

❖ WWII MUSINGS ❖

Volume 4 Issue 4

John D. Bowen, Editor

Jul/Aug 1996

WWII Memorial Update

A June 1996 status report was received and highlights of that report follow:

The purpose of the memorial is to honor those who served in the Armed Forces of the U.S. during WWII and to commemorate the participation of the nation in that war. All military veterans of the war, the citizens on the "home front," the nation-at-large, and the high moral purposes and idealism that motivated the nation's call to arms will be honored....The memorial will remind future generations of Americans what the WWII generation accomplished in securing freedom and democracy and how they came together to do it. An integral part of the memorial will be an educational facility, in which state-of-the-art technology will provide historical information to visitors, an Honor Roll of the war dead, etc.

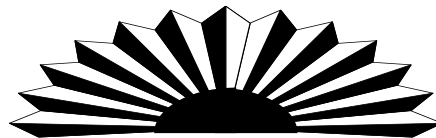
The goal for donations from individuals, corporations and foundations is \$100 million. On hand is approximately \$10 million, half of which came from the surcharge on the sale of commemorative coins and half from the Dept of Defense.

The site, dedicated on 11 Nov 1995, will be at the Rainbow Pool between the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool and 17th Street NW and midway between Constitution and Independence Avenues in Washington DC.

The design of the memorial will be selected through a two-stage, open competition. It has been announced in the Commerce Business Daily, professional publications, U.S. school of architecture. Submittal date for Stage I is 12 Aug 1996 and for Stage II the submittal date is 25 Oct 1996. Announcement of the winning design team/design concept is scheduled for Veteran's Day, 11 Nov 1996.

Design completion and approvals will take 18 to 24 months and construction will start in 1998. Dedication of the memorial is currently planned for Veterans Day in the year 2000.

Donations can be sent individually to: WWII Memorial Capital Campaign, PO Box 75071, Washington DC 20013. Indicate you are with VBOB. Both the MD/DC Chapter and National VBOB have contributed. Donations are



QUOTABLE

"Gentlemen, here they come, the queen of battles, the Infantryman, the old foot sloggers. Twenty-five years ago at West Point an old tactical professor used to say to us: 'never overlook the doughboy. A thousand years ago it was the foot soldiers who won and held the territory and it will be the same a thousand years from now...'
Look at 'em, the doughboys, God bless them."

GEORGE S PATTON, LTG, USA

SLOW ME DOWN, LORD

Slow me down, lord!
Ease the pounding of my heart
By the quieting of my mind
Steady my harried pace
With a vision of the eternal reach of time.
Give me,
Amidst the confusions of my day,
The calmness of the everlasting hills.
Break the tensions of my nerves
With the soothing music of the sighing streams
That live in my memory.
Help me to know
The magical restoring power of sleep.
Teach me the art
Of taking minute vacations, of slowing down to
look at a flower;

Continued on Page 6

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

July 20th marked the 52nd anniversary of the attempt to assassinate Adolf Hitler. As with any coup attempt retribution was swift and immediate. In looking back at history had this been successful there would have been no Battle of the Bulge. In about a month after this coup attempt, Hitler began his planning for one last counter-offensive. This planning which began in August 1944 was to continue the carnage and deaths of so many as the war was further prolonged until May of 45. The continuation resulted in horrendous damage to cities that would have been avoided. But "what ifs" are not reality and as such we must deal with what was dealt us. Do we learn from history? Oftentimes one wonders as we look at the ethnic cleansing that has gone on in Bosnia. The dictatorship in Iraq which still prevails. The terrorist bombings of Americans in Saudi Arabia. The tribal killings in central Africa, unrest in the middle east. But what is the scariest I think are the militias that are home grown in our own country. In all cases what we see are people trying to force their will on others, not by dialogue and the ballot box, but by armed might. It is almost like a generational thing, that each generation believes that they have the solution on how to impose their will on others by force. History teaches us otherwise and as the old adage goes "Those who ignore history are damned to repeat it." That is why it is important for all veterans to be admonishing their offspring in these coming months as well as themselves that what has made this nation a success is that we are a body of laws and that we produce change through dialogue, majority rule and the ballot box. Therefore it is important that we exercise that enfranchisement that we have, the right to vote. If we are not happy with the laws then it is through electing individuals that will change the laws as we wish them, that is the solution, not armed conflict. History has shown each of us that the alternative of armed conflict solves nothing. People just want to live in peace and peace must eventually prevail.

It is fitting that we learn from the Dutch, Belgian and Luxembourg people their eternal gratitude for the sacrifices that all of you made. Whenever veterans visit in their countries it is reason for them to celebrate and for the people including the children to come up to the veteran and thank him or her for what they did 50 years ago. Without any fanfare these wonderful people have been expressing

All Gave Some

their gratitude to our fallen comrades graves where their families have chosen to have them lay. Quite some time ago in writing to Camille Kohn, President of CEBA, in Luxembourg, I closed by saying "We are also indebted to your organization and the Luxembourg people for remembering our fallen veterans who rest forever in your soil and for whom you have taken it upon yourselves to tend to their graves and to their memories...."

The other day I received a letter from Camille with the wonderful Forward that you will see on Page 3 of this issue. Camille went on to say: "You are right John, when you state that we remember your fallen veterans.... etc. Yes, your thankfulness is just pleasant and meant very honest but you are wrong saying that you (the Americans) are indebted to our organization and the Luxembourg people. May I express my feeling in this concern with only one remark: Not the American people, but the people of Luxembourg (of course the Europeans) are so deeply indebted to the U. S. that we can never make up in the centuries ahead for what you have done for us!.... And do not forget John, what I wrote there is not only my feeling, it is the feeling of all my fellow citizens."

Though this was a letter between Camille and myself, I would be remiss if I did not point out that I have received similar letters of gratitude from my correspondents in Belgium and in the Netherlands.

D-DAY Weather Forecaster Dies

Irving P Krick who made the crucial weather forecast for the D-Day Invasion died on 20 Jun 1996 at age 89. He was a weather forecaster based on historic weather patterns. He selected the dates of June 6, 7 and 8 according to his obituary which would have calm weather for the invasion.

Source: Los Angeles Times and Richmond Times Dispatch

It is the soldier, not the reporter

who has given us , Freedom of the Press.

It is the soldier, not the poet

who has given us Freedom of Speech.

It is the soldier, not the campus organizer,

who has given us the Freedom to Demonstrate.

It is the soldier, who serves beneath the Flag,

who salutes the Flag; whose coffin is draped by the Flag...who allows the protester to burn the Flag.

It is the soldier, not the politician

who has given his blood, his body ... his life.

From the OHIO North Coast News, Summer 1996

NEW ARCHIVES II

The Unit records for all WWII Military Units have been moved from Suitland MD to the new Archives II Building at 8601 Adelphi Road, in College Park MD. They will be open for research at the end of July 1996

WAR GRAVES

Place of Admonition for Mankind

By Camille P. Kohn

The holocaust of 1939-1945 is the greatest disaster ever to visit mankind, the consequences of which exceed the human power of imagination even today.

The war started on 1 September 1939 at 5:45 AM and ended on 7 May 1945 at 2:41 AM with the unconditional capitulation of those who had been the cause of it. The hostilities spanned a period of 2,075 days or 49,800 hours.

When the balance is made up, the Second World War is unequalled in the history of mankind. More than 55,000,000 deaths as a result of hostilities, political racist and religious persecution or captivity!

As a result of this destructive struggle between nations approximately 1.125 people died every hour; endless landscapes of graves came into creation, silent witnesses of the many millions of victims.

Millions upon millions of innocent people, voluntarily or involuntarily, became involved in this war, in so far as they were not already completely swept along in it. To consign all of this to oblivion would be a terrible insult. It would mean that a common crime would be added to the list of crimes already committed!

The Blitzkrieg in Poland in the year of 1939 was the first halting place in the triumphal march of the Nazi raids through Europe. At the same time as the springtime of 1940 was awakening, the West was horrifyingly awakened in another way when Hitler, with his omnipotent army, struck again and, within the space of a few weeks, swallowed up France, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg. The great fall of the twentieth century had begun. A new reign of terror dominated the peaceful people of these countries. The seeds of violence were germinated!

A struggle emerged between all peoples and nations against the escalation of terror. battles were fought from the stratosphere to the deepest seabed. Aeroplanes, ships and ground forces fought for supremacy!

No statistics can even begin to make the size and suffering of this war visible.

The long battle for Stalingrad was the turning point in the war. With this crushing battle the end of the Second World War was initiated. The end was expedited by the last great battle in the West: the Battle of the Bulge in 1944-1945! As a result of this senseless act of desperation by the Germans, which was neither strategically nor morally justifiable, macabre necropolises emerged: enormous military cemeteries, spread throughout the Benelux countries. Margraten in the Netherlands, Henri-Chapelle and Neuville-en-Condroz in Belgium and Hamm in Luxembourg. A great multitude of grief-stricken mothers and fathers slipped into a quagmire of suffering and acquiescence.

Of God's acres in the Benelux countries, those cemeteries which are inextricably bound up with the American people are visited most frequently. Armand Blau has registered details of these military cemeteries and has

made a professional report on this subject by giving a summary of the emergence and development of these cemeteries in the last few decades and has now made the report public. With this report Mr Blau has produced an authoritative piece of work. He has entered a completely new area and has delved up details from the historic past which were unknown up to now.

American military cemeteries can basically be distinguished only by their location and the number of dead.

With their enormous number of graves which exceed all power of imagination and the way they are situated, these cemeteries give the visitor an impression of perfect beauty and peaceful harmony.

They have an overwhelming and lasting power of expression, as if they wish to proclaim: "WHEN WILL MANKIND FINALLY UNDERSTAND?" They even overawe contemporaries, who have no knowledge of the war, by the grandeur of their splendid layout and their sublime mysticism which exalts them to temples of reflection.

Along the vast plains, the majestic white marble in an impressive layout according to fixed lines, proclaims the glory and heroism of the American soldiers who fought in the past for the freedom of Europe and had to pay for it with their lives! They gave everything they had, including their lives! The overall air of these acres of God, with their harmonious layout, their perspective effects and their undulating green, naturally makes a fascinating impression on the unattached cemetery visitors.

26,694 young American soldiers found their last earthly resting place in the cemeteries of Margraten, Henri-Chapelle, Neuville-en-Condroz and Hamm. A further 3,006 fell in battle but have no grave, no cross, no Star of David. Their remains lie desolate in foreign soil, far away from their homeland. No human hand has been able to protect their secret grave from sorrowful loneliness. No flower has ever adorned their last resting place. No priest has ever walked round, blessing the graves. No one has ever spent time at the grave in quiet remembrance. There is no one who stood there in silent conversation. They have passed away without leaving a trace of them behind.

The blood of all these brave GIs was shed to free our homelands. It is part of our duty to keep the memory alive of these Americans who died and this remembrance may never cease. It is the duty of the living to remember the dead. Whether we be from the Netherlands, Belgium or Luxembourg, we all have the Americans to thank for our national identity, our independence, our freedom and our WAR GRAVES (Continued from Page 3)

well-being. These sons of America, who fought for months or years here in Europe against an unrelenting enemy, have a right to our permanent appreciation and our eternal

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REUNIONS

11th Armd Div Assn 6-11 Aug, Spokane Wash, Contact Mrs Alfred Pfeiffer, 412-375-62955.

101st Airborne Div Assn, 7-10 Aug, St Louis Missouri, Contact Bill Carrington 513-549-4326.

83rd Inf Div Assn WWII, 13-19 Aug, Holiday Inn, Independence, OH. Contact Robert Derickson, 3749 Stahlheber Rd, Hamilton OH 45013-8907, 513-863-2199.

82nd Airborne Div Assn, 14-17 Aug, Ft Mitchell KY. Contact S R Gossett at 513-898-5977 or write Operation Bluegrass, 1996, 5459 Northcutt P, Dayton OH 45414-3742.

2nd Armd Div Reunion, 14-17 Aug, Richmond VA, Contact Loren Guge, 904-596-6834.

Fourth Armored Div Assn, 19-25 Aug, Radisson OH, Columbus OH . Contact Samuel A Schenker, 1823 Shady Dr, Farrell PA 16121. 412-342-6058.

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

80th Div Vetn Assn, 21-25 Aug, New Orleans LA, Contact Frank Terrizzi 215-485-3146.

84th Inf Div Railsplitter Soc, 24-28 Aug, Williamsburg VA. Contact Thomas H Stone, Jr. 14308 Shelter Cove Rd, Midlothian VA 23112, 804-739-4155. **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.

94th Inf Div Assn, 27 Aug-2 Sep, Hyatt House, Kansas City MO. Contact Harry Helms, 809 Dogwood Dr, Downingtown PA 19335, 810-363-7826 **36th Inf Div Assn, 29 Aug-1 Sep**, Houston TX, Contact Leonard Wilkerson, PO Box 2049, Malakoff TX 75148.

6th Armored Div Assn, 3-8 Sep, Scottsdale AZ. Contact Edward F Reed, Po Box 5011, Louisville KY 40255-0011.

Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, 8-11 Sep, Cape Codder, Hyannis, MA. Contact Nancy Monson, PO Box 11129, Arlington VA 22210-2129, Tel 703-528-4058

70th Inf Div Assn, 5-8 Sep, Clarion Plaza Hotel, Orlando

FL. For information contact Louis a Hoger 5825 Horton St, Mission KS 66202-2608

95th Inf Div , 5-8 Sep, Peoria Ill, Lester W Wolf, 708-458-3047.

275th Armd FA Bn, 26-29 Sep, Hyatt Fair Lakes, Fairfax City VA. Contact Thomas J Dobinski 535 Joann Dr, Odenton MD 21113-1729, Tel 410-674-4733

83rd Inf Div Boston Chapter, 30 Sep-4 Oct, Pines Resort Hotel, South Fallsburg NY. Contact Pat DiGiammenino, 36 East Border Rd, Malden MA 02148, 817-322-2754.

SHAEF/ETOUSA Vetn Assn (European Theater, WWII) 4-6 Oct, Ramada Plaza resort Orlando FL. Contact Alan F Reeves, 2301 Broadway, San Francisco CA 94115, 415-921-

Captured Letter

Reflects some of the occupational drawbacks of being a member of a master race. It is from a woman living in Jena to her husband, a member of 7 Para Regt

Jena 14.2.45

My dear beloved darling:

Today once again, I waited in vain for mail from you. None arrived at all because the train was cancelled owing to the fact that there were two terror attacks on Dresden last night. I need hardly tell you how we cried, 5 hours in the shelter in the dark. It was so cold. A number of planes circled round incessantly dropping flares. I wasn't scared at first but during the night I really thought that our last hour had come. The AA fired away like mad and the whole ground shook - it was really terrible. This time they didn't drop any bombs on us. Heaven knows what they are trying to do driving people crazy hour after hour. At this rate they will soon succeed. I would just like to know why we are on this earth at all, our whole lives are nothing but care and sorrow, I have lost my faith in a better future. How can people believe in anything with the Russians so far into our country - we need a miracle to save us anyway. So far, in German history, no Russian has ever set foot in Berlin and now it looks as if he is going to. It's unthinkable. Only today they were saying in the paper what will happen to us if we are the losers. I hope that it doesn't get that far, there must be something we can do to defend ourselves. But for the terror the war would be

bearable. It is that that breaks people up and disheartens them so. There is no longer any fun or joy in existence and it is only because of the children that we pull ourselves together. It is nearly a year now since you were home, how much we have to do without!. If only all goes well and you come home safely we shall be content. Now, my sweet, you are going to worry about us. If the bombs don't smash us and the Russians don't come you needn't worry about a thing. Today I must see to the washing, or as much of it as is dry. Its rather windy outside. Already the planes are buzzing around up there, its bound to be intruders. Our Norbert says they are German planes. He is such a funny little chap, he has to see and put up with so much. It is a good thing that he doesn't understand much of it. He is saying that they dropped bombs in Jena today. Thank God though they were only 500 pounders, still they caused much suffering and destruction. 85 dead so far, those they were able to identify. Now I am off to Grandmother's to see how our meal is getting on. Goodbye my darling and write again soon. A thousand greetings and loving kisses from your Annie and little Norbert.

Source : 3rd Div written in Annex #3 to accompany 75th InfD G-2 Periodic Report No. 62, 16 Mar 1945 from Record Group 407, 75th Infantry Div, National Archives, Archives II, College Park,

Hitler as a Military Leader

Before the war broke out, Hitler considered himself anything but a great military leader. It must be admitted, however, that he was technically minded and he was outstanding in recognizing the importance of mechanized equipment in modern warfare. Thus, when Guderian propounded his radically new theories on armored warfare, it was Hitler especially that recognized their merit and brought his influence to bear in order to overcome the traditional stodginess of the Prussian general staff in matters of technical improvement. Through his ability to view highly complex problems without the reserve and caution of the expert, he was capable of seeing things and saying things that startled his professional military leaders. Thus, before the invasion of Poland, and later the Scandinavian countries and France, he was perfectly uninhibited by any of these considerations which make the specialist so earth-bound. German staff officers admit that he was the one that provided the momentum of recklessness and dared evilness which so characterized German strategic moves at that time. The general staff was frankly astonished when these operations were patently successful. They conceded that Hitler had been right, and a few of them even began to believe that Hitler possessed some inexplicable intuition which perceived things in military plans which to them were just cut and dry problems. Thus, the position of the general staff was not so strong anymore when Hitler decided that he again sensed something which to his mind minimized the difficulty of operations against Russia.

A vastly different matter was the publicity campaign in Germany which extolled Hitler as the greatest military genius of all times. This campaign was touched off by Goering, and radio and press jangled with this new eulogy of the Fuehrer. And while the military experts could only shake their heads over his good guesses political circles and the whole of

Germany resounded to this praise of the great military genius. Strangely enough, Hitler himself became very susceptible to this propaganda. He then actually began believing that he was a man of exceptional ability in the science of warfare. When he drew the Luftwaffe away from the assault on England, he was convinced that after the conquest of Russia which would take from 3 to 6 months, he would be able to launch a new, more concentrated and final attack upon England. It was to no avail that a Japanese military commission appeared before him and warned him not to attack Russia, since, based upon Japan's own experience with China, it was practically impossible to conquer a country of such huge geographical dimensions. Several of the staff officers pleaded with him to stay away from Russia since the German army, strong as it might be, would lose itself in the vastness of Russia like a river in the desert. But Hitler knew he was right.

Later when the German army stood before Stalingrad, Hitler was seized by a fanatical determination to take that city. Probably the name of the city had a deal with goading him. When the Sixth army was encircled his staff officers advised him to pull the army back.

Even when the Russian forces around the army had grown to a ring 50 kilometers wide, Paulus asked urgently for permission to push his army back into German lines. Paulus was so embittered when this was refused that he remarked that he had been betrayed.

Stalingrad was a turning point for Hitler in more ways than one. Hitler turned completely into himself. He became sullen, more short-tempered. Those familiar suppers to which he used to invite the inner circle fell away. His nightly walk in front of his bunker became longer. He was more and more alone. It seemed that in any discussions of military setbacks he sensed criticism of his own leadership. At one time Hitler, quite oblivious of what he was doing, ordered certain units to concentrate on a certain town. The result was a fantastic concentration of armor in a small sector. In the confusion that resulted Hitler asked that the Corps Commander be court-martialed. A general staff officer with Hitler pointed out that he, Hitler himself, had ordered this maneuver. "Where do you read that?"

Hitler snarled in a quick rage. "In the war diary," the staff officer replied. Hitler did not say anything else, but on the same day the officers of the war history section received the strictest orders that in the future no reference was to be made to Hitler's orders in operational matters in the war diary, and that his interference in operations was not even to be referred to by implication. Furthermore, he ordered that six stenographers be on hand at all times to take down verbally the operational discussions, briefings, etc. in the operations room. The stenographic reports were typed in one copy only (in the special large type of Hitler's use since he was farsighted), and after a staff officer spent considerable time in correcting the transcript (the stenographers employed had no training for this type of work), Hitler locked this single copy in his safe to which only he had access thereafter. It was a weapon which Hitler wanted to have in battling the keen minds of his generals.

TO BE CONTINUED

The above source is Annex No 2 to accompany G-2 Periodic Report No. 104, 2 May 1945

3 Blind Lice

The following is a free translation by 5th Army of a document taken from a PW:

14 AT Co, 1044 Inf Regt 7 Feb 45

SUBJECT: Lousiness.

TO: Strongpoint Commanders

In my last inspection of the wash at Strongpoints B and C, I found as many as 25 to 30 lice in a single shirt. It was my own experience in Russia that, with careful delousing, lice could be kept down to 2-3 per day; otherwise shirts and underclothes literally took to their heels and ran away. In visiting the strongpoints in the future, I will make a spot check of underclothes and shall severely punish anyone in whose garment I find more than three (3) lice.

APFEL, Lt and Co Comdr

Source: III Corps & VII Corps

CIVILIAN ATTITUDE TO THE PARTY

An officer of the 13 Para Regt, 5th Para Div said that in the town of Dudeldorf near Bitburg the Ortsgruppenleiter evacuated himself and his possessions across the Rhine in a Red Cross vehicle. Before leaving, however, he proclaimed to the population: "When the Wehrmacht retreats, the Volkstrum will take over the defense to the last drop of blood." When he found that the people of Dudeldorf had been using the tree trunks intended for fortifications as fuel, he shrugged his shoulders and said: "Use twigs. It will still look defended."

Source: PID/OSS Daily ISUM & VII Corps. Published in 75th Inf Div G-2 Notes. RG 407, Unit Records, National Archives, Archives II, College Park MD.

No Time for Travel

A PW in describing his last journey by rail in Germany (Jan 45), remarks, "In former days, it could happen that one got to the station and the train was gone. Nowadays one gets to the train and the station is gone."....

Source: 17 Abn Div Int Rpt. Published in Annex #4 to accompany 75th Inf Div G-2 Periodic Report #105, 3 May 45. RG 407, Unit Records, National

Archives, Archives II, College Park MD.

Tips on Screening

On the basis of field experience, the 220th CIC Det, XX US Corps recommends the following:

German doctors, especially prosperous ones, be regarded with suspicion. Many of them have been found to hold high rank in the SS; many occupy official Party positions on the Kreis or Gau levels; some have connections with the Sicherheitsdienst. The cases quoted above demonstrate that they have not hesitated to violate the medical code in order to serve National Socialism.

Proper emphasis be given to documents in building a case. The German has a great respect for official papers, and even when they are capable of incriminating him he hesitates to destroy them. Very often the flourishing of a paper with a NSDAP letterhead and the accusation that the suspects name is listed on that paper are enough to solicit a confession.

Polish, Russian French and Belgian workers and Prisoners of war be cultivated as informants. It is true that much of their information proceeds from grudge rather than from authentic CI interest, but these foreign elements have been in a position to observe and experience the working of German administrative and intelligence agencies, especially the Gestapo, and they are eager to tell what they know.

German members of the Communist Party or Communist opposition be contacted. Almost all of them have served time in concentration camps or Gestapo prisons and when released have continued to work underground. Most of them have kept black-lists of CI value.

Attention be given the wives and families of wanted personalities who reportedly have fled. Very often such personalities are in local hiding, and a threat to take the son or the wife as hostage sometimes leads to the man's surrender. Regardless of how cruel a Gestapo agent may be he usually has a well developed sense of family.

Quick action be taken on any report of the formation or projected formation of a Wehrwolf movement. This detachment to date has found no evidence of a systematic organization, but several initial attempts have been discovered. The idea appeals especially to Hitler Jugend and non-combative elements of the Wehrmacht. Quick arrest of the ringleaders and wide publicizing of these arrests usually have a salutary effect.

Source: XX Corps thru 79th Inf Div. Published in Annex #3 to accompany 75th Inf Div G-2 Periodic Report #129, 28 May 45. RG 407, Unit Records, National Archives, Archives II, College Park MD.

Continued from Page 1
To chat with an old friend or to make a new one;
To pat a stray dog;
To watch a spider build a web;
To smile at a child;
Or to read a few lines from a good book.
Remind me each day
That there is more to life than increasing its speed.
Let me look upward
Into the branches of the towering oak
And know that it grew slowly and well.

Slow me down, Lord,
And inspire me to send my roots deep
Into the soil of life's enduring values
That I may grow toward the stars
Of my greater destiny
by Wilfred Peterson
*From the column of Dear Abby by
Abigail Van Buren submitted by Phyllis
Thompson.*

THE DEATH MARCH

This document incorporates sworn statements of American PWs recaptured from the Germans during the past two weeks.

The merciless cruelty of our enemies was again brought vividly to focus by stories of the American PWs, participants in the now infamous German Death March, recaptured by the 90th US Div. In sworn statements, they told of whip-driven labor in tunneling into solid rock while living on starvation rations, of quick murder with a rifle and slow murder thru forced exposure, fatigue and malnutrition; of months spent in chains, and finally the "Death March."

A British WO captured in Sept 42 in North Africa, said "the hands of the prisoners were tied together and remained tied for apprx 2 months as reprisal for repeated tying of German PWs by Allied Forces. After two months the ropes were removed and the PWs were forced to wear chains for 9 months.

On Jan 23, this WO, in a group of 4,000, began a wandering march which lasted until he was recaptured. The march "was approximately 1200 kms," he stated. "I dropped out of the column sick. I had no bread for 12 days. There had been very short halts, very scant amounts of water and frequent beatings. When I dropped out there were only about 250 left. Some had died along the way and others fell out because they could go no further.

PWs at the Berga Elsa Camp worked from "daylight to darkness" in tunnels being excavated from solid rock. "We were given no breaks and were beaten with a rubber hose and kicked if our work did not satisfy the civilians in charge," said one Pfc. "I was forced to work although I had a bad case of diarrhea." When he contracted a foot infection, he was forced to work without shoes. "I saw a civilian kick a friend of mine in the groin," a Pvt said, resulting in a rupture. Once when he tried to help a sick friend, the German commander said to leave him alone, he was faking, and then, he threw a pail of water on this man. Due to his weakened condition, plus the cold, he was dead the next morning. Most of the beatings and mistreatment of Americans was administered by the German civilians. One of the worst of these was the foreman who always carried a rubber hose. I believe his name is Lautenshimer.

The rations in the camp at first were 1 loaf of bread per day for 4 men and a liter of soup per man, later cut to 1 loaf of bread for 5 men. During the "March" their rations were 1 loaf for 10 men. Some of them who had managed to keep a few German marks when their money, watches, rings, pencils and dog-tags were confiscated, bought a few potatoes from the farmers. A British PW, caught stealing potatoes was shot. The men estimated they lost up to 80 lbs in weight since their capture.

An American, who began the March on 4 or 5 April, in company with 300 other Americans, estimated they averaged about 12 kms a day "although our guards tried to make us go faster by hitting us with their rifle butts. A horse-drawn cart followed the column and picked up some of the men who were too weak to continue. At night, we were kept in barns along the way. The men who died were loaded into the cart and buried later." These dead were thrown into an unmarked grave. One sick American was thrown in and dead piled on top of him. By the time the American PWs could get him uncovered he had suffocated.

Telling of a column of British PWs who joined them in the march, one of the Americans said the British had been marching for 3 months. "They walked from Italy to the West Wall and to Berlin - and all over." Physically, he said, the British "just did not seem to care if they went on or not. I would call them a column of marching dead"

Source: 82nd Abn Div - thru VII Corps G-2 Rpt # 126 found in Annex #1 to Accompany G-2 Periodic Report #110, 8 May 1945, 75th InfD. Unit Records RG 407, National Archives, Archives II, College Park MD.

GERMAN DRIFTING MINE

This floating mine is designed to damage pontoons, bridge piers and low level bridges. The mine body is a hollow steel ball 15" in diameter, containing 25.5 pounds of explosive. A brass rod about five feet long extends vertically from mine body. A wooden float is attached to the rod six inches from the mine body. When floating, only the wooden float and rod fingers are visible. The mine explodes if the rod is tilted in any direction. The mine also contains a clockwork igniter which can be set for any time up to six days. The mine is armed whenever the brass rod is in place and should be destroyed without being moved.

Source: G-2 XII Corps & VII Corps. Published in 75th Inf Div G-2 Notes. RG 407, Unit Records, National Archives, Archives II, College Park MD.

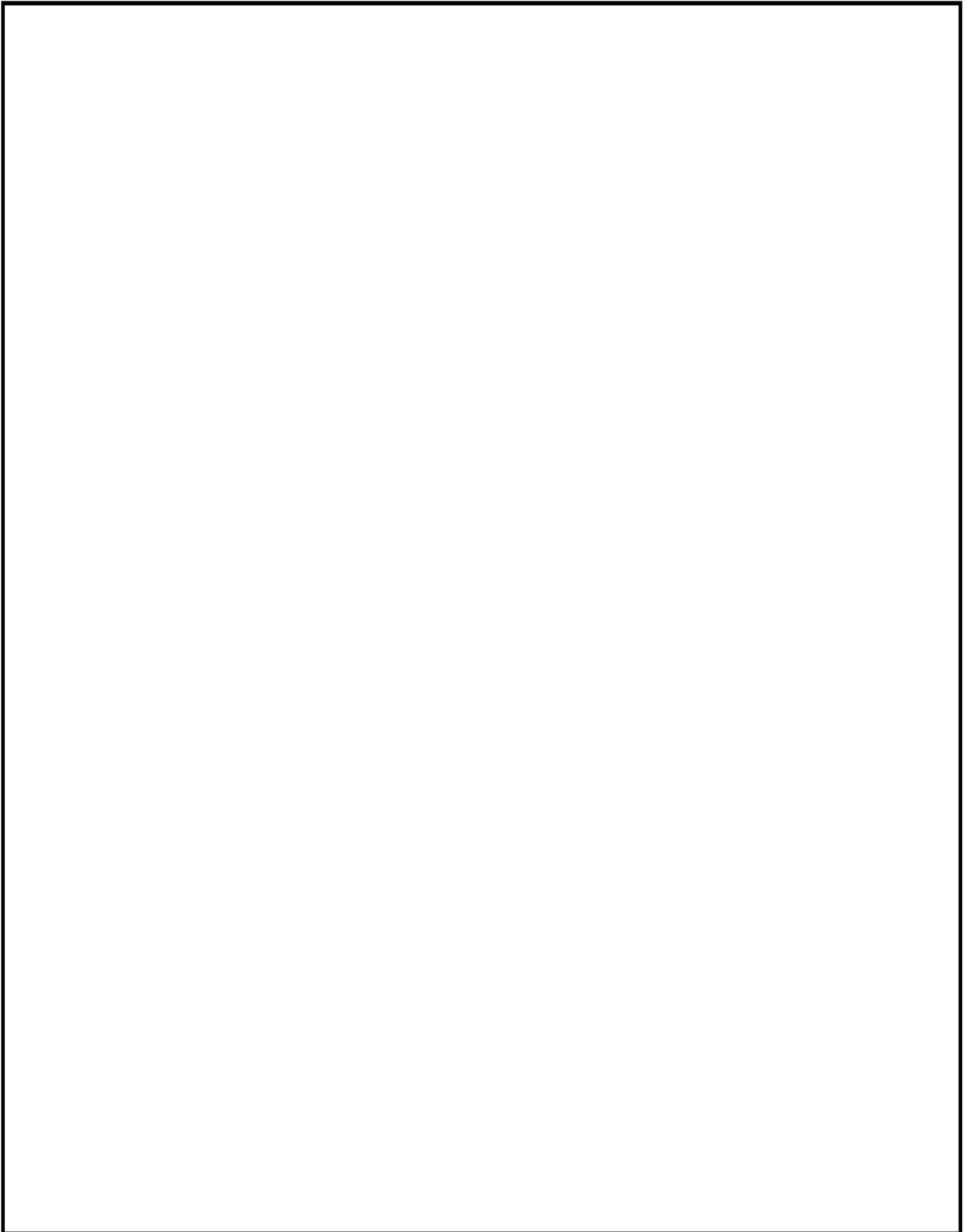
HOME SWEET HOME

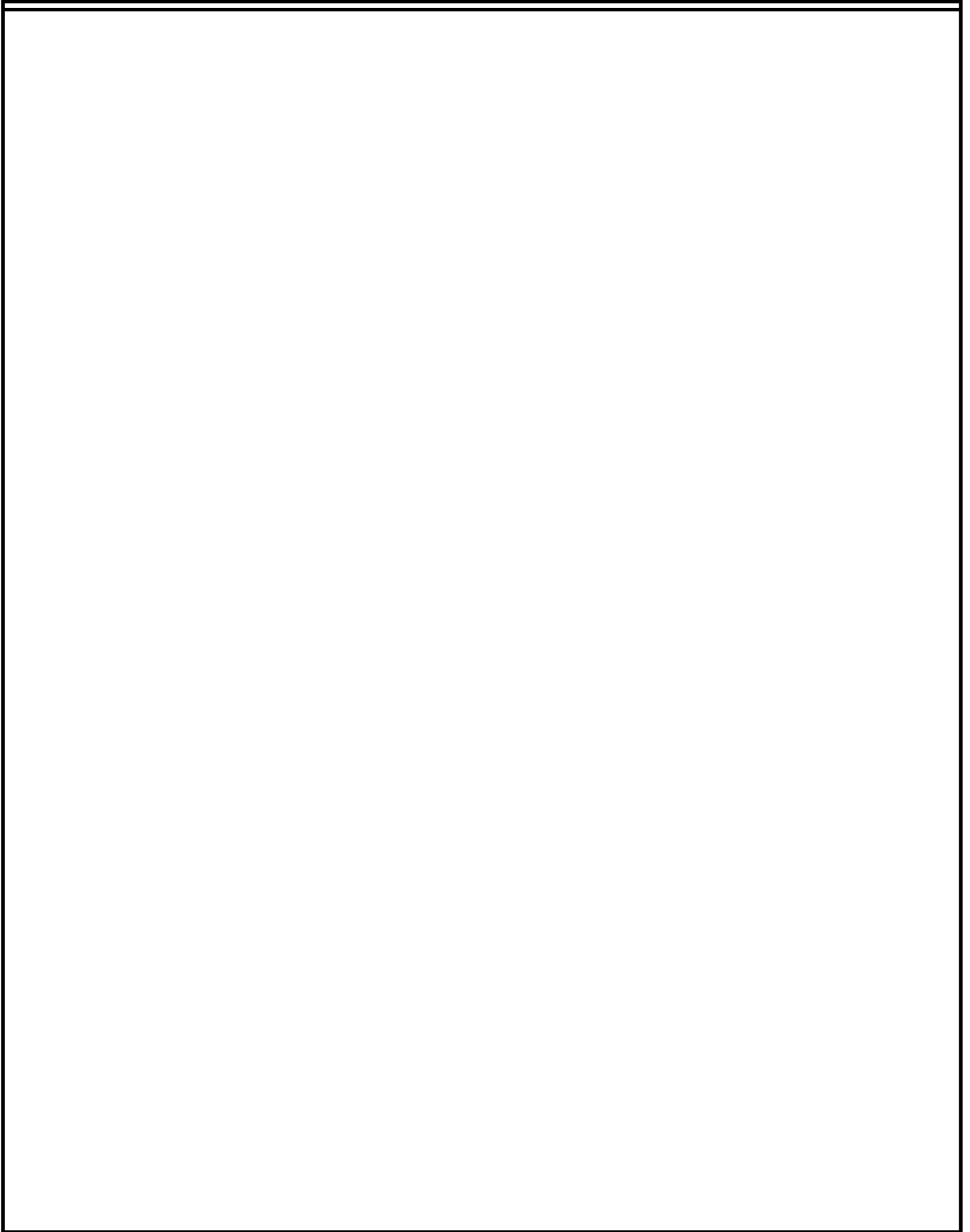
It's all relative, and if some of the former supermen of the "Tomorrow the World" school aren't too keen to return to the fatherland, maybe the cigarette situation is one reason.

During a recent transfer of German prisoners who were being repatriated via Switzerland from Southern France, several of them kept complaining about the smallness of the cigarette ration they were issued enroute, and tried by every means they could to get more. Four of them even tried to jump off the train before it left French soil to avoid being returned to the Reich, or possibly to attempt last-minute purchases.

The pay-off came when the troops were finally greeted at the Swiss-German border. Their homecoming gift consisted of an official issue or two (2) ersatz cigarettes, and one (1) each picture of Hitler.

Source: Air ISUM #68; 79th Inf Div, 15 Mar 45 and published in 75th Inf Div G-2 Notes. RG 407, Unit Records, National Archives, Archives II, College Park





DONATIONS

The New England Chapters of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge have a fund raising raffle to help defray the cost of the plaque to be placed at the Hyannis Common at this years VBOB Reunion. First prize is \$300 and there are second and third prizes of lesser amounts.

Tickets are \$1.00 each or six for \$5.00 and may be obtained from your editor John D Bowen, 613 Chichester Lane, Silver Spring, MD 20904-3331, Tel 301-384-6533

The winners will be picked at the 1996 VBOB Reunion at Hyannis Massachusetts in September 1996. You do not have to be present to win.

gratitude. The endless fields of graves emit and a admonition for reflection:

NO MORE WAR!

NO MORE WAR GRAVES!

The above is the Foreword written by Camille P. Kohn, the President of CEBA (Cercle d'Etudes sur la Bataille des Ardennes a.s.b.l, Grande-Duche of Luxembourg) to a new book called "IN THE SHADOW OF THE FORESTS. This book written by Armand Blau, will be published in Europe in September 1996, in four languages and will contain the names of the GIs buried at the cemeteries of the Benelux countries mentioned, including the missing. As you may or may not know each of these graves of our fallen comrades have been adopted by individual people of the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg. Throughout the year they visit each grave, place flowers on it and pay the respects of grateful nations for the ultimate sacrifice that our boys and girls made to restore freedom to their countries and to preserve freedom in our country. This is done out of respect and gratitude that these heroes shall not have died in vain!

Marcher & WWII MUSINGS

Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, MD/DC
John D. Bowen, Editor
613 Chichester Lane
Silver Spring MD 20904-3331

WWII Musings is published for the enjoyment of WWII Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge. It is based on the research of the Editor at the National Archives and Records Administration. Proper credit should be given both to the researcher and to the National Archives. Your comments are

FIRST CLASS

MEETING SUN 11 Aug 1996

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John D. Bowen Editor

ARDENNES □ CAMPAIGN

Jul/



EVERLASTING DUTY

We offer our prayers for all our members who have died.

ARREL U. GODFREY

**Eternal Rest Grant Unto Him
His Earthly Duties Are Done**

GET WELL SOON

Linda & Harold Fleming
Ben Layton (On the Mend)
Angie Purcell (Recuperating)
Ed Radzwich (Recuperating)
Please keep them in your prayers.

Next Meeting

11 Aug 1996

11:30-1:00 Brunch
followed by meeting
&
Slide Show

Officers Club
off of Mapes Rd
Fort Meade MD
Bring Souvenirs

Future Meetings:
Oct 13 Golf Clubhouse
Nominations & Elections

OFFICERS

Pres.	Dick Schlenker
1 VP	Syd Lawrence
2 VP	Jack Flanagan
Treas	Neil Thompson
Sec	John D Bowen
Sgt/Arms	Henry Rehn
Chaplain	Rev Davis Peck
	Tel-410-266-6723
PPres	Ben Layton
PPres	Ed Radzwich
PPres	Grover Twiner
PPres	Darrell Kuhn
PPres	CA Blaquie Culp

NEW MEMBERS

We welcome Tom Jones, Phila PA
of the 518th MP Co Bastogne.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY CORNER

AUGUST		AUGUST		AUGUST	
Donald J Breakiron	08/16	Wayne E Kiser	08/05	Edgar A Schaeffer	08/11
Thomas A Brooks	08/11	Mike J Levin	08/05	John R Schaffner	08/25
Earl Criggarr	08/09	John M Meyers Sr	08/17	Grover C Twiner	08/07
W C Dutton Jr	08/28	R Monty Montelongo	08/24	Calvin C Tyler	08/17
William F Higgings	80 08/02	Helen P O'Neil	08/15	Dale E Woomert	08/17
SEPTEMBER		SEPTEMBER		SEPTEMBER	
John J Asendorf	09/12	Jack Flanagan	09/01	Charles G Mallon Jr	09/24
John D Bowen	09/12	Daniel R Fleming	75 09/24	Edward Mc Ginty	09/28
Bernard J Cohn	75 09/22	Carson J Heldmann Sr	09/12	Robert F Milne	09/13
Dorothy S Davis	09/11	Elmer H Janosko	09/14	Alfred H M Shehab	09/18
Douglas Dillard	09/14	Frederick E Krenz	09/24		

11 August 1996 Meeting

Our coming meeting will be held at the Fort Meade Officers Club at 1:00 PM at which our featured speaker will be our Chaplain, Reverend Davis Peck, who will present a slide presentation of his visits to the Bulge both then and now. This very interesting talk will be preceded by a short business meeting.

For those who would like to partake of the delicious brunch at the Officers Club beginning at 11:30AM, the cost is \$12.50 per person and reservations and your payment should be sent to our Treasurer, Neil Thompson, 525 Patricia Court, Odenton, MD 21113, Tel 410-672-3242. Advance reservations are necessary and we will have a door prize and our usual good fun, good comraderie and good food. This is why the Marcher is earlier this month so you can get your reservations in to our Treasurer in time.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Our Past President Ed Radzwich will chair the Nominating Committee this year and is accepting recommendations for the various offices that are listed on the opposite side of this sheet. If you would like to recommend yourself or others for any of the offices please call Ed on 301-464-1767. If you feel that there is someone who would be an asset to the organization let Edward know. The Nominating Committee's recommendation will be announced in the next Marcher. Nominations from the floor will be entertained as well and Elections will be held at the October Meeting with installation in December

BURIAL DETAIL

It came to our attention last month that we have no formalized detail to honor our deceased members at their wake and at their burial. It is only fitting that a contingent of our members attend the wake and be present at the burial particularly if we have been requested by the family. Though various of us have been doing this on an individual basis it would be easier if we had a list of volunteers and a telephone tree to notify members who have volunteered for this duty to attend the wake and/or the burial. It would also give the members family a point of contact to know to notify us upon the death of a member. We should ensure that our members participation in the Battle of the Bulge is recognized when they transfer to that final post up in the sky. I would appreciate your comments on this and would appreciate your phone calls or postcards volunteering, particularly from our members in the outlying parts of MD/DC. No veteran should die without recognition. Please call John Bowen at 301-384-6533 or write at 613 Chichester Lane Silver Spring MD 20904-3331.

TWILIGHT TATTOO

Enjoy a sunset parade with the Old Guard and the US Army Band! This colorful outdoor presentation of music and military drill is performed on the Ellipse near the White House. Bring a blanket or lawn chair and rest under the setting sun as you and your family and summer guests experience the traditional honors and tribute presented to dignitaries and heads of state.

Performances are FREE and NO tickets are required. Performances are held each Wednesday to 14 August at 7:00 PM and on 21 August at 6:30 PM. The Ellipse is between the White House and the Washington Monument

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 on the front.

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-

FORT MEADE SUNDAY CONCERT SERIES

28 Jul Guest Band
4 Aug Woodwind Ensemble
25 Aug 50th Anniv Concert US Army Field Band/ 1812 Overture
18 Aug Soldier's Chorus
11 Aug Jazz Ambassadors
All concerts begin at 7PM on the lawn of Devers Hall
Bring a lawn chair or blankets - Free Parking

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. New members are always welcome.