

❖ WWII MUSINGS ❖

Volume 10 Issue 2

John D. Bowen, Editor

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BEST THEME AWARD IN THE PARADE

THE TORCH IS PASSED



Photo by St Patrick's Parade Cmte

This was the theme printed on magnetic signs adhering to each side of the weapons carrier accompanied by two WWII jeeps that transported our Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge. In addition, our marchers were preceded by the Valley Forge Military Academy Band, to give us a military beat were given the honor to lead the Military Division in the St Patrick's Day Parade, in Washington DC, on Sunday, 17 March 2002. Our marchers, again dazzled the on-lookers and the judges as they marched to the outstanding beat of the Valley Forge Military Academy, (where our VBOB Memorial is located in Wayne PA). This is the third trophy in as many years that our VBOBers have won. Last year we won the People's Choice Award and the previous year we won the Best Overall Marching Unit in the Parade.

Never let it be said that ole soldiers have lost any of their luster of 58 or so years ago when they last had some close order drill. Again, after a minute of two, the marchers had picked up the beat of the drum with their left foot and were off and in step (mostly)! It is amazing how you never forget that training of so many years ago. A tip of the Irish Top Hat goes to John Bowen (Irish Flag Bearer), Warren Chase and Morris Schulman (in his WWII uniform), proudly lead with our MD/DC Chapter VBOB Banner, Carl Morano & John Hontz of the Purple Heart Chapter marched beside the jeeps. Ed Radzwich our MD/DC Chapter Past President, rode in the Weapons Carrier. Each of the vehicles were driven by reenactors John Como, Kit Cooper, Tim Kitchum and Mat Curtis in WWII uniforms. By marching time the rain was threatening but did not fall until after we had passed the Reviewing Stand. The public again was particularly pleased to see these veterans with a little ZIP and rhythm in their step and applauded the group continuously all along the parade route. Many of the younger generation were hollering 'Thank You' among the applause which was a new and appreciated twist. The trophy is also well appreciated.

Any of you with access to the Internet can see pictures of the parade at <http://www.dcstpatparade.com> See pictures 080,

POST MORTEM WRITINGS ON INDICATIONS OF ARDENNES OFFENSIVE DEC 1944 THE ULTRA STUDY 23 May 1975

Note: The release of the study project titled "Addendum to USAWC Military Research Program paper," "The Battle of the Bulge," has been authorized by the United States Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania.

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The Battle of the Bulge, Hitler's Ardennes counteroffensive of Dec 1944, was Germany's last gamble of

WWII -- an effort to thwart Allied plans to reach the Rhine. On 16 Dec, when the German forces struck, the Allies had thirty-one divisions in 12th Army Group under Gen Bradley deployed on a 200 mile front. The almost 100 mile sector in the center, the Ardennes itself, was manned by four divisions of Gen Middleton's VIII Corps.

The US Emphasis was on offensive operations. Despite troop and material losses, bad weather, and the fact that six additional divisions were expected shortly from the United States, the decision was made to continue to attack on a broad front. On 18 October, Gen Eisenhower had decided to make the main drive to the Rhine through the Aachen Gap in the north on 5 November with the First and Ninth (US) Armies. The Third Army was to advance in the south to the Saar five days later. The offensive became bogged down by mud and rain, and by heavy German resistance and local counterattacks, so that after a month of bitter fighting, 12th Army Group had only advanced eight miles.

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EDITOR'S CORNER

MESSED UP AGAIN!

I must apologize to Bill Gaynor, Chapter Member and President of the RI VBOB Chapter for messing up the 3rd Armored Fact Sheet in the last issue by listing his Armored Field Artillery unit as the 57th instead of the 67th. This is especially embarrassing because I had done research, after I retired, for Bill on his 67th Armored Field Artillery unit. My thanks to Bill for bringing the error to my attention. If anyone would like a corrected copy of the 3rd Armored Fact Sheet please call me and I will put one in the mail to you.

A GEM!

Sometimes you run across a gem in the rough when you least expect it. This is the case with the Historical Electronics Museum at 1745 West Nursery Road next door to the BWI Marriott Hotel near BWI Airport off Rt. 295. After meeting with our President, Lou Cunningham and his wife at the Marriott Hotel to sign the contract for the 2002 Convention, Mary Ann and I stopped next door at this building that had an original WWII Radar screen outside. We thought we would check it out for the Convention tours. Well, to our delight we were given a quick tour by Ralph Strong, Pres. and this is truly a fabulous museum and library on the electronics developed for our military starting in WWII and proceeding to the current day AWACs surveillance planes.

It is a museum of interest to Army, Navy, Marine and Air Corps/Air Force veterans as it traces the development of various electronic devices from the first radar used at Hawaii showing the plot of the incoming Jap planes, the Proximity Fuse, used for the first time on land during the Battle of the Bulge, the Enigma which was used to code messages by the Germans, development of the transistor and semi-conductors, space and underwater electronics to radar control weapons for all the services. Many of these things you may have seen in England or on the continent but never knew what they were because of their classification but this museum tells about their development and explains many things you may have wondered about with electronic countermeasures and radar jamming. How they made chaff for our bombers to drop is fascinating. This museum is open from 9 AM to 3 PM Weekdays & 10 AM to 2 PM Saturdays. Best of all it is free. It is closed Sunday.

**WWII Musings is published for the enjoyment of WWII Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge. It is based on the research of John D. Bowen, 613 Chichester Ln, Silver Spring MD 20904-3331 in the Unit Records maintained at the National Archives and Records Administration. Proper credit should be given both to the researcher and to the National Archives. Your comments are welcome. 301-384-6533
New E-mail johndbowen@earthlink.net**

Letter's to the Editor

Dear John,

First I must tell you how much I enjoy the newsletter you edit and write a good bit too. I am a retired journalist and past editor of Navy's ALL HANDS Magazine. (Was there for 17 years so I know the work that has to go into a publication).

I was particularly interested in your comments about your research at Carlisle Barracks. It is a shame that the National Security Analysis of BOB came to the conclusion it was a "complete intelligence failure." It was a failure to take any action or to even investigate reports made by front line intelligence officers that such an attack was being planned to come through the Ardennes and in fact was in the first stages.

The key officer that reported this with photos as well as facts was told he worried too much. Had been on the front too long and should take a Christmas R&R in Paris. They did not want to believe it. The movie 'Battle of the Bulge' with Henry Fonda as the Intelligence Officer brought this out. Of course this version was fictionalized, but the "Big Brass" had been warned and did nothing.

Just had to make this point. I am working on a book now about my experiences at Noville and how I was wounded on the pull back to Bastogne. It will be a personalized account of one infantryman's tale.

Thanks again

*May God Bless,
Don Addor*

PS - I'm not basing the above because I saw the movie. I had come across this fact sometime, in some documentation during my 22 years as a military writer for Uncle Sam.

*PPS - I am looking for photos of Noville, Foe & Bastogne area.
106 Atlantic Ave, Milton DE 19968-1255, Tel 302-684-4966.*

COMBAT VETS UNDERSTAND

There is a special feeling when combat veterans get together. It's not friendship; we all have friends. Maybe it's because we are survivors and our lives could have ended at any time. We may have less hair on top and a few more inches in the waist, but deep within us is the same comradeship we shared at a most difficult time. We have all been to hell and back. Our relationship has been forged by a common experience from basic training to absolute horror. Nothing can separate us. We remember when all we had was each other.

With the passage of time, World War II is rapidly becoming a distant memory that fewer and fewer Americans share. Decreasing budgets and academic indifference have combined to bring about a worrisome decline in the teaching of military history in both elementary and secondary schools. Our younger generation should see the movies "Saving Private Ryan" and "Pearl Harbor." They should know that freedom is not free. Too many made the supreme sacrifice.

*George Fisher
Long Beach*

Very well said George. George is President of the Florida Southeast Chapter (62) of VBOB.

JDB

JDB

MIDDLETON'S THOUGHTS

Major General Troy H. Middleton, was Commanding General of VIII Corps during the Battle of the Bulge. On 20 April 1945 he was interviewed by Captain L B Clark at Zeulenroda, Germany. This record was found among the notes and comments on a 300+page manuscript entitled The Seige of Bastogne in RG 407, Box 24137, ML 130, National Archives & Records Administration, College Park MD.

“General Middleton said that he thought the Salerno and Volturmo pamphlets were very good. He said the 45th Div wouldn't be too pleased with them because they bear a strong 36th Div flavor. (He thought Col Forsythe had done them -- Forsythe had a regiment in the 36th and was relieved because of age.)

Military history should be written by someone without too much military knowledge and who does not have prejudice on how the operation should have gone by being there and perhaps having some command responsibility. The ideal man would be someone who would dig the facts of what happened out, without prejudice.

Gen Middleton had not received the BASTOGNE manuscript. He hoped that it would not simply be the story of the 101st Airborne (though they did a magnificent job and are certainly one of the best divisions in the Army. They ought to be he said: they are picked men and anyone who has the courage to jump out of a plane at night has guts). In BASTOGNE there were also two armored combat commands, TD's, stragglers who were ordered to report to the commands, and four battalions of Corps artillery that Gen Middleton sent in there.

If the 110th Inf hadn't put up the great fight it did, the Germans would have been in BASTOGNE the first night. The evidence of their fight was still on the ground when the ground was retaken. A Corps engineer battalion and men from some artillery units also took part in this. The 110's big fight was around WILTZ and to the east.

Gen Middleton said he would very much like to talk to some German officers to see what the Corps really was hit by. He doesn't believe it was anything like the 14 or 16 divisions that were identified in the first two days. Four or five divisions would have been enough to do what they did against two wornout and one brand-new divisions (plus a little armor), holding an 88 mile front.

On the return trip Gen Middleton had his divisions count the knocked out or abandoned German equipment in the old Corps sector. He sent a report on this to Gen Patton. It shows what an error the ARDENNES campaign was on the part of the Germans. He thinks they counted 322 tanks in the area, of which a great many were knocked out or abandoned because of mechanical failure (many of these) on the way in. On the other hand, we did not, as the papers have said, lose much equipment. He also had this checked and sent the report on enemy material loses to Gen Patton in order to counter this line of talk. The 4th Inf Div and the 9th Armd Div, on the south, lost practically nothing; the 110th Inf was the only one in the 28th to lose equipment. The Germans overran a ration dump near GOUVY and an ASP near BOURCY (the later was recovered intact).

Concerning the 106th Inf Div, Gen Middleton does not think it was the division commander's fault; he doesn't know whose fault it was. The division commander ordered the two regiments to pull back to Skyline drive line and they could have raised hell with the German armor on the plain on the way back, especially at night. The general also looked at the area occupied by the 422d and 423d Inf and it did not look as if much fighting had gone on. There were clothes strewn around where B bags had been -- the 106th had brought up all sorts of stuff you don't take into combat.

Regarding the relief of BASTOGNE, Gen Middleton said he didn't know whether Gen Mc Auliffe had actually said what the papers attributed to him -- that he did not need to be relieved. It was an unfortunate statement. Gen Middleton knew damn well that they wanted and needed relief. Mc Auliffe said on 24 Dec on the telephone that the best Xmas present they could get would be relief and called up and expressed his disappointment on the afternoon of the 25th that the relief had not come. Gen Middleton said he practically begged for relief.”

On 1 July 1945, on Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, Office of the Comptroler, stationary, Lt Gen Troy H. Middleton provided the following:

Memorandum for Colonel Marshall:

I have read this excellent report with much interest. You and your men are to be congratulated. Comments follow:

General Hodges called General Middleton and advised displacing the Corps Hq to the rear. This was done but General Middleton, Colonel Stanton (Deputy C of S), and Lieut. Colonel Hornbeak (Hq Comdt) remained in Bastogne until the following morning. The reason for staying was to acquaint General Ridgeway with the situation (Ridgeway came late that day). Also Middleton considered it important that he stay until McAuliffe got his troops in and his situation in hand. When Middleton left town Ewell's regiment was engaged with enemy east of Bastogne.

Middleton called Bradley and informed him that the 101st and other troops had been ordered to hold Bastogne and that the force would probably be surrounded since he had no reserve. Bradley said OK tell them to stay there.

1. Page 33 -- This should be explained because up to the time General Ridgeway reported to VIII Corps it was General Middleton's instructions from First US Army that 101st Division was to operate under XVIII Corps, hence Middleton was not licensed to make plans for employing the 101st Div.

2. In view of 10th Armored team already employed to the east it was not urgent that 101st Div develop the situation in that direction, however McAuliffe was directed to reinforce the 10th A.D. block because it was obvious that the weight of the enemy attack was coming along that road. It would have been a mistake to employ the entire 101st Div in that direction at that time.

3. Page 85 -- It made no particular difference to Corps where the division was assembled so long as it could defend Bastogne. It may

(Continued on page 6)

REFLECTIONS

by Joseph Zimmer

These reflections were given by the author at the MD/DC Chapter of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge Association meeting, on Sunday, 10 February 2002, at Perry's Restaurant, Rt. 175, Odenton MD. Joe served with Company B, 345th Infantry, 87th Infantry Division. His thoughts are shared with those who were unable to attend.

By whatever count, our Chapter has its 11th President, John Worthington, to lead us in our 21st year. By historical contrast, our beloved country is 226 years old, as we see our 43rd President. Our hope, prayers, our best wishes and support are with him, maybe, even our destiny is in his hands, as he leads in the fight against terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. It is a very changed world for us. The fears, taste, sorrow, sympathies, the pathos of September 11th 2001, has been experienced by all. We will not falter. For the first time in history, terrorists struck, left no message – spoken or unspoken. They don't leave us or, offer us anything except uncertainty, doubts, treachery, or maybe questions. The stereophonic horror of our TVs and radios resounded all around us for days and weeks. There are more troops on the ground in Utah, than we have in Afghanistan. The Empire State Building stands alone, as nearby, just two weeks ago, another victim was found. The sound track of our lives continues. May the echoes of our trials and tribulations experienced in WWII strengthen the brave men and women of our special forces who bravely fight today.

We may be witnessing a most decisive decade in the history of liberty and freedom. In 1947, Harry Truman reversed a post WWII policy of withdrawal from Europe, and committed the United States to the rebuilding of a stricken Europe, through the Marshall Plan, and resisting expansion of the Soviet Union. Before his tragic death in the early sixties, Kennedy promised the Nation, that we would put a man on the moon, which was accomplished by the Apollo XI program in 1969. I was privileged to have worked on that achievement while employed by ITT. In 1981, Reagan reversed a failed policy of détente and committed us to seek victory over communism, as achieved in 1989, the fall of the Berlin Wall. His recent State of the Union address, George W. Bush, put an end to a decade of temporizing and timidity and started us on the complex and dangerous path of removing the threat of hostile regimes and tyrannies of a new "axis of terror" - North Korea, Iraq and Iran. This task is truly comparable to Truman's and Reagan's. It will not be easy or painless. But it is worthy of a great nation that fought the Cold War for many years after WWII. Worry is a luxury we can't afford now.

rather than terrorism being the final act on an uncertain journey, let us believe, as old warriors ourselves, that it is only another painful crusade and, very complex, but a limited adjustment in the endless project of building a safe and civilized community of nations. Life is truly like a lake, at times; we all start swimming across, some make it, others, unfortunately, do not. Maybe we'll be lucky – luck is where preparation meets opportunity. As we have heard Winston Churchill say in our troubled times, many generations ago during WWII, "If you're going through hell, keep going." this we all will do. May the current generation measure up to what we "the greatest generation" in Brokaw's parlance, accomplished defeating the old axis of Germany – Japan – Italy. The Olympic Code says: "It's not the triumph but the struggle that matters."

The brave men and women of our Special Forces by air, land and sea, who carry the battle effort to a hard to see and difficult to find enemy continue to receive the nation's admiration and full support and concern. Imagine we of WWII, fighting then, with today's pundits, academicians, the left, the ACLU, Human Rights groups, members of the British Parliament, others, conventional neutrals like Sweden, the Swiss and searching for and speaking about "potential" violations of the Geneva Convention Rules of 1912 – the rules of warfare. Most of them, if not all, have never faced actual combat, heard artillery or felt a bullet's sting, much less being in the proximity of battle. Some Taliban, all the al Qaeda forces, in the main, are not state warriors but terrorists in the full meaning of the word, killing and maiming thousands of innocent civilians and, do not fall under the Convention Rules. Money is their oxygen; this, we have cut off, captured many, have them as prisoners. The irrational, illogical, left brain world of some newspapers and columnists, even our very own, say we are mistreating these murderers, keeping them in shackles, blindfolded, mouths taped – inhuman treatment. The truth is they were in transit at the time, from Afghanistan in C-130s. Some pictured in holding areas had bitten some of our soldiers, were infected with TB, and had vowed to kill any Americans if they could. In a prison riot in Kandihar, they had set off a grenade, causing casualties, including the death of an American. "Just the facts ma'am," as TV Sgt Friday of the LA Police Force uttered. We were attacked for who we are, not for our land, wealth or resources.

Let us continue our lives, as best we can, grateful and stubbornly though cautiously optimistic. Thanks to all who keep this Chapter functioning and you know who you are and, they are. For starters, our past ten Presidents, and our current officers. Look forward to the coming Spring. Happy Valentines Day to all you sweethearts out there.

E-MAIL ADDRESSES

The Chapter would like to collect E-mail addresses to communicate with you between newsletters. They will not be given to others. Send yours to johndbowen@earthlink.net

The American people are not — I repeat, not — going to tolerate intimidation, terror and outright acts of war against this nation and its people. And we are especially not going to tolerate these attacks from outlaw states run by the strangest collection of misfits, Looney Tunes and squalid criminals since the advent of the Third Reich.
President Ronald Reagan, speech in Washington, July 8, 1985

WERE YOU IN ONE OF THESE OUTFITS?

When the war was over in Europe there was a simple two page paper entitled REDEPLOYMENT FROM EUROPE. One would think that for such a momentous matter that this redeployment would have been on Letterhead paper from some higher command and have a signature and BY COMMAND OF: notation. But the two sheets of paper only carry the SECRET stamp at the top and bottom of each page.

But this was the list that determined which units in what order would be sent back to the states for redeployment to the Pacific. One of them on the sheet for the July quota, the 86th Inf Div, is encircled and has the handwritten notation that it had "arrived." This was the list to be followed had President Harry Truman not dropped the Bombs that changed the fate of these units destined for more war. The sheet says:

"68 Division in Europe - - - 42 to be in US or en route to Pacific by the end of 1945. Movement will involve 500,000 men. Daily shipment of 1,600 men July to be boosted to 3,000 by August.

| | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| (8) To Remain in Europe | (5) October Quota |
| 4th Armored Div | 9th Armored Div |
| 1st Armored Div | 92nd Inf Div |
| 82nd Airborne Div | 26th Inf Div |
| 1st Inf Div | 79th Inf Div |
| 3rd Inf Div | 99th Inf Div |
| 9th Inf Div | (6) November Quota |
| 29th Inf Div | 10th Armored Div |
| 36th Inf Div | 10th Mountain Div |
| (13) July Quota | 13th Airborne Div |
| 95th Inf Div - US | 83rd Inf Div |
| 97th Inf Div - US | 63rd Inf Div |
| 86th Inf Div - US <i>arrived</i> | 106th Inf Div |
| 104th Inf Div - US | (6) December Quota |
| 87th Inf Div - US | 2nd Armored Div |
| 8th Inf Div - US | 11th Armored Div |
| 4th Inf Div | 34th Inf Div |
| 5th Inf Div - Dir | 90th Inf Div |
| 44th Inf Div - Dir | 80th Inf Div |
| Div | 76th Inf Div |
| 30th Inf Div | (18) 1946 Quota |
| 45th Inf Div | 3rd Armored Div |
| 2nd Inf Div - Dir | 8th Armored Div |
| 13th Armored Div - Dir | 12th Armored Div |
| (4) August Quota | 16th Armored Div |
| 85th Inf Div | 101st Airborne Div |
| 28th Inf Div | 42nd Inf Div |
| 30th Inf Div? | 65th Inf Div |
| 20th Armored Div | 66th Inf Div |
| (10) September Quota | 69th Inf Div |
| 14th Armored Div | 70th Inf Div |
| 5th Armored Div | 71st Inf Div |
| 6th Armored Div | 75th Inf Div |
| 7th Armored Div | 78th Inf Div |
| 17th Airborne Div | 84th Inf Div |
| 88th Inf Div | 89th Inf Div |
| 91st Inf Div | 94th Inf Div |
| 35th Inf Div | 100th Inf Div |
| 45th Inf Div | 102nd Inf Div |
| 103rd Inf Div | |

Canadians - - 30,000 in the Pacific. 28,000 in Europe from 6th Canadian Training Camp, Camp Breckenridge KY

(Continued from page 3)

be of interest however to know that once the enemy could not get thru Bastogne his next important move was to the southwest, this was stopped by III Corps which was then attacking from south to north.

4. Page 86 - - This hospital would not have been captured had the division gone to the assembly area suggested by Corps. It must still be borne in mind that when the assembly area was suggested it was VIII Corps impression that the 101st was to operate under XVIII Corps. We were merely helping a friend.

5 Page 139 - - Last paragraph ending on Page 140. - - I doubt the advisability of including this paragraph because this was apparently conversation (which I do not recall) and was not orders. I feel that if I had wanted the 101st to withdraw from Bastogne I would have ordered it withdrawn when it was evident that it would be surrounded. I did tell McAuliffe that in view of the possibility that communications might not be maintained that the time might come when he would have to act on his own. Communications were maintained however and I never ordered a withdrawal. The 101st could have fought its way out of Bastogne in the direction of Neufchateau, without too much difficulty, had it been deemed advisable. Furthermore, if Corps had had any reserves it is my humble opinion that we could have gained contact with 101st Division along Neufchateau - Bastogne Road without too much difficulty. It must be remembered that III Corps and not VIII Corps controlled the troops which opened up the way into Bastogne.

6. Page 142 - - Another indication that Middleton had no thought of permitting a withdrawal.

7. Page 143 - - McAuliffe was never told that he could withdraw. It was strange that one commander was told to stay while the other could go. To save an argument I suggest this paragraph be deleted or rewritten.

There have been some indications and also some press reports that the 101st Division and particularly the commander was never worried about his situation and in fact they did not need relief. On the night of Dec 24, Gen McAuliffe stated to the Corps Commander in substance as follows: "The finest Christmas present the 101st could ever get would be relief tomorrow." The relief was not effected on the 25th so Gen McAuliffe stated in substance to the Corps Commander as follows: "We have been let down."

The record does not show the great concern the 101st had with respect to:

- a. Its casualties
- b. Its supply
- c. The Kraut bombing of Bastogne

Since the hardest fighting at Bastogne came after Dec 26, and involved the 17th A. B. Div, the 11th Armored Division, the 87th Division, and elements of the III Corps I feel that this history should not be given the title, "The Siege of Bastogne." In fact what has been written covers only part of the seige and only one of the several divisions which took part.



(Continued from page 1 The Ultra Study, Battle of the Bulge)

On 7 Dec, Gen Eisenhower reaffirmed plans to clear the lower Rhineland by converging offensives from the Roer and the Reichswald after 12th Army Group had captured the Roer dams. The dams were key since attack across the Roer while the Germans controlled them would have left the allies vulnerable to flooding of the Roer, and isolation of forces which could then be annihilated piecemeal by the Germans. The target date to reopen the offensive was 12 January.

Meanwhile, Third Army in the south of the sector had been given clearance to make one more attempt to capture the Saar before Christmas. US Intelligence estimates concluded that the enemy was geared to stopping an Allied attack against the Ruhr/Cologne complex and believed he was likely to counterattack when the Allies crossed the Roer.

With the major Allied objectives located in the North and south of the 12th Army Group sector, a risk was accepted and the center of the sector was left thinly defended. The reasoning appeared sound. The Ardennes was rough forested country broken by steep and twisted valleys. Few roads were good; the best ran north and south. East-west movement had to be made on secondary roads, across ridges, through the woods. Many villages constricted the roads to single lane traffic. The Allies recognized that there was a historical prototype in the May 1940 German Ardennes offensive which pushed through the Netherlands, Belgium and France and culminated in Dunkirk. The 1940 campaign, however, was accomplished in good weather and met almost no resistance until the Germans had crossed the Meuse. The contrasts in 1944 — although conducted over the same difficult terrain — were heavy Allied resistance and winter weather.

The risk was considered minimal. Since September, both the Allies and the Germans had been using the quiet Ardennes sector to season fresh troops before sending them north and south, and to rest and refit. Allied commanders were confident that the Germans were no longer capable of another major offensive. The German Army, hard-pressed on all fronts, was calling on semi-invalids, the old and the very young to fill its ranks. Allied bombing attacks on German fuel sources were believed to have created serious fuel shortages for the enemy. The Allies held the conviction that the fuel situation would cause any enemy offensive action to fail and that any attack the enemy was capable of mounting would only hasten Germany's ultimate defeat. So confident were the Allies of the German's low priority for the Ardennes that Gen Middleton, on orders, had been simulating movement of additional units in his VIII Corps sector in an attempt to draw more enemy divisions to his front and away from the Allies' main objectives.

The 16 Dec German counteroffensive was a complete surprise to the Allies. They knew Field Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt had been returned to command German forces in the West. He was considered a cautious, orthodox, rational commander. Unknown to the Allies, von Rundstedt had nothing to do with the planning for operations in the West. The counteroffensive was planned under Hitler's personal direction — against the recommendations of his major field commanders — under elaborate deception measures, strict communications security and under cover of marginal weather.

The plan for the counteroffensive was for Sixth SS Panzer Army to move through the northern Ardennes, cross the Meuse and strike northwest for Antwerp, the key port for Allied resupply operations. The Fifth Panzer Army was to move through the central Ardennes, crossing the Meuse at Limur and Dinant and to push on to Brussels. The Seventh (German) Army in the south — with only infantry divisions assigned — was to secure the south flank.

Hitler was looking for a smashing victory to break up the Allied offensive, to seize and destroy vital Allied stocks, and to allow him the opportunity to sue for a negotiated peace rather than total surrender. His "West Wall" had been effective in slowing the Allies and had caused the expenditure of huge amounts of Allied material. He wanted a quick breakthrough which was to be exploited by fast moving

German armored forces.

The offensive was triggered before dawn on 16 Dec, when Hitler's weather experts were able to predict five days of bad weather to limit the threat of Allied bomber attack. In the north, Sepp Dietrich's Sixth SS Panzer Army was blocked by the US 1st and 2nd Divisions and forced to sideslip southward. By 18 Dec, he had been checked at Stavelot — only a few miles from US First Army Headquarters and millions of gallons of US fuel reserves. In the center, Manteuffel's Fifth Panzer Army attacked on a broader front, and rapidly pushed through units of the US VIII Corps. By 18 Dec, Manteuffel was also slowed by heavy resistance, primarily at Bastogne and St Vith. Because of the limited road nets in the Ardennes, both sides realized that control of the major road junctions at Bastogne and St Vith were decisive to any operations in the area. The German Seventh Army's advance in the south was limited by its employment of only four infantry divisions.

On the afternoon of the 16th, Gens Eisenhower and Bradley were in conference at Versailles when news of the counter offensive reached them. Gen Eisenhower immediately orders a halt to all Allied offensive operations and suggested that Gen Bradley move the 7th Armored Div south and the 10th Armored Div north to strengthen the shoulders of the salient. Gen Eisenhower's master plan for reaction to the counteroffensive was a strong defense to hold the flanks of the penetration while gathering reserves for strong counterattacks in force to stop the enemy advance before the penetration reached the Meuse.

On the 17th, Gen Eisenhower gave Gen Bradley his theater reserve, the 101st and 82nd Airborne Divisions — then located in Rheims. Gen Bradley sent the 82nd to beef-up the northern sector and the 101st by road to Bastogne. During this period, Gen Eisenhower made another major decision — and a controversial one. The German forces had split the Allied front in two. On 19 Dec, rather than risk a breakdown in communications within his forces, he split Gen Bradley's 12th Army Group, giving all the forces in the north of the salient to Field Marshal Montgomery. Those in the south remained under Gen Bradley's command. This decision created great resentment on the US side, which was ameliorated only slightly by the fact that Gen Eisenhower announced it as a temporary move.

On 18 Dec, Manteuffel by-passed St Vith with three armored divisions. On 20 Dec, after two days of frustrating thrusts at Bastogne, he moved around that strong defense in an attempt to push to the Meuse. Meanwhile, Gen Eisenhower had ordered Gen Patton to wheel the US III Corps 90 degrees sending them north to relieve Bastogne and ultimately St Vith.

In the first week, the German offensive had fallen short of what Hitler had hoped for. Mud and lack of fuel, as well as heavy resistance by Allied Forces had considerably slowed the operation.

By 23 Dec, clear skies allowed the Allies to regain their air superiority and Allied bombers pummeled the German ground forces. And the Allied shoulders had held. By Christmas, the worst of the German attack was over. By the 26th, when additional reserves were committed to Manteuffel to assist him to swing north and help break loose the Sixth SS Panzer Army, there was no fuel to move them. His forces were spread over a hundred miles and had overextended their support links. By the 26th, Gen Patton's troops had relieved Bastogne. By the end of January the Allies had won back all the territory they had lost in the Ardennes Counteroffensive.

The losses in the Battle of the Bulge were heavy — more than 50,000 Allied and 70,000 Germans killed, wounded and missing. The Germans lost 50,000 additional troops captured, as well as 600 tanks, 1,600 aircraft and innumerable wheeled vehicles. But the greatest advantage of the German defeat in the West was probably to the Russians, who reaped the immediate benefit of Hitler's wholesale commitment of his mobile reserves in the Ardennes. And, "the Luftwaffe received its deathblow in the Ardennes . . . It was decimated while in transfer, on the ground, in large air battles, especially during

HEADQUARTERS VII CORPS
APO 307 U.S. Army

19 January 1945

Major General E. N. Harmon
Commanding, 2d Armored Division
APO #252, United States Army

Dear General Harmon:

Upon relief of the 2d Armored Division from attachment to VII Corps, this date, I wish to express to you and the officers and men of the division my great appreciation of the topnotch performance of the 2d Armored Division while it has been under my command in the recent Ardennes fighting.

After a night march from north of Aachen, the 3d Armored Division had barely closed in its concentration area north of Marché, Belgium, on 22 December 1944, when it was called upon to counterattack the leading elements of Von Rundstedt's Fifth Panzer Army which was endeavoring to turn the west flank of the First United States Army. By prompt and aggressive action on 23 December the enemy was beaten off south of Ciney, and on Christmas Day the bulk of the German 2d Panzer Division was outflanked and practically annihilated southeast of Dinant in the vicinity of Celles. Thus the spearhead of Von Rundstedt's drive to the Meuse was not only stopped, but broken, and the flank and rear of the first United States Army secured.

With scarcely a pause, the 2d Armored Division shifted to the east along with other elements of the VII Corps, and on January 3, 1945, joined in the counter-offensive of First Army which crumpled the north flank of the German salient in the Ardennes. Fighting through the fiercest winter weather yet encountered on the Western Front, the men of the 2d Armored Division, in conjunction with the 84th Infantry Division, in succession captured the road centers of Dochamps and Samree, and were the first troops to enter the key road center of Houffalize.

The VII Corps well remembers the great part played by the 2d Armored Division in the Normandy breakthrough and the subsequent fighting near Mortain. It is with genuine pride and affection as well as regret that we again bid farewell. Here's hoping that we may meet again in the final drive to Berlin.

/s/ J. LAWTON COLLINS
/t/ J. LAWTON COLLINS
Major General, U. S. Army
Commanding

The above is a true re-typed copy of the Commendation provided by our Chapter member M. O. Bragdon. The 2nd Armored Division Fact Sheet was presented in the October 2001 Marcher/WWII Musings.

(Continued from page 7 Ultra and Battle of the Bulge)

Christmas, and was finally destroyed."¹ In the east, the storm broke on January 12; five Soviet Army groups steam-rolled the German line."²

The official US Army History of WWII calls the prelude to the Battle of the Bulge a "gross failure by Allied ground and air intelligence."³ The failure was not strictly one of lack of information, although that played a part. It was more one of interpretation of the information available. There were several factors which tended to down-play intelligence indicators, creating a mind-set among senior US commanders which lessened their concern of a German counteroffensive. They were discussed earlier and are summarized here:⁴

- ◆ US emphasis on offensive rather than defensive operations.
- ◆ US conclusion that the enemy was geared to stopping an Allied attack against the Ruhr/Cologne complex and the Germans were most likely to attack when the Allies crossed the Roer River,
- ◆ US belief that von Rundstedt rather than Hitler was controlling German strategy in the West,
- ◆ US view that Germany's lack of fuel would cause any enemy offensive to fail, and,
- ◆ US conviction that any attack the enemy might be capable of mounting would only lead to quicker German defeat.

There were other reasons for lack of intelligence, and for misreading of available information on the enemy. One was the nature of the Siegfried Line itself, which eliminated some sources of intelligence which had been available to the Allies when the Germans were on French and Belgian soil. Another was poor weather.

A key factor was certainly German strategic camouflage, elaborate deception plans including Hitler's cover plan for major German resistance in the Ruhr.⁵ Hitler strictly limited the number of persons knowledgeable of the plan by naming them personally and having them sworn to secrecy under pain of death. Separate war diaries were kept by the few officers working on the plan.

The plan called for massing of material and progressive withdrawal of troops for defense of the Ruhr and the Palatinate. In the area of the Ruhr, preparations for a counterattack were purposely made obvious. To emphasize the buildup in that area, a ghost army was even added with ten divisions. Footnotes: ¹ Galland, *The First The Last*, P 312. ² Ibid., P 312., ³ Cole, *The Ardennes: Battle of the Bulge*, P63., ⁴ Pogue, *The Supreme Command*, pp361-369., ⁵ Cole, pp 49-51.

T O B E

CONTINUED

Fact Sheet of the 5th Armored Division

TYPE OF DIVISION: Army of the United States

NICKNAME: "V" for Victory and for Fifth.

SHOULDER PATCH: Triangular design divided into three areas: red (representing Field Artillery), blue (representing Infantry), and yellow (representing Cavalry). Superimposed on three areas in black, are the track of a tank and a cannon. A bolt of lightning, in red, is superimposed on these. The Division's number appears in the upper portion of the triangle.

ACTIVATION DATE: 10 October 1941

INACTIVATION DATE: 11 October 1945 at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey.

COMPONENT UNITS: Hq Co; Reserve Command; Combat Command A; Combat Command B; 10, 34, 81 Tanks Bns; 15, 46 and 47 Armored Infantry Bns; 22 Armd Engineer Bn; 85 Cav Rcn Sq (Mecz); 145 Armd Signal Co.; Division Artillery: 47, 71 and 95 Armored Field Artillery Bns; Division Trains: 75 Armored Medical Bn, 127 Ordnance Maintenance Bn, MP Plat and Band.

TRAINING: Upon activation the Division was assigned to Fort Knox, KY, for training under the Armored Force. In March 1942, it transferred to Camp Crooke, CA, and from 24 August to 18 October 1942, the unit took part in maneuvers in the Desert training Center Area. In March 1943 and from 26 April to 20 June 1943, the Division maneuvered in Tennessee under the Second Army, and in July it transferred to Pine Camp, NY.

DEPARTED U.S. FOR FOREIGN DUTY: 11 February 1944 from New York Port of Embarkation.

OVERSEAS TRAINING: The Division went into training at Camps Chiseldon, Ogbourne-St George and Tidworth-Perham Downes in Wiltshire, England. In April it operated hundreds of camps, servicing First Army troops as they embarked for the invasion of France.

DATE ENTERED COMBAT: DIVISION 2 August 1944.

COMBAT DAYS (DIV): .161.

BATTLE CREDITS: (Division) Normandy, Northern France, Rhineland, Ardennes and Central Europe.

RETURNED TO US: 8 October 1945 at Boston.

SUCCESSIVE COMMANDING GENERALS: MG Jack W Heard, Oct 1941 to Feb 1943; MG Lunsford E Oliver, from March 1943 til Jun 1945; BG Merrill Ross from Jun to Sep 1945; MG Holmes E Dager from Sep 1945 to inactivation.

DISTINGUISHED UNIT CITATION: Co B, 47th Armd Inf Bn for 4-5 Sep 44 action in France; Co C, 47th Armd Inf Bn for 4-5 Sep 44 action in France; Tp A, 85th Cav Rcn Sq for 15-22 Dec 44 action in Germany; Combat Command "R" for 29 Nov - 8 Dec 44 action in Hurtgen Forest, Germany.

FOREIGN AWARDS: Reserve Command of 5th Armd Div awarded French Croix de Guerre for 14-20 Sep 44 action at Wallendorf and Our River per French Decision #246, dated 15 July 1946...

COMBAT HIGHLIGHTS: The Division plunged into combat in Aug 1944, Le Mans being the objective. The unit swept between Coutances and St Lo, across the Selune River thus starting the organization's 300 mile exploitation behind the German Seventh Army. Le Mans fell and the 5th pursued the enemy, wrecking their armor and inflicting heavy casualties all the way to the Seine River. The Euro-Seine Campaign toward the end of August was the culmination of the successful plunge to the south bank of the Seine. The 5th won Corps commendation for this action. Start of September saw the 5th ready to begin a 130-mile push from Paris north to Belgium. The Division cut through Compiègne Forest, crossed the Oise and Aisne Rivers, and then the Somme. New orders sent the unit racing another 100 miles to the Meuse River, advancing southeast below the Belgium border. Speeding onward the 5th figures in the freeing of Luxembourg. On 11 September the Our River was crossed in the vicinity of Stalzemboorg;; Germany had been entered. In Nov, the 5th Armd Div, along with the 90th Inf Div, participated in the original crossing of the Moselle River. The 5th's troopers will rate the Dec battling in the Hurtgen Forest and on the approaches to the Roer River as the most bitter they experienced. Retarded by the terrain, weather and thousands of mines, the tankers and Infantrymen fought a slow, hacking foot-by-foot engagement. They lived in mud, rain and ice and were constantly exposed to tremendous artillery concentration. This was the month of savage warfare that broke the German spirit; never again did the Nazis fight with the ferocity shown at Hurtgen. Fighting hard in Dec during the "Bulge" period the 5th greeted 1945 by continuing to advance and by crushing enemy armor in XV Corps objectives. At Coblenz the unit smashed and then mopped up all enemy resistance. By Spring 1945 Div had rolled to the Wesser River and in May, driving north of Brunswick, it reached the Elbe, fanning out in the vicinity of Tangermuonde, 50 miles northeast of Magdeburg. In crossing the Elbe the 5th was the nearest US unit to Berlin just prior to V-E Day. Assigned to SHEAF after V-E Day the Division sailed for home on 2 Oct and was inactivated shortly after arrival in the US.

These Army Ground Forces Fact Sheets were prepared at the end of the war (1 March 1947) by The Information Section, Analysis Branch, Headquarters Army Ground Forces on each division. They may be found in Record Group 407, Unit Records, for each division, under the file number 3 (Division #) - 0 at the National Archives and Records Administration, 8601 Adelphi Rd, College Park MD.

REUNIONS

9-11 May 2002, 29th Annual East Coast Military vehicle Rally, Churchville MD & Flea Market. Proceeds are donated to Ordnance Museum, Army Emergency Relief, etc. This is normally held at Aberdeen Proving Grounds but because of security controls it is being held only 6 miles away. Take I-95 to Exit 85 (Route 22 West) and proceed 3 miles to Churchville. Hotel accommodations at the Sheraton Inn, Red Roof Inn Holiday Inn and Super 8.

17-19 May 2002, 31st InfD, Hattiesburg MS Holiday Inn. Contact Marion Spencer at 601-992-0472, e-mail: marionspencer@yahoo.com

29 Aug - 2 Sep 2002 National VBOB Reunion, BWI Marriott, Baltimore Maryland. Memorial Service at MD/DC Chapter Memorial, Ft Meade, Ft Meade Museum tour and BOB Conference Room visit. Tour Inner Harbor, Aquarium, USS Constellation, USS Lion Fish submarine, & last ship afloat from Pearl Harbor, Flag Ceremony at Ft McHenry. Tour B & O Railroad Museum. Opening Reception, Hospitality, Memorabilia Room, Banquet. Registration blank in May Bulge Bugle. Contact: Nancy Monson, PO Box 11129, Arlington VA 22210-2129, Tel 703-528-4058.

4-7 Sep 2002, 28th Inf Div, Ft Indiantown Gap PA and Holiday Inn, Grantville PA

11-15 Sep 2002, 705th TD Bn, Radisson Inn, San Antonio TX. Contact Wayne

Tennant, 970-667-3233, wtenn45575@juno.com

11-14 Sep 2002, 83rd InfD, Landmark Hotel, Myrtle Beach SC, Contact Robert Gangnalth 203-268-6683. stanfrandb.elen@aol.com

18-22 Sep 2002, 106th InfD, Holiday Inn Hampton/Norfolk VA

26-30 Sep 2002, 7th armored Div, Radisson Market Square, San Antonio TX. Contact 7th ArmdD Assn, 947th A St, Meadville PA 16335, Cbaray@toolcity.net

29 Sep - 4 Oct 2002, 774th TD Bn, Ocean Front Plaza, Myrtle Beach SC. Contact Arthur Pelkey 843-272-5378. oldsarg774thtdbn@aol.com

1-4 Oct 2002, 299th Engineer Combat Bn, White Wolf Crossing OK. Contact Dan Webster sapper299@hotmail.com

15-16 Dec 2002, Commemoration of the 58th Anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge, by Battle of the Bulge Foundation and Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, at Arlington Cemetery. Hotel accommodations at Fairview Park Marriott Hotel, Falls Church VA. On Dec 15th there will be a visit to the new International Spy Museum which will open in Washington DC in June, a visit to Union Station, as well as the annual Commemorative Banquet, evening of Dec 15th. VBOB Arlington National Cemetery Ceremonies, Wreath laying at Tomb of Unknowns, Wreath laying and talk at VBOB Memorial, Installation of 2003 Officers and luncheon at Fairview Marriott. Contact Ms Dorothy Davis, 301-881-0356.

Those having reunions can post them on the Internet at <<http://www.usmc.mil/reunions/reunions.nsf>> for free.

Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, MD/DC

John D. Bowen, Editor

613 Chichester Lane

Silver Spring MD 20904-3331

MARCHER & WWII MUSINGS

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NEXT CHAPTER MEETING

Sunday 14 April 2002

Perry's Restaurant

Route 175, Odenton MD

11:00 for Lunch

Speaker: Dr. George Sharpe

Battalion Surgeon 6th Infantry Division

**Join our
Spring Fling**