

❖ WWII MUSINGS ❖

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John D. Bowen, Editor

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WWII MEMORIAL SITE NAMED

The site for the WWII Memorial has finally been agreed upon. It is a choice site adjacent to 17th Street NW on the Mall, between Constitution and Independence Avenues and brackets the 50 yard long Rainbow Pool at the east end of the Mall's Reflecting Pool. This is a significant spot as it heads the Mall rectangle as you look down towards the Lincoln Memorial. The Korean War Memorial is on the opposite left corner and the Vietnam War Memorial is on the opposite right corner. It also adds balance to the rectangle. This 6 acre site fits in the line of sight from the Capitol to the Lincoln Memorial and the Arlington National Cemetery. President Clinton will dedicate the site on 11 Nov.

The Task Force must now approve the design of the memorial to be placed on the site. Sarah McClendon, a member of the advisory board, has stated that "Now is the time for veterans of that war and survivors of those who fought to speak up and say what sort of design for a memorial should be studied." You can write to The American Battle Monuments Commission, in care of Colonel John Kelly, 20 Massachusetts Ave NW Room 5127, Washington DC 20314-0001. You should write now, as the design committee may be called to

HAPPY VETERANS DAY

BULGE REENACTMENT

Word has been received that the annual Battle of the Bulge Reenactment at Fort Indiantown Gap PA will be held the last weekend of January 1996, 26-28 Jan 1996. The event welcomes veterans to observe and to enjoy the comraderie of sleeping in the barracks with fellow veterans as well as the telling of tall tales. Last year about 150 veterans enjoyed the event. The cost will be \$37.00 this year which includes two nights sleep in authentic WWII barracks, original bunks, with recently modernized latrines and showers as well as breakfast and dinner on Saturday and entertainment. There are generally barracks displays and WWII flea markets by the reenactors beginning on Friday evening. Watch both the Allied and German reenactors reenact a Bulge event on Saturday. If you are interested in receiving a registration form and further information when it is available in December, please forward a stamped #10 self addressed envelope to the editor, John D Bowen, Bulge Reenactment, 613 Chichester Lane, Silver

heard as to what you would like your memorial to be.

On Nov 11th, President Clinton, in addition to laying the usual wreath on the Tombs of the Unknowns, will dedicate the location where the monument to all WWII veterans will be erected. The Arlington wreath laying will be at the traditional 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month. The WWII Site dedication will be at 2PM that day. All veterans will be given VIP Badges and seating and will be honored guests at

both Arlington & the Memorial site. The WWII Memorial

site dedication does however require free tickets to get in. To obtain them you should respond by 3 Nov to YNSN Adams via FAX to 703-604-0832 or 604-0833 at the WWII Commemoration Committee 1213 Jefferson Davis Hwy, Suite 702, Arlington VA 22202. You may try phoning at 703-604-0820. Seating begins at 12 noon and you must arrive by 1PM to be seated by 1:30 PM. Please send the names of those attending, WWII Unit, address

Veteran Friend to Retire

A great friend of the veteran has announced that he will retire in 1997 at the end of his current term.

Sonny Montgomery, 75, has been a great supporter of both the military and of veterans. This will wrap up 40 years of public service. Though some would disagree with him on certain items, on the whole he spent all of his waking days with the interests of those who served in the military in his mind. One of the most significant legacies that he leaves is the Montgomery GI Bill which he expanded and protected for the benefit of modern day veterans. Representative Montgomery will surely be missed.

WE MUST PRESERVE OUR DEEDS FOR WHEN WE ARE GONE THEY CAN SAY "WELL DONE - REST IN PEACE."

and home and office phone numbers. Tickets will be available at a "will-call" desk located at the ceremony site. They will also issue you a Presidential invitation which will be picked up at the "will-call" desk at the site.

Nov 4-11 1995 has been designated by Senate Resolution 179 as the "Week of National Remembrance and the Closing of the 50th Anniversary of World War II." Please join the event and participate in a commemorative salute to you and your family

Editor's Corner

The last hurrah
of the World
War I I

Commemoration will be on Veterans Day Weekend this year. It's highlight will be a gigantic ticker tape parade in New York City the likes of which will duplicate those welcome home parades of 50 years ago.

Does the Commemoration of WWII end with this event? No, it is the new beginning for each veteran to visit the elementary, middle and high schools in their areas and offer their services to address the students about WWII. As the last men of World War I passed the torch it rests upon you the veterans of WWII, the senior veterans, to pass on the legacy of service to country and the need to maintain peace.

It is time to get this great country pulling together as it did 50 years ago rather than the divisiveness that we hear on the talk shows and see among our elected leaders. It begins with each one of us to make a difference. Patriotism is not out of style and as the Korean

VBOB REUNION

Mark your calendar 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 detail in the **Bugle**.

WWII Medical News

Preamble: The following information was received from a 24 year-old Battalion surgeon whose statements are made as a result of his experience as a front line doctor working in a first aid station.

a. Wounds of the extremities are the most frequently seen, caused mainly by shell fragments.

b. Casualties are caused mostly by (1) Arty, (2) Inf, (3) bombs, in that order.

c. The most common ailments are bronchitis, rheumatism, and colds. There were no epidemics.

d. There have been adequate medical supplies. No substitutes have been used.

e. The only recent development PW mentions is the use of Sulfa drugs.

f. The treatment for infectious jaundice is isolation. Sulfa treatment has been attempted but with no great success.

g. The incidence of neuropsychiatric conditions has been low. Most cases occurred among the very young or much older age groups. Treatment by the battalion physician was not possible and cases were evacuated to a main dressing station (Hauptverbandplatz) for neurological examination.

h. Louse infestation is controlled by (1) impregnation of clothing with "Lausetum" every three to four months, (2) medical examination every 8 to 14 days by a medical NCO, (3) cleaning of louse infested clothing with steam or powder (called Russland Puder), composition unknown, accompanied by a shower for the individual, (4) the use of Cutrex, an oily liquid, in case of head lice, one application usually being enough. Civilians undergo the same treatment.

i. Trenchfoot and immersion feet are treated with MB (Marfanil Brentalbin) powder, which is also in general use in the treatment of open wounds. Soldiers are advised to change shoes and socks regularly.

j. Captured US medical supplies are used in the same manner as those of German origin.

k. No cases of Welhynian fever (trench fever) are known by PW to exist on the Western Front. Treatment would be warmth and anti-fever medicine.

l. Penicillin has not yet been used by the German Army, to PW's knowledge.

m. PW states that there has been no acute shortage of medical officers. Replacements are required to have studied at least ten semesters. PW considers the training and knowledge of replacements adequate. The medical curriculum consists of ten semesters of study (two semesters per year); four pre-clinical semesters, concluded by the "Physicum" (examination); and six clinical semesters, concluded by the "Staatsexamen." A three semester year has been introduced some time ago, but was later abandoned.

50 % of medical personnel of the 36th Inf Div had to be replaced in Aug 44, after Division's Russian Campaign.

n. Very few burn cases are encountered; most of them are caused by white phosphorus. These are treated with Kupersulfatloesung (solutio cupri sulfurici, CUSO4), a fairly new method of treatment for this type burn. Treatment for other burns was Tannin Powder or Brandbinden (burn compresses).

o. There is no vaccine for influenza.

p. Treatment for gas gangrene is by special serum. In most cases such treatment has been too late, the only alternative being surgery.

q. Gonorrhea cases are more frequent than syphilis or chancroid. Control is by physical examination and prophylaxis. Treatment of gonorrhea is with Sulfonamide (Elendren, Cibazel), and of syphilis, with Salvarsan.

r. The permanent nursing staff are Vollschwwestern (graduates of recognized nursing schools) although owing to the war there are a great many nurse's aides

s. Medical Officers in purely administrative positions are found at army level and up, and possibly at Div level.

t. PW states that the Red Cross brassard and other Red Cross markings of US Medical personnel are easily visible in the line. German medical personnel wear Red Cross jumper (approx 25-30 cm Square) covering chest and back, which PW considers quite effective when worn in the line.

Source: the above was taken from PW Intelligence Bulletin No 2/19 and describes the German Medical scene. Without that indication some of the items would sound like the American medical scene.

WWII COMMEMORATIONS

9-11 Nov 1995 -WWII Symposium, "The Dawn of a New Day," Valley Forge Military College, 1001 Eagle Road, Wayne PA 19087-3695. This symposium will reflect on the impact of WWII on American Military Personnel and American Society. Contact Donna Brown, 610-989-1450. Conference Fee \$65 includes breakfast and lunch, Thurs Banquet \$25 and Fri Banquet and show \$40. Saturday 11 Nov Memorial Service 8:15 AM and 50th Anniversary Commemorative Military Review 11 AM open to the public. Rooms at Freedom Foundation \$25 single and \$40 Double. A great close to WWII events.

4-11 Closing week of WWII Commemorations, week long event honoring all veterans, events to be held throughout the nation bringing the Commemorative period to an end.

The Vice-President will follow the sun around the world on Veterans Day ending up at the Punch Bowl in Hawaii. The President will lay a wreath at Arlington National Cemetery at 11 AM followed by ceremonies dedicating the WWII Memorial Site at the Rainbow Pool between Independence and Constitution Aves near 17th St NW. Contact Dan Ryan 703-692-2118. A gigantic ticker-tape parade will occur in New York City. Contact 212-332-9667.

A Special Thanks to all WWII Veterans for their service and dedication who answered the call when our Nation needed

Library of Congress Display

The Library of Congress has put France's greatest books on display in their recently renovated Thomas Jefferson Building. The exhibit runs until 30 Dec 1995 and is free to the public. Of special interest to WWII veterans in the 20th century collection are newsletters published by the French Resistance movement. Part of the WWII display includes Charles de Gualle's handwritten war memoirs. For more information call 202-707-8000.

740th Tank Battalion

Shortly after noon on 18 December (Major General Nelson M) Lynde received word from First Army Ordnance that his task force would be bolstered by the 740th Tank Battalion, due to arrive that evening. The catch in this piece of good news was the 740th had no tanks. It was one of four tank battalions under 9th Armored Group that had been in training for the highly secret Canal Defense Light (CDL), a project to employ powerful searchlights mounted on M3 Medium Tanks to illuminate the battlefield and blind the enemy. The project had been abandoned by 12th Army Group and the CDL tanks put in storage. The 740th was to be converted to a standard tank battalion but as yet had not received any Shermans and was being used to flush German paratroopers out of the woods around First Army Headquarters at Spa. By the time the commander of the 740th reported at Aywaille, about dark on 18 December, Lynde had received a report that German armor was less than twelve miles to the east. He directed the Ordnance vehicle park to issue to the 740th anything the men could drive and shoot. The tankers found about 15 medium tanks that could be made operable. They worked on them all night and all next morning, and also acquired from the park an assortment of tank destroyers, assault guns and light tanks, including two new M24's that had just arrived from the United States. Thus equipped, by noon on 19 December they were in a position to defend Aywaille. Two hours later on orders from General Hodges, the 740th was pulled out and attached to the 30th Infantry Division, which was having trouble with advancing German armor. The tankers called the M-24's 'Panther Pups' because of their resemblance to the German Panther tank. These two M-24s were in the depot by mistake, somehow diverted from the first shipment of 20, all consigned to Ninth Army. There was considerable consternation when the head of the familiarization mission discovered that the 740th Tank Bn had carried them off." (This tid-bit was found while researching for Ordnance units in the Official History "The Ordnance Dept on Beachhead and Battlefield by Lida Mayo, 1968, by the Center for Military History. It is interesting for a number of reasons. First the treasurer of the MD/DC Chapter of VBOB Neil Thompson was a member of this unit and he had asked me to find out about this Top Secret project to which he was assigned. We now have the official name to search in the Archives and produce a later story. But it also describes the ingenuity of the American GI when called upon to perform and some of the 'humorous' happenings in the Bulge.)

AS IT HAPPENED

This excerpt is taken from the Unit History for December 1944 and January 1945 from Hq Co, 2nd Bn, 112th Inf, 28th Infantry Division. Why was it selected? Only because it is one of the few Company histories that you find in the official files of the Archives, that covers the Bulge period. It should be recalled that the 28th Infantry Division was covering the southern front and was resting and reoutfitting after fighting in the Hurtgen Forest, near Vossenack and Schmidt. Their line of responsibility was also quite wide. When I first typed this up I excerpted just the Bulge portion but after finishing the report and reading what was going on for the first 11 days of December, I decided to include those days also. It gives the flavor of what might have been a more relaxed atmosphere until the shock of the morning of 16th December came upon them. Editor

December commenced with the company performing its normal functions at the town of Lieler, with all the men well billeted and in a very comfortable area. The only disturbing features were occasional artillery rounds that would shriek in at the most unexpected moment and inflicting a few casualties, though none of a serious nature, in the company. We constantly improved the area and increased facilities for our comfort and perfected the defenses of the area. Special attention was devoted to construction of fighting foxholes with stout covers to deflect artillery fire.

On 2 Dec the "CP Guard Squad" from the rifle companies was disbanded and returned to the companies, requiring members of the company to perform that duty. Lt Goebel and Sgt Pickett left on 3 Dec on a detail to pick up duffel-bags at the beach in France. On the same

day 1st Sgt Anderson participated in a recording for a news broadcast to the people of Pennsylvania. On this same date Sgt Anderson and Sgt Humphrey left for Paris. On 4 Dec, Capt Gilinsky, our Personnel Officer, paid us a visit to help straighten out personnel matters. We continued to serve beer served at the local "pub" which was supplied through Transportation, handled by Sgt Wolf and frequently had movies in the hall above the A&P building. Attending

movies gave one a rather exposed feeling, however, as one shell had torn out the corner of the building and there was no protection whatsoever from incoming artillery.

On 7 Dec, General Davis visited the area and also Lt Orozco left on a 30 day leave for the United States. Lt Fitch of F Company chosen as new S-2, and he reports for duty 9 Dec. In the meantime Sgt Sadler acted as S-2. On 8 Dec Cpl Farr also left for the US for 30 days and on this date Sgt Anderson and Sgt Humphrey reported very interesting times in Paris.

9 Dec Colonel Nelson awarded Bronze Star ribbons to Capt Pruden, Capt Katz, and Sgt Sadler, among others. On 10 Dec Colonel Macsalka went on leave to Brussels returning 18 Dec, Condon left on DS (Detached Service) to Regimental Assault Training Course 10 Dec. Lt Gimre went to Paris 11 December. Plans were laid to move the Battalion, less E Company, to Weis

Wampac, but these plans were interrupted on the morning of 16 Dec by a tremendous artillery barrage to our South, commencing at 0545. We were alerted on information that the 3rd and 1st Bns were having trouble and Plan B for counter-attack went into effect. The Battalion attacked in the 3rd Battalion area and heavy casualties were inflicted upon the enemy. About 2100 hours the command group returned to the CP at Lieler which had acted as rear CP during the action, and we all thought the situation was taken care of until the next morning when Plan B again went into effect and heavier resistance was encountered. This was the commencement of our participation in the December German counter-offensive, although it was several days before the magnitude of the German offensive was realized by us. The Battalion withdrew from the Sevenig Ridge area, back through Lieler and Headquarters Co withdrew with the Bn down into a position in a valley about a mile north of Lieler.

We set up temporarily in woods, while the Battalion went into position facing south. This time German activity around Kalborn, to our south, was exceedingly heavy and penetrations in the 110th Infantry section extremely deep. At dark, 18 Dec, the Battalion withdrew to Weis Wampac, where we

rejoined the combat team and in the early hours of 19 Dec we withdrew on foot to Huldange, Luxembourg, arriving there shortly after daylight. This was indeed a wearying withdrawal and our spirits were extremely low.

At Huldange we remained until 20 Dec, moving to Bieler, with the CT (combat team). We were attached to the 106th Inf Div. At Bieler we first received radio reports that the Germans had taken 20,000 American prisoners and tremendous quantities of material, and the Americans thought that it would take a week to straighten things out. On 22 December we moved before daylight in a heavy snowstorm, on foot, to Salmchateau. Here we heard St Vith had been taken, and US Forces here, though in large numbers, were being strongly pressed. Here Lt Friedman joined us and was assigned to act as liaison officer.

23 Dec we marched at daylight to Burtonville with the mission of protecting the withdrawal of armor across the Salm River at Vielsalm. At dark, the same day, we commenced a march approximately 18 miles lasting all night which was extremely fatiguing and in very cold weather arriving in Chevron.

24 Dec enabled us to get rested up. The company billeted in a large chateau. We left by truck at 1500 and moved into a

AS IT HAPPENED
Continued from Page 4

large Catholic seminary at St Roch. Here we spent Christmas day eating K rations and shivering, but at least it was an opportunity to get rested and clean.

26 Dec Lt Flynn transferred to F Company. Lt Condon was assigned as TO. At St Roch we re-equipped and held inspections, leaving from there by truck 28 Dec, going into a holding position with the Battalion, with rear CP at Erpigny. Our forward CP with A&P Platoon and Radio was in a wooded area 1-1/2 miles to southeast. In this area the weather was very cold and especially those men at the forward CP suffered frostbite.

On 30 Dec Lt Thiery was badly wounded in the leg. Also Pvt Sweetapple was wounded at the same time. Sgt Rodgers, Hq Co, 112th Inf reported as acting Communications Officer.

December ended with the Bn still in position attempting to clear the densely wooded area southeast of Erpigny, with intermittent shelling of the area and generally adverse conditions. However, it appeared that the counter-offensive was definitely stopped and the Allies were now on the offensive.

New Year's Day 1945 was spent in the area around Erpigny, Belgium while Hq Co did its bit in slowing up the force of Von Rundstedt's (sic) vicious thrust and gradually turning the tide in favor of the Allied Forces. It was cold, dangerous work in the woods and the fighting

was all at close range. Those of us who had the good fortune to occupy buildings in Erpigny could at least heat the C and K rations that the others had to eat ice cold; also have a chance to warm by a fire.

On 2 Jan Horseshoe, which had been to our rear, left the area entirely, leaving us without communication with them.

In the area around Erezee and other places to our rear were ample evidences of the massing of Allied Armor and Artillery preparatory to attack through our positions, or around them, which attack got underway with the 2nd Armored and 84th Inf Div in our general area. The weather was cloudy and visibility zero, and with no air support progress was slow. While this attack was progressing we cleared out the wooded area in our zone.

On 4 Jan the Company moved with the Battalion by truck to billets in Kim, arriving after dark. On 5 Jan the company again moved to the vicinity of Roanne, in a cold, wooded area with the CP in a house at the edge of the town.

On 5 Jan Capt Pruden received notice of promotion to rank of Major. Lt Condon left on 6 Jan for 30 day leave to the US.

Before daylight 6 Jan we moved out and occupied an assembly area on the side of a hill near Petit Co. Being reserve battalion we waited until 1st and 3rd battalions had progressed past our objective then marched thru Trois Ponts and into position north of Aisomont. Very cold and

dismal. PFC Pitts, Scouting and Patrolling Squad was killed and PFC Hartinger, S-2 Section, received fatal wounds on 7 Jan. Were relieved by 106 Div 9 Jan and moved to billets at Sart. Here we rested but again 10 Jan we relieved 1st Battalion 117th Infantry in Stavelot. Here things were quiet as we held the town. CP in a once grand chateau, with the company kitchen right in the Battalion CP with us.

On 12 Jan we bade good-bye to the Bulge area travelling by truck all the way around the Bulge, rejoining the Division from which we had been completely separated as a result of the Break-Through. The Battalion was put on guard duty along the Meuse River, widely spread out, with Headquarters Company in Stenay. In Stenay we had a good opportunity to get rested and cleaned. On 14 Jan the company received replacements and RTD's.

On 17 Jan we boarded trains and went by rail to Epinal France where we entrucked and after a cold, black ride through the Vosges Mountains detrucked at LaPoutroie. Here we stayed in an old factory. On 19 Jan we went into position high in the wooded mountains just south of Kaysersburg. We were attached to First French Army and relieved elements of 63rd Div here.

The Battalion was in a holding position spread out over a very wide front. Headquarters Company was split, with 1 squad A and P platoon, kitchen, S-1, and Sgt-Maj, message center and 1st Sgt at rear CP and just up the side of

the hill about 500 yards was the remainder of the company near the Forward CP. AT acted as local security as the motor pool was about 6 miles away, and did not have their guns with them. We moved in and occupied well dug in positions, for which we were very grateful as the previous occupants had done a lot of work on them. Message Center and Communications men of Wire Section had much trouble keeping communications. It was extremely pretty in the hills but the cold and snow were pretty uncomfortable at times. However hot chow helped things a lot and enemy artillery was very infrequent in Headquarters Company area.

On 20 Jan Lt Bernstein reported as new Communications officer, and Sgt Rogers went back to Regiment.

Communications work was heavy in the area, with numerous pioneer tasks. We mostly stood by while the French and other US troops closed up the Colmar Pocket.

On 26 Jan Lt Goebel and Sgt Pickett returned to duty from the detail at the beach.

On 29 Jan Sgt Dacenzo and two squads A and P were put on the line as riflemen.

On 30 Jan we received Combat Infantry Badges, and every man who had been awarded one received one.

The month ended with the Company still in position on the side of the hill and faring not too badly at all. Of interest in

I REMEMBER

by Dale E. Woomert

(The following article is a guest First Person account and is welcome to the pages of the WWII Musings. It can be in handwritten form or typewritten. If done on a computer, a floppy disc copy in either Word Perfect or Microsoft Word would be helpful.)

This is the 50th anniversary of many WWII events. I, like many other veterans, have been asked "what do you remember about **THE WAR**"? The "I" in the title is important. This is a combination of what I remember and my personal review of authoritative histories. It is the story of one battalion in one specific division. Remember, hind sight is 20/20; long after an experience, that experience may seem quite different. Today, the short answer to the question "What do you remember?" is: "**Cold and fear!**". Had you asked that in 1946 as I was discharged I more likely would have answered "**Tired and glad to be home!**"

As I said, this is the story of what I remember. You must realize I was a private in the 303rd Combat Engineer Battalion of the 78th Infantry Div. What I will give you is a snail's eye view of what occurred. Why a snail? Well, a private, like a snail, is at the bottom of things and a private, like a snail, moves slowly within the larger world. And neither have the foggiest idea of what is really happening in that larger world. This is why I also turned to some histories and not just my memories.

As my story begins, "The WAR" was going very well for the allies. We in our division felt very good that we had missed the worst. And we had; we had missed the landing on D-Day. In our minds, as engineers in the lead clearing mines and obstacles, nothing could be worse than a landing.

D-Day for the 78th Div was Dec 13. As we entered the line the Germans had been pushed back to a reasonably straight line along the Siegfried Line. The Roer River was just behind it and served as an effective barrier.

While it was not a large river, it had steep banks as most rivers of the area had. Further, it had a sizeable dam still under the control of the Germans. If blown while the allied troops were crossing the river, it would create a flood and devastate the forces. Efforts to bomb and destroy the dam had failed. The bridge over the dam was gone but the dam itself was still intact. The division orders were to take the town of Schmidt and secure the dam. This meant breaching the Siegfried Line - pill boxes and dragons teeth. Intelligence reports said that despite the fortifications there was no significant German strength in the area - the Germans were on the run. This was to be a mission to acclimate us to the sounds and feel of enemy fire.

Well, there was great resistance! Casualties were very high; in the order of 1500 KIA and MIA. The division was not totally successful, they did not take the town and dam. They did advance the line; break through the Siegfried Line and take and hold several towns of eventual importance to the advance.

On December 16, 1944 the Germans attacked through the Ardennes. This eventually became known as the Bulge. Because of this attack, the eventual bulge and the obvious strength which materialized in the area, I have always wondered how honest the appraisal of the situation was that had been given the 78th. But at the time I had no occasion to question it.

I have done considerable reading on the topic; without going into great detail a few points are of interest. Hitler had decided some time before this date that an attack through this region, driving across the Meuse River and on to Amsterdam would split the allies - both physically and politically. Hitler had new codes developed just for this operation and the attack was a secret within the German Army as well as within Germany. Troop movements were with great subterfuge.

British intelligence had picked up messages and had broken the code but neither they, nor the allied commanders, put any credence on the findings. US Commanders thought the attack was just an isolated retaliation for the 78th attack. As the attack went on and developed into the Bulge, they, including Eisenhower, thought it was a drive to retake Paris.

Hitler's order was the grand scheme; his generals had lesser hopes. The German generals on the scene were reacting under extreme demands for time and success which caused them to ignore some lesser but very important battlefield requirements. My studies make it apparent to me that what the division was told was what the higher echelons believed but their belief was not an accurate or proper analysis of the situation. Intelligence had failed.

The 78th, in their striving for the dam, was sitting just north of the German attack . During the Bulge the role of the 78th became a defensive one. The division was ordered to stop its attack but hold its position; the engineers role became one of laying mines, stringing concertina and setting booby traps instead of clearing them. As it turned out, the Germans had no interest in taking the land we held; their goal was to encircle the entire US Ninth and British Armies.

The infantry dug in along the front and the engineers set up defensive barriers. The Germans were dug in along the crest with our troops at the base of the hill behind a tiny stream; not more than one click across. The holding action meant mines, more than I had ever imagined. As engineers, we were laying mines in that land in between. Both the friendly and enemy troops were clearly visible. Sometimes we had to relay them when we found them disturbed. On one occasion a US bomber crash landed through one of our mine fields dragging many behind it but the crew got out. Day and night we worked in shifts digging in mines - mostly anti-tank mines. It was cold; the ground was frozen; and it began to snow. I think the records show it to have been one of the worst European winters.

At first we carried our rifles slung over our shoulders but this was cumbersome when digging in mines. We soon left them in the truck; after all, the infantry was there. Our task was further eased by the snow as there was no need to dig the mines in to hide them; the snow did this for us in a very effective manner.

When not laying mines we were assigned the job of destroying the Siegfried line. This meant blowing the pill boxes. We did little to destroy the dragon's teeth; generally they were not an obstruction once we had by-passed them. In the 1970's I had the opportunity to visit the area and found the dragon's teeth still there; I did not walk in to look for any of the pill boxes. I was not sure that all of the German and American mines had been cleared. At that time I also drove over the dam and found it unrecognizable. It had been rebuilt as a much higher dam creating a significantly larger lake.

Life for the engineer was generally more comfortable than that of the infantry. Each squad had a truck and trailer for its tools and supplies. We also managed to squeeze a case or two of rations onboard (K, C, D, canned milk, coffee whatever we could pilfer). Among our engineer tools were several blow torches which effectively heated canteen cups so we had hot food and drink - in my case hot chocolate.

We usually commandeered a house to go to when not busy at the front. For most of the time that we held the northern flank of the Bulge our platoon lived in a very modern one; which, surprisingly, had sporadic electric and water service presumably from the dam in German hands. It was also just out of range of the German 88s. Regular shellings landed a few hundred feet short. We did have to move our slit trench. This also meant that most nights we came back to the field kitchen and hot food.

By mid-January the German offensive was essentially neutralized. US drives were being made from all sides. The 78th continued the attack they had started on Dec 13. The cold broke on Feb 4 and a thaw set in. Our engineer task became one of road maintenance and keeping dirt forest trails passable - cutting trees for corduroy road and hauling gravel.

After much heavy fighting, Schmidt was taken on Feb 8. On the night of the 9th a special 303rd CEB team of five engineers and protecting riflemen inspected the dam for explosives but none were found. The penstock gates had been blown releasing a 23 foot diameter column of water producing a temporary flood. The dam was reported secure on Feb 10th. The flood peaked on 25 Feb. After 59 days (Dec 13 to Feb 10th), we were across the Roer. The statistics in Table 1 summarize the extent of the activity for the 78th Division.

TABLE 1 - ACTION SUMMARY
Dec. 13, 1944 to Feb. 10, 1945

DAM SECURED

- * 35 square miles of Siegfried defense cleared.
- * 16 towns and 2700 prisoners taken.
- * 159,000 lbs of TNT used.
- * 28,400 anti-tank mines laid.
- * 3,500 anti-personnel mines set.
- * 2,000 miles of phone wire strung.

The 78th Infantry Division was present at the very beginning of the Bulge and, while participating mostly in a holding roll during the Bulge, essentially ended the Bulge with the capture of the Roer dams and the breakout onto the

Cologne plains.

Up to here I have talked about our Division and its holding action in the Bulge. A review of what I believe to be some of the controlling factors through out the Bulge seems in order. Hitler had misjudged many things when he planned the Ardennes attack. In particular the morale of the German soldier and of the US soldier.

o Ammo availability was poor on both sides but the US had new artillery rounds and more artillery pieces despite their loosing some.

o Gasoline supply for the Germans became critical. Hitler had counted on capturing US supplies; it essentially never happened.

o Communications was extremely poor on both sides. For the US and allies radios were constantly out. Maybe some of the radio problem was the terrain; the terrain did not permit line-of-sight radio transmission. Phone line installation was usually strung along fences and trees where it was easily broken.

o Mobility was very poor on both sides. The nature of the terrain and the weather were the big factors. A usable road net just did not exist. Main roads were almost non-existent; the existing roads were narrow and winding. Forest roads were dirt trails. Snow and cold produced frozen soil which supported some heavy traffic. Bridges were generally too weak for heavy military traffic and many were destroyed in delaying actions. The road net was ideal for road blocks which proved to be very effective slowing the German advance.

o German command discipline broke down. Under the demand for speed, they were more concerned with achieving their personal assignments and goals than the overall strategy. They did not use assigned roads and created huge traffic jams for themselves.

o US had no alternatives and attempted the frozen trails with some success. They got some vehicles out, destroyed and abandoned others. Many troops made it out on foot despite the very bad weather.

In summary it seems Hitler's last effort was one that was doomed to failure from the start. Unfortunately, it was one that was costly in terms of lives and gained Hitler only a very brief respite. Most of his top command were against it and their hearts were not in the effort; morale was bad even at that level.

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Special thanks Dale for your interesting story. Editor

the area were the French Moroccans who handled the pack mules for hauling supplies up the steep mountainsides.

In this area Sergeant Wilkins was transferred from the A and P platoon and made Mess Sergeant.

January had been an eventful month, having AS
IT HAPPENED Continued from Page 6
seen us in combat on the north flank of the Bulge, then all the way around in to guard duty on the Meuse, then fighting the Krauts in the mountains near Colmar as

part of the First French Army.

James T Nesbitt,
Capt, 112th Inf,
Company Historian

(Editor's note: The above story written by Capt Nesbitt came from his December 1944 and January 1945 unit History Reports for Hq Company, 2nd Bn, 112th Infantry Regiment to the S-1, 112th Infantry Regiment, 28th Infantry Division. His subtle tone captures the cold and hardship and points out with quiet but meaningful words what must have been the pleasure of getting clean and the wonders of a hot meal.

AS XII ARMY GROUP SAW IT

Enemy Operations and Units in Contact

17 1800 Dec to 18 1800 Dec 1944

NINTH US ARMY

Enemy ground activity remained at a minimum throughout the period, but both Corps report a slight increase in artillery and mortar fire. Maastricht (K5253) received intermittent long range artillery fire, and towns near the front were subjected to some interdiction fire.

In the air, however, the enemy attitude took a more aggressive turn. Small numbers of paratroops, the majority of whom have already been captured, were dropped in rear areas, with no special mission other than to harass and create a diversion. Enemy aircraft were active over the entire Army area; at first confining their attention to our forward positions; later, dropping flares and heavy concentrations of anti-personnel, high explosive, and incendiary bombs indiscriminately over XIII and XIX Corps zones. The Hqs of both Corps were attacked, but only minor damage has been reported.

FIRST US ARMY

The Duren (F1245) approaches were stubbornly defended by elements of the 47th Inf Div in the pocket west of the Roer River; but the enemy was forced to fall back, yielding Rolsdorf in house to house fighting. Elements of the 83rd Div reached F1145 to find a damaged but passable bridge across the Roer River.

Operation "Grief," as explained by captured German documents, continued to be carried out as German troops in the V and VIII Corps zone pushed toward Trois Ponts, 5 kilometers southwest of Stavelot (K7301) and the high ground around St Vith (P8687) for an eventual junction near Mormont (P4695). In the northern V Corps zone the enemy exerted heavy pressure throughout the period and launched two small counterattacks, broken up by our artillery, near Kesternich (L0024). Local counterattacks were unsuccessfully attempted by the enemy near Hofen (K9516) but the line was restored by our troops and enemy tanks

withdrew from Kalterherberg (K9315). Along the north flank of the enemy penetration a line has been established, but confused fighting continued through the day. Monschau (K9417) remains in our hands; but a strong enemy build-up is evident in this area. Tac/R reports of heavy road movements, including tanks, in the Gemund area (F1220), may indicate that the second SS Panzer Corps may be moving down to attack in the Monschau area. There has been no confirmation, however, that 2 and 9 SS Panzer Divs are moving toward the south. On the southern V Corps flank enemy tanks were contacted north and east of Krinkelt (K9704) and the enemy held Bullingen (K9502) strongly. The reports of 1 SS Panzer Div were confirmed when prisoners were captured from the 1 SS Panzer Regt and the 2 SS Panzer Grenadier Regt near L0504, as well as the 25 SS Panzer Grenadier Regt (12 SS Panzer Div). Fighting was heavy and enemy armored spearheads pushed to the west, passing south of Malmedy (K8804) and reaching Stavelot (K7301). Enemy tanks, however, seemed to be in small groups and our infantry was successfully engaging the enemy columns that attempted to follow the tank exploitations. Tac/R reports 200 vehicles and 60 tanks in the area east of Stavelot.

In the VIII Corps zone the enemy penetrated toward Schonberg and made substantial advances toward St Vith (P8687) with elements of the 156 Panzer Grenadier Regt (116 Panzer Div) and 62 Infantry Div. Enemy troops were reported north and east of the latter town today. To the south, enemy troops had established a foothold on the western side of the Sauer River; but the enemy was contained. The 4th US Inf Div reports that the enemy purpose appears to be an attempt to secure the commanding terrain across the Our River with small forces for future exploitation, rather than for an immediate deep penetration. The enemy circle around Osweiler (L0633) and Dickweiler (L0832) has been broken;

and, in the Echternach (L0536) area, the enemy has given ground steadily. All three Regts of the 5th Parachute Div have been identified by the 9th US Armored Div.

THIRD US ARMY

In the Northern XX Corps zone, there was a noticeable increase in enemy activity as aggressive patrols were encountered; artillery fire, including smoke shells and airbursts, increased; and construction activity was heard continually along the Saar River. In the 90th US Infantry Div bridgehead the situation remained comparatively quiet and our troops consolidated their positions without any offensive action by the enemy. In the vicinity of Dillingen (Q2684) prisoners were captured from the 3rd Co of the 74th Inf Regt and 6th Co of the 73rd Inf Regt (19th Inf Div). Artillery fire was not heavy during the period. The 95th US Inf Div met fanatical opposition in Fraulautern (Q2987), taking one house at a time before moving on. A defensive attitude only was evinced by the enemy in the III Corps zone. The 6th Armored Division met intense small arms and artillery fire near Lixing (Q4442) where the 5th Co of the 113th Inf Regt (36th Inf Div) was identified; and the enemy gave no evidence of withdrawing as defensive positions were organized. The 2nd Co of the 860th Infy Regt (347th Inf Div) was identified at Q5962.

Dominating terrain, towns and wooded area were constantly used by the enemy in the XII Corps zone in his obstinate delaying actions. The 35th US Infantry Div reported a decrease in artillery fire, but heavy resistance was met in Herbitzheim (Q6263), Hochwald (Q6563) and Gersheim (Q6161). Resistance from small arms fire was determined in Niedergailbach (Q6159) and Walshecz (Q6361). The 7th Co of the 110 Panzer Grenadier Regt and 1 Co of the 111 Panzer Grenadier Regt (11 Panzer Div) were identified at Q6557 and Q6257 respectively. Source: National Archives Records RG 407, G-2 Periodic Report, No 196, Hq Twelfth Army Group TAC, APO 655, 18 December 1944.

<p>OTHER OMENS</p> <p>o PWs from 12113 Gr Regt of 189 Inf Div taken on 9 Dec state that the Regt received reinforcements from 12 March Bn z.b.v. which left Heidelberg on 4 Dec. The strength of the Bn was 100 men of which 1213 Gr Regt received 50.</p> <p>o An excellent source, quoting a German Officer on 15 Dec, state that the Fallchirmjaeger Division in Noordeloos has been reinforced with 712 Inf Div. SHAEF Comment: 3000 paratroops were reported in this area on 5 Dec.</p> <p>o A fair source reports on 4 Dec 1944:</p> <p>a. For the past ten days, troops from Italy and Balkans have been detraining at all stations of the Loerrach (A99) region. These troops are occupying a half ready defense line about 10 km from the river facing Switzerland as well as Alsace.</p> <p>b. Since 4 Dec 44, units of the Waffen SS have been arriving at Loerrach and are sent on to Muellhelm (V91). Sudeten-German units are among them. The headquarters of the</p>	<p>troops stationed in this sector has been set up at Hagen (A99) on 4 Dec. SHAEF Comment: The presence of SS in this area to prevent crossing of the Swiss border has been reported by other sources.</p> <p>o A fair source reports on 9 Dec 44, with a warning against the exaggerated figures:</p> <p>a. At Pforzheim (R73) a concentration of troops coming from Muensingen (X38) in strength of 8-10,000.</p> <p>b. At Bruchsal (R65) about 5,000. SHAEF Comment: (a) Possibly the Volksgren Div which according to PW formed at Muensingen late in Nov 44. (b) Possibly elements of 553 Volksgren Div which has been reported reforming at Karlsruhe (R44).</p> <p>o A fair source, quoting a senior German railway official, states that Himmler and a staff totalling 1200 arrived Triburg on 9 Dec. Offices and quarters are established in private houses and local offices of the town. The staff includes Himmler's Leibstandarte and 20 senior officers and two generals.</p>	<p>Troops are mixed Army and SS. The surrounding region is heavily guarded by SS. SHAEF Comment: If true, may account for the mention of "SS Div Himmler" at Schramberg (W45) and some of the other reports of SS troops in this area. Possibly sabotage and harassing activities on this part of the front are to be intensified.</p> <p>o A reliable source reporting in early Dec states that at Bjerkvik, just north of Narvik, Norway, a sign post has been put up with the inscription "Sammelstelle 210 Div." SHAEF Comment: Indicates that 210 Inf Div is in transit through Troms.</p> <p>The above indicators were distributed as Annex No 1 to G-2 Periodic Report No 196 (18 Dec 1944) from the Twelfth Army Group. It was distributed to all the various Army, Corps and Division G-2s. In hind sight we know what was building up but it is interesting to read how at that point in time all these indicators were being ignored and written off as other things. No doubt the fact that ULTRA was quiet misled all these Intelligence folks in ignoring these indicators. From the National Archives RG 407.</p>
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WWII MUSINGS

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

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SEE NOV 3 DEADLINE

FIRST CLASS

John D. Bowen Editor

ARDENNES □ CAMPAIGN

November



EVERLASTING DUTY

We offer our sympathy to the family of our member who passed away recently.

Eternal Rest Grant Unto Him
His Earthly Duties Are Done

GET WELL SOON

Phyllis Thompson,
Norman Sue,
Jack Rue,
Blaquie Culp &
Ed Radzwich.
Please keep them in your prayers.

Next Meeting
12 Nov 1995
11:30-1:00 Lunch
followed by meeting
Golf Course Clubhouse
off of Mapes Rd
by the MP Hq
Fort Meade MD
Future Meetings:
Dec 03 Officers Club
Feb 11 Golf Clubhouse
Apr 14 Officers Club
Jun 9 Golf Clubhouse
Aug 11 Officers Club
Oct 13 Golf Clubhouse
Elections

TV SET DRAWING

The winner of the TV Set was
Harry L. Durity.
We thank all who participated.

NEW 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

HAPPY BIRTHDAY CORNER

NOVEMBER	NOVEMBER	NOVEMBER
Marvin H ABRAMS	Attilio O MASCONI	Sam SILVERMAN
Paul R HAAG 75	Edwin A MORGENSTERN	Renato "Vic" TRAPANI
Emanuel LANDAU	George I PRESSER	If we have missed your birthday please let us

NEW MEMBERS

Edward GREENE 238 Engr Bn	Albert KOTOSKI 78InfD303Eng	Dorothy OLSEN 3Aux Surg Gp	Anthony STRANK 981 FA Bn
Alfred F FIELDS 3InfD 12 Eng	Mike J LEVIN 7Armd 489 AFA	Richard A	R Vic TRAPANI 4268 QM Trk
Wayne B GLENN 30InfD 117Inf	Richard A LILL 27 Air Trans Gp	Rudy RUDOLF US MarinesFMF	Joseph F ZIMMER 87InfD345Inf
Wm G HEMELT 106InfD 424 Inf	Charles MALLON Jr5InfD351Eng	Walter SMALLETS 76InfD	John B CRAMER 78InfD310Inf
Charles R HOHL 4Armd 35 TkBn	Wilbur O NELSON Jr9Amrd3AFA	Don N SNYDER 127 AAA Bn	

CHAPTER ANNIVERSARY LUNCHEON & MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

Our Anniversary Luncheon and Membership Drive was a huge success. In addition to the installation of officers for the coming year it brought together 47 new members and old members and their spouses. The Chapter was presented with a special flag and plaque as a member of the 50th Anniversary of WWII Commemoration Committee by LTC Thomas Surface. Col Surface as was the main speaker and talked about Remembering the Past, and Prepare for the Future., He talked about educating future generations by veterans doing living and oral history. It was agreed that meetings would be held the second Sunday of Even Months at Fort Meade because of its central location to the state and the District of Columbia. Meetings will alternate between the Golf Clubhouse and the Officers Club. A schedule of the meetings is elsewhere.

PRESIDENT'S SPEECH: Yesterday, 50 years ago, many of our friends gave up their tomorrows in order that we might have our today's. It is only fitting then that we spend some of our todays honoring those who made the supreme sacrifice and those who survived the conflict we call WWII and more especially the Battle of the Bulge, some of whom were battle-scarred and others who escaped unharmed. That is the purpose of our organization, "To Honor and Remember." It is also appropriate that we honor ourselves as well now, during the 50th Anniversary of the war that ended all wars, and this we have done through parades, ceremonies, support of veteran hospitals and a myriad of individual efforts which enabled us to qualify as a 50th Anniversary "Commemorative Community."

I was pleased when thoughtful and dedicated men organized VBOB in the early 80's and soon affiliated and on another occasion, such as this, became a member of the MD/DC Chapter.

A "Liberator," what an appropriate name! And we "Liberators" have done well! Four of our number have served as National President, George Chekan, William Greenville, Darrell Kuhn and Grover Twiner who is about to be "unhorsed." Ten have served as Chapter President. I am further pleased that your Nominating Committee has judged me worthy to serve you and that you have concurred. We all have vivid memories of that conflict which became so personal to us 50 years ago. It is my hope that we may set aside and personal aggrandizement or glorifications and work toward the preservation of historical facts and memorabilia of that conflict toward the end that permanent reminders of the horrors of war will show generations yet to come that war is indeed hell. the Battle of the Bulge Historical Foundation was created for that purpose and we as a chapter should stand ready to assist and indeed we are. Most recently with the completion of the conference room, the special table and exhibits, we have volunteered to be on duty at the Post Library Wednesday and Friday afternoons to receive visitors and tell the story of the Ardennes Offensive and the creation of the Memorial Conference Room. Our thanks to Mr & Mrs Thompson, Mr & Mrs Kraus, Hazel Collins and Comrades Bowen, Edmunds, Kuhn and Guenter. They were all made "Kernels" at our first meeting by our shaker and mover Dorothy Davis when she likened these volunteers to kernals being planted in hopes of something coming alive and growing. That's Kernal with a "K." Then Too, we have on this base a top quality museum which deserves our interest and assistance.

At a future meeting, we will have Robert Johnson, Museum Director, give us a good orientation session. Above all I am hopeful that we of the MD/DC Chapter will maintain a good fraternal relationship with the base staff. Our National Board meets here as do we. Perhaps we might become even more helpful as the modern military continues to be pared down. Some of you are well aware of and others may have noticed the sign at the gate which says: "Fort George G Meade is proudly joined as a Sister City with Ville de Stavelot, Belgium." Stavelot, a word well burned into the memory of the old soldiers here today. A further reason why I feel that as the local chapter of VBOB should maintain the close relationship already established with this base and I will strive to do so this coming year and I hope that you will also.

I close with a word of appreciation for our Associate Norma Loud Van Allen who served as our Secretary this past year and for Benjamin Layton our estimable President who on some occasions I call "Big Ben." You have our sincere thanks. A reminder to the membership. Our next meeting is scheduled for Sunday, November 12, sic weeks hence. We meet here at the Golf Clubhouse. Come early for luch at their excellent cafeteria but be ready to get down to business at 1300 hours. That is 1 PM for those who don't remember ZULU time.

While the Fiftieth Anniversary Commemoration will officially close with the Nov 11th Veterans Day programs a more fitting end for us will be our Annual Memorial service on December 16 at the VBOB Marker opposite the main entrance to the Arlington Cemetery Amphitheatre with a reception and installation of National Officers at the Fort Myer Officers Club following. Watch our great newsletter, The marcher, for details.(Our new President Richard Carl Schlenker was born on Patriots Day, April 19, 1923, in Wilkes-Barre PA. He is married to the former Dorris Romaine Weidner and they are the parents of six children and have seven grandchildren. Dick served with the 104th Infantry, 26th Yankee Division. He has been active in church, civic and hereditary organizations. He is a member of his unit associations and the American Legion, Post 268 and VFW Post 2562 and Masonic organizations. He is also