

# ❖ WWII MUSINGS ❖

Volume 4 Issue 2

John D. Bowen, Editor

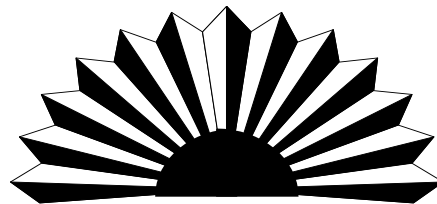
Mar/Apr 1996

## 100,000th PW

The 100,000th PW captured by the 1st US Infantry Division was a sergeant in the 272nd Anti-Tank Bn and was captured near Huttenrode. In refutation of the assumption that the German Army has to a man thrown in a towel, the prisoner has dug himself a hide-out nest in the woods with every intention of staying there until the pressure was off in the area, at which time he intended to go home or else join up with any unit still fighting. He was only netted when he left his shelter to go to Huttenrode in search of water. He was an ardent admirer of Hitler, thought he had done a splendid job until some unpredictable factors had turned the situation on him, but admitted that some of the Fuhrer's methods were a little extreme. However, he never thought of protesting against these methods. "I'm only a little fellow," he said, thus qualifying for the Cliche Expert's Badge, First Class.

the prisoner was a native of Magdeburg, was 28 years old and had been in the army (drafted) since 1937, when he was enlisted for two years. The outbreak of the war extended his term of service to the present. Originally he was sent to the 13th

Infantry Division, and fought in Poland and all across France. Later he was sent to Romania as an instructor in signal procedures for the refurbished Romanian army. A month later he was again transferred, this time to the Caucasus, where he was wounded in January 1943. In January 1944 he was sent to the 272nd Anti-Tank Battalion, then Lyon, France. He was captured in the Falaise Pocket, managed to escape, built a raft and ferried himself and an appropriated car across the Seine, and escaped back into Germany. he fought in the Eifel in November and December, and was captured again in the Remagen bridgehead, escaped again and made his way through the Westerwald to the harz. His history is not particularly significant except to show that there are still top-grade soldiers in the Wehrmacht who have no intentions of surrendering. (1st US Inf Div and the G-2 Intelligence Summary No. 12, Hq 78th Inf Div., 27 Apr 1945, Record Group 407, National Archives and Record Administration, College Park, MD.)



## GOOD WORKS

Your help is requested in assisting the good works that Neil Thompson and his faithful helper Phyllis do for veterans that are in hospitals and veteran's homes. Neil is the Treasurer of the VBOB MD/DC Chapter and the VP for Membership for the National VBOB.

He is in need of your old cards from Easter, Valentines Day, Mother's Day, Father's Day, St Patrick's Day, Christmas, birthdays and anniversaries. These card are salvaged and made into placemats. Neil also collects labels

from Campbell Soups and all other Campbell's products.

If you have been wondering what to do with all those cancelled stamps from envelopes that organizations no longer will take, Neil also has a home for them. So send him your cancelled postage stamps torn from envelopes.

Just package all these items up whether in dlibs or drabs or cartons and mail them to Neil B Thompson, 525 Patricia Court, Odenton MD 21113. Neil and the veterans will appreciate your efforts in helping this worthwhile

## VBOB REUNION

Register now for the 1996 VBOB Reunion to be held 8-11 Sep 1996 on Cape Cod, Massachusetts. The host hotel will be the Cape Codder in Hyannis Mass. This is a wonderful time to visit ole Cape Cod. Further details and registration form are in the Bulge Bugle.

## Editor's Corner

**O**ne of the satisfactions that I get from my research is helping someone who has a worthy task or question get satisfaction or resolution of his problem or search.

Today as I write this I received a letter from Fritz Vinchen who if you recall from "Unsolved Mysteries" and a previous issue of the Bulge Bugle was the young boy who with his mother celebrated Christmas Eve with three lost Americans and four German soldiers in their cabin in the forest in a moment of peace. It is a touching story and Fritz was able to finally after 51 years of searching finally find one of the Americans who surprisingly lives closeby in Frederick MD. The American soldier is Ralph Blank. I did not have anything to do with their finding one another though I did try to do identify possible American units in the area. Fritz' search was successful through the "Unsolved Mysteries" program being seen by the Nursing Home Chaplain who remembered Ralph Blank's story and the two stories being so similar. The Chaplain contacted "Unsolved Mysteries" and a reunion was had in January of 1996

However, in the course of our correspondence relative to trying to find the other two American soldiers, Fritz told me about a cobbler (shoemaker) in his hometown in 1945 who had taken a parachuted American Airman and killed him in a quarry which Fritz and his boyhood friends had witnessed from where they were playing. This unnecessary killing had troubled Fritz also for these past 50 years and he asked if there was some way to find out about the cobbler. He gave me the cobbler's name which was Dominikus Thomas and in short order I was able to locate his name in the Judge Advocates name file of defendants at the National Archives. I was then able to request the trial folder with the complete trial testimony and prior interrogations and his sentence which was death by hanging. The folder told in precise details his final moments on the way to the gallows and the testimony of the witnesses to his execution. I copied all of the file and sent it on to Fritz.

Fritz' letter to me talks about how now it has brought closure on something that has troubled him all these years. It is knowing that I have helped someone that brings satisfaction from researching in the resources of the Archives.

Though not all problems are this easily solved, it points out what a wonderful resource that the National Archives and Records Administration is, not only for genealogical research but for military research.

## Book Corner

### General William C. Lee Father of the Airborne

This hardcover book, of 224 pages, is available from the Airborne Press, 3009 Dornier Circle, Suite C, Raleigh NC 27606, for \$35.00, postpaid. It contains more than 350 photographs and documents as well as Lee's correspondence with Bradley, Ridgeway and Taylor and the text of several of his inspiring speeches

According to their advertising flyer, "General Lee was the commander of the 101st Airborne and pioneered the American paratrooper movement and rightly deserves the title Father of the Airborne. Among America's World War II heroes, he is without peer in bringing the paratrooper into modern warfare, yet few besides those who know the history of the Airborne are aware of his enormous achievements.

Lee tirelessly pushed himself and trained his troops for combat in WWII only to be struck down by a heart attack on the eve of battle. His spirit was obviously prominent in the decisive turning point of America's war in Europe; .... This book is a tribute to him."

Profits from the sale of this book are used to maintain General William C Lee Airborne Museum in his hometown of ~~Dunn, North Carolina.~~

### A WARTIME LOG

by Art & Lee Beltrone

\$34.95

Howell Press

This book contains the the diaries and drawings of twenty aviator POWs in German prison camps. Using their ingenuity the POWs burned twigs into charcoal, others traded cigarettes with the German guards for paints and colored pencils. They made brushes from their own hair and pigment extracted from coffee grinds.

The book gets its name from the blank books that the YNCA distributed to the camps, which had the name "A Wartime Log" printed on the covers. The POWs used these books to escape to a more comfortable mental state as they drew and recorded their thoughts and dreams. Often those dreams were of exotic foods and meals but they allowed the POWs to reduce the boredom and maintain their mental state..

"The German guards allowed the logs on the theory that it was better to have Americans drawing lilies than digging escape tunnels" says LAura Blumenfeld in her review of the book.

These precious books record a significant period in each man's life though some burned their books for warmth sending years of artwork up in smoke. Surely, at the time, the warmth was more important than the artistry.

## GERMAN ORGANIZATION SS and WAFFEN SS

(This will begin a series on the organization of the German Army. The information is taken from the G-2 Intelligence Bulletin No. 9 of HQ 78th Infantry Div 7 Nov 1945. the SS were the more notorious of Hitler's organizations )

The head of the SS was Reichsfuehrer Heinrich Himmler and he was also Chief of the German Police. There were a number of units reporting to him as follows:

Race and Settlement Main Office handled eugenic affairs, such as marriage permits and settlement questions (colonization in newly acquired territories by "Wehrbauern").

Security Main Office handled all police and intelligence problems.

SS Main Office (SS Hauptamt) handled the SS Para-military formations, which consisted of the:

**Deathhead Formations (Totenkopfverbände),**

The Deathhead Units were formed to use inside Germany to prevent civil war (Fourth Theater of War - Inside Germany). Their organization was highly mobile to avoid their fraternization with civilians. they were never stationed in native districts and were shifted every three weeks to different locations and never employed singly. they were in charge of concentration camps inside Germany, picking up parachutists, saboteurs.

**General SS (Allgemeine SS)**

The General SS were employed at central regional headquarters and were working on part time basis. It wore a very distinctive black uniform, consisting of: black trousers or breeches, black tunic, brown shirt, black necktie, black peak cap with "Death Head" (skull and crossed bones), Sam Browne belt with buckle bearing the inscription "Meine Ehre Heisst Treue" (My Honor is Loyalty) and the national emblem with "Death Head;" a red swastika brassard worn on the left arm. On the right shoulder goes a shoulder strap. to show that a member belonged to the SS or Party prior to 30 Jan 1933, he wore the "Ehrenwinkel (Honor Chevron) of silver gray color. Rank and unit were shown on the left and right collar patches respectively.

The distinctive black uniform was never popular with the Germans because it marked the wearer immediately as a member of a terror organization. Himmler declared in 1936: "i know that there are millions in Germany who get sick in their stomach when they see the black uniforms of our SS. We understand that well and we do not expect to be loved by many." Since during war times the black

uniform indicated service in the safety of the home front, the General SS wore, after 1942, a gray-green uniform (like the Wadden-SS, thus becoming less conspicuous.)

**Armed SS (Waffen SS).**

SS in Arms developed out of the SS Verfuegungstruppen (SS Troops at Disposal) and had become the army of the Nazi Party proper in World War II. Its uniform was very similar to the army's, with certain slight variations. the field gray color was of a somewhat deeper shade of green. Shoulder straps indicating rank were the same as in the army, but the collar patches were not green, but black, showing the SS rank

insignia. The National Emblem which army members wore over their right blouse pocket, was shown on the left upper sleeve of the SS man. Tattooing of SS men was widespread. The blood group symbol was shown in dark blue or green underneath the left armpit on the arm of Waffen-SS members.

The Nazi Para-Military Formations were organized on a regional similar to the German Army:

<u>ARMY</u>	<u>Schutzstaffel (SS)</u>
Corps	Oberabschnitt
Division	Abechnitt
Brigade	Standarte
Regiment	Sturmabteilung
Battalion	Sturm
Company	Trupp
Platoon	Schar
Squad	
File	

## REUNIONS

**104th Inf Regt Veterans Assoc, April 26-28**, King of Prussia PA. Contact Roger R Hemond, Adj., PO Box 3523, Springfield MA 01101-3523. Bulge Unit

**83rd Inf Div Boston Chapter Assn Annual Mini Reunion, 29 Apr-3 May**, The Pines resort Hotel, South Fallsburg NY. Tel 1-800-367-4637. Contact Pat D DiGiammerino, 36 East Border Rd, Malden MA 02148. Bulge Unit

**168th Inf Regt, May**, Ashville NC. Contact Larry Eckard, 3330 Springs Rd NE, Hickory NC 28601, 704-256-6008.

**526th AIB Assn, 14-17 May**, Executive West Hotel, Louisville KY. Contact Richard D Ferris, 78591 Gorham Lane, Palm Desert

CA 92211-1503, 619-360-7727. Bulge Unit

**82nd Abn Div Assn, 20-26 May**, Ft Bragg NC. Contact Shirley R Gossett, Nat'l Membership Chair, PO Box 1733, Dayton OH 45401.

**9th Inf Div Assn, 4-7 Jun**, Kiamesha Lake NY. Contact Bill Moody, Concord Hotel Resort,, Kiamesha Lake NY 12751. 800-431-3850. Bulge Unit

**30th Inf Div Assn, 12-16 Jun**, The Pines Resort Hotel, So Fallsburg NY. Contact William Ingoglia, 83 Brussels Ct, Toms River NJ 08757. 908-505-8079. Bulge Unit

**Fourth Armored Div Assn, 19-25 Aug**, Radisson OH, Columbus OH. Contact Samuel A Schenker, 1823 Shady Dr, Farrell PA 16121.

412-342-6058. Bulge Unit

**612th Tank Destroyer Bn, 21-25 Aug**, Nashville TN. Contact Jack Flanagan, 139 St Andrews Rd, Severna Park MD 21146, 410-987-1701. Bulge Unit.

**14th Tank Bn Assn 9th Armd Div, 28 Aug - 1 Sep 1996**, Northwest Chicago, Ill. Contact Frank M Simons, 91 Rotonda Cir, Rotonda West FL 33957, 813-697-2494.

**The Anti-Tank Company Reunion Assn** seeks WWII veterans of anti-tank companies for an upcoming reunion. Contact Charles K Long 1955 Regina St, Eugene OR 97402-1107

**The Indain Head Assn** is looking for men and women who have served in the 2nd Inf Div. Contact Bill Creech, PO

Box 460, Buda TX 78610.

**The Assn of the 44th Inf Div.** is looking for veterans who served in their units in WWII. Contact Robert V Deich, 2805 Sells St, Melaine LA 70003-3542 Tel 504-887-6239.

Tempel Farms is looking for members of the **42nd Recon Sqdn, 2nd Armd Cavalry Regt**, of Gen Patton's 3rd Army to celebrate the anniversary of WWII rescue of the Lipizzan stallions from Hostau Czech. Reunion will be at Tempel Farms, Wadsworth IL in July. Contact Vickie Pietryga, Miller-Pear Communications, 312-649-0466.

**Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, 8-11 Sep**, Cape Codder, Hyannis, MA. Contact Nancy Monson, PO Box 11129, Arlington VA

## SS Activity

Telephone wires in the outskirts of Nordhausen were discovered cut in ten-foot sections over a distance of 100 yards. Attached to one piece of wire was a sheet of white paper with SS markings on the back and the following message written in German: Dated 18 May 1945 From German SS-Gestapo-NSDAP

To: Military Commander of Nordhausen and Burgomeisters of Nordhausen and Salza

We wish all three of you a happy Whitsunday. You may dream what you like only don't dream that there is no more Gestapo-NSDAP,

Hitler still lives and his warriors have not yet fallen. What you have done today you must answer for tomorrow....to the victor who wears the Iron Cross on his chest.

Signed Polite greetings from the SS, Heil Hitler.

On the reverse side these words were written: "the telephone lines will secretly be out of order. Any attempt to apprehend the people who did this will be in vain. You won't find the real Nazis. You will find only those who thoughtfully interpreted Hitler's ideas and who have thoughtfully carried them out. Fate is hard but just.

(Source 5th ArmdD from VII Corps. found in the records of Intelligence Bulletin No. 2, Hq 78th InfD 22 May 1945 RG407 National Archives)

## IDENTIFICATION OF SD & GESTAPO

Every member of the SD and Gestapo has his Wehrpass and is thus able to prove that he does not belong to the Wehrmacht. He will destroy his papers and his Soldbuch since the latter one has a stamp showing his organization. In order to catch these people the following has to be observed: On pages 5, 25, or 27 of the Wehrpass there will be a notation that in 1942 or 1943 the bearer volunteered for the Waffen SS. Anyone with this notation undoubtedly belongs to one of these above mentioned organizations, for it was made compulsory at that time to "volunteer" for the Waffen SS since otherwise members would have to be drafted by the Wehrmacht. As long as they had reported to the Waffen SS, and this was duly noted at the Wehrmeldeamt and in the Wehrpass, the Wehrmacht could not touch them. The Waffen SS classified these persons as UK (deferred). This was Himmler's method of keeping the security Service and the Stapo intact (Source: First US Army and Intelligence Summary No 16. Hq 78th Inf Div, 3 May 1945. It should be noted that most of these membership records were captured and are available for research at the National Archives II in College Park MD.)

## German Reaction to Hitler's Death

(Source VIII Corps. Taken from Annex 2 to G-2 Intelligence Summary No. 17, 78th Inf Div, dated 5 May 1945, NARA College Park MD, RG 407)

The pseudo-heroic death of Adolf Hitler has mentally conditioned the German people, to a far greater extent than the ceaseless advance of American material, to defeat and surrender. This is the impression one gets from talking with widely assorted civilians on the first day of Admiral Donitz's regime.

When asked about the chance of German victory, civilians have always previously conditioned their negative answers with some vague possibility of a secret weapon or a Wagnerian miracle. Today, all mention of these possibilities has vanished. With Hitler's end they have a cold blunt answer to their old question: "Can such sacrifices be in vain?"

Very few of the civilians interrogated were able to discuss the Fuehrer's end objectively or dispassionately. The entire lives of the younger Germans have been completely saturated with the principle that Hitler and the German state are an inseparable entity. Many of them are wakening to the realization that he is responsible for their current calamitous situation, but they still find it impossible to conceive of Germany without him. It was only his person, many have admitted today, which held together a military situation which was patently hopeless. Now that he has passed, they feel that surrender will logically follow as soon as negotiations can be completed.

Most of the civilians alleged that they were pleased

that Hitler was dead, and that he had only got what he deserved. It is possible that the chief grudge held by these group against Hitler was simply that he had lost the war. They were unanimous in berating his interference in military and diplomatic spheres, but very few condemned Hitler's war against the Jews, or Hitler's extermination camps, or Hitler's breakthrough into France. They exhibited a natural hatred towards a man who gambled and lost with their own lives the stake. It is an interesting fact that nearly everyone was certain that he had died "In his command post" as advertised, and not from the illness which German commentators had mentioned in the last week. From the interviews conducted today, it is obvious that only a very small minority conceives of Hitler as a cheap thief who met a coward's end. Despite all their joy over his death, they would seem to be a fertile ground for the sowing of a Wagnerian Hitler-myth.

Some believed they had been swindled and deceived, not so much by the Fuehrer, but by his subordinates. The Officers' Corps was regarded as corrupt, especially after Stalingrad, and the Fuehrer therefore had to turn his attention to military as well as political matters. His death was not considered to have an appreciable effect on the war, since the war is over anyway.

Although it was

obvious that a good many people still wanted to think well of Hitler, their disappointment in him had made them somewhat bitter and cynical. Several remarked: You don't see anyone going around with a long face, do you? These said in effect, as Macbeth did on the death of his wife" She would have died hereafter.

reactions among the women were various. Generally, as has been found elsewhere, they regarded his sacrifice as martyrdom. On that account they considered his death as the consummation of his works and did not appear to be unhappy about it. Two girls were non-committal, but they would say nothing against the Fuehrer. When a grandfather suggested that Hitler should have been killed long ago, they indignantly told him he shouldn't have said that. Another woman said: Yes, we heard the Fuehrer died in the front lines. That's good. He's probably hiding somewhere and waiting for a miracle; it's rumored he went to Iceland.

In contrast to this attitude two older woman said that now three great leaders had died: Mussolini, Hitler and Roosevelt.

One man presumably speaking with unusual frankness, expressed himself bluntly: "Hitler may be dead - - but he still rules Germany. This reaction was unusual, and does not seem to typify most German civilians.

Opinion of any

sort concerning the new government of Admiral Doenitz was almost non-existent. The majority voiced relief that Hitler had not appointed Himmler or some other Nazi aide, and considered the Admiral an impotent and not very important man whose sole function was to bring the war to a quick end. they think that the American-British rejection of Himmler's peace terms was a foolish move, and entirely contrary to our own interests. Still most of them fail to realize that our alliance with Russia is genuine and that our interests are the same.

Opinion about Hitler, in short, has not yet entirely formed. they are certainly happy that he is dead, for now they can lay down their arms without a feeling of having betrayed the Fuehrer. They can be whole-heartedly anti-Nazi in expression, for the essence of that Nazi-ism no longer lives. But in the midst of their joy they are certain that Hitler is and was a great German, and the mere fact of his physical death has not begun to erode the hopes and dreams which he once fed them.

## INTERROGATION OF General Adolph Von Schell (Former CG, 25th PZ Div)

General von Schell was interviewed by the Chief of the Armored Section, Hqs Ninth US Army, on 20 Apr 1945.

General von Schell attended advance course, Infantry School, Fort Benning GA from 1930 to 1931. He was held in high esteem by the then Lt Col George C Marshall, at whose request he wrote a number of articles for the Infantry Journal and other United States Military publications.

He returned to the United States in 1937 for a brief tour of inspection. During this visit he was particularly interested in the motor industry of the United States. He met William Knudson, and made a study of mass production as applied by General Motors Corporation, and was greatly impressed by what he saw. According to von Schell, in 1937 the United States was producing some two million motor vehicles annually (actually the figures were much higher) while Germany was producing only about six thousand. He realized that in order to meet the military requirements, vast changes would have to be made in the motor industry of Germany.

Upon returning to Germany in 1937, he went to Hitler and proposed reorganization of the German Motor Industry towards mass production methods and greater standardization. He found that 113 different makes and models of motor vehicles were in use in the German Army, and realized that this constituted an impossible situation from the standpoint of motorization and mechanization of the German Army according to the scale contemplated. "Mister" Hitler was in accord with his ideas (Note: Throughout the interview he referred to Hitler as "Mister" Hitler with emphasis on the "Mister." To his surprise, Hitler would not order the changes made, but directed him to see that they were made. He undertook the task with some reluctance, but results obtained, as we now know them, indicate that he carried out his assignment very well.

From the beginning of his job as director of motorization, he had trouble with the party. He stated that he had been taught to say what he thought, and always did so. This led to more trouble with the party, so that in 1941 he asked to be relieved and be given command of a Panzer Division. Hitler relieved him from his job as Director of Motorization, but would not give him command of a division. He was inactive until eventually some of his friends in high places in the Army interceded. He was given command of the 25th Panzer Division in 1942 and commanded that division until he was retired in August 1944.

Upon being questioned about the German trend towards arming yanks and SP's with heavier and larger caliber guns (125mm gun on Jagetiger, 172mm on SP's, 325mm recoilless mortar on Tiger chassis, etc) he could or would not give any specific information. He did state that

German experiences with the Russians and taught them that they (the Germans) had started the war with too light calipers of cannon, both for conventional field artillery and for tanks and SP's. He stated that in this and in all wars, there is a tendency at the beginning to place too much reliance upon mobility. As casualties begin to mount, there is always a shift to slower but more powerful armament. Upon being shown pictures of some of the latest ultra-heavy weapons, which the Germans are mounting on tanks and SP's (which he professed to have never seen) he stated that he thought these represented a swing too far towards heavy armament. Too much mobility will have to be sacrificed.

Von Schell claimed that the PzKpFw VI (Tiger) tank was brought out in answer to the Russian T-34 rather than to our medium M4 series. The German PzKpFw IV was no match for the Russian T-34.

Upon being questioned about the whereabouts of the file of information on tanks that the late Fritz Heigel is known to have compiled, he stated that he did not know for sure, but thought it might be found at Ursdork 60 kilometers south of Berlin, Z9211, sheet P-8, 1/100,000. This place was the last location of the German tank research and training center.

he gave the following reasons as to why the Germans have never employed tanks in close cooperation with Infantry as we have. When the Germans began motorization and mechanization, they had very few officers, who had any knowledge of the subject, but had a great excess of cavalry officers and enlisted men. It was decided to use these officers and enlisted men as the basis for the Panzer Corps. All their thinking and training rendered them unsuitable for employment of tanks in close cooperation with Infantry, but made them very well suited for employing armor in more mobile roles. "they can think fast and see far. An Infantryman only sees a few hundred meters to each flank and a kilometer or so to the front." he thinks that one mistake which the Germans made was that of taking older officers who did well with Infantry commands and on the strength of their records, giving them Panzer Commands. Younger officers who had come up with armor should have been given higher commands in Panzer formations. "It takes a new generation of Lieutenants to ingrain a new weapon." On one occasion Goering stepped up to him and said, "Your Panzer divisions have been a disappointment." When he asked Goering why, Goering replied, "After 3,000 kilometers, your panzers are broken down." This coupled with another von Schelle made to the effect that the one day out of the week for maintenance which they were supposed to have was never allowed and may explain his retired status at the age of 50.

The general had been a strong advocate of employing Panzer divisions messed into Panzer Corps and Panzer Armies, but this has never been done to any great extent. One reason, the Russian front was very wide and

Continued on Page 8  
Continued from Page 6  
SCHELL

## Statistics Regarding the Cremation Plant at Camp Buchenwald (Weimar)

Editor's note: As we approach the month of April it is appropriate to remember the Holocaust victims and the liberation of the concentration camps. Ethnic cleansing and the lack of tolerance for one another unfortunately still exists today, 51 years later in a number of parts of the world. Bosnia is a prime example in our times. One must be eternally vigilant to speak out against this inhumanity and it is appropriate to repeat this article published on 3 May 1945 in Intelligence Summary No. 16 of the Hq , 78th InfD. The text begins as follows:

"The following translation is from a letter which was given to one of the Corps chaplains by a former inmate of the Buchenwald Horror Camp. Undoubtedly this was written to show his gratitude upon being liberated."

When Camp Buchenwald was opened in July 1937, the prisoners who died there were cremated in Weimar; because of the mounting death rate behind the camp walls, the necessity of concealing the amount of death cases arose. For this reason a cremation plant in the camp was erected, which the inmates of the camp had to build. Later, modern installations were put in. The cremation took place in two large stoves, the capacity of which was eight bodies at a time. Cold, lack of proper clothing hunger, and disease took a sizeable toll of prisoners. More died from torture, and as a result of experiments on human beings performed in the "scientific testing station" of the camp. the average amount was 60 to 70 corpses a day. Later, this figure grew and the crematorium became insufficient. The "production" had to be kept up day and night. Especially when transports started to arrive from the nearby camps Dora and Laura. the amount of people detailed to serve at the stoves grew constantly. Large convoys of trucks arrived daily to dump heaps of corpses behind the fence screening the cremation plants. Sometimes the bodies remained in the small yard in front of the cremation plant because the capacity of the stoves was insufficient. the cremation building served not only for disposal of bodies, but was also used by the SS administration of the camp as a place of execution. They used to hang political prisoners, people convicted by military court and so called popular courts. For this reason a gallows was erected in the yard of the crematorium. The gallows could be used for seven people simultaneously. The hanging was performed by the prisoners under the supervision of the SS. In some cases the camp commander or his secretary used to attend the execution. the gallows was used not only to dispose of the inmates but often to hang people from outside of the camp., mostly Poles. Mass executions (as many as 25 at a time) used to be performed in public. The last mass hanging took place in March (16 men executed by order of the SS Reichsfuehrer (Himmler). Prisoners whom the management of the camp wanted killed or had to kill in a hurry used to be corralled into the crematorium and rushed through a special shaft down the cellar, where SS personnel awaited them in order to hang them in a way which prolonged the agony of dying. Sometimes the process was speeded up by blows of a heavy mallet. From the cellar, the bodies used to be transported to the cremation room in an electric elevator. At times this crematorium employed details of 60 to 70 men; their duties included loading of bodies, stripping of clothing, sorting and transporting to a cleaning plant. They had to perform this macabre and sad work in shifts, day and night. In exchange, they used to be treated better than the rest of the prisoners by the SS, receiving more food and some tobacco; but on the other hand, they had no doubts that sooner or later they would be liquidated as witnesses to the crimes of the SS.

In the beginning the ashes of the prisoners could be obtained by the family for a fee of 50 marks. Later this was discontinued due to the lack of time. the administration of Camp Buchenwald organized a special registration bureau for the purpose of keeping track of the dead and the notification of the families. This last practice was discontinued after a couple of years. The amount of official death certificates given by the camp physician is 32,705. This does not include liquidation of Russian transports and murders committed by the SS. the statistics from 1 Jan 1945 is as follows: In January, from the average of 61,000 prisoners, 6477 died. In February, from a total of 62,000 prisoners, 5,614 died. In March, from a total of 82,000 prisoners, 5,479 died. From 3 to 10 April, 915 prisoners died from hunger and malnutrition.

After the arrival of the American troops, the death rate immediately decreased due to help in the form of food, the care of medical men and their effort to save the sick and disabled. Endless columns of supplies poured into the camp from the Army of De Gaulle, the French Catholic charity units, the German Red Cross, and the Third US Army. Immediately upon liberation by the American troops, a committee consisting of prisoners of all nationalities was created. this committee directed an appeal to the population of Weimar for help in the form of provisions. In most of the cases, this appeal gave satisfactory results, and before long peasant carts started to roll into the camp, loaded with potatoes, bread and milk. The information service of the committee kept the prisoners - now free people - informed about the progress of the rescue work. The water situation in the camp was critical due to the destruction of water mains during the retreat of the SS. The kitchen had no water for cooking, and toilets became cesspools until relief came in the form of water tanks, hauled mostly by the American troops. Unfortunately, a large number of former prisoners are still sick, the hospitals in camp filled, and the death rate due to physical damages beyond repair is dreadful. The SS removed a large number of the camp prisoners prior to the entry of the American units, leaving only 21,000 in the camp. Among them are still approximately 3,150 invalids and aged requiring hospitalization and 4,300 invalids and children who require special care. (Source V Corps, From the Unit records of the 78th InfD G-2 reports, RG 407, The National Archives and Records Administration, College Park MD.)

### ENEMY ACTION BEHIND FRONT LINES

Two boys, one aged 15, the other 6, approached a battalion mess hall in the vicinity of Delitzsch (E1934) and attempted to throw a hand grenade into the building. The elder boy lost control after pulling the pin and dropped the grenade; the boys ran but were caught by the explosion. They were both wounded, but the younger boy escaped. The 15 year old had another grenade in his pocket; both grenades were of American make.

An L-5 plane with two Sgts of First US Army's Reconnaissance Group was forced down on an abandoned air strip at 1030B about two miles southwest of Bad Frankenhausen (D3309) for minor repairs. While they were working, they were held up by two German soldiers, one a Corporal. The other of the Luftwaffe. the enemy soldiers took off in the place and were last seen heading South. The plane number is 42-98659 and the name SAD SACK is painted on the side of the ship together with a Donald Duck picture(Source: Vii Corps)

At 2350B on the night of 29 Apr, a radio operator of "A" Tr, 83 Rcn Sq, was attacked by two men wearing long-billed caps. At the time of the attack the operator was engaged in starting a half-track. One of the attackers wielded a knife, cutting the operators hand and clothes, and asked questions regarding the identification of the unit, strength, personnel and CO's name. Lighted cigarettes were pressed against the operator's cheek trying to get information. (Source 5th Armd Div thru VII Corps.)

Five girls all through the ages of 15 and 18 were arrested today. two were caught red handed cutting wire. The other three are suspected of plotting our front line positions. (Source 89th Div thru VIII Corps.)

PWs state that severely wounded or crippled but reliable SS personnel will remain behind in towns threatened by the Allied advance. Upon occupation, these men will report to G-5 with forged papers including back-dated Army discharges. They will play the poor souls and will try to win our confidences by voicing anti-Nazi sentiments. (Source: First

### LEAD PENCIL

Two harmless looking mechanical pencils complete with lead were found in one of the buildings occupied by local troops. Upon examination it was found that these pencils were capable of firing a bullet about the size of a 22 cal. from the end where the eraser is usually placed. A small knob on the side when pulled back and released fires the bullet. Another weapon under the guise of a harmless looking object was found recently when an ordinary looking cane was picked up which proved to have a hollow stem through which a bullet can be fired. The trigger which fires this weapon is concealed in the handle. A variety of blackjacks, knives, etc. some appearing to be commonplace articles have also been found. Troops should be cautioned to be on the lookout for German soldiers or civilians who have in their possession such weapons. (Source: 6th Cavalry Group, through VIII Corps and published in the G-2 Intelligence Summary No. 145, Hq 78th Infantry Division, 29 Apr 1945, Record Group 407, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park MD.

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

all Army commanders wanted Panzer divisions, so that there were no Panzer divisions left to group into Panzer Corps or Armies.

His comments on certain German officers were as follows:

Guerdian is the number one tank expert. In the German Army, he is known as "The father of the tanks." He is better as an inspector, that is, he knows more about technical aspects of armor, details of organization and training, than he does about tactical and strategical employment

Model is a brave officer and a good one, but he does not understand armor. Von Kliest was lucky in that he drew the decisive mission in 1940.

In the German Army, the Panzer Corps (Tank Army) headed by the inspector of tanks, is responsible for developing basic training doctrines and for training junior officers, but beginning in 1939, Army commanders were made responsible for training Panzer divisions assigned to their Armies.

He believes that the "battle group idea" that the Germans stressed so much through 1940, has been overdone. It is all right with highly trained staff and troops in situations where the enemy is not in "fixed positions." But on the whole, he thinks that commanders not knowing commanders of subordinate units and vice-versa, which is the inevitable result of the battle group system, has cost casualties which have far outweighed any advantages of flexibility gained. He was emphatic about the importance of artillery, infantry and tank commanders knowing each other so well that each knows how the other will react to various situations. This is developed through long and close association, which is possible only in a more fixed type of organization. (Source: Intelligence summary No 16. Hq 78th InfD., 3 May 1945 from the records of the National Archives, Record Group 407.)

## ENEMY ADMINISTRATION

The following background material is published for the information of personnel of this command in connection with occupation duties

### GERMAN PARA-MILITARY ORGANIZATIONS

### THE NATIONAL SOCIALIST GERMAN WORKERS' PARTY HITLER MOVEMENT

(“Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiter Partei - Hitler Mewegung”) NSDAP

#### CALENDAR HISTORY

**Hitler's Birthday 20 April 1889**

**1919** Foundation of Nazi Party in Munich (Hitler Member No 7)

**09 Nov 1923** Beer-Hall Putsch

**30 Jan 1933** Hindenburg, as President of the German Reich appointed Adolph Hitler Chancellor of the German Reich.

**27 Feb 1933** German Reichstag on fire.

**25 Mar 1933** General elections, Hitler obtain 43.9%, all other aparties 56.1%. With the support of the nationalist party, he gets near majority of 52% of total votes.

**23 Mar 1933** Hitler submitted to the Reichstag an act giving him dictatorial power for 4 years. Under pressure of SS & SA, who were crowding the Reichstag, Hitler obtained 441 votes in favor against 94 Social Democrats who still had the courage to oppose it.

**30 Jun 1934** Blood purge, ending: 1) clamor of masses for the second revolution that would realize the socialistic promises put him into arms in that Hitler had made but had failed to put into effect after the so-called first revolution that had put him into arms in power. 2) the feud between the SA and the Reichswehr as to who should be the future bearer of Germany. After the purge, the SS became Hitler's most powerful instrument with which he inforced his dictatorial powers inside Germany and the army remained unpolitical and only Germany's bearer of arms.

#### After 1934

The history of the Nazi party and the German Reich have merged to such an extent that the distinction between them has become impossible. Hitler put the country on an economic war basis in preparation for inevitable war for world conquest. He used the country's great economic wealth to build up the most gigantic war machine in history, while he used in his foreign policy, the various techniques of deceitful promises, threats, propaganda and fifth column activities to undermine the other country's morale and ability to resist, so that they were eventually ripe for destruction, even before the German Army attacked them.

**1933** He weakened collective security by LEAVING THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

**1934** he signed a TEN YEAR FRIENDSHIP PACT WITH POLAND, outside the LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

**1935** He signed a NAVAL AGREEMENT WITH GREAT BRITAIN, which lulled the English into a false sense of security. At the same time Hitler continuously declared his great friendship and admiration for France.

**16 Mar 1935** He proclaimed GENERAL CONSCRIPTION for Germany in open violation of the TREATY OF VERSAILLE.

**Mar 1936** He ordered German troops to MARCH INTO THE “DEMILITARIZED” RHINELAND again in violation of the TREATY OF VERSAILLE and repudiating at the same time the treaty of LOCARNO.

**1938** Hitler felt strong enough to defy openly the world.

**Mar 1938** He invaded Austria.

**Sep 1938** He blackmailed at Munich the Western Powers into agreeing to surrender parts of CZECHOSLOVAKIA.

**Mar 1939** He occupied the rest of that country.

**1 Sep 1939** REINVADED POLAND and thereby started the present war which he expected to bring his DOMINATION over EUROPE as first step for the conquest of the world.

### NAZI PARTY MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the Nazi Party comprised only a small majority of the people:

Jan 1933 - 849,000 members

May 1933 - 3,000,000 members

1943 - 6,500,000 members

However, though the membership in the party was small, almost every German was enlisted in one or another of the various affiliated and supervised formations and organizations (military, professional, etc.) which controlled German life. Membership in such organizations was a pre-requisite to earning a living and avoiding the Gestapo....

(Source: Intelligence Bulletin No. 9, HQ 78th Inf Div G-2, 7 Nov 1945)

**WEAPONS IN POSSESSION OF CIVILIANS**

Experience has shown that a large number of civilians are the possessors of firearms of one type or another. Troops advancing through towns have issued proclamations for the surrender of all firearms. The rapidity of the advance and the reluctance of many Germans has allowed numerous weapons and firearms to be kept in the possession of potentially dangerous civilians. A startling example of what remains in many localities, after the initial call-in of weapons is brought out by an organized "shakedown" of all occupied area by the 555 AAA AW Bn. During a 24 hour period ending 251500 April, Btry C, with the aid of 3 Polish civilians, several impressive looking AAA weapons and a determined group of Timberwolves, brought in 53 military rifles, 94 panzerfaust (hidden in houses), 12 military pistols, 360 civilian rifles and shotguns, 60 swords and boxes of grenades. the search is continuing throughout the entire area. for as long as any weapons are at large, someone will get hurt.

(Source 104th Inf Div, Fr VII Corps, published in G-2 Intelligence Bulletin No. 13, Hq 78th InfD, 28 Apr 1945. From the records of the National Archives & records Administration, RG 407)

**WEREWOLVES' DEN DESTROYED**

Following the many reports of the supposed formation of a group of "Werewolves" for underground activity, the first concrete evidence of their presence in VII Corps zone has now been established.

on 24 Apr 1945, a searching party seized 6 German soldiers in the Rarz Mountains, vicinity of Thale, where a PW Stated he had helped set up an ammunition dump to supply the Werewolves. One of the apprehended men, Kretschmar, was pointed out by the PW as the leader of the newly formed group of Werewolves. the ammunition dump was discovered and found to contain MG ammunition, Panzerfausts, T-mines, and other explosives which was demolished by the searching party. Enroute to the PW cage with the PWs, the party was forced to halt momentarily while some Am engineers demolished a German vehicle which was blocking the road. During the enduing explosion, Kretschmar leaped from the radiator of the jeep where he was sitting and jumped down a cliff bordering the road. The party opened fire on him and severely wounded him in the left leg. Later he disclosed the names of Werewolves and the hideout. (Source: VII Corps)

**WWII MUSINGS & Marcher**

Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, MD/DC

John D. Bowen, Editor

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*Inside This Issue*

*Good Works* Page 1

*German Org* Page 2

*Hitler's Death* Page 5

*Gen Schell* Page 6

*Buchenwald* Page 7

*Enemy Admin* Page 9

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# FIRST CLASS

MEETING SUN 14 APR 1996

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John D. Bowen Editor

ARDENNES □ CAMPAIGN

Mar/Apr 1996

**EVERLASTING DUTY**

We offer our prayers for all our members who have died.  
Eternal Rest Grant Unto Them  
Their Earthly Duties Are Done

**GET WELL SOON**

William F Higgins  
Charlie Krause  
Linda & Harold Fleming  
Mike Levin  
Ed Radzwich.  
Walter Smallets  
Alton F Wagner  
Please keep them in your prayers.



**OFFICERS**

Pres.	Dick Schlenker
1 VP	Syd Lawrence
2 VP	Jack Flanagan
Treas	Neil Thompson
Sec	John D Bowen
Sgt/Arms	Henry Rehn
Chap	Rev Davis Peck
PPres	Ben Layton
PPres	Ed Radzwich
PPres	Grover Twiner
PPres	Darrell Kuhn
PPres	CA Blaquie Culp

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY CORNER**

APRIL		APRIL		APRIL	
W Edwin Alter	04/21	Irvin W Johnson	04/15	Gordon F Thomas	04/12
George Chekan	04/30	Patrick C Mudd	04/12	Lee W Woods	04/23
Robert B Edge Jr	04/18	Richard C Schlenker	04/29	Joseph F Zimmer	04/04
John Wesley Hart	04/22				
MAY		MAY		MAY	
John Anthony Bladen	05/09	Leonard J Bridgett	05/26	Robert O Jones	05/28
Andrew P Bloom	05/25	Richard L Elliott Jr	05/23	Melvin F Kaufman	05/23
James B Bowman	05/11	James W Jackson 75	05/18	Henry F Spignesi	05/17
If we missed your birthday its because		we need it in our roster. Please send it.			

At the February meeting the Chapter voted to donate \$100 to the WWII Memorail. At the March National Executive Council MEETING it was also voted to donate \$100 to the WWII Memorial Fund.

Members may contribute individually to the WWII Memorial. The address is: WWII Memorial Capital Campaign, PO Box 75071, Washington DC 20013. The quicker the funds are raised, the quicker construction can begin.

### ST PATRICK'S DAY PARADE

The Veteran of the Battle of the Bulge Association marched in the St Patrick's Day Parade, in Washington DC on Sunday 17 March 1996, in spite of the threat of rain and the cold day. The hardy members were from the Delaware Valley and MD/DC Chapters as well as the Purple Heart Veterans which provided a van for the walking wounded. When asked "what do we do if it rains?" the answer was obvious "What did you do in the Bulge! Did the battle stop for rain or snow?" All along the parade route the veterans were greeted with applause and it was said that the Bulge veterans were the single unit that received the most applause. Our contingent was led by our National President Stan Wojtusik. The flags of the two chapters and the Grateful Nation Remembers Flags accompanied Ole Glory down Constitution Avenue. The Flag of Ireland was carried by an Irish son Jack Flanagan

The following veterans marched: Stanley Wojtusik and Tom Jones of the Delaware Valley Chapter, John Bowen, Donald Breakiron, Dorothy Davis, Jack Flanagan, Frank Heppner, Bob Jones, Darrell Kuhn, Lucky Loiacono, Edward Radzwich, Dick Rehling, Richard Schlenker, and Neil Thompson. For those non-believers who were hesitant to show up because of the threatened rain, I must point out that it did not rain on St Patrick's parade nor has it rained on the parade in its 25 year history. Mark your calendar for next year, we'll be marching again.

### SUNDAY APRIL 14th MEETING

The April 14th meeting will be held at the Fort Meade MD Officer's Club at 1:00. Those desiring to partake of their wonderful all you can eat brunch should plan to attend at 11:30 AM. The cost of the Brunch is \$12.50. and reservations are required. Please mail your check to our Treasurer Neil Thompson at 525 Patricia Court, Odenton MD 21113, tel 410-672-3242. We are hoping to have the Post Commander or his representative as a speaker at the meeting after the Brunch. A 50/50, free lunch and book will be given. Reservations must be made. Do it now.

### CONCENTRATION CAMP LIBERATORS

A request has been made by some government agencies, who will be holding a Holocaust Remembrance on 17 April 1996 in downtown Washington DC, to locate veterans who actually liberated Concentration camps, so that they may be honored. Though we have the list of Divisions that liberated concentration camps we have found that this task has been extremely difficult because it was some small unit or task force within the division that came upon the concentration camp and did the actual liberation. If you did liberate a camp or know of some veteran who did would you please call John Bowen at 301-384-6533 as soon as possible. Call collect if necessary.

The Marcher is the official publication of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, MD/DC Chapter and is published every second month.

John D. Bowen, Editor  
613 Chichester Lane  
Silver Spring MD 20904-3331  
301-384-6533

The opinions expressed are those of the editor. Items of interest to the membership are requested. Please keep us informed of those who are ill or who have died. Publication deadline is two weeks before the regular meeting listed

### MAYO MD

Blacque Culp has asked that those who would like to get together to socialize at the American Legion Post in Mayo to please contact him on 202-554-0312 to set up a convenient time and receive further details. You may write Blacque at 101 G St SW # A502, Washington DC 20024-4340

### CONFERENCE ROOM

The Battle of the Bulge Conference Room, located in the Library Building at Fort Meade MD is open each Wednesday and Friday Afternoon from 12:30 to 3:00 PM. Bring a friend and come visit. See the room, table, models and videos on the Bulge. If there is a question about the weather affecting opening you can call the Library at 301-677-4509.

Chapter dues are \$10.00 per year and are due, each year, on the anniversary of the start of the Bulge, Dec 16th, each year. If your label has a red mark on it means that your dues are not current. Please send your dues to John D Bowen, 613 Chichester Ln, Silver Spring MD 20904 so you don't miss the next issue.