

# ❖ WWII MUSINGS ❖

Volume 2 Issue 5

Jun 1994

## ◆◆◆ D-DAY REENACTMENT VA Beach

It was a memorable week as, it was 50 years ago, many of the veterans alluded to how realistic it was. In fact, about a week ago, the Washington Post used a picture from the reenactment along with one of its stories about WWII. If you hadn't been at the reenactment you would have assumed that it was a WWII picture. There were 17 veterans who came to stay in the barracks at Camp Pendleton, VA. The barracks were beautiful. They had taken the WWII barracks that we are all familiar with and had completely redone them with tile floors, false ceilings, painted walls and air conditioning.

Chow was supplied in regular mess halls and was prepared by members of the 29th Inf Div National Guards and it was excellent. Camp Pendleton VA is a small but beautiful post and is now home to Virginia's 29th Inf Div National Guard.. Upon arrival and reporting to registration it was easily transformed to fifty years ago with GI's in WWII uniforms, WWII jeeps, trucks and tanks in the area. Representatives from the Delaware Valley Chapter, Northern VA Chapter, MD/DC Chapter and the North Canton Chapter of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge were represented.

On Friday, 3 Jun, there was a rehearsal for the following day. The veterans were transported to the beach at Camp Pendleton in a period truck. The reenactor troops marched to the beach. Every one was loaded onto LCM's (Landing Craft Mixed). The Landing Craft would handle one M-1 Tank or 100 or so soldiers in battle gear. Everyone donned their life jackets on the

## 50th ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATION END of THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE REENACTMENT ANNOUNCED

26-29 January 1995

Fort Indiantown Gap, PA

The Federation of Reenactors has announced that the date of their commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge has been changed from the beginning of the Bulge in Dec to the victory of the Allies in crushing the German Counteroffensive at the end of January. Reserve this weekend so as to be there for this special event. It will also allow veterans to attend the 50th anniversary commemoration of the start of the Bulge at St Louis.

## GOLDEN PARACHUTISTS DROP-IN

John Onder, 17th AbnD and Battle of the Bulge participant tells me that he landed a mile and half off course and in 2 feet of water. If you know John that didn't leave much room for safety. We are happy to report that 41 veterans were able to jump at the D-Day ceremonies on 5 Jun 1994 and they stole the show. As was previously reported it was an up hill battle all the way for these noble vets. Our US Army didn't want to have anything to do with them any more because they were too old and a liability. So it took a lot of pressure and the French and others came through.. Continental Airlines provided them with free air

transportation and a rousing send-off from Houston. TX. John is quoted in his home town paper the News Tribune as saying "Everyone was nervous. Our biggest problem was going out that (airplane) door. But we all went through with the jump. There were no 'chickens' in the group. Still I am glad it is over. I was a wreck. I couldn't eat or sleep and I lost 5 pounds." They had trained on 3 & 4 Jun on how and where they would bail out from an old C-47 Dakota that had been flown over from Oregon. 25 went in the C-47 and 16 went in a French aircraft. He jump as number 13. Though Onder didn't jump on D-day he qualified for the jump because he had seen combat during the war particularly in the Bulge. The 82nd Abn then jumped after them and paraded toward the village of Ste Mere Eglise. One of his jump mates, Richard Mascuch, however, landed in cow manure and nobody would sit near him on the bus. Onder said it turned out to be the cheapest trip yet (sort of like his WWII experience), he didn't spend a cent. They were feted at Paris City Hall and wined and dined at Normandy. He is still Airborne all the way. Great Job,

## EDITORIAL NOTE:

This newsletter is based on the research of John D. Bowen, 613 Chichester Lane, Silver Spring, MD 20904-3331 in the National Archives in the World War II Unit Records. Where noted the information provided is from the actual After/Action Reports, G-2 and S-2 Intelligence Reports and Journals. These are reports as they happened. The information may have been found to be different with fifty years of history. It is presented here as it actually was written. Comments are welcomed. This information is in the Public Domain. Credit should be given to the National Archives Military Branch, the citation and this researcher. It is distributed for the benefit of VBOB Chapter members &

## D-Day Reenactment

(Continued from front page)

Landing Craft and the 17 craft set off for Camp Perry VA. The route gave a wonderful view of the Virginia Beach Shore Line. Upon arriving at Fort Story, the veterans 'stormed' the beach through about 18 inches of water since the Navy couldn't get the craft any further up on the beach. After a demo and instructions about the following day for the reenactors the craft were moved and again it was necessary to plow through the water to get on our craft. The Navy just couldn't get them on the sand but those run by the Army Transportation Corps had no trouble dropping the front on the sand.. We then proceeded to get back on the landing craft no one thinking to take off their shoes.

### VETS PARADE

On Saturday morning everyone was up bright and early as it was parade day in the morning. Three of the Chapters from VBOB had their chapter flags along with the POW Flag and American Flag. About 21 Veterans came to March including Dorothy Davis, 57th Medical. It was probably one of the sharpest marching units in the parade. It received applause all along the parade route as the 'troops' marched sharply to the cadence count. It was amazing how one never loses that marching step. Many had never marched in near 50 years but within a block that cadence count all came back to them. At the reviewing stand, the contingent swung to the front of the stand and saluted the Reviewing Stand members. We were told that we were the only unit for which the Reviewing Stand Members all arose and returned the salute. We then sharply moved off.

In the afternoon, as many of the veterans arrived, they were asked to wait while the 3rd Regiment of the French Foreign Legion band and armed troops came forward to surround the veterans and escort them into the reenactment to the front of the reviewing stand. They were the

## BATTLE OF THE BULGE

### Memory Routes Book

**\$8.00 plus \$2.00 Postage & Handling**

This 153 Page soft cover book was produced by the CRIBA & CEBA Organizations of Belgium & Luxembourg respectively to commemorate the Battle of the Ardennes by listing and describing the monuments, museums and locations with a description and photo. It gives museum times also. John Bowen, 613 Chichester Lane, Silver Spring, MD 20904-3331 is handling sales for them. It can be picked up at 10 Jul meeting.

honored guests of the day. The reenactment then proceeded with an Mf-109 overflying the beach while the Germans patrolled the beaches, the Navy Seals came and layed their explosives followed by 4 P-51s and a P-47 who came and strafed & bombed the beach. Offshore, a Navy Ship, USS Mississippi, fired rounds to soften up the beach. A B-25 also made a bomb run of the beach. The Germans had anti-aircraft weapons firing on the planes. A C-47 flew over to simulate the airborne drop. After softening up the beach the Landing Craft and Allied troops stormed the beach. It was quite a realistic fire fight. In the end, the Allies won again.

## March to Victory

An excellent book, The March to Victory has been revised this year and is available for anyone going to Europe. It is a Guide to WWII Battles & Battlefields from London to the Rhine. It includes maps, directions, times, background, etc. If there is enough interest I will secure copies at \$14.00 +.70 MD Tax for MD residents and 3.00 for shipping & handling for this 293 page, softcover book. Please write to me, John D. Bowen, 613 Chichester Lane, Silver Spring MD 20904 with your check by 14 July. Even if you don't plan to visit the stories & maps accompanying the directions are worth it. It gives the trail of Kampfgruppe Peiper in the Ambleve Valley & the spot where the 740th Tk Bn & 1st Bn 119th stopped Peipers column. Martin Blumenson says "This handbook is indispensable for those who want to see the places where fighting occurred as well as the museums and memorials of the combat."

## OTHER EVENTS

07 August 1994, Sun, Camp Atterbury, Indiana, second annual observance of the dedication of the Camp Atterbury Veterans Memorial dedicated to the 83rd InfD, 30th InfD, 92nd InfD, 106th InfD, 28th InfD and 31st InfD who trained there during WWII and Korea. Ceremony begins at 2:30 PM. Earlier at the Italian POW Chapel a picnic will be held at 11:00 AM. 317-844-6441.

07-11 September 1994, Wed-Sun, 83rd Infantry Division Association Reunion, at The Pines, in the Catskills, South Fallsburg, NY 12779. Call 1-800-367-4637. Questions to Pat DiGiammerino, 1st VP, 36 East Border Rd, Malden MA 02148 (617-322-2754). Includes trip to Ellis Island, meals entertainment, and activities.

10-11 September 1994, Illinois Remembers: 50 years of Change at Vermillion County Airport, Danville IL. Living history displays and spectator battles. Contact Donald Smith, 9 North Hegeler, Danville IL 61832 (217-431-1387)

17 September 1994, A Day of WWII Commemoration, Leesburg VA Municipal Airport. Contact 703-777-1262. Period entertainment, vehicles, displays, battles, warbirds.

23 October-2 November 1994, VBOB Battle of the Bulge Tour of Belgium, Luxembourg & Paris. 2-6 November, optional Normandy Extension. Call Galaxy Tours 1-800-523-7287, ask for Alison Dodge. Time is short, a good group is going.

11 Nov 1994, Battle of the Bulge Monument Dedication, Valley Forge Military Academy, Wayne PA. 10AM, Delaware Valley Chapter VBOB.

# D-DAY

## Conclusion of the 16th Infantry Regiment's landing on D-Day

This account is used to give testimony to the trials and triumphs of so many men and units who landed on D-Day, 6 Jun 1944 and is especially dedicated to those who made the supreme sacrifice on the beaches of Normandy.

### THE INVASION (Continued)

At this point the 1st section was joined by elements of Company K under Lt Hallissey which were followed by 4 sections from the 116th Infantry. Defense positions to hold ground were set up to defend the taken ground and protect the left flank of the beach area. Defense was strengthened later in the day by arrival of Lt Lazo with a HMG platoon and a S Sgt with 20 men from Company F.

The other three sections of Company L, under Lt Cutler, advanced; Sgt Monroe emplaced his LMG (Light Machine Gun) squad to cover the advance; Lt Monteith enlisted, and directed the support of two tanks. Under cover of this fire and that of the 1st and 5th sections, Sgt Wells' squad worked its way through 2 minefields and 3 bands of wire. At the head of the draw the section took up hasty defensive positions, covering the advance of the 5th section and Company Headquarters.

Two open emplacements were silenced by BAR (Browning Automatic Rifle) and rifle fire during the advance up the draw.

Meanwhile, the 3rd section, moving up the right slope of the draw under Lt Williams, advanced through anti-personnel minefield clearing a path for following sections. Sgt Cama blew lanes in the wire. The section received scattered small arms fire from enemy snipers and MGs (Machine Guns) which harassed but failed to slow down progress.

Reaching the first high ground Lt Williams' section took up hasty defensive positions, contacted the 2nd section, via runner, on the left. The two sections advanced, crossing a heavily-mined road, again took up defensive positions awaiting the Company Commander's orders.

Company Hqs moved up from the beach to the first defensive position followed by the 2nd and 5th sections. 1st Sgt Waddell set up the first company CP (Command Post) 600 yards inland at point 62,500 NE CABOURG. At 0900 hours contact with Battalion via radio was made. Under Lt Cutler's direction, perimeter defense was set up on initial high ground. The 5th section was assigned a mission to secure the right flank and patrolling to Chbourg. The 3rd section covered the left flank patrolling to Le Gd Hameau. The 2nd section, in reserve protecting the Company rear. A HMG (Heavy Machine Gun) section under Lt Booth and 2 LMG (Light Machine Gun) squads under Sgt Lopuhovsky and Sgt Monroe arrived at 1930 hours and were placed in position. The company was under constant small arms fire.

A patrol from the 5th section was sent to Cabourg, but failed to return. It consisted of Privates Mielander, Butt and O'Dell, who were captured in Cabourg when

surrounded by 52 enemy. Private Butt was wounded. Later Private Mielander talked the Germans into surrendering, then turned them over to the 2nd Battalion, 16th Infantry. A patrol from the 3rd section under Sgt Davis was sent to cut the main road between Hameau-Colleville preparatory to the company attacking its first objective, encountered enemy resistance in the vicinity of Hameau from the town and in the fire fight one German was killed. The patrol was forced to withdraw.

Capt Richmond joined the company and reorganized the battalion.

At 1300 hours one platoon of enemy counterattacked the left flank and rear supported by light mortars and MGs. This threat was met by heavy fire from the 2nd section. Company Hqs and Lt Stumbaugh's section was repulsed. There were 13 enemy killed or wounded; 2 men killed, and 4 wounded from their own forces. Lt Monteith who in a large measure was responsible for effective defense was killed while exposing himself to direct effective fire against counterattacking force. T Sgt Worosbyt assumed command of the 2nd section.

Following the return of Sgt Davis' second patrol, Capt Richmond decided to dispatch a strong combat patrol to Le Gd Hameau to be followed up with remainder of the combined force totalling 104 men, 84 from Company L and the remainder from Company's I, k and M. Lt Williams volunteered, and his patrol succeeded in entering the town with his entire section. A German scout car approached the town and one man was taken prisoner, the second killed while attempting to escape. Later two German staff cars and one scout car were taken under fire by Pfc Hodge with a LMG. One prisoner was taken and two Germans escaped. Numerous military papers and maps and a complete radio set was captured with these vehicles.

Elements of Company K moved into Hameau following up the 3rd section. The remainder of Company L moved into the town at 1600 hours. A patrol under Lt marincie was sent up the main road to reconnoiter Cabourg. They encountered heavy opposition enroute and was unable to force their way into town. S Sgt Madous was seriously wounded in the action.

At 2110 hours the company proceeded by a small covering patrol under T Sgt Worosbyt, took up defensive positions in orchards about 600 yards SW of Le Gd Hameau to protect the right flank. During the night enemy infiltrating parties were encountered and driven off. At

dawn the following day (7 June) small enemy groups were mopped up behind Company L's position by the 5th section. One officer and 4 Germans were taken prisoners. Eight or ten Germans were killed and wounded. The 2nd section wiped out a 3-man reconnaissance patrol. Snipers were active but were cleaned out.

Meanwhile the 1st, 2nd and 4th sections were engaged. H+30 minutes two provisional (50 cal) AAA Batteries landed on beach Omaha. One provisional AAA (AW) Battery landed with the 2nd Bn and one provisional AAA (AW) Battery landed with the 3rd Bn. They were to provide the defenses of the beach, beach exits and beach maintenance. Only two guns were landed, the rest of the weapons were swamped or sunk since they were too heavy to be manipulated in the early stage of the invasion under the intense artillery and MG fire.

Company G scheduled for the infantry assault wave following Company E and F at H+30 minutes to land on EASY RED. They were loaded from USS Henrico into assault craft at 0415 hours, rendezvoused 500 yards off the starboard bow until 0445, then proceeded toward the beach. One of the craft capsized 200 yards from the beach, forcing the boat teams to swim ashore minus key equipment and weapons; remainder of the company walked ashore in the face of heavy enemy fire. The number of casualties mounted.

Approximately 200 yards inland from the waterline a small shingled mound about 10 feet high enabled the company to secure a slight amount of defilade from fire raking the beach from the flanks and immediate front. Company G found a large number of troops, who had landed at H-Hour, pinned down on the beach unable to advance into the bluff overlooking the beach. Company G found most units disorganized due to loss of officers and NCO's on the beach.

A hasty reorganization of assault teams was made in Company G and 60 mm mortars and LMGs were placed in firing position. All efforts were made by a few officers and NCOs to build up a volume of fire. A few elements of the 1st wave, by this time, had succeeded in advancing approximately 100 yards in front of this position, but were pinned down and unable to move in any direction because of enemy fire concentration.

At 0710 hours Company G infiltrated through a narrow gap between minefields flanked by the shingle mound and overlooking a cliff. They were told by the Company Commander of Company G that their organizations were supposed to be 500 yards to the right of this position and to move inland and to the right if possible. They proceeded to move forward and slightly to the right. As Company G reached this point the sections were directed to seize high ground to the immediate front and to deploy from right to left as they cleared the crest of the hill, in addition to maintaining contact with two sections of Company E on the right.

Two enemy MG nests were destroyed and one German captured by the 5th section of Company G. With the immediate crest of the bluff secured, the remainder of the company was enabled to reach high ground and deploy in forward movement, from right to left: Sections 5, 3, 4, 1, and 2, with LMG section attached to the 2nd section. This advance was made under enemy artillery fire and enemy

snipers employing machine pistols. One enemy LMG section was wiped out and three Germans were killed 200 yards from deployment position. As the 1st section advanced inland two more enemy were killed.

At approximately 0900 hours Company G had moved inland to a line generally from 677881 to 685885. An effort to laterally consolidate the company was impeded by enemy small arms and automatic weapons fire coming from the front and rear. Heavy mortars fell on the right side flank of Section 5. The 5th and 3rd sections engaged the enemy to clear the woods surrounding a road junction at 683883. Heavy casualties were on the left flank where most of the enemy fire came from the small valley at 663900. One enemy MG nest was destroyed in this vicinity by the 2nd section.

At 1200 hours the enemy was cleared from this area and excluding sporadic mortar and artillery fire falling in the general vicinity of the position, all enemy personnel had withdrawn or had been destroyed. The 5th and 3rd sections engaged the enemy to clear the woods surrounding a road junction at 683883. Heavy casualties were incurred on both sides. Meanwhile the 12th, 2nd and 4th sections were engaged on the left flank where most of the enemy fire came from the small valley at 663900. One enemy MG nest was destroyed in this vicinity by the 2nd section.

At 1200 hours the enemy was cleared from this area and excluding sporadic mortar and artillery fire falling in the general vicinity of the position, all enemy personnel had withdrawn or had been destroyed. The 5th and 3rd sections formed a line at 682879-685879 with a few men from Company E, 116th Infantry while Company C, 16th Infantry moved into position on the right flank and abreast of Company E, 116th Infantry, but the sections didn't remain long and withdrew back to road junction 682880.

At 1300 hours the 1st section was dispatched to Colleville to clear the town of enemy, to seize and hold it with the 5th and 2nd sections, protecting the company's right front in position at 683878-686880. One section of 20 cal HMGs of Company H, 16th Infantry was placed in position on the right flank of this line when the 4th section was moved to extend the right flank to 682878. Thirteen men constituted the 4th section, and the remainder had become casualties. One 30 cal HMG section from Company H was put into position at 686883 to cover the 1st section as it advanced into town. The remaining elements of the 2nd section were placed in position on the left flank at 684883, they became engaged in a fire fight with the enemy around 684885, and could not render covering fire or support to the 1st section as it advanced into town.

The 1st section reached the outskirts of the town at 1315 hours, occupied the church and house due south of the church at 687882, where they engaged the enemy at point-blank fire. Three men of the 1st section were immediately killed, two were wounded seriously; the buildings were occupied by elements of the section and held. A heavy counterattack developed on all sides of the entire company at this time, but was successfully repulsed with 9 enemy killed in town; four on the north of town by the 2nd section and five by the 5th and 3rd sections on the south, a total of

Continued on next page

18 men. Up to this time 8 PWs were taken. This engagement necessitated consolidation of the company in an oval position as the enemy completely surrounded Company G and no front could be fixed. To contain ground that had been gained, no further effort to advance was made and Company G dug in to await the 18th Infantry to pass through and relieve the pressure

At this time the company strength was 107 men, 6 officers, plus about 25 men from other organizations. The 2nd Battalion 18th Infantry, passed through, moving SE from the road junction at 683879, relieving pressure from this sector. Meanwhile the 4th section and one section of HMG from Company H had moved further south and became isolated in the vicinity of 680877, where they remained for the remainder of D-Day and morning of 7 June. Effort to contact this section was prevented by enemy infiltration.

At 1530 hours friendly naval fire shelled Company G's position in Colleville-Sur-Mer with heavy fire, which continued to 1700 hours causing seven casualties. Efforts were made to stop this fire by firing yellow smoke flares. Contact was finally made via Battalion and the fire was lifted. On the morning of D+1 the Company Executive Officer and 27 Enlisted Men rejoined the Company, having landed at a later hour on D-Day. The company moved through the town, occupied it, taking 12 more prisoners, and killing 5 in an engagement at 1000 hours at 688879. Company G suffered two men wounded.

Total casualties for Company G from H-Hour, D-Day to 1200 hours D+1: 60 Enlisted Men and 3 Officers.

{The above account has been taken from the actual unit records 301-Inf(16)-0.3.0 of the 16th Inf, 1st Inf Div, entitled History 16th CT Invasion of FRANCE, S-3 Combat Report, Covering Citation of the 16th Inf for the period 6 June 1944. These records are maintained by the National Archives in the Washington, DC area}

### 22 December 1944

1815 hours-S-2 to PWI. In checking people find out about equipment, also check on 1st SS. ~~They are the people that~~ have committed atrocities on our troops. Get affidavits on them and we will have them shot. (Source:16th Inf Regt Journal Dec 44)

### HARBOR CRAFT COMPANIES

The Harbor Craft Companies were part of the Army's navy during WWII. Military crews for the Army's small boats, that is vessels up to 200 feet in length, were activated and trained as Harbor Craft Companies, a company providing personnel for a number of crews. The first harbor craft units were based on Quartermaster Corps tables of organization for aviation rescue companies...

The first Harbor Craft Companies were activated in 1943 and trained at the Charleston POE, which was not carrying as heavy a traffic load as most of the other ports. Basic military training at first occupied 4 weeks but was soon extended to six, followed by basic technical training and unit training for 9 weeks. After completion of this training the troops were sent to more active ports for advance training and actual experience in operating various types of

vessels...

The summer of 1943 brought such heavy requests from the South West Pacific area for small boat crews that new training arrangements had to be made...A survey of possible sites were made and the Chief of Transportation against his better judgment agreed with the Army Service Forces HQ on the use of Camp Gordon Johnston at Carrabelle on the coast of Florida. These Harbor Craft Companies were used in moving troops and supplies at ports throughout Europe and also along the rivers and by ways. There were 57 seven units activated and/or trained by the Chief of Transportation. (Source: The Transportation Corps: Movement, Training and Supply by Chester Wardlow)

### 591st FA BN UNIT JOURNAL

~~"27 Dec 1944-At 1030 one officer and five EM in a jeep~~ stopped at No. 1 Section A Btry and questioned the Chief of Section as to the location of 40mm gun locations. The Chief of Section did not answer but went to the phone and called the Executive Officer. While the phone call was being made, the jeep drove off. A Btry Exec Off made an attempt to overtake the jeep but was unsuccessful. The incident was reported to 1st Div Intelligence Section."

"10 May 1945-Several convoys and vehicles w/German medical personnel, sick and wounded, homesick members of the Wehrmacht, female hangers-on arrived in a confusing and confused state at 'B & C' Btry's road block. In the morning Hq Btry picked up 18 Germans whose rations consisted of 110 gallons of Schnapps and 2 cheeses." Editorial Comment:What a way to forget losing the war.

### CIVIL WAR CONSERVATION CORPS

You ask what the Civil War has to do with World War II Musings. Nothing really, other than the National Archives is looking for volunteers to work one day a week at the downtown building to work in the original Civil War Service Records. The work prepares the records for later microfilming. Hours are 9:30 to 3:30 on the day of your choice. To re-up call Sgt Major Rita Sexton at the National Archives Volunteer Office, 202-501-5205.

For those not in the Washington area who would like to help and have a computer, you can volunteer to enter the Index of Union and Confederate Soldiers into your computer, at your home, at your own pace. This information will be placed on floppy disks that are supplied and will be uploaded into the master database that will be available at National Park sites. This indexing project called the Civil War Soldier's System will be up and running it is hoped by 1996. If you have time to spare why not volunteer by contacting the Civil War Soldier's Index, PO Box 3385, Salt Lake City, UT 84110-3385. Re-Up! Do It Now!