

The Fighting 36th

Historical Quarterly

Worldwar2veterans.org



The TRUCE at Mt. Castellone, Feb. 1944

Vol. 1, No 3

Fall 1981

Published by
The Historical & Records
Committee of the
36th DIVISION ASSOCIATION

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Service Record of the 36th Infantry Division in World War II

Activated 25 November 1940 at Camp Bowie, Brownwood, Texas, they were the first American troops to invade Hitler's Europa at Salerno, Italy, 9 September 1943. The 36th participated in 6 European campaigns: Naples-Foggia, Rome-Arno, Southern France, Rhineland, Ardennes-Alsace, and Central Europe. The division made amphibious assault landings at Anzio and Southern France. The 36th suffered over 27,000 casualties, third highest of any World War II division.

AWARDS and CITATIONS OF THE 36th...

Congressional Medal of Honor.....	15
Silver Star Medal.....	2,354
Distinguished Service Cross.....	80
Bronze Star Medal.....	5,407
Air Medal.....	88
Presidential Unit Citations.....	12
Enemy Captured.....	175,806



The Fighting 36th
HISTORICAL
Quarterly

Worldwartwoveterans.org
Published by
The Historical & Records
Committee of the

TEXAS

36th DIVISION ASSOCIATION



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FALL 1981

The Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly is published for the members of the 36th Division in World War I and World War II. It contains the best of new stories by the men who served, and re-prints of previously published great stories of the exploits of the T-Patchers in both wars. It is available only on a subscription basis, to 36th Association members and all interested war buffs.

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly



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THERE ARE 8 MILLION STORIES IN THE 36th

Welcome to our new Quarterly. The idea for this publication was born several years ago, when many of our troopers sent in great stories of their personal experiences, which unfortunately were too long for printing in our newsletter - The T-Patcher. They were too short for a book or booklet. The QUARTERLY seemed to be the only way to pass on to our membership and war historians the real "*way it was, eye-witness account of the good, bad and ugly part of war*".

The combat infantryman was the man who had to look eye-ball to eye-ball with our enemy. The privations, regimentation, the agony of defeat, slaughter, and heartache of losing a dear friend and buddy, made life sometimes unbearable. But, as the years pass, some of these things we all encountered seem to change from the dark to light, and that the true feeling of the man with the rifle had to carry the big load, and tell his story.

Now thirty-six years after the end of the confrontation, we find that it is our responsibility to 'record' these personal observations, in our own words...because if it is not now, it will never be preserved for all the future historians of the 21st Century, which we feel sure will continue to write about Americans in two world wars. Read on.

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Are War Stories Popular?

Did you know that the body of literature pertaining to the CIVIL WAR (War Between The States) encompasses over 60,000 works—and the number is steadily mounting... after 116 years since it ended.



**THE TRUCE
AT MOUNT CASTELLONE
FEBRUARY 14, 1944**

COVER STORY



WEBSTER: Truce (troos) n. a stop in warfare or fighting for a time, by an agreement on both sides.

Such occasions as a TRUCE are rare. They only happen when a battle makes it impossible to continue, until the dead are removed. We had one prior to this action at Mt. Lungo. This story was activated by SAM CANADA of 736th Ordnance who sent in these great original glossy prints of this encounter. We have tried to gather here, many reports of this, in order to offer a better understanding of the times and conditions that existed at that time. Start here:

TEXAS TO ROME, A General's Diary

By Maj. Gen. Fred L. Walker

Cairo, Italy

Saturday, February 12, 1944

Beginning at about 4:00 AM the Germans put down one of the most intense artillery preparations on Cairo and neighboring areas that I have been in since the German artillery bombardment at the Marne on July 15, 1918. *More than 2,000 shells fell in the Cairo area between 4:30 AM and 6:30 AM.* I knew that this was a preparation for a counter attack on our position on Mt. Castellone, and warned our artillery and infantry to expect an attack at dawn. All our wire lines were blown out soon after 4:30 AM. The Germans did attack at dawn in force. Our troops, the 142nd Infantry especially, were ready for them and met them with rifle, machine gun and mortar fire.

Our artillery concentrations, previously prepared, were called down on them. hand grenades were used freely. I could hear the small arms fire at the

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top of the mountain above me, nine-tenths of which was our own. This continued until about 11:00 AM, when it died down. I knew then that our troops had won. *It is reported that over 200 German dead are lying in front of our positions. Our losses are light.*

Brigadier General Robert I. Stack, who succeeds Wilbur as Assistant division commander, and whom I never saw or heard of before, came to the forward battle station this forenoon, and I placed him in command of the sector. Later I returned with my party to the CP at Cervaro.

Cervaro, Italy
Sunday, February 13, 1944

A German with a white flag came up on Mount Castellone this PM with a request from his commander for permission to pick up and bury his dead. *I granted permission for them to do this between 8 and 11 tomorrow morning.* Keyes tanks cannot get up on this mountain.

This afternoon, *Lt. Colonel Aaron Wyatt*, Werner's replacement in command of the 141st Infantry, was killed and *Lt. Colonel Price* was wounded when a German shell made a direct hit on their CP in a house in Cairo. Both were ideal officers, and Price was a great help to the regiment; he knew the personnel because of his long service in it. when Price came by my CP on his way to the hospital, I gave him the fifth of whiskey Keyes gave me as a Christmas present. He was pleased to get it and sampled it immediately.

The 142nd Infantry is still in position on top of Mount Castellone. Temperatures are below freezing, and the men have to subsist on cold, canned "C" rations. They have no heat. They have my deepest respect. *No soldiers anywhere have had greater hardships than those of this Division since last November 15th.*

Monday, February 14, 1944

When the Germans, under the flag of truce, arrived this morning to pick up their dead, they asked for an extension of one hour, which I granted. Later today they asked to continue the work tomorrow at the same period. This I refused since an attack is being made tonight by the 7th Indian Division on our left flank to capture the monastery mountain and Cassino.

I am recommending the 142nd Infantry for the President's Citation, but I don't think Clark knows enough about the situation and the splendid fight the regiment went through on Castellone on February 12th to approve it.

Major General Mosabert called on me at my CP this afternoon. When I told him that more than 200 German dead had been picked up in front of our positions by the Germans under a flag of truce, he said, in French, "Congratulations. Magnificent! You now have partly evened your losses at the Rapido."

The Truce at Mt. Castellone

Exact repro of text from The Fighting 36th Pictorial History, published in 1946, compiled and edited by Ex-T-Patchers.

On February 12, beginning at 0400 and lasting until 0610, the enemy laid down an artillery concentration which exceeded any the Division had ever experienced. Nebelwerfer fire from the Germans' six-barrelled rocket mortar came over in volleys of sixes, one after the other. The barrage was directed over a large front and was followed by a strong German attempt to retake Mt. Castellone. The 143rd Infantry with attached troops defended the Castellone Hill mass: 1st Battalion, 142nd on Mt. Castellone peak; 3rd Battalion, 143rd guarding Hill 706; 2nd Battalion, 141st defending the southern slopes of Hill 706 to Hill 465, and the 1st and 2nd Battalions, 143rd Infantry in reserve to the south.

On Castellone, two battalions of the enemy worked up the slope under cover of the concentration, coming in amongst our positions at daylight when the artillery lifted. A critical five-hour battle ensued, as, with hand grenades, machine guns and rifles—some of which were discovered frozen in the morning cold—men of the 1st Battalion, 142nd, drove off the German bid.

Had Mt. Castellone fallen, the entire Allied defensive line in the hills across the Rapido would have been seriously threatened. Late in the afternoon reorganization was completed. No ground had been lost.

On February 13 a group of 15 German medics made request of a truce from 0900 to 1200 hours, February 14, in order to evacuate their dead. The request was approved and at the appointed time in the morning the Germans came forward.

To keep them from walking into our positions our men carried down one hundred and forty-three German dead to the draw at the base of the hill. The Germans asked for a similar period the next day in order to complete the evacuation, which was taking longer than expected. The Commanding General, II Corps, refused this request but granted an extension of time to allow the truce to run until 1430.

Action in this sector continued with little incident until the Division was finally relieved on February 26 by French units and elements of the 88th Division, then new to the line. These "forty days and forty nights" along the Rapido River and on the hills above Cassino had nearly halved the Division's combat strength. It was a tired 36th that was leaving the line going into a rest area near Piedmonte.

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Photo above: SAM CANADA and Eli Gunn of 736th Ordnance were part of the detail to pick up 143 dead Germans and deliver to an arranged spot during the truce, to avoid the Krauts from walking into our positions.

These photos were made by Sam's camera, in cooperation with Lt. Col. Hal Reese who was in charge of the TRUCE. Note: There were no 'official' news cameramen at this event, so had it not been for Canada's camera, this rare encounter with the enemy would never have been recorded.

PHOTO at right: Col. Reese is shown here yelling to our troops to hurry-up, as only 30 minutes are left until the Truce is ended.



The Truce at Mt. Castellone

Extracts from **THE TEXAS ARMY,**
By Robt. L. Wagner; Page 148—



After the vicious five or six hour infantry battle of the 12th (Feb 1944), the Germans had requested a truce on the morning of the 14th for removal of their dead and wounded from the slopes of M. Castellone and adjacent areas. The truce line extended from slightly south of Hill 720 to slightly south of Hill 706 and then connected on a line to the west from Hill 593. This lull was granted by the Commanding General of II Corps and was to last from 8 to 11 a.m. (14th), later extended to 2:30 p.m. Men of the 142nd carried down 143 German dead from the M. Castellone hillside to the draw at the base of the hill. The executive officer of the 1st Battalion of the 142nd, Captain Joseph T. Middleton, represented the Americans in supervising the operation, while the division inspector general, Lieutenant Colonel Harold R. Reese, acted as General Walker's special envoy to cover the temporary cessation of hostilities. A total of 165 enemy dead were evacuated during the 6½-hour truce.

Reese had volunteered for the assignment with the thought that he might pick up information of value to General Walker. In this he did not succeed but he did converse at length with various cheerful and friendly German officers and enlisted men. One of their number came forward and shook hands.

The best I could get out of his rather halting words was that "It is such a tragedy this life...today we laugh, tomorrow we kill." He seemed quite moved. So was I. As I look back and try to analyze my feelings...I could see all previous thoughts of "wiping out every last German...extermination of the race" etc., were rapidly changing.

Reese composed this narrative the following May, at which time he had less than two weeks to live. He was killed at Velletri by German Artillery on June 1, 1981."

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THE DEATH OF LT. COL. HAL REESE

Page 179, The Texas Army, by Robt. L. Wagner

"It was late that afternoon when Lieutenant Colonel Harold R. Reese, the 36th Division inspector general, was killed in action. While jauntily striding down the road to Velletri, ahead of American Armor, he was fatally hit, probably by a German anti-tank gun. Reese had earned the Distinguished Service Cross in World War I, serving as Walker's adjutant; the T-Patch leader wrote of his comrade of two wars:

Chaplain (Herbert E.) MacCombie came and told me Hal was dead. I am very, very sorry. I warned him twice not to get in front of the tanks. He was a grand person."



Extracts from General Walker's
book, **FROM TEXAS TO ROME,**
A General's Diary, Pages 377-378
June 1, 1944

"I was with the 1st Battalion, 141st Infantry, all afternoon. It was on the Division left flank, advancing on Velletri. When there was a pause in the German fire, Hal Reese and I walked along the road behind the self-propelled cannon company vehicles of the regiment while the foot troops moved ahead through the cane and vinyards on both sides. As we approached the town of Velletri, the cannon company vehicles stopped at a bend in the road. Hal walked out beyond the bend, in front of the leading vehicle.

In a few minutes, Chaplain MacCombie came to me and told me Hal was dead. A German antitank shell and a mortar shell had simultaneously struck near the vehicle and tore away Hal's left side. He died instantly.

MacCombie said the men had carried Hal's body to the courtyard of a small house off the side of the road, but I did not want to see it. There was nothing I could do to help, so after I had overcome my grief, we moved on into Velletri.

I have written the circumstances of Hal's death to Julia, and asked her to go to Philadelphia immediately to tell Sue. Julia can get there before the official "Regret" telegram arrives. I am very, very sorry. I warned him twice not to get in front of the tanks. He was a grand person. I shall miss him."

The Truce at Mt. Castellone

Extracts from story by Eric Sevareid,
"On The Standars of the 36th,
Proudly Inscribe Velletri"

(Pictorial History of the 36th Division)...

"I remeber my friend Lt. Col. Hal Reese, Philadelphia business man and Inspector General for the Division, smiling at us as he drew a map with his cane in the dirt to illustrate the route we must follow to mount the hill—"If you get by the snipers." Reese was a cultured, charming gentleman, who had served closely with Walker in the last war. He was one of so many Americans, of advancing middle age who bore the physical hardships without murmur, who had nothing to gain and everything to lose by going back into uniform—one of those non-professional, civilian reservists who provide an indispensable balance wheel of experience, humanity and common sense to every combat unit. He waved his cane at us as we pulled away. It was the last time I saw him alive."

A LOOK BACK...

This story, the Truce at Mount Castellone is not narrative of greatness, as much as is is - a unique event, since there were only a limited amount of 'truces' during WWII. This one, of course was called for by the Germans. At this time in the war, the 36th had suffered greatly at RAPIDO, and many other parts of Italy during the winter fighting.

Most of the T-Patchers engaged in the Italian battles at that time heard about the truce. Just how many were eye-witnessess is the story we try to re-capture this time. Our thanks to SAM CANADA, unsolicitedly sent to us these rare photos of this event. We felt obligated to pass this story on to the thousands of troupes - who were there - but not involved in the TRUCE.

We also wish to acknowledge thanks to C.N. Red Morgan and Col. Oran Stovall who were helpful in finding the 'quotes' from previously printed stories of this event.

The moral of this story - is that we need for our members to send in material such as this, so these rare and unusual events can be recorded for posterity.

TIME MAGAZINE LAUDS "SAN PIETRO" 143RD FILM, AS HISTORICALLY GREAT

Reprint from T-PATCH
June 1945 - In Germany

Time Magazine, May 21, 1945 issue, lauds with five stars a 36th Division movie, "San Pietro", recently released by the Army Pictorial Service - War Activities Committee.

Time reviews, "San Pietro is in every respect as good a war film as any that has been made; in some respects it is the best. A 30-minute record of one of the tense and bloody battles for the Liri Valley in Italy in late 1943, it is a story told chiefly in terms of the experiences of one infantry regiment - the 143rd of the 36th Division."

San Pietro's record of combat, its eye for terrain and for weather, its recognition of war as a science both wonderful and tragically inexact, are at least equal to any seen in films so far. But its great distinction is its constant bitter, admiring, pitying awareness of human beings.

Its narration, a high-mettled, professionally military prose, delivered with quiet irony, is repeatedly given life and resonance by images which show what "heavy seasonal rains" look and feel like to get a truck through, what Texan "elements" in a regiment are as people, something of what eleven hundred "replacements" (in one regiment) mean in terms of death and survival.

The huge close-ups of the helmeted heads of infantry men as they move into battle, or rest after it while you are told that many of those you watch are soon to die, have the simple immediacy of good family snapshots - and the enduring majesty of a heroic frieze.

In one long passage, free of comment, while the screen multiplies the Etruscan and Renaissance faces of children and infants, their features luminous with hunger and portentous of the incalculable future, this record achieves pure tragic grandeur.

San Pietro is a very fine film. History is likely to recognize it as a great one."

JOHN HUSTON is some sort of star in the galaxy of Hollywood Directors and Writers. He has many great movies to his credit, and in 1941 was commissioned a Major in Army Pictorial Service, made 3 documentaries. "SAN PIETRO" was the best, and is still viewed, clipped and used in later stories about this bloody battle involving the 143rd Infantry Regiment.

36thers are glad he choose this one, as it is a WWII classic. HUSTON later in 1948 won an Oscar for his direction and screenplay, "The Treasure of the Sierra Madre."



"BOOTS OF FREEDOM"



By Jack Clover
Hq. Co., 2nd Bn., 143rd Inf.

He was a very young man, a very big man, a very, very dead man!

He lay with his legs outstretched spread eagle, his arms tucked beneath his chest with helmet askew as he had fallen. His heavy G.I. overcoat was circled with the full cartridge belt of a BAR man.

It was Christmas morning 1943, halfway up the side of giant Mt. Sammucro with the ravished town of San Pietro at its base. The battle had swept through this area two weeks earlier then wheeled right, up the Liri Valley to the fringe of San Vittore. I had volunteered to accompany other 2nd and 3rd Battalion, 143 Infantry soldiers, and a graves registration team, back to this lonely battlefield to pick up the dead G.I.'s who had so valiantly fought for San Pietro's liberation only days before. We had just been relieved from the San Vittore front only last night and were still shaky and dog tired.

As I looked over the carnaged area many of the landmarks seemed painfully familiar. Mute evidence of the battle's ferocity was everywhere. Down a terrace to our left was a face-down G.I. in a green raincoat, his severed leg and combat boot lying a few feet behind. To our right, one terrace up, were two soldiers huddled together against a stone wall clutching M-1's--their faces a skeletal mass from an apparent mortar hit. Shattered cartridge belts and packs littered the trails. Burned out rifle and machine gun barrels lay near the slit trenches. Stone terraces were torn apart, mutilated, pulverized. The remaining olive trees were shredded, ravished

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by shot and shell--their pitiful limbs stretched skyward as it asking God for mercy!

But now there was only silence.

With a sick feeling, I looked at our downed soldier. In a brief instant I saw him as a kid in grade school where, during the holidays, the windows are decked with crayoned black and orange turkeys, Pilgrims in cocked hats and chubby, red-suited Santa Clauses. I saw him red-faced playing street football on a crisp, fall afternoon. I saw him in high school in his black '36 Ford with his girlfriend listening to Glen Miller's "Indian Summer" on the radio. I saw the wedding, the tearful goodbye as he traded street clothes for olive drab. Now I saw him as a fallen warrior on this bleake, windswept mountainside all alone, all alone.

My reverie was sharply broken, however, as I saw one of the soldiers in our party on his knees tugging at our fallen comrade's left hand. He was apparently pulling on the wedding band. "What are you doing?" I inquired. "I'm taking his wedding band. He don't need it any more!" "You're what?" "I'm taking his wedding band, he don't need it any more!" Furor welled up inside me. "What the hell, you mean your stealing his wedding band?" "Hell yes I am." In a blind rage I exploded and kicked him hard in the ribs causing him to yell in pain and roll across the path. Another soldier grabbed him and escorted him aimlessly down the trail as we shook our heads in disbelief at such indignity.

With knotted stomachs we carefully turned our soldier over, removed his heavy cartridge belt and laid him on the stretcher. Blue-black blood trickled from a small, dark hole in the middle of his forehead apparently preserved by the frigid air. We covered him with a GI blanket and lashed the body securely to the stretcher for the long hike down the mountainside. His damp, muddy combat boots protruded awkwardly from beneath the blanket depicting a sensitive story of death and gallantry not easily put into words. But there was something about those boots. Something about those glorious boots. I just couldn't take my eyes off them.

Our task completed we boarded G.I. trucks for our trip back to camp on the fringe of Venafro. As we bounced along the winding mountain road I mulled over the day's events, thinking what a sad duty to perform at such a time. Nothing made any sense but I guess as they say in love and war nothing ever really does.

Upon reaching our bivouac area I noted the boys in my platoon had built a fire by our pup tents and were singing Christmas carols. Mail from home had arrived and a turkey dinner was upcoming. The late afternoon sun shone brightly in the Italian sky as it sawed its way into the massive snowcapped peaks above.

My spirits lifted as I joined in on a chorus of "Silent Night" and a dash of "Jingle Bells". Home seemed so far away and yet so close. But, there was one

“BOOTS OF FREEDOM”

overriding thought I could not shake. I still could not forget those glorious boots on our soldier. They told me something that Christmas Day 1943 that until now was inexplicable. Now as I look back on the significance of the day's events I suddenly see it all clear!

Of course! These are the “Boots of Freedom”. Within them are indignity, humor, sadness, pain, fear, revulsion, fatigue, survival, numbness, frustration, reverence, hope, pathos, loyalty and heartbreak. But they symbolize for eternity the call of duty to one's country, the dutiful courage of our forefathers, the shining light of freedom. These are the boots worn by our men at Valley Forge, Alamo, Gettysburg, Meuse-Argonne, Guadalcanal, Salerno, Pork Chop Hill, DaNang or wherever freedom rings!

So let's not forget our fallen heroes whose “Boots of Freedom” have kept us free and will always do so, as long as we believe in ourselves. Let's not let them down as we have received the uncomprising message loud and clear America!

TO OUR FALLEN WARRIOR:

Let's sing it out so loud and clear

That everyone is sure to hear

The price of liberty comes very high

But our “Boots of Freedom” will never die.



Submitted by:
JACK L. CLOVER

5 Cobblestone Trail
Ormond Beach, Florida 32074



OLD SOJERS NEVER DIE

...They Just Can't Drink as Much As They Used To!

By Del Kendall

It was another one of those breathless hot nights in the Qualiano area, north of Naples in July 1941 (getting ready for another invasion). You lay there in your skivvies, tossin' fitfully on your blanket. The sides of the pup tent open, awaiting a breeze that never came. The hot stillness even muffled the sounds of a truck convoy in the distance, and the chorus of insects in the night. Not a leaf stirred or a star shown down. The ground beneath you felt like a rack from an oven.

You thought to yourself, God, why couldn't you have had some of this heat a few months back when we needed it on the Winterline, in that freezing-ass cold. The insects continued their chorus as the locusts joined in, their hum sounding like a drill on red-hot metal. You groan and roll over.

What the hell was that? Another sound struck your ears, as the chorus of insects faded into the night. You sat up. Yep, another hum came and went. A plane was overhead, a Jerry plane, you could tell by the broken throb of its engines. "Bed-Check-Charlie", no doubt. You could picture him overhead, like some great nighthawk, circling the sky and searching the darkness below, liek he had done so many times before.

There was another sound now, besides that of the plane's engines. Your body tensed like a coiled spring. There it was, this faint whine turning into a whistling scream - growing louder as you sat there like in a bad dream unable to move. KEE-RIST, we're being bombed!

A giant whoosh of air slapped you and a thud shook the ground as a silence engulfed the area like a giant wave: stilling even the chorus of the insects in the night. It was all over in a few seconds. Out of the uneasy silence, some one shouted now - "*Corporal of the Guard! Corporal of the Guard!!!*" Men came from all directions, stumbling from their tents. "*What the hell was that?*"

Someone tripped over a tent rope, as a couple of flashlights combed the darkness. "*Jeez, I thought I was dreaming. Ole 'Bed-Check-Charlie' bombing now?*" The men continued the search. Someone shouted, "*Here's the f---er, over here!*" A cluster of men gathered on the bomb sight, the motorpool, a few hundred yards away. There in the sand lay this strange contraption, an oblong metal cannister.

The top had some 4 foot long umbrella-like ribs, now broken. No bomb - this, but a magnesium flare that had lost its parachute somehow, and failed to trigger its blinding white light, now lay at your feet - a 'dud'. Good, there'll be no photo-reconnaissance for Hitler that night. NO, photos of the 7th Army, massing for an amphibous invasion soon.

Dawn was showing first light, as the troops wandered back to their tents, and a thought just struck you, maybe, just maybe - somewhere in Nazi Germany, a factory worker, if he only knew, would be smiling to himself and hoping - "IT" happened like it did. SABOTAGE! His small battle was won.

COMPANY G, 142ND STORM THE CASTLE AT MONTE CAVE

By Kenneth L. Dixon, War Correspondent
AEF in Italy June 2, 1944



Worldwartwoveterans.org
Our thanks to Charles W. Stimson, Jr. Editor of the Co.
G 142nd Newsletter, for this story reprinted in their Nov.
1981 issue.

Storming of the Castle at Monte Cave by Company G, 142nd Infantry was no easy task. Except for a three hour difference in the Germany and the American armies time table, the men of Company G never would have stormed the Castle at Monte Cave here in the Alban Hills.

But they had to do it and they scaled this rock wall which defied modern warfares mortars and bazookas, going over the emplacements on one anothers shoulders like knights of old, yelling and shouting and shooting into the smoke.

And they took the Castle miracously without a casualty, while killing more than half of those inside and capturing the rest.

It was just before 6 PM when the battalion surrounded the stone Castle, about 125 yards long, 100 yards wide and three stories high. Nazi riflemen, macine gunners and machine pistol experts cut loose at them from the four hughe blockhouses on the corners and from the slits in the stone. On the top of the thick walls were barbed wire entanglements. It looked as though the word impregnable was invented especially for it.

Inside were about 70 Germans. The battalion had to capture the Castle and move on over the mountain - Hill 949 the military maps called it - to keep from exposing the flanks of their advancing comrades on both sides.

So Company G, formed back in Snyder, Texas, long ago, drew the short straw. It's leader, CAPTAIN CARL P. MATNEY of Vernon, Texas, who already holds the DSC for action back at Cassino, conferred with MAJOR JOSEPH T. MIDDLETON of Ballinger, Texas, the battalion commander.

They had made their plans for storming the Castle, got the mortar company ready to throw down a preliminary barrage and the men of Company G moved through the trees up as close as possible.

"It looked impossible", said an observer watching from a OP behind the

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company. "Yeah, we never thought they'd make it," chimed in another observer.

But Company G was willing to give the Germans a chance. Up to within a few yards of the Castle crawled PFC HERMAN J. KEMNER, 20, of Buffalo, NY, who was born in Germany.

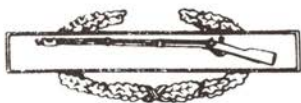
"Come on out and surrender", he called out in German. "We have your surrounded. We will give you a free ride back to America. It's nice over there. Otherwise we will fire on the Castle."

In perfect English a voice replied: "Sorry, but we have orders to hold this Castle until 9 o'clock. You know the army. We can't do it. Sorry."

Company G was sorry too, but they had their orders and they knew the army, too. They signaled to Lt. JAMES STRADER, 22 of Amarillo, Texas, the FO for Company H, the mortar Company, and he started calling the shots in the Castle positions.

From 6 until 7 o'clock the mortar men laid down more than 400 rounds on everything that moved in the Castle. They did it in three separate barrages and between each barrage KEMNER again called out for the Germans inside to surrender. Each time the answer was the same. Each time it was accompanied by bursts of machine gun fire from the Castle windows.

Bazookas dented the stone walls and mortars obviously weren't going to do the job along. So CAPTAIN MATNEY called the men of Company G to scale the walls and storm the Castle.



Co. G Reunion at Snyder, Charles W. Stinson (left) visits with Capt. Carl Matney, 3414 Rusk, Amarillo, TX 79109. Photo appeared in T-Pacher, March 1980 issue. Stinson gets mail at: 108 Westridge Road, Plainview, TX 79072. This unit's membership is growing, so watch 'em go - in the future.

The Gun Crew That Saved Salerno



AMERICAN HEROES

LOOK

39TH IN LOOK'S AMERICAN HEROES SERIES

STORY BY DON WHARTON—DRAWINGS BY GLEN THOMAS

“THE GUN CREW THAT SAVED SALERNO”

Look Magazine, March 1945

Although war now is waged on a tremendous scale, the individual soldier or small unit can still decide a battle. This fact has been demonstrated time after time, but never more effectively than at Salerno. There, on the day the 5th Army came ashore, a single U.S. gun crew of a cannon company, 143rd Infantry, 36th Division, slugged it out with 13 German tanks— and apparently saved the whole beachhead.

The members of this great gun crew, all of whom have been decorated with the Silver Star, were: Lt. John W. Whitaker, Fort Worth, Tex.; Sgts. Arthur H. Lloyd, East Rutherford, N.J., Seth Groce, Caldwell, Tex.; Cpl. Harry Bodzin, Brooklyn; and Privates First Class Camello J. Caminiti, Cincinnati, and Preston D. Graybeal, Conowingo, Md.

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly



From the top of a church tower an observer spots thirteen German tanks approaching the narrow beachhead at Salerno. He reports to Capt. Wiley Stem, of Waco, Tex., the 25-year-old commander of the cannon company.

Realizing that the Germans, unless halted, may be able to cut the entire beachhead to pieces, Captain Stem sends a runner, Sgt. George E. Cude, also of Waco, back to find self-propelled mounts and hurry them into action.

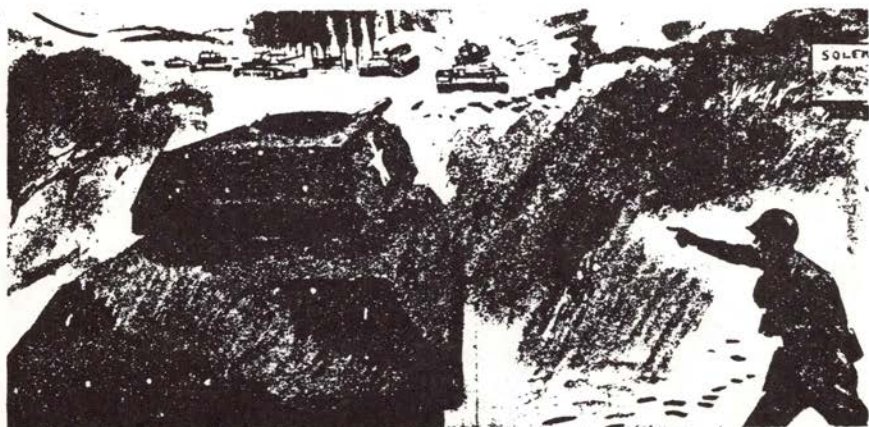


Cude finds Lieutenant Whitaker, but only one of his platoon's self-propelled guns is ashore. Whitaker rushes the gun with its green crew toward the Nazi tanks, now only 100 yards from the Division's command post.

The Gun Crew That Saved Salerno



Deployed along a highway, the Nazi Mark IV's open fire. Caminiti responds with machine-gun bursts. Then Whitaker's 75-mm. speaks, blows a hole in a stone wall just as the nearest German tank goes behind it.



But the tank reappears on the highway, drives directly at the Americans, its cannon and machine guns firing continuously. Whitaker's men stand their ground, coolly reload the 75 and train it on the onrushing enemy.

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The tank is only 80 yards away when the 75's second round smashes into its turret. The tank catches fire, its crew boils out. One man aims a machine pistol, is cut down by Graybeal. The others wave hankerchiefs.



A second German tank comes from behind a row of trees, trying to find a clear space from which to fire. The 75 spouts one round, blows the tank's left track off. The tank burns, but no Germans emerge. Meanwhile, the other tanks are landing shells all around the 75, some as close as ten yards away and one so near that it knocks down several of the crew. But in the smoke and dust of the explosions Camano keeps moving the mount to new positions.

The Gun Crew That Saved Salerno



A third tank moves out into an open field, stops, begins an attempt to slug it out with the Americans. It fires five rounds—all close. The 75 also fires five rounds, getting three direct hits—the end of that tank.



Lieutenant Whitaker is still standing in the middle of the highway, directing and correcting fire. He spots a tank trying to escape, points it out. The 75 fires again, hitting and destroying this fourth tank as it runs.



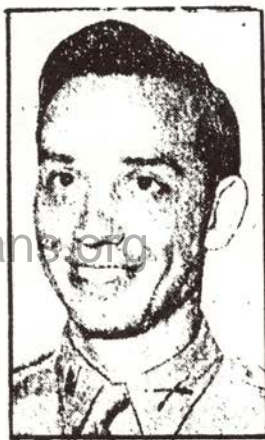
ANYONE out there in T-Patchland, who may have a similar type story that appeared in a national publication, send it in, we'll evaluate it, and more than likely use it. And we can assure you we shall 'return' it, per your request.



Lloyd and Bodzin get a fifth tank in their sights—the one carrying the German commander. Caminiti fires the 75, loads, fires again. Hit twice, the tank halts and its crew and commander scramble out to surrender. With the eight other enemy tanks withdrawing, this ends the battle. Whitaker's gun crew, in its first action, has stopped thirteen German tanks, knocked out five of them, taken eleven prisoners—and probably saved the Salerno beachhead.

Texan Who Held Nazis at Salerno Still Has Grudge

From: Fort Worth Star Telegram (May 1944) - Of course he has the Silver Star and the Purple Heart, and his officers say his coolness and gallantry probably saved the beachhead at Salerno. But, Lt. Whitaker, a 23-year-old out-patient from McCloskey Hospital paid a visit to his home town, says he has a grudge against the Nazis, because the shrapnel wound which put him out of action, "bled so much it ruined a perfectly good \$15 pair of trousers." John Whitaker is a 'new' member of the 36th Association, gets mail at: 6829 Lancelot Court, Fort Worth, TX 76113 (via Bert Carlton, H & R Committee).



Star-Telegram Photo.
LT. J. W. WHITAKER.

HARD LUCK DIVISION ?

A young soldier views the 36th Infantry Division in the Italian Campaign

By Dave Ruby



For the men of the 36th Infantry Division the Italian Campaign was over. They would now prepare for the invasion of southern France. They could only look forward to many more days of mortal combat in France and Germany before the ultimate victory was achieved. As in Italy, the military cemeteries in France would continue to fill with fine young citizen soldiers from Texas and many other states which now made up the 36th Division.

All of this however was still in the future. For the time being, the 36th Division could take a short breather, reflect, and take an account of what it had accomplished, perhaps a better word would be endured, in Italy. Like all Allied Divisions fighting in Italy, the 36th had had a rough time. Fighting against every conceivable obstacle-terrain, weather, and an always well entrenched bitterly determined foe - every encounter with the enemy-save one- had been a costly affair in men and material.

Footnote from Stovall: "I think most observers considered it - hard luck, only because the 36th was given near impossible jobs."

Some people involved in the Italian Campaign had intimated - some even accused - the 36th Division of being a "hard luck" outfit - one that did not measure up to the performances of other combat units. When I first started to read and study military history some five years ago, one of the first things I learned was that in military history one of the first casualties was always the truth and that many people who set forth opinions and estimates of a particular battle, campaign, or unit had been just too close to the action to render an unbiased objective look.

A more greater injustice could not have been done when the 36th Division was called a hard luck unit. All of its assigned tasks had been difficult to say the least. Places like Salerno, Monte Lungo, Monte la Difensa, Monte Maggiore, San Pietro and the Rapido all come to mind. I have read far too much about the many good soldiers of the 36th Division who were lost in the mud and the mountains of Italy to believe this crap about "hard luck" and the like.

In one of the most brilliant moves of the war, General Fred L. Walker and the men of the 36th Division opened the door to the Eternal City of Rome at a place called Vellitri. Many of the people who had previously criticized the 36th Division, would now say at Vellitri, the 36th had finally found itself. The truth of the matter-from my viewpoint- is that the 36th Division had

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never been lost in the first place. It had been sent into a theater that may well have been the most difficult one of World War II. It had carried out most of its difficult missions to the best of its abilities. It had shown and would continue to show-throughout the war-that it could dish out a punishing blow and take it with the best of them.

If all of this is not a sign of a good combat unit then I do not know what is. No, the men of the 36th Division will never have to bow their heads and say we were a hard luck outfit. They were in fact a damned good unit and I think a good hard look at historical fact and historical fact only (without all the trimmings attached) will show the truth. This is how a young soldier views the 36th Division in the Italian Campaign.

Worldwartwoveterans.org

Editor's Note: The term—"Hard Luck" has quite a negative meaning and it has been mis-used by many post WWII writers since 1945. It has been annoying to most of us who served with the 36th. So, it is very refreshing to find a young man, unbiased, to come to the aid with this great analogy. The purpose of the H & R Committee is to *compile, preserve and record* our military record for future historians, such as Dave Ruby. May he 'write' a classic war story (like *Gone With The Wind*) based on the 36th's exploits—in the year 2001.

DAVE RUBY

Dave E. Ruby, Special Investigator, USA Criminal Investigation Command, Washington District, is a 26 year old soldier, a devoted student of WWII Army Military History, has a home library of over 300 books. He has collected Unit Histories, Biographies, Memoirs, Official Records, popular accounts of major battles, and is particularly interested in the 5th and 7th Armies in Italy and France.

He is a subscriber to the Quarterly, and it has been our pleasure to correspond with this young dedicated military historian for almost a year. He says he admires the T-Patchers, very much, has read enough about the 36th to know what he's talking about. Hence this story—"Hard Luck Division." Here is an exact quote from his letter that accompanied this narrative...

One thing I must make clear. I am intensely proud of the State of Pennsylvania. I owe no allegiance to the 36th Infantry Division or the 36th Div. Association. I have based my facts and figures that I have come across in the many books that I have read on the war in Italy. I have tried to stay away from the bitter personal conflicts and prejudices that I believe have really plagued the entire written history of the Italian Campaign. I have tried to render a fair and honest view based on fact. Nothing else.

T-Patchers Recall Two Sides of War



*Dallas Times-Herald feature story covering
the 1968 Reunion at Royal Coach Inn, Dallas...*

"Anyone who says he wasn't afraid is a liar," Concepcion Sanchez said firmly, but then he smiled. "I guess the thing I remember best is wanting to step back but instead finding myself taking two steps forward."

Sanchez, former platoon sergeant in the 141st Infantry of the famed Texas 36th "T-Patch" Division, was taking Saturday of the 36th's bloody introduction to combat on the beaches of Salerno, Italy on Sept. 9, 1943.

"The night before we landed, we were told the Italians had surrendered, that they would throw down their arms. Some of the guys said not to expect it to be that easy.

"**IDON'TKNOW....**that morning, about 4 I guess, in the landing craft, we all just kind of sat and wondered what would happen. Almost none of us had been shot at before.

"Then, on the beach, well, there was a lot of machine gun fire and artillery from the hills.

"The Italians may have surrendered, but the Germans moved into their place. It was pretty rugged—lots of guys getting shot up and all.

"Ten hours later, it was still the same. It took us almost a week to secure the beachhead, and it took many, many lives.

SANCHEZ, from San Antonio, is one of 500 "T-Packers" at the 36th Division Association's 45th annual reunion, which ends Sunday at the Royal Coach Inn. Newly elected association president Lance Mullins said more than 40 states are represented at the assembly.

*Most Celebrated Stowaway in World
War II Adopted by Claren 'Curly'
Thompson of Waxahachie, Texas.*



Former 141st Infantry mess sergeant Claren "Curly" Thompson from Waxahachie didn't talk Saturday of combat and beachheads, but instead of a poignant "war story" with a happy ending.

It was at Attalvilla, Italy, the site of a bloody battle just four days after the Salerno landing, that Thompson first met "Johnny". Johnny, whose real name was Giovanni Camera, was a 9-year-old Italian lad who would become

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the 36th Division "mascot" and, later, Thompson's adopted son.

"**THIS OLD MAN**, a fascist who used to steal blankets and other stuff from us, was using Johnny as a slave", Thompson recalled.

"Johnny used to bring the stuff back to us in the night and then the old man would beat him. After several nights of hearing the boy's screams, I finally warned the old man he'd better stop.

"When we left Altailla after 15 days and moved to Carserta, I took Johnny with me. It was against regulations, and I tried to keep him hidden. As soon as I'd dig a foxhole, though, there he would be, inside even before me. So finally he was discovered by the officers."

Thompson said he tried to arrange to adopt the boy. At one point, a representative even went before Gen. Eisenhower to plead the case, but to no avail.

FINALLY, in Naples, I had to leave him behind. I remember him standing there waving, with his little duffel bag and the Eisenhower jacket and combat boots I'd cut down to fit him. "I think it was the saddest moment in my life. I looked back down the street, and I was crying and tears were just streaming down his face, too. I gave him my Texas address and told him to write if he ever got to America. I never thought I'd see him again."

In the fall of 1945, Johnny wrote Thompson a letter. The Italian lad was in

Vets of 36th Go to Bat for Lad From Italy With the Texas Drawl

WAXAHACHIE, Feb. 5. (AP)—Efforts were being made today by Sgt. Claren (Curley) Thompson through authorized channels to gain custody of Italian stowaway Johnny Camera, who Thompson picked up during the battle of Salerno and taught to speak English—with a Texas drawl.

Johnny lost his mother and four sisters in the battle of Salerno and was roaming around, starving and in rags, when Thompson and other members of Company M., 141st Infantry, 36th Division, adopted him. He became the company mascot and stayed with the company through some of the unit's heaviest fighting in Italy.

Thompson taught him to speak English in three months. When the division pulled out, officials said Johnny had to stay behind. Thompson gave Johnny his address and told him he could live with him in Texas if he got to America.

Last Saturday, the 13-year-old



Johnny Camera

Italian boy tried to slip by immigration authorities in New York after stowing away on the troopship Claymont Victory. When nabbed, he produced Thompson's address, \$55 and a Texas drawl. He was dressed in a cut-down GI uniform made by his Texas soldier pals.

As hundreds of 36th Division veterans went to bat for the Italian boy, with wires buzzing between Texas and Washington and

New York all day yesterday and today, a wire from Sheriff Jess Cariker of Waxahachie was sent to immigration and naturalization officials in New York.

The wire is quoted in full:

"Johnny Camera, 13-year-old Italian stowaway on troopship Claymont Victory, which is berthed at Pier 84, North River, is well known to Sgt. Curley Thompson of Waxahachie. The boy's story as to knowing Sgt. Thompson is true. Sgt. Thompson is very anxious to have this boy paroled to him at Waxahachie until his status can be adjusted. He knows the boy well and taught him English while in Italy and the boy was used as an interpreter. Sgt. Thompson will wire necessary money for expenses for Johnny Camera to come to Waxahachie, and he is financially able to take care of him after he arrives here pending the outcome of the case. Please notify Sgt. Thompson or Sheriff Jess Cariker immediately if this can be done."

Fort Worth Press
Feb. 5, 1946

T-PATCHERS RECALL TWO SIDES OF WAR

America, but he was being held at Ellis Island, NY, for having stowed away aboard a ship. Authorities planned to send him back to Italy.

MARCANTONIO OFFERS BILL TO LET MASCOT OF 36TH IN

WASHINGTON, Feb. 6 (AP).—Representative Marcantonio of New York has introduced a bill in Congress asking that Johnny Camera, 13, Italian-born war orphan, be allowed to enter the United States under the current immigration quota.

The lad, who "joined up" with the 36th Texas Division and became its mascot after his parents and four sisters were killed at Salerno, was caught by U.S. Immigration authorities last Saturday as he slid down the hawser of the troopship Claymon Victory. He is held on Ellis Island as a stowaway.

"As I see it, that boy has every right to come into the United States—and 40,000 GIs from Texas agree with me," Marcantonio told a reporter.

Meantime, Sgt. Claren "Curley" Thompson, Waxahachie, Texas, who was Camera's special buddy among the 36th Division men, has offered to adopt Johnny.

"The 36th really went to bat for me. They flooded Congress with letters and finally Gen. Mark Clark was able to send Johnny to see me," Thompson related.

Johnny's entry into the U.S. was finally legalized, and Thompson, a bachelor, arranged to adopt the lad.

"Johnny" is now Johnny C. Thompson, and he lives with his wife and two children in Waxahachie, deep in the heart of his new country.

This photograph of Johnny Camera was taken in New York in 1946 when the Italian lad was discovered stowed away on a returning troopship. He was 12.

Curley Thompson of 141st Infantry died in 1972, is still well remembered to the citizens of Waxahachie, Texas.

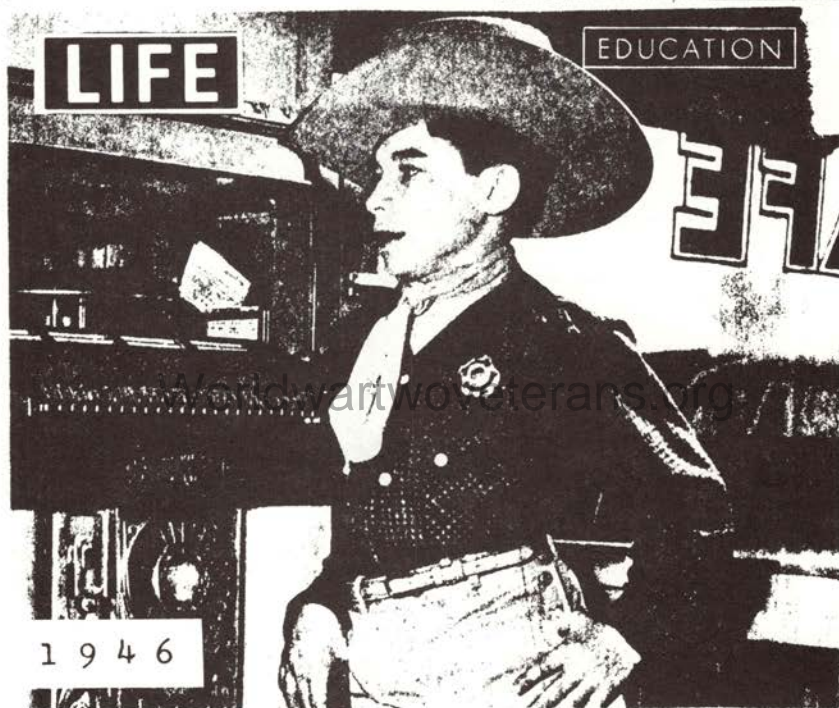


Dallas Times Herald, April 26th 1962
Front Page Feature Story



Fort Worth Reunion
Sept. 10, 1946

WAINWRIGHT SPEAKS TO 36TH DIVISION REUNION—General Jonathan Wainwright, who spoke to the 36th Division reunion in Fort Worth termed the United Nations charter as an effort to substitute "justice for force," but warned that "moral influence, not backed by a strong right arm, is of futile avail when greed and passion replace reason." General Wainwright is shown at the speakers table with Johnny Camera, mascot of the 36th division, Curley Thompson, behind Johnny, who is Johnny's guardian, and Miller Ainsworth, retiring president of the 36th Division Association. (NEA Photo).



“UNIT REUNION IS GOOD THERAPY FOR EX-PRISONER OF WAR”



Worldwartwoveterans.org

By Dewey Mann
Co. B, 142nd Infantry

In Jan. 1944, Co. B had practically a whole platoon of men captured. At that time, it was of great concern and has been for all these years. You could not help but wonder how these guys made out.

This action took place at Lemberg, France when the company was in a defensive position. At early dawn, they were hit from every side. In order to check out the situation, I left my C.P. and started across the street (we were at the edge of town) and the same time, a German soldier started across from the other side. They were all around us, and all of our units were committed. To gain the advantage, the enemy were camouflaged with white suits (the ground was covered with snow), they were difficult to detect. Thus they were able to get on top of the platoon of men before they knew what it was all about. Since this was a reserve platoon, the company was now split and cut off from a front-line platoon. It was not a pleasant situation to experience.

However, after reporting the facts to battalion, we got a group of men for C Company 142nd, and took back our positions and captured most of the Nazis who had taken over the foxholes that were formerly occupied by our captured commander. To add to my concern, some of our troops wanted to shoot the Germans as they were routed out of their foxholes. I screamed for them not to do it, as the Germans had our boys and they would do the same.

In fact, they were hardly out of sight, you must believe it was a terrible sight to see our men being marched away in the snow as prisoners.

Walter Kneisley Tells It Like It Was...

Well, what we got started on this story—is that Walter Kneisley (first timer at our Muncie, Indiana reunion)...he was ONE of the captured men at Lemberg. Walter had his share of tough luck with Co. B. He became sick with malaria, had trenchfeet, was wounded twice and then became POW. At

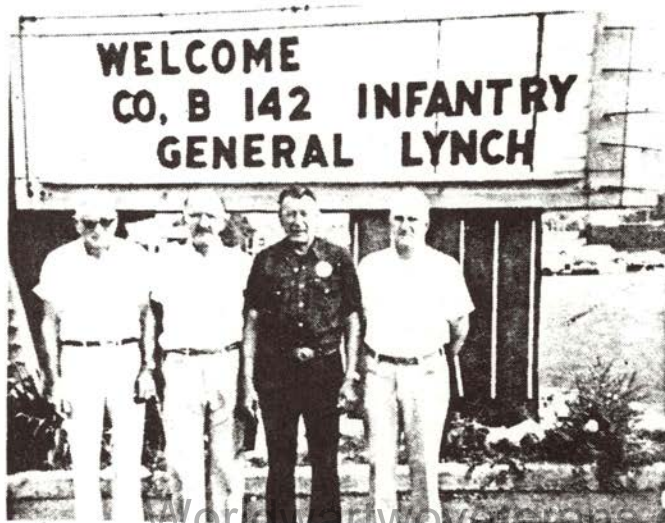
Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

the stockade, the POWs were threatened to be executed and almost starved to death.

Walt said one POW was caught in the act of stealing food, and he killed the German officer who apprehended him. To determine who did the killing, the POWs were lined up at the edge of a freshly dug trench in front of a firing squad. Walter thought surely they would be shot. However, they were inspected and searched for food and any evidence that might point to the one who killed the German. Then they were told that the guilty one must step forward, or all of them would be starved to death. After the second day of no food, a soldier admitted that he had killed the man. We never saw the soldier again.

Walt added that when a man became the least bit ill, he just died, as their resistance was so low due to lack of food. Their only salvation was RED CROSS packages that they had to divide up very thinly.

When captured, Kneisley realized that he had no way to keep track of the days, and the only paper he had was a Christmas Card from his girl friend.



Co. B 142nd Reunion at Muncie, Indiana July 29-Aug. 2nd, 1981, bivouaced at the Holiday Inn. Here's four 'first-timers' at the reunions—from left: Eldon Carter, Walter Kneisley, Henry Hanson and Melvin Broach. All but Carter were POW's. Photo was sent in by host Charles Glenn. We called Glennto get address of KNEISLEY...who is featured in this story...it's Rt. 1 Box 176, Conestoga, PA 17516. This reunion will go down in the books as an all-time great one. Glenn reports that 125 persons attended—the biggest yet.

Unit Reunion is Therapy for Ex-POW

On this, he made a calendar. On the back side, he listed the names of Co. B men who were taken prisoner at Lemberg. He marked the days that they received Red Cross food packages. He made a copy of his calendar and gave it to me.

Anyway, because of the many terrible experiences and suffering, Walter, like any number of combat soldiers had difficulties erasing the awful memories from his mind. His wife Bea, said that his counselor advised him to *bring it out into the open*. When we located Walter, his good friend, Stanley Kotula of Moosic, PA, called him on the phone, and Walt broke down. Stan realized that he was in trouble and told him that he would be paying him a visit. This, Stan did, and they talked about Co. B and the war for a long time.

I wrote to him a couple of times and he answered. At Muncie, I asked him why he decided to come to our reunion. Walt replied that he realized his comrades cared about him. He said that he wanted to express his thanks and appreciation, and that the reunion was wonderful! His wife added that she had never seen such a change in him—and GOOD!

You can rest assured that our Reunion at Muncie was a success, and one of the reasons was WALTER KNEISLEY.

DEWEY MANN, formerly C.O. of Co. B 142nd has our thanks for this great story about the trials and tribulations of a prisoner of war. We have heard other similar ones, where those involved did not care to talk about those horrible days in WWII. If there is an object lesson here, it would be the advice of the counselor who recommended "bring it out in the open."

Co. B 142nd is the only unit we know of that has an Eastern & Western chapter. The two groups will meet jointly next Labor Day at the 36th Division Reunion in Houston.

Dewey W. Mann gets mail at: 2105 21st St., Nitro, W.VA. 25143.



THE 36th DIVISION'S



BIGGEST BOOSTER

This story is probably one of the least known - about a dedicated man - who did more to champion the admiration for the men of the 36th Infantry Division, than just about anyone you can think of.

The ingredients are simple:

1. A new, giant hospital in central Texas.
2. Wounded soldiers by train and plane load.
3. A newspaper editor with a big heart.

Yes, his name was Walter R. Humphrey, editor of the TEMPLE TELEGRAM. He is credited to being the first to file AP stories about the seriously wounded soldiers arriving at McCloskey General Hospital. It started about two months after the Salerno landing (9-9-43).

His dedication and warm feeling for these men who arrived at Temple, all in very serious condition, seeking neuro-surgery, etc., found a real 'friend'. His stories were released through AP wire service, and special releases to that 'soldier's home town'.

Our connection with Walter Humphrey was in the fall of 1944, through Wick Fowler, War Correspondent for the Dallas Morning News, whose stories about the 36th were released to other newspapers all over Texas.

Editor Humphrey sent me copies of the stories that appeared in the Temple Telegram, and others through Associated Press. Later, when he formed the 36th Division Memorial Commission (as president) told me about the proposed 36th Memorial Museum to be built at Temple.

He had a guilt-edge committee, including such T-Patchers as: Lt. Col. HARRY V. STEEL of Boerne, former G-4; and W.C. TORRENCE, 143rd and City Manager of Waco; Two Dallas Bankers; JAMES W. ALLRED, former Gov. of Texas; FRANK CULVER, Judge 17th District at Fort Worth and former 36th in WWI; W.P. HOBBY, former Gov. of Texas and publisher of Houston Post; COKE STEVENSON, the Governor of Texas, and a raft of biggies in all walks of life from all over Texas.

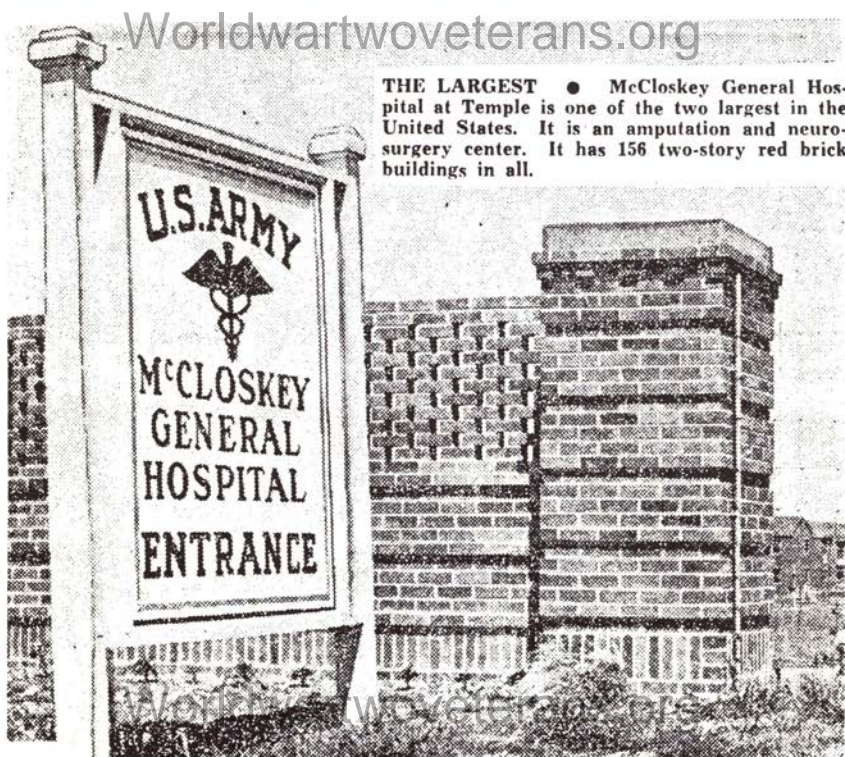
How great can you get? Humphrey, on his own was the catalyst of this project. He was dynamic, greatly respected for his courage to take on such a project, and everything was looking UP. Accolades for the brave men of the 36th, all their wounded came through Temple - at McCloskey Hospital. Many stayed for six, twelve months or longer. The ambulatory ones were used on Bond drives, radio shows and personal appearances all over Texas. The

The 36th Division's Biggest Booster

publicity about THE FIGHTING 36th gained momentum. All the 600 Texas newspapers played up all the stories released out of Temple - thanks to Walter Humphrey.

Some time after V-E Day, Walter Humphrey was transferred to Fort Worth as Editor of the Fort Worth Press. Upon my return home (on V-E Day) I called him, and he asked that I write a six-installment story about the 36th, which we agreed to call - SALERNO to the DANUBE.

It broke on Sept. 9th in every Scripps-Howard newspaper in the southwest. To me, it was a labor of love, and, though it was hurriedly written, it did get numerous re-printing in many other newspapers and magazines. I can truthfully say, that I know of NO OTHER man who did more - in behalf of the ole "FIGHTING 36th". Over and out.




THE LARGEST ● McCloskey General Hospital at Temple is one of the two largest in the United States. It is an amputation and neuro-surgery center. It has 156 two-story red brick buildings in all.

McCLOSKEY Veterans Administration center, Temple Texas, was named for major James A. McCloskey, killed on Bataan, March 26, 1942. The first regular United States Army doctor to lose his life in WWII. The hospital was activated on June 16, 1942. One of the largest general hospitals, it was outstanding as a center for orthopedic cases, amputations, and neuro-surgery. The number of patients at peak of admissions was over 5,000. (The Handbook of Texas, Vol. 2, page 103).

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

THE QUILL
A MAGAZINE FOR WRITERS, EDITORS, AND PUBLISHERS



TEXAN COVERS BATTLEFRONTS AT HOME
(See "Crusier Spread")
Walter S. Humphrey, editor of the Temple (Texas) Daily Telegram, covers every American battle front for his paper and the Associated Press without leaving Temple. Here he is interviewing Sgt. Jack White, top, and Pfc. James Stotomak, both Texans, as their arrival.

Photo by U. S. Army Signal Corps

35 Cents

January-February, 1945

The following story - appeared in THE QUILL, A Magazine for Writers, Editors and Publishers, dated - JAN.-FEB. 1945, was the pioneer story about a dedicated Editor and his personal desire to tell America about their servicemen. The story was written by WALTER HUMPHREY, and will enlighten many a T-Patcher who spent months, or a few years at McCLOSKEY General Hospital.

Editor Humphrey brought much recognition to the valor of the Fighting 36th and their part in this great conflict. The City of Temple rallied around this cause, and many plans were made...Read On...

A TEXAS EDITOR GETS UP IN THE MORNING TO GIVE AMERICA— Battle Coverage Right at Home

By WALTER R. HUMPHREY

All the battle-front coverage in this war isn't being done by the war correspondents at the front.

Some of it is being done at home.

Down here in Temple, Texas, we think we have turned up a tremendous amount of good battle copy to compare with that produced on the spot from many a "theater of operations."

The sources of live copy are inexhaustible, and some of the stories we feel have been as terrific in their appeal as some of the best stuff straight from the war fronts.



While Walter Humphrey interviewed wounded soldiers from the battle fronts inside this A.T.C. plane, hospital attendants transferred patients to waiting ambulances for removal to McCloskey General Hospital. Photo by U.S. Army Signal Corps.

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

The basic reason has been that one of the army's largest general hospitals, McCloskey General hospital, an amputation and neuro-surgical center, is located at Temple.

But the real reason has been that we have taken the time... and plenty of time has been required...to give the hospital the attention it deserves and to exploit its endless potentialities.

I don't know, but from all I've heard, no newspaper in the country has done a more enterprising job in home-front coverage of battle casualties than has *Associated Press*, of which the *Telegram* is a member, from Temple.

This rather spectacular type of news coverage was started when the first convoy of battle casualties arrived at McCloskey General hospital.

We met every convoy, whether it came by rail or air, and interviewed literally thousands of wounded men for their personal stories of combat.

We interviewed the men as they were waiting to be unloaded at the hospital. Those who could walk we accompanied to the mess halls and talked to them as they were being assigned. We finished the job in the wards.

The men, almost without exception, have been splendid. They have cooperated magnificently in helping get out to the folks at home the true picture of what they had seen and what they had been through.

And we have the unqualified cooperation and help from what we have come to believe is the best hospital command and the best army public relations set-up anywhere. Otherwise, it stands to reason, the job would have been as impossible as it was gigantic.

This day-after-day meeting of convoys provided many complications and a severe strain on a staff constantly shot with personnel worries. But it was too good a story to drop and we stayed with it.

It was fun, despite the fact that most of the train convoys unloaded at dawn...and dawn is no time for a morning newspaper to get up and cover a story! For many months I made practically every one of the convoys myself, and I can truthfully say that a newspaperman never had a more challenging story to cover.

From a professional standpoint, it is interesting to note that we scored many newsbeats of state, regional and national scope through this battle casualty coverage.

The first story identifying the 36th and 45th divisions in connection with the landing at Salerno we broke, although the story with about 5,000 words of red-hot coverage for Texas and Oklahoma interest was not without its censorship repercussions. This was two months after Salerno, after all, but it was not until two days after we announced the arrival of casualties from these two battle-scarred divisions that the War Department made the designations official.

The 36th Division's Biggest Booster

Walter "Hump" Humphrey, shown here at the stone in the Temple Telegram shop, was graduated from the University of Colorado nearly 20 years ago, worked for Scripps-Howard in Fort Worth, then teamed with Frank W. Mayborn, a college friend, to buy the Temple daily. Mayborn, publisher, is now a captain on General Eisenhower's staff in Paris.



About the Author

THE Texas Associated Press managing editors association passed a special resolution of appreciation for Walter R. Humphrey's coverage of the news of the army's great center for returning wounded, McCloskey hospital, at Temple.

"Walter Humphrey, editor of the Temple Telegram and past national president of Sigma Delta Chi, has made one of the finest contributions to the war effort of any civilian I know," said Frank H. King, head of the AP organization in Texas.

"He has developed stories, in number and quality, like a war correspondent. From as far away as Canada, Hawaii and Latin American, Humphrey's coverage of the wounded men flown to Temple from the battle fronts has been appreciated. Nothing has been too much trouble for this editor and his slim staff to handle. Any hour of the day or night finds Temple alert with the heroic, the tragic or the human story of broken fighting men home from the fronts. On some days two or three convoys have arrived, and planes have landed other wounded men direct from ports.

"Walter Humphrey's creed of wartime work and service as a small city editor makes one proud to be in the business of gathering and writing news. For Walter, all this is just a part of his wartime effort, because community projects, his seven-day column 'The Home Towner,' the usual struggle to keep a staff together and all the other editorial jobs continue as a part of the daily grind. But it is never a grind to one who works with his devotion and inspiration.

"As an Associated Press sketch about Humphrey which was printed in many Texas newspapers said: Texas newspaper editors, each in his own way, have done their share on the home front, and some of them have done more than their share.

"Such an editor is Walter Humphrey, whose friends in Central Texas say that 'everything good' in Temple has his support and that many such movements, activities and enterprises were inspired or started by him."

Texas Memorial To 36th Division Urged at Temple

Bravery of Troops at Salerno Compared With Alamo as Wounded Soldiers Are Honored

TEMPLE, Feb. 8.—SPRINGFIELD, Texas should erect a memorial to the Thirty-sixth division for its heroism in Italy, a memorial on a par with the huge stone shaft which marks the battlefield of San Jacinto, said Harry Withers of Dallas at a luncheon here today honoring wounded men sent from the Thirty-sixth in Italy to McCloskey General hospital.

Withers compared the bravery and self-sacrifice displayed by Texas soldiers at Salerno with heroism of Col. William B. Travis' men at the Alamo. Texas should certainly commemorate today's heroes as she has honored those of the past, and in as fitting a manner, he said.

History Is Traced

Organizational history of the Thirty-sixth division was traced back 100 years by Withers in a detailed resume of the military units out of which the Texas national guard grew.

Maj. Gen. Claude V. Birkhead of San Antonio was introduced as the officer who commanded the Thirty-sixth division when it was called into federal service in 1940. He was praised by Lt. Col. Harry Steel, a casualty of Salerno, as deserving much of the credit for the division's combat achievements because it was under Birkhead that the Texans received their first intensified training prior to moving overseas.

Both Steel and Withers paid a high tribute to the army medical corps for its record in treatment of sick and wounded men, especially as exemplified at McCloskey General hospital and by medics on the Italian battlefield.

Brig. Gen. James Bethea, commanding McCloskey, was intro-

duced by Walter Humphrey, toastmaster. The luncheon was arranged by members of Temple Rotary, Kiwanis and Lions clubs as a tribute to the following patients at McCloskey now being treated for wounds received in Italy with the Texas division:

Wacoan Included.

Pvt. Alvis D. Sikes of Corsicana. Sgt. Uriah Nichols of Waco. Sgt. Clayborn Honeycutt of Temple. Staff Sgt. Dalton E. Ferguson and Cpl. Charles Hays of Coleman; Raymond D. Horton, Sgt. Joseph B. Cozby, Sgt. Lawrence Dahlberg, Cpl. Alvis B. Sims of Groesbeck, Pvt. Jodie Brooks, Sgt. Librado A. Gonzales, Pvt. George Pollack, Sgt. A. J. McDonald, Tech. Sgt. William P. Bond, Pfc. Arnold Murdock, Pfc. Wallace Watson, Master Sgt. Clinton Eaton, Pvt. Clemens W. Loegering, Lt. Homer Cluck, Lieutenant Klinger, Maj. Sidney Lahourcade, Lt. Grant Moore, Capt. Mike Rinehart, Capt. Mark Hodges, Warrant Officer Charles Van Dusen, all of whom were present.

Five other Thirty-sixth division patients unable to leave their hospital beds to attend were Cpl. Raymond Y. Harris of Temple, Cpl. Merrill Varner, Pfc. L. D. Smith, Pfc. Jesse L. Stojanik of Bartlett and Cpl. Clarence O. Isbell.

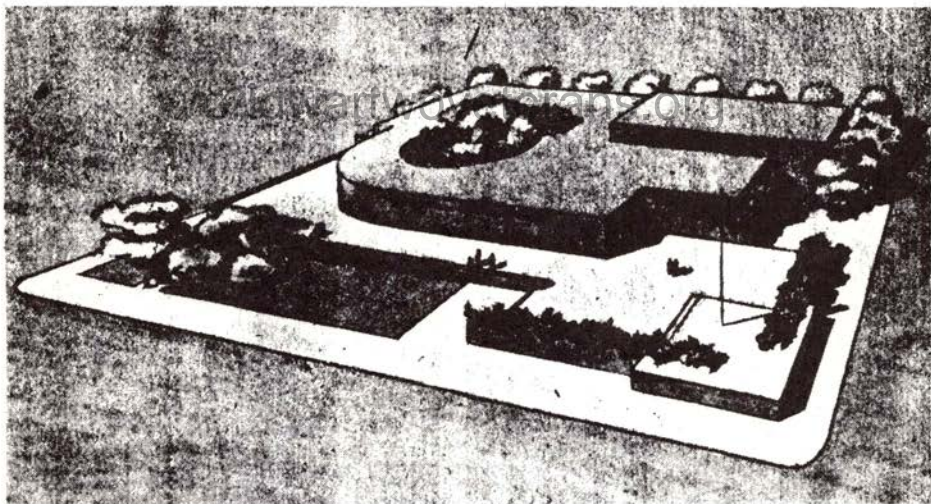
Other Texas battle casualties present included Maj. William D. Singleton, Capt. Jack Akins, Capt. David C. Kelly Jr., Lts. Allen H. Cunningham, Claude L. Holliday, John Wall, Russell Turner, Charles F. Sorgi, Byron Sachs, Winfred T. Jordan, Flight Officer James R. Padgett, Sgts. Amos Miracle, Clarence T. Gardner, Cpl. Sewell M. Smith, Pvts. Emmett Shinn, Tom Starr, Charles M. Gaddy, Oscar L. Estep.

Walter Humphrey was the prime mover in getting the Texas Memorial to the 36th. Please mark the date: Feb. 9, 1944, all this was taking place and the end of the war was still 15 months away (V-E Day).

Associated Press ran stories about this in papers all over the southwest during this campaign. You'll probably spot a few names of T-Patchers listed above.

The 36th Divisions Biggest Booster

Alden B. Dow Of Houston Wins \$1,000 First Prize For 36th Memorial Design



This is architect Elden Dow's sketch of the proposed memorial. It was chosen by the Texas Society of Architects in a state-wide competition.

The 36th "Texas" Division Memorial Commission is now raising a half-million dollars to erect its proposed memorial building. It will be erected at Temple, Texas, a terminus of Highway 36, the 36th Division Route.

The Memorial is conceived around a Garden of Peace in the center. The garden will be elevated, and on the steps leading to it from all sides will appear names of the Division men who have died in action.

The large central exhibition hall will surround the garden. On its long curved side wall will appear a great mural depicting the struggles of the 36th in the present war. In the rear will be an auditorium, and a museum in which will repose the collection of souvenirs and honors bestowed on the 36th.

The above story appeared in the Overseas T-PATCH Tabloid, Germany, June 1945 at war's end. Enthusiasm for this project at this time had about peaked. The sad news follows on next page.

Mr. Walter Humphrey, now chairman of the Commission, has called several meetings of his commission for the purpose of getting construction started before the 36th returns to Camp Bowie.

Sgt Bill Jary, former editor of the T-Patch, is also acting with the committee, in an advisory capacity.

Other former 36th Division men have also been asked to aid the commission in its efforts to construct a suitable monument.



THE HOME TOWNER

By WALTER R. HUMPHREY

Memories of the 36th

When the 36th had their Reunion in Fort Worth, Sept. 1969, Walter Humphrey wrote this tear-jerker, and was his last public statement about this ill-fated Memorial Museum for the 36th Infantry Division. He was still editor of The Fort Worth Press.

Worldwartwoveterans.org

A proud and battle-scarred division is the 36th, which has been having a reunion here this weekend.

This is the outfit that invaded Europe at Salerno, that was literally cut to pieces at the Rapido River and that had so many casualties in its historic role in the conquest of Nazi Germany.

I am a fan of the 36th. If my job hadn't been so demanding...or possibly if I hadn't been too lazy...I might have been one of its historians.

No, I didn't have the honor to serve with the 36th division but I was the first to welcome it back home...for I met the first hospital train and planes that brought its wounded back from Italy.

That was down at McCloskey General Hospital at TEmple. **So the first story of the invasion at Salerno, identifying the 36th, came onto the wires out of TEmple.**

This upset the War Dept. in Washington, but the hospital commanding officer stood by the story because the boys were home...and it couldn't well be kept a secret any longer.

I never will forget that first trainload of casualties. Some of the men were badly wounded, and walking through cars was a sobering experience.

Men of the 45th from Oklahoma were there, too.

The stories of these men, who they were and what they did...and what their comrades did...were tremendous.

No newspaperman ever was more privileged than I to send out over Texas the stories of the gallant men of the 36th. Thousands of words. Stories to make you proud of these Texans.

A few days later a planeload flew into the little airport there. More men of the 36th.

A young boy leaned out of his bunk and called, "Hello, Mr. Humphrey. When I saw you I knew I was home."

And so he was. And Texas quickly chorused its pride in the men of the T-Patch division.

Many others came in as the months wore on, adding to the legend of a great division.

And so, some of us got together and organized a commission to build a memorial there in Temple to the 36th. Leading citizens from all over Texas became directors of it.

The city offered a square block downtown as a site. We raised thousands of dollars, conducted a statewide architectural competition under the chairmanship of Joe Pelich of Fort Worth.

And the Memorial building was to be a beauty.

Then folks elsewhere in Texas began to shoot at us. They hadn't been consulted. Why were we going to build it at Temple, instead of Austin or Brownwood or somewhere else?

Oldtime leaders of the division had different ideas or thought the whole idea was wrong. Stumbling blocks were thrown in the way.

BIGGEST BOOSTER"

Very Sad Ending

And so, sad to say, we were whipped. The winning architect got his \$1000...and the rest of the money we'd collected...not quite \$20,000...finally was turned back.

The city has built a parking area on the block it once gave for the memorial. And only memories of the wonderful project, mostly mine, remain.

I feel guilty because of the failure, for this fine division deserved the memorial. But none of those who didn't want that particular memorial to go through has come forward to replace it.

And so, we keep these men, their sacrifices, their achievements in our hearts only. But may be there always.



The first Post-war gathering of the 36th was in Brownwood Jan. 1946. Photo above was taken at State Park during reunion. At left is: Earl Higginbotham, General John E. Dahlquist chats with DICK STANSELL, and Murdock, All are patients from McClosky Hospital at Temple, TX where most all T-Patchers were sent. Ole Dick Stansell of Amarillo sent this one in.



ONLY picture of the 36th's three commanders: Maj. Gen's John E. Dahlquist, Fred L. Walker and Calude V. Birkhead. This was made January 1946 at Brownwood at the Assn's 1st post war reunion.

Fort Worth, Texas, Tuesday, August 24, 1971

Retired Press editor Walter Humphrey dies



artwoveterans.org

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Walter R. Humphrey . . . 1904-1971

TALES OF THE TEXAS NATIONAL GUARD

By Alan (Chum) Williamson

ANYBODY ELSE WANTA BUY AN ANNUAL!

The year was 1931, near the black depths of the Great Depression. Camp Palacios had not yet been renamed Camp Hulen. The laying of the concrete slabs for tent bases, a New Deal WPA project, was still several years away.

The uniform of the National Guard was virtually unchanged from that worn by the doughboy of World War I. Wrap leggings that made good shine rags when retired, cotton khaki riding breeches, long-sleeved wool flannel shirt worn year around (its defenders stoutly maintained that it was actually cooler in the August heat), topped by the only article that has survived, the campaign hat.

The infantry weapon was the U.S. Rifle, Caliber .30, Model of 1903, the bolt action "Springfield" (half of them were made at Rock Island Arsenal), which in the hands of a sharpshooter was accurate at ranges up to a thousand yards.

At his initial officers conference for the 1931 summer encampment, Colonel William C. Torrance, long time Waco city manager and commander of the 143rd Infantry, proposed the publication of a regimental annual. The paperback, pamphlet-size booklet would feature a two page spread of each unit, with group picture, roster, and unit history. The cost could be only a dollar a copy. Torrance asked that each commander poll the members of his unit and report the number of copies desired.

As might have been expected, one of the officers immediately volunteered that every member of his company would want an annual. Not to be outdone, each of the others echoed the unanimous commitment. The result was that on payday, everyman in the 143rd Infantry was given a copy of the regiment's first -- and last -- annual, and had a dollar deducted from his pay.

A dollar was a lot of money in 1931. A private was paid only a dollar a day; fifteen dollars for the 15-day encampment. Also, it was more than a decade before the supergrades of World War II and after. A squad leader was only a corporal, pay grade E3. A platoon sergeant was a "buck sergeant", grade E4. The first three graders in a rifle company was the topkick.

On payday night there was a dance at the Officers Club. The enlisted men began their inevitable crap games as soon as they left the pay table. As darkness fell, men armed with tent stakes guarded piles of government property against marauders from other units, bent on making up shortages.

The men of Company D, 143rd Infantry, were from Alto, Texas, a farming community. Many were unemployed. It was during the prohibition

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

era, and some of the men brought out gallon jugs of bootleg whiskey. Others either joined the dice, poker or blackjack games or kibitzed as the crapshooters chanted, "Eighter from Decatur!" "Two rows of rabbit--."

A shot fired from the Company D area shattered the tranquility of the evening. In the stillness that followed, a voice shouted, "Anybody else wanta buy an annual!"

Another shot rang out. "Anybody else wanta buy an annual!"

The guard was turned out. Locating the area where the shots were fired, the officer of the guard ordered a formation of Company D, with arms. He then smelled the muzzle of each weapon and found two rifles that has been fired. The two riflemen were taken into custody.

Colonel Torrance immediately convened a general court-martial. There was an order that at least one officer remain on duty with each unit, yet all three of the officers of Company D had attended the dance. There were charged with dereliction of duty, found guilty, and dismissed from the service.

Meanwhile, Torrance had the men of Company D turn in all clothing and equipment, mustered the company out, and sent the men home in civilian clothing. When the 36th Division returned to Palacios for the 1932 encampment, a new Company D, 143rd Infantry, had been mustered in at Temple, Texas.

The 143rd Infantry Annual of 1931 is now a collector's item. A copy in good condition will bring many times the original price. But for years after its ill-fated publication, any time men of the regiment assembled for drill or at camp, the cry, "Anybody else wanta buy an annual!" was sure to get a laugh.



This bit of early days in the Guard will bring back memories to all the old timers who served in TNG during the 1930's. A.C. Chum Williamson is a devoted old-timer with 50 years from his entry into the 36th. He gets mail at: 2654 King Oaks, San Antonio, TX 78233. Phone: (512) 654-9180.

**THERE ARE 8 MILLION
STORIES IN THE 36th**

For Conspicuous Gallantry..



T/SGT HOMER L. WISE
CONGRESSIONAL
MEDAL OF HONOR WINNER

Worldwartwoveterans.org
Number Five CMH

Winner in the 36th



From T-Patch (Overseas Tabloid)
Sunday 3, December 1944
Vol. 2, No. 13 Eastern France



Louisiana Infantryman Lead **Assault To Smash Foe Near Magliano, Italy**

In the same tradition set by Kelly, Logan, Bjorklund and Crawford, the 36th Division now has a new extraordinary "Kraut-Killer" T/Sgt Homer L. Wise of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, now wears the Nation's highest award, the Congressional Medal of Honor.

"Blackie", as he is better known to men of "L" Company, 142nd Infantry Regiment, Staged a one-man war against the Krauts in the Magliano sector of the Italian campaign on 14 June 1944. Wise's award is the third CMH for the 142nd Infantry Regiment, as they also claim Lt. Bjorklund and Pvt. Crawford.

With savage disregard for deathdealing enemy machinegun, small arms, mortar and artillery fire, Sgt. Wise— Evacuated a wounded buddy 100 yards to safety.

Killed two Germany officers and a great number of enlisted men.

Effectively launched rifle grenades on entrenched enemy positions.

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

Fired an automatic rifle from the hip, from a squatting position and from a standing position to clear out Boche strongpoints.

Repaired and fired a tank-destroyer machinegun, enabling his battalion to move forward and capture its objective.

"Blackie" was in the assault squad of the 142nd Infantry, whose mission was to smash German troops on the high ground overlooking the German positions.

Even while moving into position, the Texans were subject to heavy small-arms and mortar fire coming from three directions. When they jumped off, the troops, forcing grimly forward, were pinned down by sprays of machinegun fire which temporarily stopped them.

Hearing the cries of a wounded soldier, only faint amid the exploding shells and tearing bullets, Sgt. Wise left his place of safety, dashed across the fire-swept area to the stricken doughboy and with help of three others, carried him back for treatment.

Blackie then made his way back to his squad which was about to take advantage of a break in the fire - to advance. The Germans soon opened up with a murderous spray which again halted the T-Pachers.

Sgt. Wise dispersed his men, and although frequently exposed, coolly moved among them, directing their fire. It was then he saw two German officers and an enlisted man apparently moving to an observation position on his flank.

Working his way over exposed terrain, Blackie reached an advantageous position, and with three carefully-aimed shots from his M-1 finished the three Krauts. Then, taking up a tommy-gun from a nearby soldier, Wise blasted that area accurately enough to disorganize a number of enemy troops.

Enemy fire was still coming from a difiladed position which Wise could not reach with his tommy-gun. However, a good infantryman is familiar with all weapons, and Blackie traded his tommy-gun for a rifle-launcher and grenades. Again under enemy observation and fire, he moved forward, blasted over several rounds of ammo, causing numerous casualties and breaking the enemy stand. As the remaining Germans fled from the terrific explosions, Wise grabbed the tommy-gun and killed and wounded most of them.

Once again the battalion took advantage of the enemy disorganization and moved forward. The stubborn Germans re-formed and opened again with terrific fire, this time from the left flank. Blackie signaled his machinegun crew forward, but they were pinned down.

Desperately ignoring the fire, Sgt. Wise crawled back for his BAR, which he obtained from a wounded soldier. He snaked his way back and went

For Conspicious Gallantry

ahead of his pinned-down squad. Reaching a good position he rose, and, death pouring from his automatic rifle, he dispersed the startled Germans to his front. Walking forward deliberately, firing bursts, he killed and wounded many more of the enemy.

His one-man breakthrough was halted, however, when he was taken under fire by a small group of Germans who turned and fired carefully at him. Still exposed, but squatting, Wise, with cold determination, sprayed their positions until he had neutralized their fire. His platoon moved quickly into the gap and was able to capture the remainder of the enemy force.

Following behind the doughboys was a tank-destroyer unit which had difficulty moving because of the close-in fighting, also because of the nature of the terrain. The lead vehicle was mounted with a machine gun which had jammed and out of action.

Needing additional automatic fire, Blackie moved under cover to the armored vehicle, disassembled the gun, and corrected the stoppage.

He took position behind the gun and fired 750 rounds, clearing the enemy from their areas along the road and permitting the TD's to advance.

By his heroic action, Sgt. Wise killed, wounded and dispersed many of the enemy, causing many others to surrender, and so removed the last stumbling block to his battalion's advance.

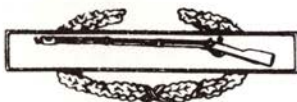
The town of Magliano was liberated and the Texans were on their way to the important town of Piombino.

The 27 year old infantryman also wears the Silver Star and the Purple Heart with an Oak Leaf Cluster. He joined the 36th in September of 1941.

Editor's note: Keeping up with the whereabouts of all our great heroes of the 36th has been quite a chore. Those of you who lived through many of these battles, knew or read-about our CMH winners.

Wm. J. Smyth of Latrobe sent in this obit to the T-Patcher 6 years ago...quote:

"Homer Wise, G.I. Who Won Medal of Honor Dies at 57," as appeared in the NEW YORK TIMES, April 24th, 1974. A retired Army first sergeant, Homer L. Wise died yesterday in Yale-New Haven Hospital. He was 57, lived at 23 Tree Lane, Stamford, Conn. Sgt. Wise served with 142nd Regiment of the 36th Division, was awarded the nation's highest decoration for action at Magliano, Italy. He also received the Purple Heart with two clusters, the Silver Star and the Bronze Star. He was discharged in 1945 as a technical Sgt. and instructor at Fort Benning. He later re-enlisted and retired in 1965.





Instituted by President Lincoln on December 21, 1861 in the first year of the Civil War, awarded in fourteen wars and campaigns since, including Viet Nam, Medal of Honor citations recount the saga of American valor and sacrifice.

The words read: "The Medal of Honor is awarded to officers and enlisted men of the Navy and Marine Corps, who shall, in action involving actual conflict with the enemy, or in the line of his profession, distinguish himself conspicuously by gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty and without detriment to the mission of his command or to the command to which attached." Requirements for the Army Medal are identical, but limited to combat only.

Seaman John William, captain of the maintop, U.S.S. Pawnee in the attack upon Mathias Point, Virginia, June 26, 1861 was the first recipient. Philadelphia was the site in which the first medal was struck. Like the bulk of Civil War winners, designer and engraver, Christian Schuller and A. Paquet, hailed from foreign shores.

Various legislation was passed amending design, qualifications and presentation procedure. Although present law stipulates only one decoration per person, several men have been twice cited. Most famous of these, perhaps, was Sergeant Daniel Daly, USMC, reputedly World War I's most decorated man.

The Medal of Honor is the only decoration presented by the President or someone designated by him. He makes it in the name of Congress but usually Congress takes no action. It may do so, however. Every recommendation must be forwarded to the Secretary of Defense. He refers it to the Defense Department Decorations Board where action is then taken.

President Theodore Roosevelt, by executive order on September 20, 1905 provided that the presentation be made with "formal and impressive ceremonial." Current instructions read, "The recipient of the Medal of Honor, will, whenever practicable, be ordered to Washington, and the presentation will be made by the President." Posthumous awards are made with dignified ceremony to next of kin.

Today's Medal of Honor Recipients now living total a little more than three hundred.

“THE TRENCHFOOT TRAGEDY”

Division QM-Surgeon Combine Efforts To Combat Trenchfoot With ‘DAILY SOCK EXCHANGE’

Exact Reprint from
MARCH 4, 1945

four page, Tabloid issue
of the T-Patch,
EASTERN FRANCE

T-PATCH

36th « Texas » Division News

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Lt. Col. Clifton Carter

“SOCKS FOR SUPPER”

“Socks for Supper”, That’s the slogan making the rounds of the 36th Division as the quartermaster and surgeon combine efforts to combat trenchfoot.

Conceived by the quartermaster, Lt. Col. Clifton Carter, Kerrville, Texas, a daily sock exchange has been instituted, the only one of its kind in the 7th Army. Every day the doughboys take off their dirty pair and turn it in for a freshly laundered pair, keeping a third set in their pockets for emergency use. This daily sock exchange has contributed greatly to the appreciably lowered trenchfoot rate within the division.

Every line company in the Division has been drawn into the plan, which employs an average of five pair of socks per man. “This sock business is really good stuff”, said Capt. George E. Chambers, Milwaukee, Wis., B Company commander, 143rd Infantry. “It makes the men take care of their

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

feet. I've seen times in the line when men were afraid to take off their shoes and went without taking care of their feet until they couldn't help catching trenchfoot."

"We handle about 2500 pairs of socks per day," explained Major Albert Suessmuth, Houston, Texas, the Regimental S-4. "It's worth every effort. I've noticed that when the men take off their shoes, they often unconsciously massage their feet. It's little things like that that go along way to prevent trenchfoot."

The daily sock exchange works like this: every day when rations are brought forward, each man is handed a clean pair of socks for which he turns in a dirty pair. In addition, he must keep a clean pair in his pocket for daily emergencies. The fourth pair is being washed at the QM laundry attached to the division, the fifth pair is either at a forward installation in reserve, or is in transit. "This is all done without having to draw extra socks for the men," Col. Carter explained. "Each man is entitled to five pair as basic equipment. We merely handle them for him and get them forward, clean." Getting socks to the men is considered so important that they have almost the same priority as food and ammunition.

Whenever the companies come out of the line, the medical personnel hold daily foot inspections. These are held when clean socks are delivered to the troops, and the company aid men make sure not only that the men change their socks but also that their feet are as clean as conditions permit. According to Lt. Col. Clarence Brewster, Fort Worth, Texas, the Division Surgeon, such simple preventative measures have made the men "foot conscious" and made them realize that it is up to them individually to take care of their feet. "That is the crux of the situation," he said. "There's not any one thing will do it, but a combination; and the man himself is the basis of it."

Editor's note: During any war over the ages, one of the most hazardous things to endure, besides the enemy—is the WEATHER. Like heat and heat exhaustion, cold and snow, rain, mud and windstorms, and even a flood or two. Mother Nature can really be unkind to the troops.

How well we knew in the winter fighting of 1945, the long, cold and wet—TRENCHFOOT. Here was a major catastrophe! Some cases of TRENCHFOOT were so sever that amputation was necessary. We are sure the Nazis had the same problem, and we do not know how they handled it, but we recalled this "Socks For Supper," and checked our old yellow copies of the T-PATCH (overseas) and think this story deserves a reprint. If awards were passed out for ingenious ideas...we think this one was a winner.

A MEMORIAL ADDRESS
by Brig. Gen. Armin F. Puck

Prepared for and given as a Memorial Service address before the 56th Annual Reunion of the Texas 36th Division Association, in reunion at the El Tropicano Motor Hotel in San Antonio, Texas on Sunday morning, 6 September, 1981. (56th Annual Reunion, Texas 36th Division Association 3-6 September, 1981, El Tropicana Motor Hotel, San Antonio, Texas).

Worldwartwoveterans.org
"Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity—"

Thank you, President Morgan and Father Yadrick for the opening prayer. I am sure all of you believe, as I do, that it is meek and proper always to invoke the aid and blessings of Almighty God before entering into or embarking upon any function or undertaking. And, I wish to further thank you President Morgan and my buddies and fellow members of our great San Antonio Chapter, 36th Div. Association for honoring me by allowing me to bring you this Memorial Address today. I only hope that my few words will be worthy of this occasion and of our fallen and deceased comrades in arms whom we remember in mind and memory here today. Scarcely a moment or a day passes that some one of us living doesn't recall or is mindful of a fellow soldier with whom we marched and served and fought who fell in combat so many years ago. Whatever the thought or memory is—it is important because of the strong impression those comrades made on us during training and in combat because of the strong impression those comrades made on us during training and in combat because of their courage and their character and their devotion to duty and their friendship and affection for us.

Worldwartwoveterans.org
Many of you here today bore the brunt of heavy combat with a fearsome foe—the German Nazi Wehrmacht. And, many of us served in direct support. Together with some of you in the forefront of battle, we took the fight right to the enemy from our landings at Salerno on the beaches at Paestrum—on up thru Italy, from the landings on the French Riviera—up through the Voeges Mountains—through a part of Germany—and to his ultimate surrender in our sector deep in the heart of Austria. And we whipped the enemy all the way.

True, we suffered set backs and delays and disappointments, but not ever because of a lack of character or courage. The 36th U.S. Infantry Div. could fight and did fight—all the way—and eventually won at war's end. And, not

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so incidentally—all of us being real men—good Americans—could and did all those other good things too—don't ask me—because I won't tell—*I was your Provost Marshall.*

A premier combat unit; surean elite Infantry Division; incomparable and indomitable character and courage and fighting spirit and esprit de corps—Damn Right! We accomplished our mission and got the job done—never lost or gave up an inch of ground we took—all of this despite tremendous casualties along the way—often against superior odds and greater strength—and, through unspeakable weather in two winters—in Italy and France. I am not going to relate our high and heart tearing casualties or detail or glorious achievements or recount the many well deserved awards and decorations earned by so many of our comrades here. No—that has been recorded and many related before, rather I want for a moment to dwell on the great leadership given us by our great Commanding Generals—Major General Claude V. Birkhead in peacetime and in our early days of preparation and training by our beloved Major General Fred L. Walter in further training and our first year of combat and our most exteemed Major General John E. Dahlquist and our many other senior and junior officers and non-commissioned leaders. They knew their jobs—they knew their men; they knew themselves and they set the example for us all to follow.

And all of us—you and I—the front line combatants and—if you will—our fighters and your direct support—because of our character and courage and determination to do our duty and carry the fight to the foe—and despite any and all odds—whipped him in our sectors all the way thru to V-D Day. Now, let me say a few words directly from scriptures, these are: Faith - Hope and Love - then let me for a moment hand you a thought or two in their regard; not a one of us could have ever made it individually or as a unit without Faith and Hope in our trust and our confidence in each other and in our comrades—we had to rely and depend on one another to each do his job and carry out his part of our mission. Thrown together as strangers in units—some of us in 1940 others later and some much later in combat—we all had to “throw in together.” train together so we could become a first class fighting machine. How about Love, well we became associates and then friends and then buddied up with one another in pairs or groups, we developed comradeship and great friendships and some have lasted through the war and combat until right here today. And, through this form of love and affection resulting in comrades and buddies working together in trust and confidence—relying and depending on one another, each knowing the other would carry out his part of the mission. And, when fate so decreed, and if necessary—men went forward together—knowing as it were—casualties—killed and wounded comrades would occur. Men making sacrifices for one another—willingly and unselfishly. So, you here today and our fallen and deceased comrades—because of your courage and

A Memorial Address

character—gave our great generals and commanders and leaders the soldiers from which they forged our great Fighting 36th U.S. Infantry Division.

Our Division is the Division which landed at Salerno and refused to back off—give up ground or go back to the boats—NO SIR—this is the division that fought gallantly and took Rotundo, Lungo, San Pietro and Cassino & Maggiori—and when we fought at the Rapido—we attacked heroically on the late afternoon of 20 January, 1944—some units even having to fight to get to the the River bank and boat launching sites—but, only god will know, except you who attacked again the second day, of your sheer courage and determination with which you made the second attack. Then could still go on to Cassino and Mount Cairo—Remember the truce on Mt. Cairo so both sides could evacuate their dead and wounded? How we later broke out of the Anzio Beachhead drove brilliantly through Velletri, took Rome and stormed up through Central Italy to the Arno River, where we were finally held up—for withdrawal for preparation for the invasion of Souther France—which we did—brilliantly fighting and executing break throughs to defeat the enemy in Austria. Let writers in the past—those will write now and in the future say what they will—our Division was one of the finest combat units the United States Army ever had.....

Reliable.....yes

Dependable.....yes

Effective.....yes

A Fierce Fighting Unit.....Yes

Toda we honor those who were killed in combat or were noncombatant casualties or have been deceased since World War Two. We revere their memory, we are mindful of their gallant and heroic deeds and sacrifices—We salute their memory and share as much as we might their loss to family loved ones and friends.

But, to those of us who also marched and served and fought—and by the Grace of God—survived—did so because of our love of freedom and liberty—and the principals of democracy—and, so it is for us in the memory of our lost comrades—to continue to stand up for and if necessary fight—to help keep our United States Free—and work for peace—not only in our time but for all time to come! May the love and grace and peace that comes from God Almighty continue to keep and bind us together today and always—

Thank you.

T - P A T C H

36th Division News

Vol. 3, No. 2

In Germany

15 April 1945

The Lone Star Flies Over Germany



The flag of the Lone Star State, which has been carried by the 36th since training days at Blanding, flies over Germany at the great gate north of Wissembourg. As Major Armin F. Puck, Division Provost Marshal, came out of the tower to plant the flag on German soil, the area was strafed.

Photo by Paramount News.

Our special thanks to Julian Philips (Treasurer of the 36th Association) for sending in this memorial address for all T-Patchers to read, keep and pass on to others.

Note: The photo above of Major Armin F. Puck was made by Paramount News Service and was circulated in news papers and magazines all over America in April 1945. This however was 'first' used in the T-Patch, April 15, 1945 issue.

Brig. Gen. Puck gets mail at: 1019 Spent Wing Drive, San Antonio, TX 78213.

"NEVER SAY DIE"

Worldwartwo

Abilene Reporter-News
May 9, 1980
By Mark Nassutti
Staff Writer



Harvey V. Ashton, 83, lives on his 54-acre ranch northwest of Abilene on Hodges Road.

Until last year, he raised ponies and horses there, showing them "all over the Southwest" and collecting a wallfull of trophies and plaques. He had been an insurance man, first in Breckenridge, then here.

Like most good West Texans, Harvey V. Ashton is a talker. Not quite as spry as he was; he has a cane to help get about. But he'll set you down on his screened porch on a hill overlooking his ranch and just talk.

This time, the talk mostly about his "two years, five months and a half" as a soldier. He served from early 1917 to August 1919, saw action along the Rio Grande with the Texas Militia and later as part of the 36th Division in France.

He came to late to join Blackjack Pershing's group as it chased Pancho Villa into Mexico; Ashton mostly stayed at his outfit's headquarters in Hillsboro and played in the band.

Which brings us around to how he got into the Army to begin with. In his home town of Italy, in Ellis County, he had "fooled around with music a bit, in the town band. Each regiment, y'see, had a band. That was the only entertainment they had. So I joined up with the band in the first part of '17, I volunteered, in Hillsboro."

His instrument? Cornet - or trumpet. And no, he did not play taps and

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reveille; that was for the bugle corps, and “buglers weren’t musicians.”

Most of his seven months on the border were spent guarding pumps like old Donna, in Donna, buying tequila and playing in the band. “Things were pretty calm on the border then,” he recalls. Pershing was already headed for Europe, helping prepare for “the ol’ number one war...brewing up over there.

“I didn’t even know about it (the war) when I joined,” Ashton said. “I was just a kid.”

Ashton said he took part in “a few skirmishes. No bit commotions. The Mexicans didn’t like us, y’see, ’cause we didn’t fool with ’em. The Texas Rangers didn’t either, see, The Mexicans said “You take Texas outathere and we’d whip the United States.”

They chased after men like Pancho Villa, but never crossed the border as Pershing had. That Pershing, he was a tough one. A good general. Hellfire, if the US government hadn’t called him back, he’d brought ole Pancho back with him.

After the border period, Ashton and his outfit headed for Camp Bowie, “out on the prairie near Fort Worth.” They joined up with the Oklahoma militia to form the 36th Division, with it’s insignia the T and arrow. T for Texas, arrow for Oklahoma.

“Then the flu hit, and killed off a lot of ’em, like flies. That slowed us down about goin’ to France, but we went over to France...got over there in July 1918.

“We weren’t scared at all. We were on the ocean, in th is troop ship, with submarines all around.” Ashton is glad he was a young man then, because “young ones ain’t got no fear in ’em. The older y ou get, the more scared you get that something’s going to happen to you. H—, we were out on the decks playing dice.”

In France, Ashton did triple duty. He served as a litter carrier along with other band members, helped salvage abandoned equipment, and entertained soldiers and officers alike.

“The bands, during the war, when we got to the front, were used as litter bearers, the most dangerous job they had. Were attached to the medical corps,” Ashton said. Dangerous because despite Red Cross armbands, Germans would still shoot as litter-bearers scooped wounded men out of shell holes and trenches to carry them to field hospitals.

Ashton said that aside from taking potshots at litter-bearers, the Germans would sometimes bomb medical facilities.

“I was on the Marne River right there, and there was a hospital filled with wounded soldiers. Those Germans came over one time and dropped a bomb over it, timed to go off before it hit, and it just slaughtered them, like hogs.”

“Those things don’t come out in history, y’see, but it happened. I was there. It just mowed ’em down, with shrapnel.”

He called his job the most dangerous, up there with the runners. “And

"Never Say Die"

they called us gim-riders. What's that? Well, that's the ones that don't do no more than they have to, just slow and won't do anything than what they're told to do.

"But it's a d-- good thing to do when you're in a war like I was in. You don't volunteer for anything. All the boys that I knew that volunteered are still over there kickin's up daisies.

"I learned not to volunteer 'cause they'd get around to callin' you anyway, y'see."

At night, Ashton recalls, "You couldn't smoke. But hell, I smoked. Still do. But you couldn't then, 'cause these German planes flew over us every night. They always had control of the air. We had them old Jennies back there then, but they couldn't bring down nothin'.

"Our anti-aircraft guns were scattered all up and down the lines, and they'd always try to shoot the planes down, but I don't remember ever seeing a one of them that ever got hit."

The Armistice was not long in coming. To Ashton and his group that meant a 13-day walk with full packs getting off the front. "I carried over a 100 pounds on my back, and I didn't weigh more than 128. There were a lot of rumors on that walk. Like, 'We're gonna hit his town, where there's a train, and we'll just walk right on.' H--, we never did see a train. If they'd built a bridge across the ocean we'd a walked back."

Ashton ranged over France with the band, finally heading home in August of 1919. After he got out, he "hung around Dallas for a while," got married after a year, and went into the insurance business.

He opened the first Texas branch office for Mutual of Omaha ("You know, Wild Kingdon") in Breckenridge, then opened another office here in 1930. He helped organize other companies and finally opened his own business, at 21st and Pine.

"Texas Independent Life Insurance. I organized that. That was in 1952. I operated that until 1961, then in 1965 sold out and started stock farming. I've fooled with horses as long as I can remember."

He raised Shetlands and Hackneys, show horses, cart and harness horses. "One won the stake in Tulsa, and in New Orleans. A 2-year old. He's 25 years old now. His name is Larigo Junior."

"But I don't get around like I used to," Ashton said. He underwent surgery recently for cataracts, and has not been able to spend the time he wishes he could with the horses he loves. "But I've lived almost 84 years now...past the average, at least."

Our thanks to Woodrow J. Baxter, P.O. Box 961, Coleman, TX 76834 of Co. B (Western) 142nd Infantry for sending in the story as appeared in the Abilene Reporter News, May 9, 1980. These stories about our World War I rothers are most interesting. We find that the privations of war are no different that those we of WWII encountered.

CONFESSIONS OF A MILITARY HISTORIAN

By Col. Vincent M. Lockhart
"T-Pach to Victory"



"So you want to write a book?"

Or, maybe, like me, you get talked into it. I'll admit it wasn't hard to talk me into it, because I wanted something written about the 36th (Texas) Division in France and Germany before everybody, including me, died.

As it was, a number of excellent sources were lost to me within days and months of when I would have talked with them. I took this as proof that we must get on with it.

At first, I thought I'd do the book for the 36th Division Association, as their historian, but I found very little support for this idea among the directors. The association has a pot full of money in its treasury, and it's not about to part with it. Too many people can remember just a few short years ago when the Association was broke.

Then I got egotistical, and I decided I could write a good book, and I'd just invest my own money in it, and expect to make some profit. The facts in this area are that I have spent about \$20,000 of Helen's and my money, travelling, interviewing, cajoling, begging, and finally writing. At last, the job was finished, and it's at the publisher's.

My publisher has made me the sweetest deal any publisher ever made to a first time author. He has known me some 30 years and he ought to know better.

After the expenses of putting the book together, binding, advertising, mailing, etc., are taken care of, the publisher and I will split 50-50. Nobody ever heard of such a good deal! Now, if we sell 1,000 books in advance, the publisher will order 5,000 copies of the book. If we sell 5,000 copies of the book, I will make about \$30,000 -- subtract my \$20,000 expense, and you will find that I will net \$10,000 for **three years' work** -- IF we print, and sell, 5,000 copies.

At the Santone reunion, I sold 44 copies in advance. It's quite a ways to 1,000 from there. One experienced hand there told me, somewhat apologetically, "folks just have to see the book before they'll buy it."

We'll leave the money question right there. Now I know why a professional historian wanted \$20,000 up front before he would undertake the book.

Confessions of a Military Historian

Okay, forget money and think of dedication.

I started out with interviews, and some correspondence. Among the correspondence with Brigadier General Fred W. Sladen, who was a lieutenant colonel had been G-3 of the Division from the landing in Southern France to about Thanksgiving. He sent me his diary, and if you buy the book (or borrow a copy somewhere) you'll find his diary helped a lot in telling the story. I arranged to go see him in May of 1980 -- in a sweep of the West Coast that would include former lieutenant William D. MacGibbon of the 143rd's I&R platoon, then living (I thought) in Portland.

In correspondence, I learned that the author of "**MacGibbon's Mule Barn**" was gone to Valhalla, then in January Freddie Sladen, as fine a guy as ever wore the T-Patch, had a heart attack and died. Thank God that he had sent me his diary and that Mrs. MacGibbon sent me a copy of MacGibbon's little book.

Meanwhile, I ran down Raymond Bernberg, one-time adjutant of the 143rd, and Steve Weiss, a rifleman from Company C, 143rd who had a most unique story to tell. And I found Major General John W. Harmony in San Francisco and had a marvelous session with him. Then a session in northern San Francisco with Brigadier General Frederic Bates Butler, of Butler Task Force fame. He doesn't liek the 36th and my two hours with him were something less than joyful.

But I went across the bay to Tiburon and there was old Amarillo friend **Clifford M. Snow**, who had commanded the 155th Field Artillery. He plied me with liquor, which eased my pain, and told me some stories, a few printable.

There were other soirees around the US of A, like to the banks of the Potomac to talk with **Brigadier General Robert I. Stack**. I don't think I fully appreciated him when we were serving together, but then, I was a rear-echelon type and he was most certainly a combat officer. I had wonderful sessions with **Major General George E. Lynch** in Georgia, and **General Paul D. Adams** in Tampa, and **Brigadier General Charles Hodge** in Del Ray, Florida.

A lot of the talks were sheer joy, and I guess I shouldn't think about getting money for writing a book about guys like **Dave Frazier** and **Price Middleton** and **Beany Wilson** and **Hank Gomez** and **Charlie Beacham** and **Joe Gill** and **Parks Bowden**.

Sometimes, though, I found guys didn't want to talk. This surprised me. I went to Nashville to the first fully national meeting of my old Company B, 142. (I commanded them in the Louisiana maneuvers of 1941). Only one guy there would talk with me. That was **Lieutenant Colonel Elliott W. Amick**, who had commanded the 1st Battalion until wounds ended his war.

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

I travelled to all the 36th Division reunions -- Houston, Dallas, Santone -- and asked guys to come see me and talk. They were few and far between. Good old friends like **Oran Stovall** and **Bob Ives** helped me out. Others didn't quite get around to it.

There's another chapter I could write about the delays from having my life's companion in the hospital and near death for weeks -- that delayed my writing -- and then I messed up a new car and got eight broken ribs. It's not easy to run a typewriter with busted ribs.

But -- at last -- it's at the publishers.

It's YOUR story!

It's called "T-Patch to Victory", about 400 pages, and costs \$15 advance sale price (plus 68¢ sales tax if you live in Texas).

Footnote: This 'confession' was written for the Quarterly because your editor asked for it. Vince Lockhart is a most modest individual, and I know, because it has been my pleasure to know him very well from the early days. He was appointed the official historian of the 36th Division way back from the beginning of our battle-scars. He also was first editor of the Post-war T-Patch published at this newspaper at Canadian, Texas. It took a long time to convince 'Vince' that he should do the last-half of our campaigns (Southern France to Austria).

His devotion to the 36th is unquestionable, and to understand the problems he encountered, you'd have to walk a few miles in his boots. We urge all T-Patchers to ORDER a copy of "T-Patch To Victory."

T-Patch to Victory

STAKED PLAINS PRESS, P. O. Box 779, Canyon, TX 79015

Yes! Please send me _____ copies(y) of Colonel Vincent Lockhart's book, *T-Patch to Victory*, as soon as it is out. I enclose \$ _____ (at \$15 a copy, plus 68¢ a copy sales tax by Texans).

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The last man

Time thins veterans' ranks from 'War to End All Wars'



Nick Deitiker (from left), Frank Clarkson, and Jess Slaughter meet for the last time in Beaumont

By Brad Bailey

Staff Writer of The News

The wine has turned to vinegar, and the aging scotch won't be tasted, but allowed to age forever.

What the "War to End All Wars" could not do to the 250 men of Co. B, 143rd Infantry, 36th Division, time has done all too well.

Nine remain alive. Of those nine, only three were able to attend the last meeting of the Last Man Club on Veterans Day in Beaumont, Texas.

Jesse Slaughter, 84, and Nick Deitiker and Frank Clarkson, both 86, were brave enough to enlist in Beaumont's all-volunteer Company B, and travel to France with the

American Expeditionary Forces.

They were brave enough to swarm out of the muddy French trenches and face horse-drawn artillery, bayonets and mustard gas while forcing "The Hun" back to the Aisne River during the Argonne Offensive of October 1918.

But none of the three was brave enough to be the Last Man Club's very last man; none was man enough to taste the scotch saved all these years for a toast by the last remaining man to all his fallen comrades.

They ate their \$3 box lunch at the Beaumont American Legion Hall, said a silent prayer, and voted that the meeting Wednesday be their last.

Time thins veterans' ranks

The scotch, replacing champagne which long ago soured to vinegar, will "survive all three of us, that's for damn sure," Slaughter said.

Slaughter, the youngest and in relatively good health, feared the task of the last toast would fall to him.

"I looked at Clarkson, and I said, 'Damned if I want to be the last man. Let's just break the damn thing up and bury it.' The three of us buried it Wednesday. Put yourself in my boots. What would I have done with that scotch, by myself, after so long? What was I going to say? Who would I say it to? I wouldn't have been able to do it without crying pretty hard. Used to be, Nov. 11 was a happy day . . ."

Once upon a time, after the Last Man Club was formed in 1936, 18 years after war's end, Wednesday's 11th hour seemed a lifetime away. And it was.

The meetings, Nov. 11 at 11 a.m. every year, were parties with good food, talk of old times, and friends scattered all over the country getting together again.

Fewer came each year.

"Used to," Slaughter said, "we only had to send about two wreaths a year to families of members who had passed on. Here lately we've been sending 10 and 12. Lt. Lockwood passed on up in San Antonio about six days ago. He was the latest. They're going pretty fast lately. It bothers me when they pass on. It takes me back to other times."

Slaughter paused. "It makes you wonder — makes you wonder how much longer you've got. I'm not ready, but I guess I'm as ready as I'll

be. I've lived a good full life, and tried to be as good as I could. I can afford to be sick in a hospital and still pay for my funeral, and the government don't owe me a damn thing."

For the record: The 250 met up July 19, 1917, at the now-long-gone Millard School in Beaumont. They took the troop train to Camp Bowie, Fort Worth, trained for 11 months, then were shipped to France, where on Oct. 39 they arrived at the front line in the Argonne Offensive. In 10 days, they had achieved the objective of driving the Germans back the three miles to the river. About 40 of them were killed before they were relieved by French regulars who pushed on into Germany.

In the lazier months following Armistice Day on Nov. 11, 1918, Slaughter, not yet 20, made three trips to Paris. He liked the French girls.

Now, also for the record:

"I'm proud to have been a veteran and still living under our constitution.

"It's like that joke about the mouse and the elephant crossing the bridge. When they got across, the mouse looked up at the elephant and said, 'Boy, we sure shook that bridge, didn't we?' I'm like the mouse, and the 4 million others who fought that war were the elephant. But we sure shook that thing."

See page 110 of Camp Bowie, 1917-18 Fort Worth, pub. by Bernice B. Maxfield in 1975—complete story on Co. B, 143rd World War I.

Buddies Recall Invasion

AMARILLO GLOBE-TIMES



..Staff Photo

Meeting again in Amarillo ... World War II veterans Scharenberg, left, Stansell and Curtis Soileau of Port Barre, La.

By Greg Rohloff
Amarillo Globe-News

A "family" is how the 12 men who fought together in World War II think of themselves now.

Their faces, serenely bearing the lines of age, betray their past. They laugh at some of the memories, their eyes mist a little with others.

A casual observer might think that the reunion at Dick Stansell's house at 1829 Poplar might be high school classmates recalling fierce gridiron battles.

But the 12 share a past they say binds them closer together than family.

On September 9, 1943, the 12 were part of the 143rd Infantry, 36th Division—an intelligence and reconnaissance platoon.

Joe Presnall of Baytown, then the company's executive officer at headquarters and nicknamed "Holy Joe," recalled that day.

The platoon had already fought battles in northern Africa and, said Presnall, with Italy surrendering to the Allies on the day before, they were prepared to land at Salerno, Italy.

They were the first American troops to land in mainland Europe.

What they didn't know, Presnall said, was how difficult the landing in



Italy was going to be.

“We didn’t realize that the Germans had moved into Salerno,” Presnall said.

Steady fighting followed the landing, and troop ships held their positions offshore in case the American soldiers needed to be evacuated.

They drove the Germans out of Salerno, out of Anzio, and out of southern France. At the end of the war, they had helped take control part of Austria—Hitler’s homeland.

By then, said Carl Nelson of Prentice, Wis., who hosted the platoon’s first reunion four years ago, they had fought more than 100 days in a row without relief.

The battles claimed a toll.

Four men were killed in action—Oscar C. Baker of Fayette, Ala., John A. Gegetski of Portage, Pa., Earl R. Marley of Larned, Kan., and Manuel S. Teixeira of Valley Falls, R.I.

five suffered severe wounds—Odell E. Collins, then of Lott and now of Valera, Casimir Grenda of Chicago, Milton W. Halpern, then of Ozone Park, N.Y., and now of Hicksville, N.Y., Stansell of Amarillo, and Verner E. Stokes Jr. of Hamilton, now of Lompoc, Calif.

BUDDIES RECALL INVASION

And three were captured and held prisoner—Roy G. Pankake, then of Grantville, Pa., and now of Hershey, Pa., Leo D. Scharenberg then of Marion, Kan., and now of Florence, Kan., and Marion T. wilkinson, of Anniston, Ala.

Scharenberg explained how he, Wilkinson, and Pankake were captured, and Teixeria was killed.

As part of the reconaissance patrol, he said, they were manning an observation post. On a scouting mission at about 4 a.m., the American lines were ordered to withdraw, but the patrol was not informed of the move.

The Germans quickly attacked the post, and the four Americans fought back, with Scharenberg suffering a wound.

"Tex (Teixeria) grabbed my gun and ran for the door," Scharenberg said. "They shot him and he fell dead beside me."

The three were marched 179 miles in 10 days with other prisoners to Dijon, France. Later Scharenberg was moved to a prison camp for non-commissioned officers near Berlin.

They split up as the war ended, and each went separate ways after getting out of the Army.

Some, said Nelson, kept in touch with Christmas cards and occasional visits.

The first reunion was held in 1977. They met again in 1979, and most likely, said Nelson, will meet again in two years.

What brings them back together after being separated as a group for so long?

"You take a group like this—a small group—and you have a lot more feelings for each other than some of the larger groups," said Presnall.

"This is kind of like a family reunion," said Stansell. "We went through so much hell together. Every day you're together, you get closer."

"What gets me is the people that have come from all over the United States to be here for this reunion," Presnall said. With one coming from more than 1,700 miles away, the men have come to Amarillo anywhere from New York to California.

For Presnall, the meeting was the first in 36 years with some of those at Stansell's house.

While they're here through the end of this week, they'll take in a performance of "Texas" and a visit is planned to the JA Ranch.

And, they'll relive some memories and fill in missing details of each other's stories from a war 36 years ago.



WHERE WERE YOU HEROS IN 1940?

By Jack L. Clover

It was a typical fall morning in southern France, October 1944. Warm, bright, sunny with a few puffy clouds pasted in the vivid blue sky. We have long since crossed the Moselle River, taken Remiremont and now our pursuit has taken us through an endless chain of small French towns or villages. I believe at this point we are somewhere near the town of St. Die.

What a contrast between the wars of Italy and France! So far, at least, the Jerries are on the run here and are a less aggressive and tough breed of individual; much younger too. The countryside is flat so we don't have to pry the enemy from mountain caves and entrenchments they had shoehorned themselves into. Flat country also means our strong points of air power and mechanized armor may be brought to bear. We are marching down the narrow French road in usual infantry two-column style. To combat boredom you look at anything in sight that might command attention. At this point I am watching the man marching five yards in front of me. He is typical of our boys. Helmet cocked to the side with the trace of a white 1½ x 3 inch block at its base. These blocks when newly painted and slightly fluorescent were used to spot the man ahead of you during night movement and such.

The pack consisted of a blanket and a green raincoat with a band of sweat edging its way toward the outer edges. The canteen flopped on the right, a trench knife well attached to his cartridge belt was next while his small medical kit fluttered on the left. The pants were baggy and dusty, combat boots heels rundown and you could just feel the strap of that nine pound M1 rifle digging into his shoulder blade.

From what we had heard, we were to enter this next village which had already been cleared by one of our rifle companies. We would then have a few hours of shuteye or pursue the infantryman's creed of wine, women and eggs. Jerry was not far ahead though as we saw plenty of fresh, wobbly bicycle and hobnail boot tracks flanking each side of the road in the soft earth.

As we finally entered the village the sergeant confirmed the rumor. We had a few hours of much needed rest coming but we must set up a loose road block at the town's eastern fringe in case some misguided krauts returned.

The area ahead was fluid and the stinking rascals could pop up from anywhere. However, it didn't take long for the boys to scatter through the unsuspecting town like a swarm of locusts. In the infantryman's world of Coleman stoves, blackened canteen cups, Bellaire cigarettes and wet, aching feet, a chance like this was utopia.

For some reason I ended up along with "Preacher" Bynum helping set up the loose-fitting road block on the road entering from the east. It worked out as a 57 MM rifle about thirty yards to the left sequestered in some trees

Where Were You Heroes In 1940?

supplies by the crazy Anti-Tank platoon. We then stuck a 50 calibre carrying Jeep in the left ditch, a GI 6 x 6 60 calibre in the middle of the road blanked by a 50 calibre carrying Jeep in the right ditch. As we say - it was "loose" but we felt adequate.

The responsibility for maintaining the road block was on the Anti-Tank platoon so the "Preacher" and I decided to head into the affray in the village to cast our lines for a little action.

We headed down the main street. It was obvious that this place had never been known for any more action than perhaps a Sunday afternoon cock fight. We saw an occasional G.I. pursuing a reluctant peasant girl up a stairway or arguing with a confused shop keeper over the price of a bottle of wine.

At last we spied a couple of boys in our squad who were purported to be quite the lotharios both off and on the field of action. They were in the lobby of a tiny, cheap hotel with two young giggly French girls pressed into a couch. On the table in front of them they had managed to muster a bottle of "White Lightning" (not to be confused with "speeder juice" we later found that powered the V-2 rockets) and a bottle of the heavy orange stuff we called peach cognac for lack of a better name. Whatever the orange mystique was could put a man out of action faster than the speed of sound!

It looked like there could be some fun here so we had a couple of belts of cognac and sat down to measure the progress. It was then we noticed a ragtag young man sitting in the corner with a harmonica trying to play romantic music. About all he could accomplish with any accuracy was the "MARSIELLES" (the French National Anthem) which he played over and over. The action was now red hot! "*You say you like American soldier with our flag on the sleeve?*" "*Oui.*" "*American soldier save France so don't you owe us something?*" "*Oui, oui.*" "*How about another drink of cognac?*" Giggle, "*Oui, oui.*" A slug of the orange crippler was poured and the action rebounded with vigor.

Our other buddy jumped in for the kill. "*You are very pretty girls!*" "*Merci beaucoup.*" "*How about you and American soldier go up to bed, you know sleep?*" "*Pardon Moi?*" "*Come on Janine, how about you and your girl friend go make love upstairs?*" "*Le ne comprende pas.*" At this point the "Preacher" and I were holding our guts to keep from laughing. Being just 19 and not wise in the worldly wiles of the feminine gender it was still obvious to me these were a couple of the biggest teasers from the word go. We charged outside laughing till our sides hurt hoping the boys might escape with at least their combat boots.

The "Preacher" had some ideas of his own so we decided to split and report our conquests later. It was apparent to me that in the infantryman's creed of "wine, women and eggs" I was strong on the former and latter but sure as hell weak in the middle!

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

The fragrance of frying eggs wafted through the air so I figured some of the boys had progressed to category three. It was then I decided to head back to the road block and maybe get a little much needed shuteye and round up a bottle of cognac for good measure. On the way back I passed a few G.I.'s with the "Thousand yard look" walking side by side on their knees. A couple of others just up and jumped into a fountain gasping for breath. I never found out what category had befallen them but it must have been a fate worse than the infantry. Another poor G.I. appeared to be jitterbugging with an 80 year old woman within a circle of Frenchmen. This wouldn't be so bad but he apparently had lost his pants.

As I neared the road block feeling in cognac just a little I suddenly had a strange feeling we would not be alone for long. The radio in the Jeep ahead began to crackle as it to say, "*get with it.*" As I neared the Jeep the radio blared out again and all I got was, "...*truckload, road, Jerries.*" The next transmission came out loud and clear so all nearby could hear. "*Attention: truckload of Jerries headed your way about three miles down the road. Be ready to intercept.*" "*Repeat, truckload of krauts headed your way, take all available precaution.*"

Wow! I looked around and only a handful of us were there and somewhat unsteady at that. The radio continued to feed us the progress and it wasn't long till we saw the large Jerry truck bearing down fast.

Thank goodness Sgt. Pet Chulak and Pvt. H. D. Blackwood had caught the message on their three-quarter ton vehicle radio and were feverishly readying "Betsey" the 57 MM for action. In short order they had her zeroed in waiting for a close range shot. In reality Pvt. John Fodor, Pvt. 'Boom-Boom' Barry and myself were all that was left to man the road block for the moment with the two Anti-Tankers. Fodor jumped on the 6 x 6 50 calibre, Bary hit the right Jeep and I stood in the middle of the road with my MI. I knew I had no time to ready the dusty 50 calibre on the left Jeep nor did I know a damned thing about it.

As all this sank in I began to think man this is no place for me! Suddenly when the Jerry truck was within perhaps 500 to 600 yards the 57-MM (which we said couldn't hit the side of a house) spoke. We let her do the honors and at once there was a big "*Whamo!*" The gun jumped and spewed out a tracer resembling a giant harpoon with trailing rope. "*Pow-crash!*" It was a direct hit right in the driver's cab! The big truck shivered and was then enveloped in a large, blinding cloud of dust while jumping at least a foot in the air before settling back on its haunches.

For several seconds all was stilled in stunned silence. Then quickly the Jerries began pouring over the sides like rats leaving a sinking ship heading for the left ditch of the road. My MI barked as I squeezed off a fast clip. I saw

Where Were You Heroes In 1940?

one krauthed grab his leg and drag himself across the road. Fodor fired a burst from the 6 x 6 50 calibre but had a misfire spewing shell casings all through his lower extremities wounding him badly. I never could determine how "Boom-Boom" came out. But at this point other G.I.'s hearing the firing came running to help as we had to keep the enemy trapped in the ditch.

We were about to rush them when we heard Lt. Roberson yelling from the rear: "Hold up, no one goes down there. Our Headquarters Company Range platoon will be on the knoll just above them in a few minutes and handle the capture." At that instant we could see a makeshift white flag waving weakly on a Karbiner rifle barrel for surrender.

The battle of the unsteady road block was over. In a few minutes the Ranger Platoon took over rooting the pigs from the ditch and marched the disheveled but cocky bunch into town. There were about fifteen, some in several stages of wounds. One was being carried from a leg wound (maybe my boy). The driver of the cab-over-engine Ford truck suffered a direct hit and was spread around just a bit.

Our boys took over at this point and marched the hapless group toward the rear. It was then the French frogs came out of the sanctuary of houses and began kicking the krauts and hitting them with their fists. One of our guys up front seeing the bravado and apparently with some knowledge of France's anemic demise yelled: "Hey, where were you heroes in 1940?" And another, and another to where a chorus of "tongue-in-cheek" G.I.'s were shouting: "Yea, where were you heroes in 1940?"

Come to think of it: GOOD QUESTION!

Jack L. Clover
5 Cobblestone Trail
Ormond Beach, Florida 32074

One of the regular features of the QUARTERLY is a feature story of our 16 congressional Medal of Honor winners. We have carries—Edward C. Dahlgren, Arnold Bjorklund, and Homer Wise (in this issue). We would like to hear from anyone—who may have been in contact, fought with, or casually knew—any of the remaining CMH winners. Send it to your editor (see page 4).

BOOK REVIEWS

RETURN TO CASSINO, A Soldier's View of the Fight For Rome
by Harold L. Bond
Printed in Great Britain by J.M. Dent & Sons, Ltd.



*"This story shall the good man teach his son
But in it we shall be remembered."*
HENRY THE FIFTH

THIS personal record of a sensitive and observant young officer is a book of unusual compassion and honest. The story is given poignancy by Mr. Bond's post-war return to Monte Cassino, which saw some of the most bitter fighting in World War II.

the advance, at first so rapid, which the Allied armies had made up the Italian Peninsula in 1943 grew slower and slower as the autumn rains and the efficiency of the German road and bridge demolitions began to make their mark. With the onset of winter the Germans took their stand, as they had planned, in the formidable stronghold of Monte Cassino, a monastery which dominated the country for miles around and must have daunted the hearts of all who be held it from below. It is a scene which remains indelibly in the memory of every soldier who ever saw it.

Fresh from training school, and assigned to the 36th Infantry Division, the author was given command of a mortar platoon at the time of the disastrous attack across the Rapido River, and was very soon involved in some of the most savage close-quarters fighting around Monte Cassino. Under constant shelling and 'inappealing weather conditions' the infantry suffered fearful ordeals in their valiant but hopeless attempts to storm the powerful enemy positions. Ordered by their superiors to do the impossible, some of the men were bitter, some cowardly, but most responded with the utmost bravery to the demands. In the spring, when the Division was moved to the Anzio Beachhead the author was made aide-de-camp to Brigadier General Robert Stack, the Assistant Division Commander.

As Harold Bond sits on the battleground with his wife and children, recalling the death of comrades and the occasional moments of glory, he takes into his writing consciousness a more honest appraisal of battle than if he had written it shortly after experiencing it. He describes the general untidiness of the action, the seeming accidents that determine victory and defeat, and, of course, the comradeship. He also recalls feelings which

BOOK REVIEW

thousands experienced caught in such a conflict: 'None of us had any illusions about what lay ahead; and we all knew that sooner or later our luck would run out. When that happened, the most we could hope for was that the wound would be enough to get us out of the fighting but not so bad as to injure us for life, or to kill us.'

The Monte Cassino story is all here from the aftermath of the disastrous assault across the river in front of Monte Trocchio to the important huddling in the stone sangars on the sleet-swept heights that were to see the ultimate triumph of the exiled Poles...but not for many months yet. Then came a change of scene and a transformatin of destiny such as only the Army—an army—can give, whereby First Lieutenant Bond was transmuted into an aide-de-camp, a staff officer bound for that graveyard of military reputations the Anzio beachhead and pining, so contrary is human nature, for the warmth, companionship and danger of his home in 'M' Company.

About the author...

Harold L. Bond was born at Newtonville, Mass. In World War II, he participated in the fighting at Monte Cassino and the subsequent drive for Rome. RETURN TO CASSINO was written 18 years later, after revisiting the scene of the battle. Mr. Bond is Chairman of the English Department at Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire, and lives in Hanover with his wife and four daughters. He is the author of a critical study of Gibbon's *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, entitled *The Literary Art of Edward Gibbon*.

His address: Dartmouth College, Box 594, Hanover, N.H. 03755

COMBAT SOLDIER. Major General James C. Fry. The National Press, Inc. Washington, D.C., 1968. 356 Pages. Copies available from the Fairfield Book Company, Box 289, Brookfield Center, CN. 06805. \$14.95 plus \$1.00 postage. (Each copy signed by Fry)

A vivid close up look of the war in Italy by the war time commander of the 350th Infantry Regiment of the 88th Blue Devil Division. Fry was the type of leader who spent most of his time up front with his troops. Fry describes in detail the hardships, horrors, accomplishments, and the humor of the infantry war. What makes this a great book is that most of the book is based on the notes that Fry made during the war while emotions and memories were still fresh in his mind. This is one of the better combat narratives on the War in Italy and I highly advise it to anyone interested in the Italian Campaign. Its only criticism is the lack of combat maps.

David E. Ruby, 12463 Glade Drive, Apt. B,
Reston, VA 22091 (Jr. member 36th Assn).

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

INFANTRY REGIMENTS OF THE U.S. ARMY, by James A. Sawicki, Wyvern Publications, 682 pages, Vol. 1 is a vital part of anyones War Library. It is easily the most comprehensive publication of its kind to ever appear in print.

This volume documents the history, heraldry and honors of the 481 Infantry Regiments which have existed since the begining of World War I. The histories of the majority of the regiments appearing in this volume have never before appeared in print.

The primary mission of the Infantry is to close with and kill or capture the enemy. Only by accomplishment of this mission can victory be achieved. When the massive potential of our nation is mobilized for war it is directed toward one goal-to place the infantryman where he can use his weapons to complete the destruction of the enemy and seize the ground upon which he stood. But in accomplishing its mission the infantry has paid a high price for its valor. 88 percent of the Army's 260,783 casualties during World War I, 71 percent of the 936,259 casualties of World War II and 84 percent of the 109,958 casualties of the Korean War were suffered by the infantry.

In recognition of its valor 310 Presidential Unit Citations, the nation's highest organizational award for extraordinary heroism in combat have been awarded to infantry regiments and during the nation's last four wars nine foreign governments have conferred more than 368 decorations on these regiments.

Today fewer than 200 of these regiments have active elements; the rest have been inactivated, designated or disbanded. This volume tells you what happened to them and provides other interesting facts you probably never knew about the *Infantry Regiments of the U.S. Army*.

Retailing for \$29.95, it must be classified for serious historians of the INFNTRY. We do recommend it to those who are building a WAR Library.

FOOTNOTE from the Author, to Bob Wallace:

Mention of the 36th Infantry Division brings back old memories for me and of course the words "The Fighting 36th" in your logo are vary appropriate. The 36th people were not only fighters on the battlefield but off as well. I was an infantry type, 34th Infantry Division in Italy and on occasion I observed the 36th in action in Naples and elsewhere. At the time I think I got a little ticked off at Texas types because I was slight of frame and usually got the worse of it when the 34th and 36th tangled. But I now look back in admiration at you Texas types and only observe that you were a hellava bunch of scrappers.

*James A. Sawicki, 14703 Dunbar Lane,
Woodbridge, VA 22193*

TIE ONE ON FOR AMERICA...



H&R Committee Needs Your Biography

It had been a question for some time, about the average age of the troops of the 36th, members of the Association, so we pulled at random - 100 - Biographica sheets, sent in by the loyalist who took time to do so.

Our home-made computer came up with 62 to 63 years of age. Now, as a clue, this means that there's not too many years left to get the INFORMATION from these men whom we seek their "OWN STORY".

We don't mean the story of WWII, just the actual 'eye-witness' report of what it was - at that time, and place in the many battles the 36th Division was involved in. IF we do not get these stories now...tomorrow may be too late.

All WWII veteran divisional units have the same problem. As time goes on, the ranks will thin, and accelerate as years go by. The message here—is that your H & R Committee ask that you take time to 'write' about a particular time and event in which you were involved that will shed some light on—"how it was," which would be invaluable to all future historians.

The exploits of the T-Patchers will be re-written for the next decades by young writers who admired the record set by the brave men of the 36th. So, don't be bashful, just send in yours. Typed, double-spaced narratives are preferred.



COLLECT, COMPILE AND RECORD HISTORY OF THE 36th DIVISION

is what the H & R Committee is all about.
Let us hear from you...now!

Ole T-Patcher

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

COMING...Next Issue, WINTER 1981
Vol. 1, No. 4

Special feature on BENITO MUSSOLINI, "the Robbin-Hood" (in reverse)...with exclusive, rare glossy photos of the capture and slaughter of Il Duce and his mistress, April 27, 1945 by Italian guerrilla fighters at Dongo, Italy.

Also covers excerpts from "*Mussolini's Missing Millions* (Saga 1972) and details about the \$80 million in plundered wealth of the Italian nation. Photos were sent in by Sam Canada of 736th Ordnance, who supplied press of the TRUCE, in this issue.



Benito Mussolini

OTHER GREAT WAR STORIES...

LANDSBERG Prison Camp...where T-Patchers saw Nazi brutality at first-hand. Just one more of the terrible concentration camps where 6 million jews met extermination. Great camera shot by JOE WRIGHT of 141st shows the grim scene, all made by Wright. Also reports about the United States Holocaust Memorial Council.

THE BIG HAUL...eye-witness reports from the 36thers who made the 2000-plus round trip from Casablanca to Tunis to feed, then move 250,000 POW's to the giant compound at Casa. This is probably the largest, longest CONVOY-ever in WWII. This is a story that HAS NOT been written about (as far as we can find), and damn few of our own troops knew about it when the action took place. The problems encountered by the truck drivers and a guard are most unusual. This story would make a great TV-Movie documentary.

CAPTURE OF VON RUNDSTEDT-at Bad Tolz by 1st platoon of Co. A, 141st Infantry, led by 2nd Lt. Joseph E. Burke, of St. Petersburg, Fla. Field Marshall Von Rundstedt was the KEY man of all Junker generals from the old school. Maybe you read it before, but we give you an update on this great grab-bag of the 36th's capture of the Nazi BIGGIES.

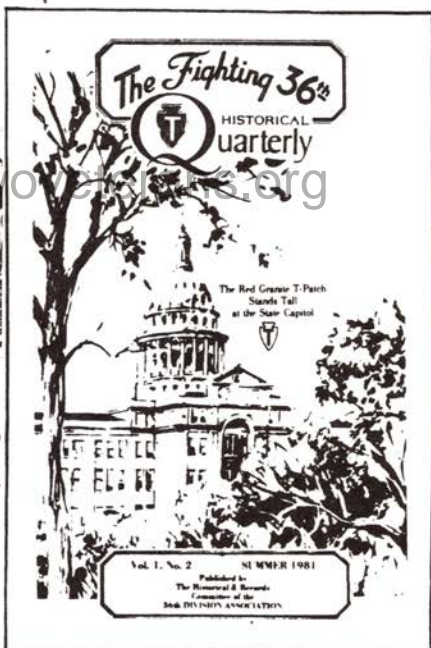
THERE WERE MANY great stories about the 36th Division and their exploits during the early post-war era. This is just one of the many that received large nation-wide coverage. In our files we could find only 2 of the LOOK Magazine series. The other one, "ESCAPE FROM A PRISON TRAIN" will appear in the SPRING 1982 Quarterly. Julian Quarles and the late Carl R. Bayne are featured in this story.



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Next Issue...
WINTER 1981

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