WWII MUSINGS

Volume 7 Issue 6 John D. Bowen, Editor Nov/Dec 2000

Happy Holidays

THANKSGIVING

At this special time of year
we wish to express

Our heartfelt thanks
to all who have done so much to
make this year a success.
Whether it's a trip to a school, a
veteran's home, the VA Hospital, or
a cemetery to visit a friend or loved
one. Thank you for caring.

WWII Memorial

It was a grateful day in Washington DC, on the Mall, at the site of the WWII Memorial, on Veterans Day 11 November 2000, as the Commander-in-Chief and other dignitaries, including our own Stan Wojtusik, VBOB VP for Military Affairs turned the earth symbolically for the WWII Memorial.

It was a beautiful sunny day and it was great to see all of the many World War II veterans who had packed the seating to commemorate this significant event. Many had lined up to go through security at 9:30 AM and visited with fellow veterans until the Groundbreaking Ceremony began at 1:00 PM.

In remarks by Representative Marcy Kaptur, of Ohio, who spearheaded the idea through Congress spoke of how one man, a Battle of the Bulge veteran, Roger Durbin, asked "why isn't there a WWII memorial in Washington?" It took over 13 years for his idea to come to fruition though unfortunately he was to pass on this year before the Groundbreaking event.

Bob Dole, National Chairman, of the WWII Memorial Campaign was to receive the only standing ovation that day. Tom Hanks, of *Saving Private Ryan* fame, chose to make a dramatic reading of one of Ernie Pyle's reports from the front which brought tears to many an eye.

After the President's tribute to the Greatest Generation, the Groundbreaking Ceremony was held followed by Taps and the singing of God Bless America and the Armed Forces Service Medley in which each service stood as their service song was played. By far the majority of those attending were from the Army but it took all of the branches to win the war including the Merchant Marines and Coast Guard.

It was a beautiful tribute to each of you!

BATTLE OF THE BULGE
HISTORICAL FOUNDATION
56th Remembrance & Commemoration
Hospitality Room, Sheraton National
Friday, 15 Dec 2000
Library of Congress Bulge Maps 9:00 AM
Luncheon Union Station 12:00 PM
NewseumTour Rosslyn VA 2:00 PM
Banquet Sheraton Arlington 6:00 PM
See Bulge Bugle for details
Call Dorothy Davis 301-881-0356

VETERANS OF THE
BATTLE OF THE BULGE
56th Remembrance & Commemoration
Saturday, 16 Dec 2000
Wreath Laying Tomb of the Unknowns 11:00 AM
Followed by
Ceremony of Remembrance BOB Memorial
Arlington Cemetery
Buffet Luncheon, Sheraton National, Arlington
Vafollows.
Installation of new VBOB Officers

EDITOR'S CORNER

WWII MEMORIAL

It was a well deserved salute to you our WWII Veterans at the symbolic groundbreaking at the WWII Memorial on the Mall in downtown Washington. I say symbolic because it is still not a done deal.

The Coalition to Preserve the Mall has filed a lawsuit to prevent the building of the WWII Memorial on the Mall because they say it will disturb the historic vista of the Mall. Thus they could not break the actual ground because the permits have not been issued and will not be until the lawsuit is resolved..

This to me is all hog-wash by a few, I feel, to salve their egos and draw attention to themselves. Chief among the detractors are Eleanor Norton of the District as well as a few misguided World War II veterans who say they are for the memorial but just not there. As representative Kaptur said at the ceremonies. It has taken 13 years to get to this point which is almost three times longer than it took to fight the Second World War.

Frank Walsh and I visited both the Korean War and Vietnam War Memorials after the WWII event and it was gratifying to see so many civilains especially the young people visiting these memorials learning about the horrors of war and that Freedom is not Free. That is why the World War II Memorial needs to be exactly where it is proposed, to teach future generations about Duty, Honor, Country.

Yes, this portion of the Mall has become hallowed ground from the Washington Monument dedicated to George Washington and his service to his country in the Revolutionary War and as President At the opposite end is the Memorial to Lincoln and the Civil War. His great service to save the country, abolish slavery and reunify our strife torn land. At that same end of this hallowed ground are memorials dedicated to honor those who served their country and those who gave their lives in a Forgotten War in which the parties have still not signed a treaty and an unpopular war in Vietnam.

There is no more appropriate place then at the head of this hallowed ground in the shadow of the Washington Monument, as the sun rises in the day, to honor the sacrifices made by those of "The Greatest Generation" who answered the call when our nation called, saved our democratic values from the clutches of tyranny and then rebuilt the aggressors into formidible allies as they brought prosperity to our nation and the world. *JDB*

A TIP OF THE HAT

A right hand salute and a tip of the hat should be given to the Students and Staff at John F Kennedy High School in Silver Spring MD for the outstanding Veterans Day Commemoration that they held on Friday, 10 Nov 2000.

This is the only school of 187 in Montgomery County that commemorates Veterans Day and their Student Government members, future leaders of America, worked tirelessly to organized and execute this Salute to Veterans.

Your Chapter President, Dee Paris, your Editor and my wife Mary Ann and Dolleye xxxxxxxxxxx were asked to speak as veterans representing World War II, Korean War, Woman in the Military, and the Peace Corps respectively.to the students for two of their assemblies. In addition to being attentive, interested and respectful they had very informative questions that they presented to the speakers during the question period.

But what made this event particularly great and touching was that they had collected $200 in their Social Studies classes and presented this to the Veterans in a symbolic oversized check for the Disabled American Veterans. Frank Walsh, our Chapter Member from Columbus Ohio, who was in town for the WWII Events, was wearing his Purple Heart Cap and as a DAV Member accepted the symbolic check on behalf of Veterans.

It is encouraging to see the patriotism of these students and I believe that if and when duty calls these students will meet the call. JDB

ONLY IN AMERICA

As I prepare this newsletter, we still do not have a President elected, but this great nation continues to function as a democratic Republic. Shortly, the Florida election and subsequently the President of the United States will be decided by our military as is often the case in so many countries in the world. But there will be one major difference. The military will decide who our next President will be but not by the force of arms as we see so often. Instead our military will decide this election by their vote in their absentee ballots. Our country will then support whomever is decided as having the most electoral votes. God Bless America.

JDB

It is with sadness that I report on the passing of member
NICK T. SAVKO, Sr.
Company G 359 Infantry 90th Infantry Division
who passed away 26 August of this year after a short illness. He did so much for the MD veterans through his leadership in the American Legion and VFW. May he rest in peace.

E-Mail Addresses

If you have an E-Mail address please send it with your dues. If we missed your birthday we are sorry that we do not have it. Please send your DOB & Telephone # changes.

Thanks JDB

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

THE CIGARETTE CAMPS

Many GIs went through a Cigarette Camp either as they entered the Continent or when they were leaving to come home. The author of this article Larry M. Belmont has produced an excellent web site on the internet about the Cigarette Camps. This Introduction may bring back many memories by each of you and Larry would appreciate hearing about these memories so that they may be saved for posterity. You may contact Larry at 30 Purick St., Blue Point NY 11715-1120, By phone at 516-363-8014 (leave a message), by FAX at 516-363-8014 or by e-mail at webmaster@skylighters.org Please visit his web site at http://www.skylighters.org/special/cigcamps/cigintro.html

After the Allies secured the French harbor of LeHavre (on the eastern side of the bay of the Seine, opposite Cherbourg, in Northern France), the Americans began ringing the city with camps that served as staging areas for new troops arriving in the ETO. Most of the camps were located between LeHavre and Rouen [They had constructed the so-called "City Camps" around the city of Reims. The wartime plan was for incoming units to pass through camps named for cigarettes and departing units to pass through camps named after American cities. The names of the cigarettes and cities were chosen for two reasons. First, for security. Referring to the camps without an indication of their geographical location went a long way to ensuring that the enemy would not know precisely where they were. Anybody eavesdropping or listening to radio traffic would think that cigarettes were being discussed or the camp was stateside, especially regarding the city camps. Secondly, there was a subtle psychological reason, the premise being that troops heading into battle wouldn't mind staying at a place where cigarettes must be plentiful and troops slated to return to the USA would be somehow comforted in places with familiar names of cities back home (Camp Atlanta, Camp Baltimore, Camp New York and Camp Pittsburgh, among others.). (I doubt if the GIs heading into Europe were taken in by any of that cigarette mumbo-jumbo!) By war's end, however, all of the cigarette and city camps were devoted to departees. Many processed liberated American POWs (Prisoners of War) and some even held German POWs for a while]

The city of LeHavre had fallen on September 12, 1944, but because of the persistence of the German defense and the ferocity of the Allied air assault, much of it was destroyed, including the world-class harbor facilities so coveted by the British and Americans. Considering that Cherbourg's harbor facilities were slowly being restored after being demolished by the Germans prior to surrendering the port, most of the Allies' men and materiel were being landed directly on the Normandy beaches and ferried inland, initially to be injected directly into combat and later to be sent to staging areas for placement. In late 1944 these camps were rather primitive places, usually sprawling tent cities characterized by a sense of transience, with little if any conveniences. Those "canvas" camps were at the mercy of the weather that was particular to Northern Europe in the Fall and Winter of 1944-45, and many US veterans who spent time at any of them before the onset of the battle of the Bulge and prior to being shuttled forward recall nothing but cold rain and colder mud, and, of course, snow. Trenchfoot ran rampart. So did the flu.

The camps were named for American cigarettes, which were fast becoming universal currency in the ETO. Soon, GIs were cursing places called Camp Chesterfield and Camp Lucky Strike. And there was Camp Old Gold too, and Philip Morris, Pall Mall, Herbert Tareyton, Wings, Home Run, and Twenty Grand. They'd cross the channel in some LST or tinier tub, perhaps an LCI, spend a few days in what must have seemed like a hell hole, and then entrain to the front in boxcars known as "40 and 8s" (so called for the French designation "40 hommes et 8 chevaux," which means the boxcars had a capacity of 40 men or eight horses) or in trucks. The camps were also known as "pneumonia holes," "repple-depples," or "Repo Depots" (denoting replacement Depots). (WWII movie buffs will recall that the opening scene of William Wellmann's Battleground evoke the atmosphere at these camps pretty accurately.)

In 1945, when the end of the war in Europe was in sight, some of the camps underwent tremendous changes, in anticipation of the role they would play after the war in Europe was over. Barracks and other permanent structures were built. Hospitals and PXs too. Mess halls replaced outdoor chowlines snaking through rows of tents to mobile field kitchens. Wood began replacing canvas and concrete and asphalt replaced the mud. The Red Cross had a tremendous presence at those camps that were to handle returning POWs. "Java Junctions," those ubiquitous dispensaries of real coffee and doughnuts, were established at all of the camps. (Spend a day at a camp and one would come away thinking that the American GI could be sustained solely by tobacco and doughnuts!) After V-E Day the camps were now ready for these new roles and were redesignated redeployment centers as part of the *(Continued from Page 5 – Cigarette Camps)* American plans to both reassign units to the Pacific Theatre and to demobilize others and return men home. Occupation troops also continued to arrive at LeHavre and spend a few days at a

(Continued on page 4)

"cigarette camp" before receiving final orders throughout 1945, although by 1946, they were falling into disrepair and were becoming little more than the ramshackle collections of tents pitched in vast mudholes that they were two years before. Today, little remains (but) names of GIs carved into trees in the surrounding forests (along with) some scuffed tarmac (or) perhaps a wooden structure or two absorbed into the French villages that have grown up around the original sites.

In these pages, we hope to document the history of "The Cigarette Camps," collect maps and pictures depicting them, and tell the story of what life was like there for the few days between hopping off the boat in LeHavre and heading for the front lines, or waiting for a Victory Ship ride back home…. We also welcome contributions of such material from individuals (maps, photos, postcards, etc.). We will pay all postage associated with sending them or facsimiles and will return original material by Express Mail at no cost to the contributor. AS always, we cannot write history properly without the participation of the men and women who were there and we invite GIs and other personnel who have memories of these camps to get in touch with the author.

A parallel effort is underway in France, coordinated by Frédéric Brière, who is concentrating on Camp Lucky Strike, but hopes to document the history of all of the camps. He reports (October 1999) that he has been in touch with many veterans who have contributed photos and related their memories. Further, he reported the following:

HThere is no trace of Camp Old Gold (Yerville, adjacent to Yvetot)

HThe surviving buildings of Camp Twenty Grand are being used by the town of St Pierre de Varengeville.

HThe taxiways of a former runway at Camp Lucky Strike are in need of serious repair.

HThe site of Camp Philip Morris is deserted, but there are still artifacts to be uncovered if one digs a little bit (as at Lucky Strike).

Frédéric's web site (in French and soon to be in English; visit AltaVista's Translation Page to translate his French pages), a work in progress, is taking shape at http://www.normandnet.fr/inddex/cc/default/htm (yes there are two 'd' in inddex)

Larry M. Belmont

ARMY MORTUARY UNIT

The Army Mortuary Unit is the repository of information for all US Army and US Army Air Corps personnel who were killed in action during World War II.

If you are not the next of kin you can still receive information on a buddy that you served with or a family member by filing a Freedom of Information Act request to:

Mortuary Affairs & Casualty Support Division
US Total personnel Command
HQDA (TAPC-PED-F)
2461 Eisenhower Avenue
Alexandria VA 22331-0482

It will take approximately 5-6 months but they will respond to your request. You need to provide them with the name, rank, service number and unit in which the individual served. If you are not the next of kin, the Army will generally blank out addresses of next of kin on letters and telegrams sent and other matters of a privacy nature. However, the file will generally have eye-witness accounts to the death and the wishes of the family as to burial.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

At the suggestion of Treasurer Neil Thompson and approval by the officers, the Chapter contributed $250 to the Fort Meade "Holiday Assistance Program" in support of the Commissary Food Drive Collection. Our members can be proud of this action as we continue our close and mutually-beneficial relationship with the Post.

Members attending the October meeting agreed they want to hear more about Engineer activities from VP John Worthington who had to battle noise from the adjacent room. They also want a return engagement by Barbara Lee Podoski with a request that she tell them more about OSS activities.

The Fort Meade Officer's Club has undergone a major change in its membership requirements. It is now known as Club Meade and membership is open to everyone. Annual dues are $96 a year ($8/month). Meade membership is not reciprocal with other military clubs.

At this time of the year I want to thank all that have helped in making my year as President a productive one. One cannot do it alone and it is the teamwork and camaraderie of this Chapter and its members that makes it unique. Happy Thanksgiving and Holidays.

Dee

BULGE REENACTMENT

The annual Battle of the Bulge Reenactment will be held from
Wednesday, 24 January 2001
To
Sunday, 26 January 2001
At Fort Indiantown Gap, PA
All Veterans Invited
Deadline 31 Dec 2000

Option C: $55 -4 nites in Barracks, Saturday Breakfast and Dinner
Option D: $35 -4 nites in Barracks, No Meals

For Registration Forms send stamped self addressed envelope to John D. Bowen, 613 Chichester Ln Silver Spring MD 20904-3331

Fact Sheet of the 94th Infantry Division

TYPE OF DIVISION: Organized Reserve

SHOULDER PATCH: The patch is circular in shape and is divided diagonally into a field of grey and black. The Arabic number 9, in black, is superimposed on the field of grey and the Arabic number 4, in grey, is on the field of black.

ACTIVATION DATE: 15 September 1942.

INACTIVATION DATE: 9 February 1946 at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey.

COMPONENT UNITS: 301, 302, and 376 Inf Regts; 94 Cav Rcn Tp (Mecz); 319 Engr Combat Bn, 319 Med Bn. Div Arty: 301, 356 and 919st FA Bns (105 How) and 390 FA Bn (155 How). Sp Tps: 94 QM Co, 94 Sig Co, 794 Ord Co (LM), Hq Co, MP Plat and Band.

TRAINING UNDER ARMY GROUND FORCES: The division was activated for this war at Ft Custer MI but soon after activation moved to Camp Phillips, Kansas. In July 1943 the 94th participated in maneuvers in Tennessee, under the Second Army. In December 1943 the unit moved to Camp McCain, Mississippi for final training.

DEPARTED U.S. FOR FOREIGN DUTY: 6 August 1944.

OVERSEAS TRAINING: Trained briefly in England prior to leaving for the continent.

DATE ENTERED COMBAT: Division 17 September 1944, First Elements 10 September 1944.

COMBAT DAYS (DIV): 183.

RETURNED TO U.S.: 6 February 1946.

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

SUCCESSIVE COMMANDING GENERALS: Major General Harry J Malony from September 1942 to May 1945; Brigadier General Louis J Fortier from June to July 1945; Major General Allison J Barnett from 1 August 1945 to inactivation.

COMBAT HIGHLIGHTS: The division went into action in September 1944 in the Lorient and St Nazaire sectors, with the object of containing some 60,000 Germans in those submarine ports, well protected from aerial bombardment by flak guns and concrete emplacements. The division had to cover 450 air line miles of front and was faced constantly with the threat of an attempt by the Nazis to join the two pockets. However, when the 94th finished 111 days of combat in Brittany, the two pockets had been thoroughly pinned up. Blain and several other French towns had been liberated and 29 battalions of French Infantry had been trained and equipped to help fight in the area. In addition, numerous Germans had been killed and three exchanges of prisoners of war effected. In January 1945 the division moved to a section southeast of the city of Luxembourg where the Germans had thrown up what became known as the Siegfried Switch Line to protect the bulge of the German border. And to act as a buffer to the main Siegfried Line east of the Saar River. Taking up positions along the Moselle River, the division, now part of the Third Army, began to probe for possible routes for an all-out offensive. On 14 January the 94th captured Tettington and Butzdorf and in the next three days made the first crack in the Switch Line by grabbing Nennig, Wies and Berg. In February the division began the job of clearing out the Campholz Woods. On 7 February after the woods had been gained the 94th took Sinz in a bloody action. It went on to strike east through Adenhelz Woods, Munzingen and Keblingen fell to the Infantry, as well as Oberleuken and Faha. The division now swept aside all opposition as it headed for the Saar. By the latter part of February the 94th helped clear the west bank of the Saar and on 22 February threw up bridgeheads across that river preparatory to smashing the defenses of the Siegfried Line on the opposite side of the river. By early March the 94th had consolidated its gains across the Saar and on 16 March was given the job of spearheading the Third and Seventh Armies drive to the Rhine. Eight days later the division was at the river. It had taken the prize industrial city of Ludwigshaven and had run its total of prisoners up to 17,000. Upon conclusion of its Rhine offensive the division was sent to XXII Corps, 15th Army to Krefeld area and operated on the southern tip of the Ruhr pocket. It occupied the Ruhr after V-E Day with Headquarters in Dusseldorf. Elements of the division began arriving in the US early in February 1946, and the division was subsequently inactivated.

These fact sheets are from The Information Section, Analysis Branch, Hq Army Ground Forces, Washington 25 DC, 1 Mar 1947, as found in the records of the National Archives and Records Administration, RG 407, Archives II, College Park MD. Not all of the Division's Fact sheets have survived and they are being presented here in random order as new ones are found.

BULGE UNIT REUNIONS

14 Dec 2000, 11:00 AM 106th InfD Assn Observance of 56th Anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge. Buffet lunch at Club Meade (Ft Meade Officers Club). Cost $15.00. Contact John R Schaffner, 1811 Miller Road, Cockeysville MD 21030-1013, 410-584-2754, e-mail: jschaffn@bcpl.net

15-16 Dec 2000, Commemoration of the 56th Anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge, by Battle of the Bulge Foundation and Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, and Arlington Cemetery, VA. Hotel accommodations at Sheraton National Hotel, Arlington VA. Contact Ms Dorothy Davis, 301-881-0356.

16 Dec 2000 Annual Luncheon , 56th Anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge, by Chapter XXX Northern Indiana VBOB. Hobart Elks Lodge, Hobart IN $15.00, Family Style Luncheon Guest speakers from USS Indianapolis.Contact Stew McDonnell, 6 Constitution Dr, Michigan City IN 46360, 219-872-6370

24-26 Jan 2001, Reenactment of the Battle of the Bulge, Fort Indiantown Gap PA. Veterans invited as observers and to stay in the WWII barracks. Re-live your barracks days and the comeraderie of your fellow veterans. Contact John D. Bowen, 613 Chichester Lane, Silver Spring MD 20904, 301-384-6533 for Registration form by 31 Dec 2000..

22 – 26 Sep 2001 National VBOB Reunion, **Orlando, Florida.** Chaired by Lou Cunningham, Exec VP VBOB. Further details in Spring Bulge Bugle. Contact: Nancy Monson, PO Box 11129, Arlington VA 22210-2129, Tel 703-528-4058.

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

DUES ARE DUE NOW
16 Dec 2000
Still $10

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

MARCHER & WWII MUSINGS

Inside This Issue

Page 3 WWII Memorial
Page 3 Dec 15 & 16 Affairs
Page 5 Cigarette Camps
Page 6 Army Mortuary Unit
Page 6 Bulge Reenactment
Page 7 94th InfD Fact Sheet

NEXT CHAPTER MEETING
Sunday 10 DEC 2000
Ft Meade Officers' Club Brunch
56th COMMEMORATION
BATTLE OF THE BULGE

FIRST CLASS

DUES ARE DUE NOW