3rd Platoons, A Company, 777th Tank Battalion crossed Werra River at the bridgehead established at Witzenhausen. They moved north to Gertenbach. At a location between Witzenhausen and Gertenbach, **Captain Burson** met up with **Colonel Margerson**. Together, they returned to Witzenhausen. It was here that **Colonel Margeson** worked out an assignment for **Captain Burson's** platoons. Finally the decision was made. **Captain Burson's** tanks would be assigned to B Company, 1st Battalion, 271st Infantry Regiment at Gertenbach. 1st and 3rd Platoons moved out for Gertenbach.

Gertenbach

8 April 1945: Upon arrival at Gertenbach, 1st and 3rd Platoons, A Company, 777th Tank Battalion, picked up Company B, 1st Battalion, 271st Infantry Regiment.

Note: Resistance at Gertenbach had been eliminated by an all night shelling by B Company, 777th Tank Battalion on 7 April 1945.

8 April 1945: The tankers, 1st and 3rd Platoons, A Company, 777th Tank Battalion and Company B, 271st Infantry Regiment, moved North toward Mollenfelde. **Captain Burson** "found another shotgun... which isn't so good, but the case is okay."

The Battle at Mollenfelde

8 April 1945: As soon as they were in position, they attacked Mollenfelde and the town fell quickly. The tankers of 1st and 3rd Platoons, A Company, 777th Tank Battalion liberated the French laborers who had been held captive in Mollenfelde. These Frenchmen reported that 50 enemy soldiers and 6 German tanks had departed Mollenfeldt just 3 hours earlier.

The tankers captured 6 enemy soldiers and turned these prisoners over to infantry at Mollenfelde. The tankers of 1st and 3rd Platoons, A Company, 777th Tank Battalion and Company B, 271st Infantry Regiment remained in the Mollenfelde vicinity for the night of 8 April 1945.

Note: Some of the following information comes from an After Action Report which I attribute to **Lt. White** of 2nd Platoon, A Company, 777th Tank Battalion. Headquarters Platoon and 2nd Platoon traveled together while 1st and 3rd Platoons traveled together.

(Continued on Page 16)

TANKER STORIES (Continued from Page 15)

9 April 1945: The 9th of April would be a long day for the tankers of 1st and 3rd Platoons, A Company, 777th Tank Battalion. They would be called on to attack and take several towns on this date.

9 April 1945: By 0630, Headquarters, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Platoons were rolling out of Mollenfelde toward the East with Friedland as their initial objective. Friedland was located 6 miles to the east.

Hermannrode

9 April 1945: The first town that lay in their path was Hermannrode. The tankers attacked and took Hermanrode and kept on moving.

Marzhausen

The tankers attacked and took Marzhausen and kept on moving toward their objective, Friedland.

Friedland

9 April 1945: By 0800, 1st and 3rd Platoons had reached their initial objective, Friedland. They attacked Friedland and took the town. The tankers captured 4 enemy soldiers and turned them over to the infantry. One of the captured men was not a soldier. The tankers "thought the Chief of Police was a soldier." According to **Captain Burson**, "He is a big devil...about the size of Bob Butler in Camilla, but a little fatter." After only a few minutes in Friedland, the tankers move on. Again, the tankers rolled on, this time turning south.

9 April 1945: At 0830, 1st and 3rd Platoons, A Company, 777th Tank Battalion departed Friedland with the town of Bremke as their next objective. Bremke is about 15 miles from Friedland and there are several towns in between. Artillery, which had pounded this area for some time prior to the arrival of the tankers, was responsible for the dead German soldiers found lying all along the road between Friedland and Bremke. Soon they were closing in on Reckershausen.

Reckershausen

9 April 1945: Just as the tankers arrived in Reckershausen, American artillery opened up on the town...lobbing ten to fifteen 155mm rounds into the town. **Captain Burson** wrote, "As I was getting out of my tank, our artillery starts coming in...I head for the nearest foxhole....I'm glad the Germans dug plenty of foxholes."

This artillery action prior to (actually it was at the same time as) the arrival of the tankers allowed the tankers to easily take Reckershausen.

Four Germans civilians had been wounded as a result of this friendly fire incident but there were no casualties among the tankers. No determination was made at this time for the cause of this incident. Due to fog in the area, no return fire was made.

1st and 3rd Platoons, A Company, 777th Tank Battalion captured 51 enemy soldiers which they turned over to the infantry. **Captain Burson** took a pair of binoculars off a dead German soldier but they were "not worth a damn."

Soon the tankers were on their way again. Turning northeast, 1st and 3rd Platoons, A Company, 777th Tank Battalion then moved out toward Reifershausen.

9 April 1945: One mile south of Reckershausen, 1st and 3rd Platoons, A Company, 777th Tank Battalion again received fire from a friendly outpost. Investigation revealed that confusion between command centers placed two separate friendly units in the same enemy zone at the same time. Before the mistake could be sorted out 1st and 3rd Platoons returned fire and inflicted two slight casualties on the artillery forces. The two wounded men were from the 272nd Infantry Regiment.

Reifershausen

9 April 1945: 1st and 3rd Platoons, A Company, 777th Tank Battalion attacked and took Reifer-shausen. The next town in their path was Ludolfshausen.

Ludolfshausen

9 April 1945: Following a narrow, winding road known to the locals as the "Fairytale Road," 1st and 3rd Platoons, A Company, 777th Tank Battalion attacked and took Ludoffshausen. They were ordered to move on to Ishenrode. The Tankers passed through the village of Lichtenhagen.

Ishenrode

9 April 1945: The town of Ishenrode also lies on the "Fairytale Road." 1st and 3rd Platoons, A Company, 777th Tank Battalion attacked and took Ishenrode. Bremke would be their next objective.

Bremke

9 April 1945: 1st and 3rd Platoons, A Company, 777th Tank Battalion moved to outskirts of Bremke. On the outskirts of Bremke, the tankers spotted an enemy soldier waving a white flag. The tankers took him prisoner and turned him over to the infantry.

About the same time, the tankers received enemy machine gun fire but automatic weapons fire from the tanks quickly dispersed the enemy.

The lead tank commander sighted what was thought to be an enemy tank at 1200 yards. He fired two rounds and destroyed a friendly Tank Destroyer but caused no casualties.

The tankers received fire from a friendly anti-tank gun. They returned fire and destroyed it causing two slight casualties. Both men were still able to walk so their wounds were not life threatening.

Apparently, two friendly outfits had been dispatched to take Bremke. The 2nd Infantry Division had been moving to Bremke from the North.

9 April 1945: Regimental commanders of the 271st Infantry Regiment (Trespass 6) and the 9th Infantry Regiment conferred with each other in Bremke to determine the error that had placed two friendly units in the same zone. As it turned out, both units had been told in Orders that no other friendly troops were in the

(Continued on Page 17)

TANKER STORIES (Continued from Page 16)

area but the reason for the error is not given. The tankers were then ordered in another direction, leaving the area occupied by the 2nd Infantry Division.

Bisshagen

9 April 1945: Here the tankers turn southeast toward Bisshagen with Heiligenstadt as their next objective. 1st and 3rd Platoons, A Company, 777th Tank Battalion moved on. They secured Bisshagen and kept moving.

Siemerode

9 April 1945: At Siemerode, the tankers turned south toward Heiligenstadt. Heiligenstadt was just 5 miles away. A few miles west of Heiligenstadt, the tankers captured 7 enemy enlisted soldiers and 2 enemy officers and turned them over to the infantry.

Note: The Battle at Heiligenstadt was printed in Volume 60, No 1.

Westhausen

9 April 1945: At Westhausen, 1st and 3rd Platoons, A Company, 777th Tank Battalion captured 10 enemy soldiers and turned them over to the infantry before moving out to the east to Bodenrode.

Bodenrode

9 April 1945: It was just after sunset when 1st and 3rd Platoons, A Company, 777th Tank Battalion arrived at Bodenrode. The enemy soldiers that had been in the town fled into the woods. 1st and 3rd Platoons, A Company, 777th Tank Battalion fired high explosive rounds into the woods but couldn't check results because of darkness. They returned to Westhausen for the night.

Westhausen, 10 April 1945: 1st and 3rd Platoons, A Company, 777th Tank Battalion remained at Westhausen and performed maintenance. Later that night, they moved out.

Note: It was here at Westhausen that **Captain Burson** received word that the 777th objective now was the City of Leipzig. **Captain Burson** wrote, "Holy Smoke! That is over 150 miles away. Doesn't seem possible to me. Maybe Ike knows what he is doing. Who am I to doubt his word?"

10 April 1945: **Captain Burson** sent **Lt. Robert E. White** back to the rear to pick up a new tank. Apparently when **Lt. White** arrived to get the new tank, he radioed that he was also bringing back 2 new tank crews. Apparently something was wrong because he didn't return right away as expected.

Bodenrode, 10 April 1945: At 2300, 1st and 3rd Platoons, A Company, 777th Tank Battalion moved out. Passing through Bodenrode, the tankers didn't receive any resistance from the enemy. Their next objective was Krungen or perhaps Birkungen.

Note: Krungen is actually Birkungen. I have not located Krungen on the map.

Krungen (Birkungen)

11 April 1945: The tankers arrived in Birkungen but there is no report of action that took place there. At Birkungen, the tankers ordered the civilians to get out of bed and get out of their houses. According to **Captain Burson**, "They were out." The tankers remained in the houses in Krungen (Birkungen) for the night. At midnight, **Captain Burson** became worried about **Lt. White** because he still had not returned.

At about 0500, **Captain Burson** was up, still worried about **Lt. White** and the rest of the group with him. **Lt. White** was late and the rest of the Company was due to move out from Krungen at 0730. Since the kitchen truck also failed to show up, **Captain Burson** decided to return to Westhausen to see what he could find out. While **Captain Burson** was making the trip, the rest of the Company prepared to move out.

Captain Burson located **Lt. White** and the rest of the Company at Westhausen. After regrouping, the lost tankers returned to Krungen where they found that **Lt. Dorner** had already left. **Captain Burson** didn't know which way they went so now he had to find their route, and then speed up and catch up with his men.

11 April 1945: A Company, 777th Tank Battalion, was given new orders to follow the 9th Armored Division and mop up any enemy resistance bypassed by the 9th Armored Division. Orders also said to bypass any heavy resistance.

11 April 1945: A Company, less **Captain Burson** and **Lt. White** and the two new crews, departed Krungen with 1st Battalion, 271st Infantry Regiment on board their tanks and Company A of the 661st Tank Destroyer Battalion. They were advancing behind 9th Armored Division and spearheading the "bold advance" of the 777th Tank Battalion tankers and the 271st Infantry Regiment and the 661st Tank Destroyers.

Birkungen

The following account of the action which took place on 11 April 1945 and written about above has been taken from the 271st Infantry Regiment History, page 20, 1945.

"Meanwhile 1st battalion, 271st Infantry Regiment, had been working closely behind the 9th Armored units, spearheading the bold regimental advance. Orders were to by-pass resistance if possible.

With A Company, 661 Tank Destroyer Battalion and 1st and 3rd Platoons, A Company, 777th Tank Battalion attached, the battalion left Birkungen and traveled seventy-one miles, often out ahead of the armor, to the town of Beichlingen, where sharp fighting ensued on the outskirts and in the castle area.

Many snipers were flushed out, several big guns were neutralized, and one medium tank from commanded by **Sgt. Bennett** was lost when it suffered a direct hit from an 88 or panzerfaust."

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Beichlingen

Captain Burson, Lt. White and the two new crews caught up with **Lt. Dorner** at Beichlingen.

The Battle at Beichlingen

11 April 1945: At Beichlingen, which was bypassed by the 9th Armored Division, the tankers received small arms fire, panserfaust, and sniper fire. The infantry dismounted and the attack commenced.

One of 3rd Platoon's tanks, commanded by **Sgt. Bennett** was destroyed and **Sgt. Bennett** was seriously wounded in the leg. Several infantrymen were killed or wounded. **Captain Burson** talked with **Sgt. Bennett** who said he "wasn't feeling too bad" but **Captain Burson** wrote, "Bennett is the type that would never tell you" how bad he really hurt.

Captain Burson's tanks destroyed two anti-tank guns and soon after the guns were knocked out the enemy surrendered and the town fell quickly. The tankers of 1st and 3rd Platoons, A Company, 777th Tank Battalion captured 25 enemy soldiers and turned the prisoners over to the infantry.

A Company Tanks are now ordered on to Bernsdorf and remain there for the night. **Captain Burson** wrote, "...now all we have to do is get there." They head out for Billroda.

Billroda

11 April 1945: A Company, 777th Tank Battalion passed through Billroda. **Lt. Dorner's** men from 1st Platoon were just outside Billroda when they fired on and destroyed two more anti-tank guns. Here they captured 49 enlisted enemy soldiers and one Captain at Billroda. They turned the prisoners over to the infantry.

Civilians in the town reported that there was a German tank around the corner in Billroda. **Captain Burson** was in the lead tank at this time. He comes up on the German tank and it has a white flag but **Captain Burson** takes no chances. He tells **Don Slimmer** to get prepared to fire at a moment's notice. Fortunately, the tank is empty....abandoned by some smart men.

Bernsdorf

11 April 1945: A Company, 777th Tank Battalion moved toward Bernsdorf. There they captured 17 enemy soldiers and turned them over to the infantry. 1st and 3rd Platoons, A Company, 777th Tank Battalion then out posted Bernsdorf for the night.

Captain Burson wrote: "Moved into Bernsdorf... slept in houses....drank some Apple Cider...good, too...Good looking German girl here....no fraternization though....15 POWs walked up to **Rocky (Lt. Rothrock)** to surrender....almost scared him to death....he didn't know they were there...."

Note: The following account of the action which took place on 11 April 1945 and written about above has been taken from the 271st Infantry Regiment History, page 20, 1945.

"From here (Beichlingen) the battalion moved ahead to Bernsdorf, again in front of the armor (1st and 3rd Platoons, Company A, 777th Tank Battalion), and at one time were the closest Americans to Berlin."

From "On The Way"

12 April 1945: At 0330 at Bernsdorf, Ib Hvenegaard and **Otis Burdick** were on guard duty when a German truck passed through their lines. Although it was too dark to see the vehicle, **Otis Burdick** fired in the direction of the sound of the motor in the vehicle with 50 caliber machine gun fire and knocked it out of commission. Due to darkness it was impossible to locate the driver. In the morning at first light, they went out and found the driver, a German soldier and a destroyed gas truck. The driver whose leg was half blown off was turned over to the infantry. The fuel on the truck that was on its way to the enemy, never made it to its destination.

The Battle at Schortau

12 April 1945: At 1100, A Company, 777th Tank Battalion moved East in the direction of Leipzig with one company of 661st Tank Destroyers and Companies A, B, C, and D, 1st Battalion, 271st Infantry Regiment. They arrived on the outskirts of Schortau. Here they captured 5 enemy soldiers and turned them over to the infantry. Then "all hell broke loose."

Soon this group began receiving heavy concentrations of 20mm weapons fire which was accompanied by 40mm, and 88mm mortar fire. Heavy casualties resulted among the 271st Infantry Regiment. "Many of the dough boys were shot to pieces....a horrible sight." The tankers returned fire and destroyed three 20mm Guns and six 88mm Mortars.

The tankers of A Company, 777th Tank Battalion and infantry were ordered to withdraw from this engagement at Schortau and bypass the area. They moved out toward Pettstadt.

Branderoda

12 April 1945: 1st and 3rd Platoons, A Company, 777th Tank Battalion moved South through Branderoda. They pressed on to Grost.

Grost

12 April 1945: At Grost, 1st and 3rd Platoons, A Company, 777th Tank Battalion captured 12 enemy soldiers at Grost and turned the prisoners over to the infantry.

Note: The following is a quote from the 1945 version of the 777th Tank Battalion History.

12 April 1945: "President Roosevelt died at 2 o'clock in the afternoon of a cerebral hemorrhage. This was a day of tragedy for the American troops. The men of the 777th received the sad news over the field radios later on that night. They were stunned. Many bowed their heads and some even wept. He was their Commander-in-Chief." He had been their President for nearly 4 terms. Vice President Harry S. Truman was sworn in as President and Commander-in-Chief of the military.



“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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*Camp Shelby, Mississippi
 Major Walker, Assistant Division Surgeon performing*

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