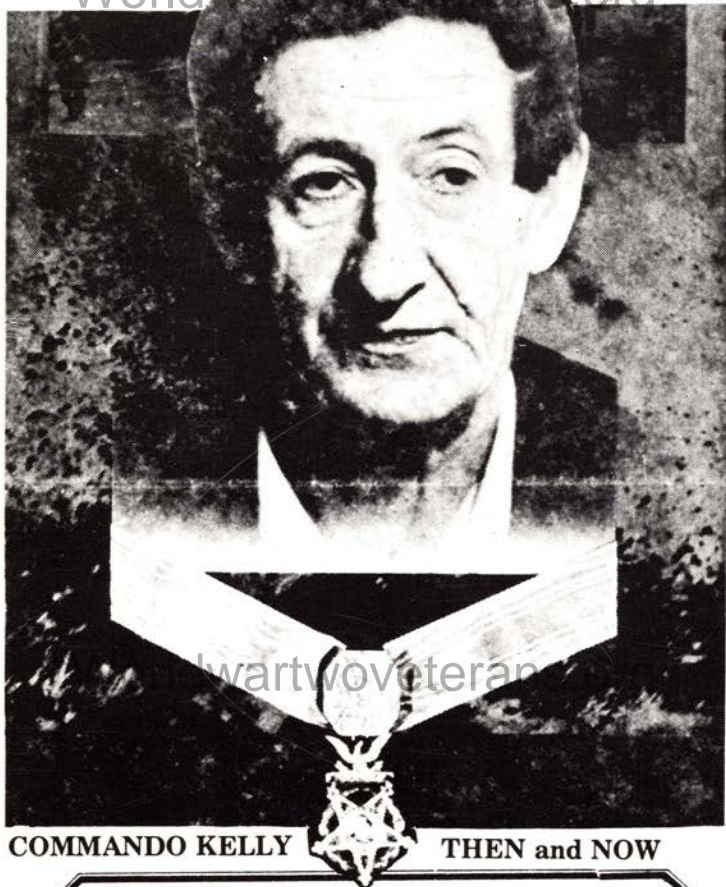


*The Fighting 36<sup>th</sup>*  
HISTORICAL  
Quarterly

HE WAS THE FIRST



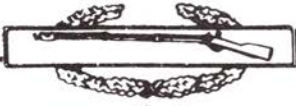
COMMANDO KELLY THEN and NOW

Volume II Number 3 FALL 1982

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

[Worldwartwoveterans.org](http://Worldwartwoveterans.org)

[Worldwartwoveterans.org](http://Worldwartwoveterans.org)

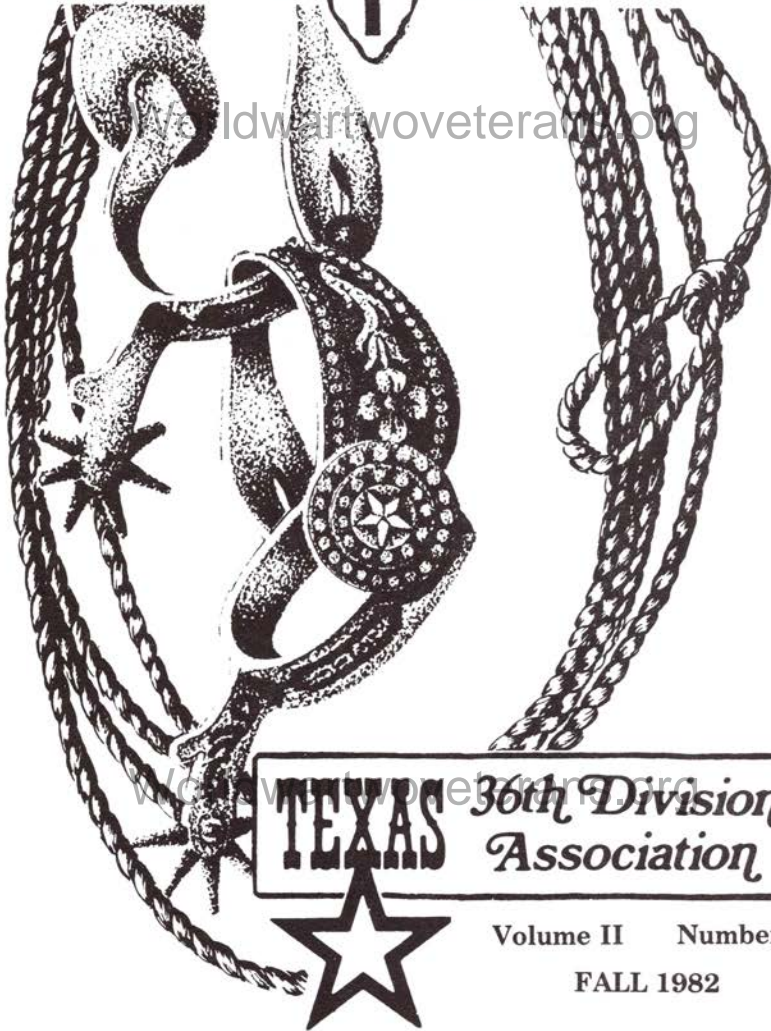


# The Fighting 36<sup>th</sup>

Historical



Quarterly



**TEXAS** 36<sup>th</sup> Division  
Association

Volume II    Number 3

FALL 1982



## 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 division made two other amphibious assault landings at Anzio and Southern France.

The 36th Infantry Division participated in SEVEN (7) European CAMPAIGNS:

- **Naples-Foggia**
- **Anzio**
- **Rome Arno**
- **Southern France**
- **Rhineland**
- **Ardennes-Alsace**
- **Central Europe**

The 36th suffered over 27,000 casualties, third highest of any World War II division.





OUR THANKS to Colonel Vincent M. Lockhart, 36th Division Historian, for setting the record straight, after all these years.




Volume II    Number 3

FALL 1982



*The Fighting 36<sup>th</sup>*  
 HISTORICAL  
*Quarterly*  
*Texas 36<sup>th</sup> Division Association*



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 reprints 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.

[Worldwartwoveterans.org](http://Worldwartwoveterans.org)



## Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly



### 1982 Editorial Advisory Board

Mac Acosta (editor Le T-Bone) San Antonio; Payne Rucker, (president Dallas Metro); Charles Beacham, 141st, attorney and historian; Vincent M. Lochart, former official Historian of 36th in WWII; C. N. Red Morgan, former President of the 36th Division Association; Oran Stovall, Elder Statesman of the Association; Lelia McDugal, author of History of 143rd; Dewey Mann, former CO of Co. B, 142nd Eastern; Woodrow Baxter, prime-mover of Co. B, 142nd Western; Melvin C. Walthall, of 144th and author of several WWII military histories; Dave Ruby, Junior historian and war buff extraordinary; Alan (Chum) Williamson, in charge of Post-war days of Texas National Guard; Bill Eberle, former member of 36th Division Artillery overseas tabloid; Del Kendall, author of history of Anti-Tankers of 143rd and specialist in the 'funny-side of the war'; and Robert Hughes, V/P of 142nd for his moral support on the project of The Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly.

William E. Jary Jr. . . . . Editor and art director

CORRESPONDENCE: concerning editorial matters—mail to: William E. Jary, Jr. Editor, P.O. Box 1816, Fort Worth, TX 76101, (817) 738-1467. Your comments are welcome.

[Worldwartwoveterans.org](http://Worldwartwoveterans.org)

SUBSCRIPTIONS: The Fightin' 36th Historical Quarterly is holding the line on inflation. The annual \$12.00 for a year (4 issues, each of 80 pages) is same as 1981 price. War buffs and interested parties may also subscribe at \$12. postpaid. Charter subscriptions are \$50.00 for three years, and you get 'all' prior issues up to date.

ORDER only from: Leonard Wilkerson, P.O. Box 1049, Malakoff, TX 75148, (214) 489-1644.

**HISTORICAL & RECORDS COMMITTEE**  
**36th Division Association**

# CONTENTS

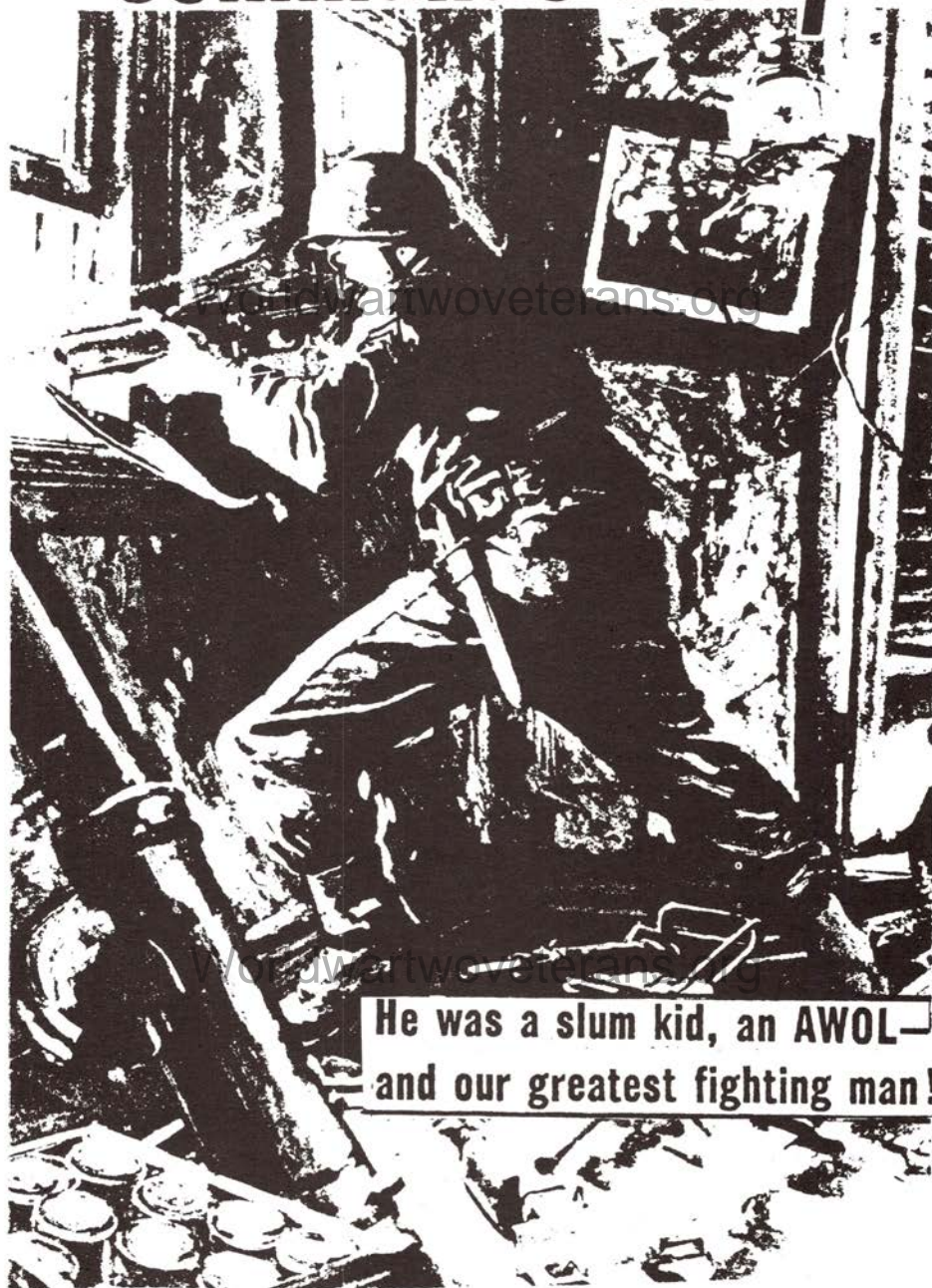
Volume II, Number 3

FALL 1982

1. COVER STORY - Commando Kelly,  
CMH, Then and Now. .... 6
2. Ambush at Velletri,  
by George Kerrigan ..... 13
3. Das Hund Am of Wissembourg,  
by Del Kendall ..... 18
4. Buck Sheppard - Two Gun Cowboy  
From Texas - Co. L, 142nd ..... 20
5. State Hwy 36 Dedication,  
courtesy Roy Goad, 143rd ..... 29
6. Chudej Recalls Rapido River,  
"I crossed it four times, 2 each way" ..... 34
7. May It Please the Court. Military  
Justice according to Chas. Beacham ..... 40
8. Ugly Gonzales, "A Damn Good Soldier"  
from Stars and Stripes 1944 ..... 44
9. 'Back From The Dead', incredible story  
by Harold GHOST Donovan ..... 48
10. Trackdown! Related by Bill Eberle,  
finding old buddies in New Zealand. .... 51
11. Court-Martial of Lt. Ivan Ker, as  
recorded by - himself. .... 53
12. Twas Christmas Eve at Venafro,  
By Del Kendall ..... 59
13. My Eight Days On The Riviera,  
By Ray Lee, APO 36 ..... 63
14. The Best Dressed Lieutenant,  
by Shelby Krouse ..... 65
15. One Who Returned, by Robert  
'Buck' Glover ..... 67
16. The Lie, by William Weldon  
144th Infantry ..... 69
17. The Re-Enactors - Today's Men  
of Co G, 143rd Infantry ..... 72
18. Cork Forest Vignettes, by  
C A Chum Williamson. .... 74

COVER STORY

# Commando Kelly



He was a slum kid, an AWOL—  
and our greatest fighting man!



# The Heroes



**THEN**

WorldwaryVeterans.org  
For  
Conspicuous  
Gallantry..

**KELLY, CHARLES E.  
CONGRESSIONAL  
MEDAL OF HONOR WINNER**

**KELLY, CHARLES E.**

*Rank and Organization:* Corporal, Company L, 143d Infantry, 36th Infantry Division. *Place and Date:* Near Altavilla, Italy, 13 Sept. 1943. *Entered Service at:* Pittsburgh, Pa. *Birth:* Pittsburgh, Pa. *G. O. No.:* 13, 18 Feb. 1944. *Citation:* For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at risk of life above and beyond the call of duty. On 13 Sept. 1943, near Altavilla, Italy, Corporal Kelly voluntarily joined a patrol which located and neutralized enemy machine-gun positions. After this hazardous duty he volunteered to establish contact with a battalion of United States infantry which was believed to be located on Hill 315, a mile distant. He traveled over a route commanded by enemy observation and under sniper, mortar and artillery fire; and later he returned with the correct information that the enemy occupied Hill 315 in organized positions. Immediately thereafter, Corporal Kelly, again a volunteer patrol member, assisted materially in the destruction of two enemy machine-gun nests under conditions requiring

## Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

great skill and courage. Having effectively fired his weapon until all the ammunition was exhausted, he secured permission to obtain more at an ammunition dump. Arriving at the dump, which was located near a storehouse on the extreme flank of his regiment's position, Corporal Kelly found that the Germans were attacking ferociously at this point. He obtained his ammunition and was given the mission of protecting the rear of the storehouse. He held his position throughout the night. The following morning the enemy attack was resumed. Corporal Kelly took a position at an open window of the storehouse. One machine gunner had been killed at this position and several other soldiers wounded. Corporal Kelly delivered continuous aimed and effective fire upon the enemy with his automatic rifle until the weapon locked from overheating. Finding another automatic rifle, he again directed effective fire upon the enemy until this weapon also locked. At this critical point, with the enemy threatening to overrun the position, Corporal Kelly picked up 60-mm. mortar shells, pulled the safety pins, and used the shells as grenades, killing at least five of the enemy. When it became imperative that the house be evacuated, Corporal Kelly, despite his sergeant's injunctions, volunteered to hold the position until the remainder of the detachment could withdraw. As the detachment moved out, Corporal Kelly was observed deliberately loading and firing a rocket launcher from the window. He was successful in covering the withdrawal of the unit, and later in joining his own organization. Corporal Kelly's fighting determination and intrepidity in battle exemplify the highest traditions of the armed forces of the United States.

This is an actual reproduction of the official citation for the Army war records and was submitted to us courtesy of Col. Vincent M. Lockhart.



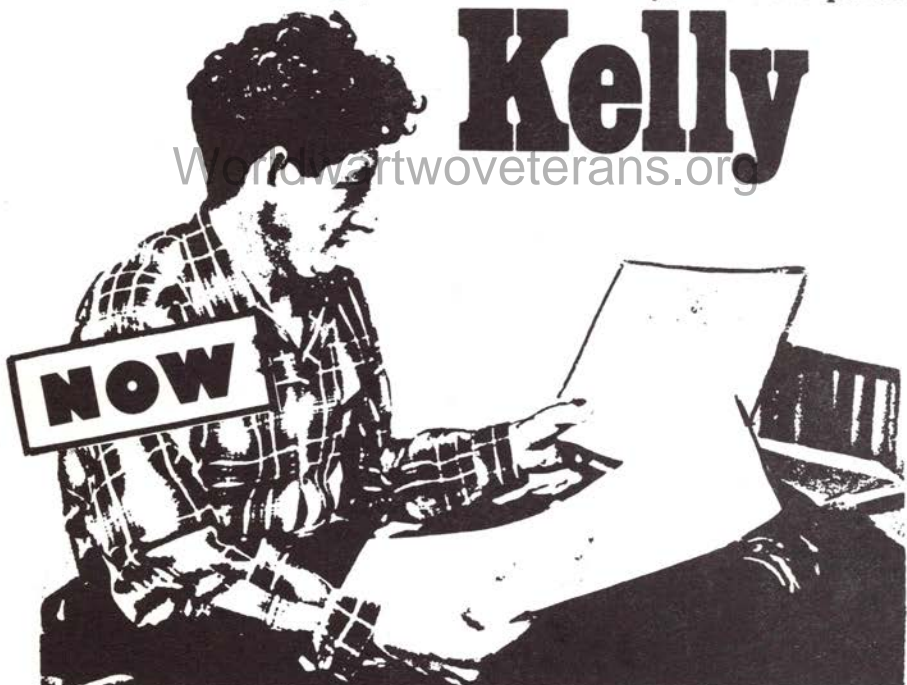
### T/SGT. CHARLES E. KELLY

T/Sgt. Charles E. Kelly, the 143rd's one-man army, emerged as the war's most publicized and beglamored GI. The "Commando" Kelly legend began with his famous stand at Altavilla where he heaved 60mm. mortar shells from a second story balcony, killing a score of Germans, and virtually saving the day. It culminated in a swarm of moving picture, biographical, and advertising offers. His homecoming parade in Pittsburgh introduced the fad of hysterical celebrations for returning veterans. Kelly was first to be decorated with the CMH for action on the European continent.

# Commando

*"Killer of 40 Germans." One of World War II's most publicized heroes. But it has been a long peace for Charles Kelly, D.C. housepainter*

# Kelly



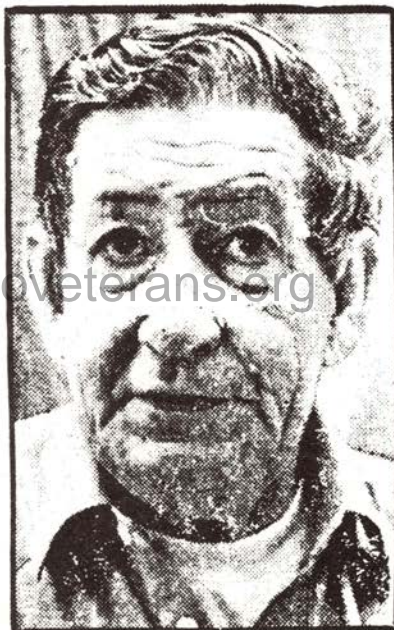
Commando soon discovered that even Medal of Honor winners are soon forgotten. When the parades were over, he found it tough to hang onto a job—and tragedy scarred his family life.

WHAT PRICE GLORY? That's an old WWI story. It happens in every war. On the following pages you will read—the NOW story of Charles E. Kelly in the post-war world.

It's tragic—so is war and the scars it leaves with most everyone. Charles Kelly has probably received MORE ink, then and now, than any WWII hero. His exploits, which were rather sensational, have been written and re-written by hundreds of magazines and newspapers.

After all, remember—Kelly was wearing the famous "T-Patch". . . and we wish him well.

# War Memories Never Die For Commando Kelly



The Pittsburgh Press

Sunday, November 7, 1982

By JEAN BRYANT

*Charles E. "Commando" Kelly, above, who now lives on the North Side, earned highest medals of World War II, left, but they never stilled the aching memory of his dying comrades.*

He still has those dreams.

Of comrades falling to the staccato of enemy fire; of stepping over their writhing forms; of blotting out their cries and trudging on; of cursing the heavens and wading through a foreign river turned red with the blood of American soldiers.

Such are the memories of that haunt Charles E. "Commando" Kelly as the nation prepares to observe Veterans Day Thursday.

One of Pittsburgh's World War II heroes, he was the first GI in the Italian Theatre of Operations to win the Congressional Medal of Honor.

## Commando Kelly — Then & Now

In his room at a boarding house in a tough North Side neighborhood, Kelly, now 61, remembers well the horror of a war that has faded in the memories of others.

---

**The medals—the Congressional, the Bronze Stars, two Silver Stars and decorations from the British and French governments—all of them are gone, given out over the years to hero worshippers.**

---

And he'd rather not talk about the memories. They are his own private hell. Although he has recounted the war stories time and again, the pain persists.

But gentle prodding brings a spark to his eyes and the tales begin to spill from his very guts. And for the time, the retelling serves as a catharsis, a cleansing of Kelly's tormented soul.

He makes a joke here and there, an attempt to ease the agony of remembering. Yet at sensitive moments in the sharing of his memories, tears betray his emotions.

One could say Kelly had his training for war on the streets of the North Side, where he was born and where he "lived all my life."

If survival instincts are what war heroes are made of, then Kelly, one of nine sons, was destined to be among them.

He joined the Army in 1942, but not before he told his employer in his explicit terminology to "take this job and shove it."

And before long, the tough 21-year-old kid found himself in the 36th "Texas" Infantry Division hitting the shores of North Africa and ducking bullets later all the way to Salerno in Italy.

### Salerno - Altavilla - Rapido River

It is the action in Italy he remembers most—Salerno, Altavilla and the Rapido River.

How can he forget the Salerno beachhead and its terrible price in human life?

*"We went in with 15,000 men and lost half of 'em,"* Kelly recalls.

The enemy Axis—the Italian and German armies—hit hard.

Kelly calls the names of some of his fallen comrades. And the tears well in his eyes.

*"We were like family, you see,"* he says.

*"But I had to keep moving. Later I got separated from all my men."*

He was carrying his Browning automatic rifle. Nothing else.

*"It fired 360 rounds a minute. I always believed in traveling light."*

Kelly pushed on by himself until he heard the rumble of approaching tanks.

*"I hit a goddamn ditch."*

Kelly spotted two enemy tanks heading for Salerno. He jumped onto

## Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

the first vehicle, pouring lead rapid-fire through the tank's viewing ports, then taking cover in the ditch until the next one rolled by.

*"I didn't take no prisoners."*

He rejoined his company to be rewarded with news of a court martial for "desertion" charges, which were never pursued. When he became separated from his outfit, the brass thought he had gone over the hill.

But it was the action at Altavilla which fired him up and sent Kelly, a tech-sergeant, blasting his way to become the holder of the highest medal a soldier can acquire.

*"I saw a kid get a bullet right between the eyes,"* Kelly says, wincing.

*"I'm going to get 'em,"* Kelly vowed to his commanding officers and moved out along a narrow, winding "donkey path."

---

**Crouching low, Kelly made his way along the mountainous path to an ammunition dump where, with his Browning and 60 millimeter mortar shells, he stood off a contingent of enemy soldiers. When the shooting was over, about 40 German soldiers lay dead.**

**"I fired till I ran out of ammunition."**

---

And how can he forget the bloody Rapido River when the events still flash in his head like a kaleidoscope?

There was sure death on the other side of that river, but he faced fierce enemy fire to lead a platoon safely across.

*"We left 2,400 men in that river. I lost some good friends."*

Some men shot themselves in the arms and legs to keep from having to cross it, Kelly remembers. His eyes narrow.

*"They were scared. . . scared of dying. I ordered the medics not to give them morphine. Let them suffer. It was cowardice. Hell, we all knew we were gonna die sooner or later."*

Kelly left the service as one of the country's most decorated men.

Now, in his own way, he tries to forget.

But for Kelly, the war has thundered on in his memories.

In his room in a lonely North Side neighborhood, the memories of death and dying are still vivid.

And one wonders if a war hero ever really survives a war.

---

OUR THANKS to Dave Ruby, a young war historian and native of Pittsburgh, who was kind enough to provide us with the story of Kelly, as appeared in the Washington Post (Sunday supplement) April 20, 1975, (see cover photo) and the recent feature in the Pittsburgh Press, by Jean Bryant, dated November 7, 1982.

Dave Ruby is devoted to the 36th Division and without his help we could not have given this Commando Kelly story the in-depth coverage as related herein. He also gave us Kelly's current address: 421 Lockhart St., Pittsburgh, PA 15212.

## AMBUSH AT VELLETRI

### THE LUCK OF THE IRISH



By George Kerrigan



### Let's Set the Record Straight

*Dear Editor: I'd like to get a story straight that has been buggin' me since I bought Robert Wagner's book, "The Texas Army." (See pages 166 and 167.)*

*A story by Sgt. Alden W. Williams of Bowie, Texas, Co. B, 111th Engineers said he was attached to 2nd Bn. of the 142nd Regiment during the infiltration of the Mt. Artemiseo three miles above Velletri, June 1, 1944.*

### Call it—"A Rifleman's Dream..."

Well, the true story is—instead of a 'whole battalion' it was only one platoon of riflemen, under the control of Lt. Cummings (one of the best), later KIA in France while serving with Co. C, 142nd. We had about two engineers and two light machine gunners, one was Sgt. Avery Rudd of Alton, Illinois.

The night before, the whole 142nd infiltrated the German lines, due to the ingenious planning of General Walker and our great Colonel Stovall of 111th Engineers.

Our platoon was picked to travel to a place where we could set up a road block and cut off the escape route from Velletri. We also cut the communication lines.

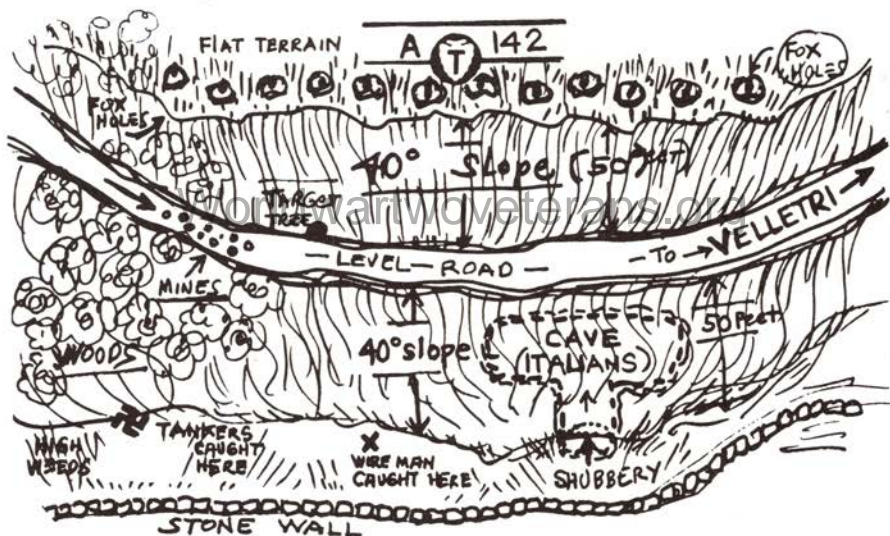
Lt. Cummings picked an ideal spot for an ambush: an open road about 50 feet below us. The road twisted to the right and led to a large patch of woods.

The Engineers planted some land mines to the right, near the wooded

## Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

area, and tried to camouflage them. Velletri was to our left, and that was where we expected the Nazis to try their escape. Also, we were to stop any reinforcements from the north.

Our group were on the top level of a hill with a 45-degree slope, and the whole length of the hill was about 300 feet with tall grass and high weeds all over the slope (see map.)



We picked a tree on the road and told the men to hold their fire until 'Jerry' reached the tree. That way, no one would get 'trigger-happy' and fire too soon and blow our whole mission.

Eventually, a cyclist came from Velletri, and when he hit our 'target' area, 29 rifles and two machine guns hit 'em. Two of our men ran down and threw him and his cycle off the road into the high weeds on the lower slope. Then Lt. Cummings called me to his CP hole and gave me his glasses to see a tank coming from Velletri. The German commander was standing up in the open turret. Then Cummings told me to 'hit' the commander when he reached our target area. He then changed his mind when he figured it'd be better to let him hit the mines planted in the road ahead, and no one was to open fire.

The German tank commander was so casual, looking the terrain over, until the last moment when he spotted the camouflaged mines and yelled for the tankers to stop, and I hit as he was going down in the turret. They couldn't stop in time, and his tank hit the mines.

My radio man in the next hole was injured in the right wrist by a piece of the tank track, but he shrugged it off and kept firing. (Werner Loeb of Indianapolis was the only one hit of our group on the whole mission.)

In the smoke and confusion, three tankers escaped temporarily. (Sgt.



## Ambush at Velletri

Williams reported that they ran up a white flag and surrendered.) Thirty minutes later, I was policing up the German tank and got stuck, head down in the hatch with all the gear around my waist. . .when a loaded German truck came from Velletri and was shot up by my gang. I was never so scared, since I could not get in or out of the tank with all that lead flying around. Thank God, my gang did all that shooting and saw my legs flailing around.

Later I took off again looking for the tank crew, and a young Jerry had me in his sights, but he got scared and dropped his rifle and surrendered. He said he was not a rifleman but was laying wire. He showed me the wire and also his Signal patch on his arm. Boy, was he scared, and I was lucky he didn't have the nerve to shoot me.

So he headed back to the hill and I saw a hidden entrance to a cave. It was shaped like a 'T' . . . anyone inside was safe from shelling, etc. On the right was a load of radio equipment, and on the left were five Italians with a stove, table and chairs and hot Pasta Vazule.

### A Hot Bowl of Pasta from the 'Ities'

The 'Ities' said the Krauts left the day before and offered me a bowl of pasta. While eating, a Jerry came in and almost 'died' to see me and ran out, but he didn't get far since my rifle was on my lap. My 'prisoner' landed on the floor, face down. I took my bowl of pasta and the Kraut and called to my platoon that I was coming in with a prisoner. They passed the word to hold the fire.

Imagine the expression on their faces to see me with a hot bowl of pasta and not a house within miles.

### Nazi Tank Commander was Target

My buddy, Lt. Cummings, threatened to have me 'tied up' when I advised him I had to go and get those 'three' Nazi tankers before it got dark. Lo and behold, I finally found them about 900 feet away lying in the tall weeds.

The German tank commander was a 'mess' where I had hit him, so I gave him my handkerchief and brought back the threesome after calling our platoon again to hold their fire. I could finally rest in peace.

But we had one more vehicle. . .an ambulance, and no shots were fired. They couldn't pass the tank or shot-up truck, so we carried the wounded and fed'em C rations and offered cigarettes. They were grateful and let us know how they felt.

### Platoon gets due Recognition

As it got dark, an officer (can't remember name) showed up and shook the hand of each man. Seems he just could not get over the success of 'one' platoon. . .*the vehicles we stopped, the killed and wounded enemy and the prisoners we took.*

Looking back after three and a-half decades. . .

Here are some of the men I recall. . . Deodato Ruiz of Buenavides, Texas, who was the best damn B-A-R man in the U.S. Army, he should have gotten the CMH; Alfred 'Skipper' Brandt of Dubuque, Iowa—'all man'; Werner Loeb, Indianapolis, who had left Germany to fight with the "great" (36th) Division; Emile DeLiew who was awarded the CMH (posthumously)—see Vol. 2, No. 1 Spring '82 Quarterly. . . and ?? Murray, of Granite City, Illinois, later KIA.

**"Wouldn't give a plugged nickel. . ."**

*Twenty-four hours before we infiltrated the German lines to set up a road block, our platoon would not take a plugged-nickel for our chances of survival. But with a man like Lt. Cummings leading us. . . we started rolling, and I believe we were T-Patchers at our best!*

*When you look back at the job we did, the toll we took, with only one man slightly wounded. . . you can't help but get 'teed off' to read that this fellow gave credit to a WHOLE BATTALION and not even our own, instead of 28 riflemen, two light machine gunners and two Engineers.*

*This was not the only battle we won—but it was one of the best, and I am proud of our men. . . they WERE the greatest.*

S/Sgt. George Kerrigan

---

**Kerrigan Still Wears Uniform**



GEORGE KERRIGAN, is probably one of the 36th's most colorful characters. He makes all the reunions and adds his touch of 'one liners' that keep the troops laughing—the whole night long.

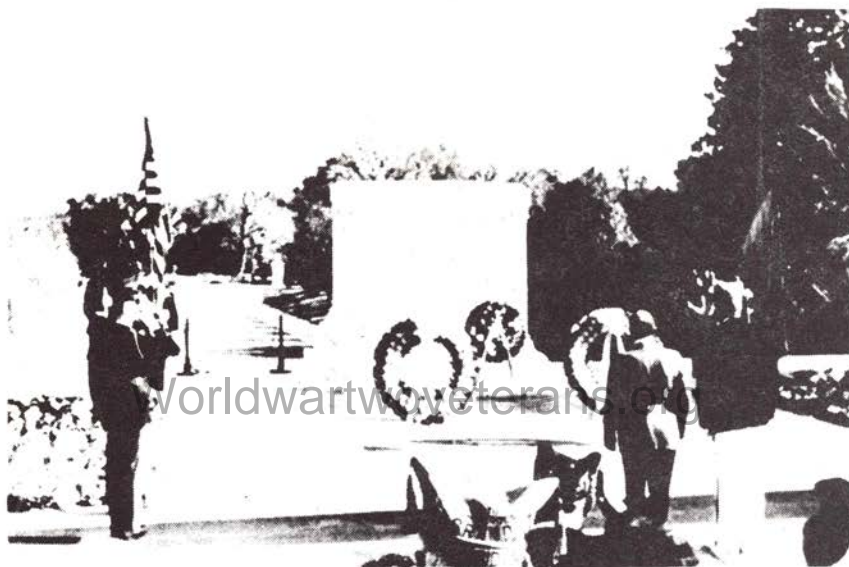
Photo at left—George as bank officer for the First National Bank of Chicago. He said, "Please note T-Patch lapel button on my left lapel." How devoted can you get. He also attends the Mid-West Chapter reunions, also bird-dogs drop-outs and strays.

His best line. . . "I used to work for the Brooklyn Garbage Department. Got \$100 a week and all I could eat." Over and out!

You'll be hearing more from Kerrigan in future issues. We have it in writing, and as Editor, we intend to ENFORCE it.

Kerrigan served with Co. A, 142nd Infantry and gets mail at: 8008 South Talman, Chicago, IL 60652.

## Ambush at Velletri



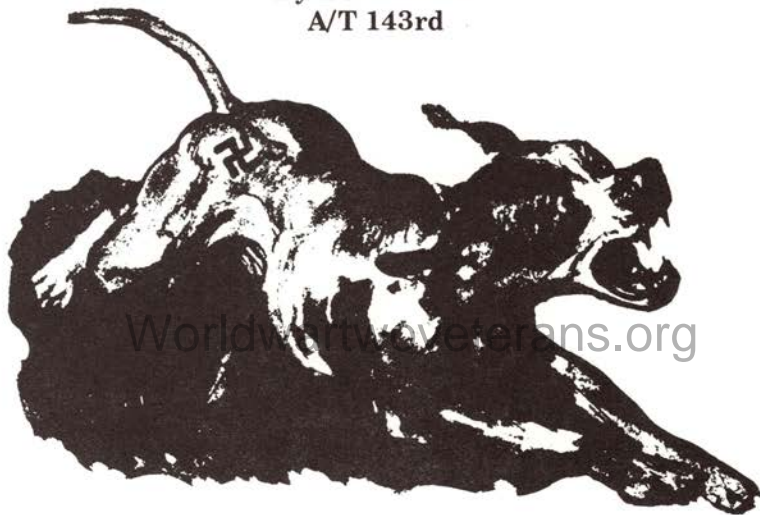
George Kerrigan (the Irishman's Irishman) has a good T-Patcher buddy in his hometown of Chicago—Herman 'Rosie' Rosenthal. . .sends along these photos:

We made a trip to Arlington Cemetery recently with the 'Cooties' for a week. This was third in a row. It's called "the 48th Supreme Tomb Trek." We worked with the Honor Guard at the UNKNOWN SOLDIER'S TOMB and placed hundreds of wreaths to honor the Dead of all Wars.

The second photo shows the famous 'T-Patch' of the 36th Division.

## DAS HUND AM WISSEMBOURG (The Hound of Wissembourg)

By Del Kendall  
A/T 143rd



You were in Germany now. The town of Wissembourg had just been cleared and the battle joined in the hills beyond, when your Co. was relieved. The men set up in deserted houses on a side street across from a bombed-out rail yard. The platoon took over an old rambling Gasthaus just as darkness settled. Guard being posted, someone pumped up the coleman stove and coffee was soon made, along with heated cans of meat and beans. The men wolfed it down, kibitzing between mouthfuls.

*"Shotgun, ya' shouldn't been runnin' thru those dugouts, mighta' been booby trapped."*

*"Boy, wasn't that'a sight for sore eyes, those four Screamin' Meemies at the roadside, never made it to the front."*

*"Man, don't those Tankers with those new 90's, play'em real pretty like, hot damn."*

Bedding down in a warren of rooms, the talk faded away, as the men soon fell asleep to the sound of guns in the hills.

You woke up, your gut rumbling, it was 0500 hours. Where the hell's the crapper? You stumble down the hall in the dark, no doors marked "HERREN" or "DAMEN" to be found. You walk to the end of the building and down some steps to the outside. Should be here someplace. In the darkness you could just make out the outline of a coupla' sheds by a dirt path. Nothing here either. Well, this'll go, you said to yourself, as you entered a chickenwire enclosure attached to a blank wall of one of the sheds.

You quickly dropped your pants and squatted, a few feet from what

## Achtung Bissiges Hund

appeared to be a coop, in the center of the enclosure. In the darkness there seemed to be a black void, like an arched opening, about two feet high. Suddenly, your mind whirls. There before your veery eyes, like some sorcerer's black magic appears these two glowing green marbles at ground level. What the hell? They're gone now. They're back again, rising ever so slowly. That's all you could see, nothing else. Upward they rise, disappearing behind the top of the arched opening. Your scalp tingled.

You stood up, fumbling with your pants, your body tightening. Jeez, gotta' get outta' here, but no, like in a bad dream you stand, unable to move. There's movement, and a sound of a low throaty growl, as this giant, shaggy black beast of an animal hunkers down through the too-small opening to stand before you shoulder-high and inches away, a giant Irish Wolfhound. You froze in his sight. God, he looked like something left over from the ice-age, as he stood there so rudely awakened. Your mind spun. You said to yourself, easy does it. No quick movements or you're a goner. Keep your arms close to your side as you slow-motion your way to the door, two steps away.

You moved ever so slowly, and the animal, without taking a step, growled and grabbed your upper arm mouthing it like a birddog, unsure of the next move. You inched closer to the door. Thank God it was on the side away from the beast. His giant jaws, tightened like a clamp now. Through your combat jacket, shirt and heavy underwear, you could feel his sharp fangs, as he spotted your left arm opening the enclosure door. In that huge shaggy head, his eyes were wild now, as you sidled halfway through the door. This is it. He growled, his jaws tightening as you gave a mighty lunge and jerk of your arm, wrenching free from the beast, leaving him standing there with the sleeve of your jacket and shirt, hanging in his great jaws.

You whirled around, quickly slamming the wire door shut, as the animal lunged, his great weight and size shaking the whole enclosure. He stood on his hind legs towering over you in a blinding rage, as he frothed and sounded deep yelps of frustration, battering at the fence and his quarry that got away.

Phew! That was close; at least you were all in one piece. As you turned to go, there in the early morning light, you noticed a small sign hanging on the door of the wire enclosure, something you'd missed in the darkness a bit earlier. It read: ACHTUNG BISSIGES HUND! (attention, bad dog). Oh, my aching back!



# Nightmare for Hero of 36th *After 20 Years, It's Still There*



**BUCK SHEPPARD**

*The Dallas Morning News*      Sunday, September 5, 1965

FORT WORTH, Texas— James W. (Buck) Sheppard still fights a war within himself.

That war has lasted 20 years.

As if it were yesterday, and not 20 years ago, the husky Breckenridge carpenter-cowboy still relives the horror and anguish he went through in 400 days of combat with the famed 36th "Texas" Infantry Division in World War II.

There are many sleepless nights for Buck, who still sometimes mistakes the snap of a twig outside the window for a sniper's bullet cracking over his head.

"It's all a bad dream," said Buck Saturday at Hotel Texas, during the annual reunion of the 36th Division's combat veterans. "You can't shake it. It haunts you like a nightmare that you can't forget. And I've had nightmares for 20 years.

"Those TV combat shows don't help matters," he noted, though admit-

## “Two Gun Cowboy From Texas”

ting that he is a staunch viewer of old war movies and television series.

Buck Sheppard, still the same square-jawed, good-looking man today that he was more than 20 years ago when he often fought what seemed to be the entire German army single-handed, can rattle off battle tales that will curl the hair of a young boy and hold even a veteran spellbound for hours.

### Buck Sheppard - No Ordinary Soldier

Buck was no ordinary combat soldier. He is one of the 36th Division's most famed soldiers of World War II, though he never won the Medal of Honor despite being recommended for it twice.

But it wasn't the ribbons—the Silver Star, the Bronze Star, the Purple Heart—that made Buck famous. Nor was it the two guns he wore on his hips, earning him the nickname of “the two-gun cowboy from Texas.”

Rather, it was the back-woodsy way he fought his own rowdy and rough brand of war. . .It was the square-shouldered way he accepted responsibility when the lives of his buddies were at stake. . .And it was the uncanny way he managed to live despite all odds that said he should be dead.

Buck wasn't a combat man because he wanted to be. He hated it, actually, because he had to be. . .but because he had to be, he made the most of it.

Today, after 20 years thinking about the war and still reliving those dreadful days when life was a matter of being at the right place at the right time—and nothing more, Buck Sheppard doesn't mind talking about it. It's the one way to ease the tension that has built up mental anguish for him all these 20 years.

That is one reason he attends all the reunions of the 36th as well as conducting his own reunion in Breckenridge. For some 12 years, he has been president of the Company L, 142d Infantry Regiment Reunion, which meets every other year in Breckenridge.

*“Being back with all my old buddies helps ease these mental pains I have bottled up in me,”* said Buck. *“You can spill your heart out because they understand. They went through hell too.”*

It was 22 years ago, come September 9, that Buck Sheppard and the

---

*Editor's Note: World II combat veterans of Texas' famed 36th Division, now in reunion in Fort Worth, can tell a million stories about how “war is hell.” Here is a story on such a man, and how it has affected him 20 years later.*

---

To appreciate this story of BUCK SHEPPARD, written by Eddie S. Hughes, of the Dallas Morning News, West Texas Bureau, you've got to turn back the time-zone to 1965 to get the gut-feeling of this interview.

Back in those days, when the 36th had a reunion in Dallas, Fort Worth, San Antonio or Houston, it was BIG news. This story, covering ¾ of a page, was probably activated by the late James Minor (who was Association president 1965), former CO of 1st Battalion, 142nd Inf.

## Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

36th Division—fledging fighters they were—got their first taste of live combat.

Buck, despite having 400 days of combat to choke his memory with untold stories of horror and hell, still remembers that day when he first went headlong into the face of the enemy, his first day at war.

### Navy Man Shoots His Mess Sergeant

Here, in his own words, he retells that unforgettable 9th day of September, 1943, when the 36th Division spearheaded the U.S. 5th Army's invasion of Italy at Salerno:

*"On the way over, we had thought a lot about it. We had never fought a battle. We thought 'Well, this is it.' And it was.*

*"As we anchored that night, about 12 o'clock midnight, I was in the galley of this ship preparing to push off at 2 a.m. Suddenly, in the cabin next to mine, there was four or five shots of a .45 pistol. I raced into the hall, in time to see a sailor holding his .45, still smoking.*

*He had just shot and killed this mess sergeant who had given him a bad time on the trip over. That scared the hell out of us, seeing his glassy eyes and his gun still smoking. The Navy arrested him, but it still tore us all to pieces.*

*"Then came time to leave. The first wave was to hit at 3:30 a.m. sharp. We were in the second wave, due to hit the beach at 3:37 a.m.*

*"One the way in, it took about two hours. Most of us went to sleep due to the rocking back and forth of the small boat. When I woke up, the first wave was just hitting the beach—right on schedule.*

*"Then all hell broke loose. I mean it got bright as day. The flares was just hanging. The men were screaming and drowning.*

*"I had always tried to teach my men, in training for this invasion (we made it six times in practice), to hit the beach and drop down, then follow a man ahead when he got through the barbed-wire entanglements. But it didn't work that way.*

*Our boat was hit before it got in. Two men were wounded in the boat. All the sounds of men drowning, the cries of the wounded, the scream of the shells, the bright lights from the flares, it was almost too much to stand.*

*"I thought we had reached the beach. The motors of the landing craft were racing hard. The Navy helmsman said, 'Boys, this is as far as I can go. I'm sorry.' He let the ramp go down, and we was 100 yards out in the sea from shore. We dropped into the water shoulder high and tried to get ashore. The water was choppy, and it was awful. But most of us made it.*

*"A machine gun rattled in front of us. We didn't pay any attention to anybody getting through that barbed wire entanglement at all. We went through, running, straight ahead. We knocked out the machine gun, crossed on over the sandy beach, and everybody got separated.*

*"We were supposed to reach the highway, 2,500 yards inland, and then*



## **“Two Gun Cowboy From Texas”**

*go down the highway six miles to the bridge and hold it. That was our objective by dawn.*

*“But come daylight, and man, we weren’t even near the highway. The Germans had loud speakers set up, warning us to give up. All kinds of machine guns, antitank guns, everything in the world, was firing at us. Their artillery batteries were back in the hills, firing on the beach. It was slaughter.*

*“You could look back and see guys floating in the water, drowning. Guys who never had a chance with their packs. They couldn’t get them off, and their ammunition carried them to the bottom.*

### **The Captain Said, ‘Kill Him’, I Said, ‘You Kill ‘Em’**

*“The Germans had map charts and had their guns zeroed in on the most likely positions that we would attack. . . the ditches, the creeks, the ravines. But we didn’t do that. We ran right out in the open, wide open fields, scattered from here to hell. . . half a platoon here, half a platoon there.*

*“Why, we was so scattered that the enemy couldn’t concentrate on any one body of troops. What made it such a success for us, when we were destined for defeat, was the individual man being able to take cover to lead the platoon, squad, company, or whatever.*

*“We finally got to this road. We spotted this German kid on a motorcycle, a recon deal. He was in front of his tanks, scouting. Our company shot him off his cycle. He was 17 years old, blond headed, a good-looking kid, too.*

*“Our company commander wanted to get to that bridge as fast as possible, so he was yelling, ‘Let’s go! Let’s go!’ I was talking with this German kid, who was hit, seeing if I could get something out of him. I yelled back: ‘What do you want to do with this German prisoner?’*

*“The captain shouted back, ‘Kill him.’*

*“‘Kill him yourself,’ I yelled back. ‘I ain’t ever killed anybody that I know of.’ And I hadn’t. Not that I knew of. I had fired. But it was dark, and I couldn’t see anything. So I left the German boy alive. He probably gave us a lot of hell later on.*

### **Nazi Sniper Gives Us Hell**

*“We started up this highway. We got shot all to hell again, and got separated into different groups again. Me and my platoon sergeant, Mickey Peacock, had two mortar men with us. We linked up with an infantry bunch of 39 men and started down the road again. Suddenly, a sniper from a nearby farm house pinned us down.*

*“The infantry lieutenant asked me and Peacock if we could get rid of the sniper. ‘What do you men, Lieutenant?’ I asked. ‘Send your riflemen. We’re mortar men.’ But he stood fast. ‘I don’t care. I want you to get that sniper out of that house,’ he told me.*

## Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

"I told Peacock to cover me, and I'd run across the railroad tracks, then I'd cover him and let him catch up. We crossed over. I covered him, and he covered me. We finally got to this house, kicked down the door and tossed in a grenade right into a fireplace. When it went off, man, you couldn't see anything for the dust. We grenaded every room. Didn't find anyone in any of the rooms. So we continued on our way. We later learned that he was hiding in the fireplace. Our first grenade got him.

"We went on our way, but when we started across a field another sniper got me pinned down. He fired five times. Every time I hit the ground, I'd roll. I'd come up and run, and he'd shoot and I'd fall and roll again. He never could get me.

### 'Peacock, You're Going the Wrong Way. . .'

"About two o'clock in the afternoon, it was hot, and we were all spittin' cotton and all. We walked right into five German tanks and hit a nearby ditch. But they spotted us. It was sure death for all 43 of us.

"I told Peacock, 'If we was to run down this fence line, then I believe it would draw these tanks away from the infantry boys.' Peacock said he would lead. He jumped out of the ditch and began to run. Other members of my mortar section and I also did the same, leaving the 39 infantrymen still in the ditch.

"Those tanks just ate us up. Their fire went right down that fence line, screaming over our heads. We hit another ditch, but Peacock got turned around and headed right into those tanks. I started yelling, 'Peacock, you're going the wrong way.' Five years later, when he got out of prison camp, he said he could still hear me yelling, 'Peacock, you're going the wrong way.'

"Meanwhile, the rest of my mortar section and I went into this big courtyard. The tanks were still firing at us. In the courtyard was an artesian well, with water running out the sides. Man, I was dry and hot as a pistol, but the machine guns on the tanks were just cutting off the tops of the farm house.

"I told my men, 'Man, I've got to get some of that water, even if I get killed.' I crawled over there and got on my back and lay under that fountain to let the running water fall into my mouth. Got my canteen full while the tanks still cut the tops of those farm buildings. Then we got out of there.

"We went on around, and up this fence line, and it wasn't long before I ran into Lt. Col. Thomas McDonald, the Third Battalion commander of the 142d. With him was an artillery captain, a forward observer, who was trying to get the artillery on the tanks. They didn't even know where they were. But they could hear this machine gun rattling.

"The colonel saw me and yelled, 'Sergeant, get your men and go knock out that machine gun.' I told him, 'Colonel, that machine gun is on a tank, and

## **"Two Gun Cowboy From Texas"**

*we just come from there,' Then the colonel yelled: 'Dig in, then man, dig in.'*

*"We got out of there all right, and me and my men continued down the fence line until we came to this deserted farm house. Everything was fastened up. The chickens, the hogs and cows were locked inside. We bedded down behind the chicken house as it grew dark and kept a sentry awake all night.*

*"That night, as we dug in, they shelled the beach until it was pitiful. That night I couldn't go to sleep, listening to the shelling of the beach, and knowing that we were behind enemy lines, and listening to the machine guns chattering.*

### **Next Morning, There Wasn't a Sound Anywhere**

*"Next morning, I got up and the sun was beautiful. Wasn't a sound nowhere. My first thought was that the war was over. We let out all the chickens and pigs and cows and watered them.*

*"We felt good. One day of fighting, and the war was over. We practically skipped down the road, in the direction of the beach. On the way back, we found a gun stuck in the ground with a helmet on it. We went over to see who it was. It made us sad.*

*"But the war was over, so far as we were concerned. There wasn't a sound from anywhere.*

*"We finally found L Company. They had 37 men left. The captain had been wounded. We figured we'd be relieved. Didn't have to fight no more. But the order came down for us to move out again. There never was such a sick feeling. Thirty-seven men. And we had to move out in attack."*

### **A Savage Attack Wipes Out Nazi Gun Crew**

The war, for Buck, had just begun.

His company practically captured the town of Abanella single-handedly, as Buck led his men into town in the dark of night, then surrounded the surprised Germans who had stayed behind to delay the American advance.

Up the road, he saved the life of a buddy and held a German machine-gun nest at bay while his platoon withdrew.

On another occasion, Buck daringly led his men in a strategic maneuver against a machine gun position and inspired a savage attack that wiped out the German crew.

In the American attack on LaDifensa, Buck met five Germans face-to-face with just a bolt-operated Springfield rifle. With his sights clogged with mud, he fired from the hip like he had been taught as a cowboy. All five Germans fell.

In an Italian town, south of Rome, Buck bluffed some Germans who

## Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

were hiding inside a building that he had 16 tanks and that they had better surrender. When they didn't come out, he borrowed a tank and rode it down the street. When the tank rumbled past, 36 Germans came out with their hands high.



**HERO RETURNS** — Staff Sgt. James W. (Buck) Sheppard, Throckmorton, is on his way home after serving with the 36th Division in Italy and receiving the Silver Star, Bronze Star and Purple Heart. He participated in a dozen actions, including San Pietro, Rapido, Cassino and Castellone Ridge. A graduate of Throckmorton High School, he has been in service since before Pearl Harbor. He is the youngest in a family of 18.



PHOTO ABOVE: Mickey Peacock and Buck Sheppard in happier days during Louisiana Maneuvers 1941 with Company L 142nd Infantry.

RIGHT PHOTO: SOMEWHERE IN FRANCE—Sgt. Buck Sheppard and Sgt. Edward J. Kilpatrick are shown in battle gear somewhere in France.



## "Two Gun Cowboy From Texas"

### The Early Happy Days at Camp Bowie, Brownwood



**IN EARLY DAYS**— This picture was taken soon after the 36th Division was mobilized and sent to Camp Bowie in 1941. Those pictured are Dan Dorsey, front; front row, 1 to r, Bill Garrand, Harris T. Lawson, Buck Sheppard; second row, Alton SoRelle, Carroll Hughes, Ed Charles, Bob Charles, Joe Peevey, Conrad Backman, Billy R. Lyerla, Oscar Eakin, Marvin Herring, Edward L. Havins and Raymond R. Elms.



**BUDDIES**— The year was 1942 when this picture was taken of five members of Company L. The unit was still assigned to Camp Bowie. Pictured, 1 to r, are Edward L. Havins, Sam Vente, unidentified, Buck Sheppard and Albert Delvaux.

## Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly



**AT WAR'S END**—After returning from overseas in 1944 these three Company L members had just completed Military Police School when this picture was made. Pictured, l to r, are Clyde DeMaster, Teddy Bear Grant and Buck Sheppard.



**MOBILIZATION OFFICERS**—When Company L was mobilized Nov. 25, 1940 the officers were, l to r, Capt. Charles G. Greeclose, Lt. Robert Mahaffey, Lt. Barney Davis and Lt. Newt Lantrea.

## Worldwartwovete

Photos shown on these pages are xeroxs of a special section that appeared in the Breckenridge American, August 6, 1981, —designed and produced by ROBERT MAHAFFEY who was then president of the Co. L, 142nd Association. It filled two pages with complete history and dozens of great photos of these men.

Mahaffey was Exec/Officer of 3rd Bn. 142nd (whose life was saved by wallet in breast-pocket) gets mail at: Rt. 1, Box 294, Breckenridge, TX 76024.



**MAJOR MAHAFFEY**

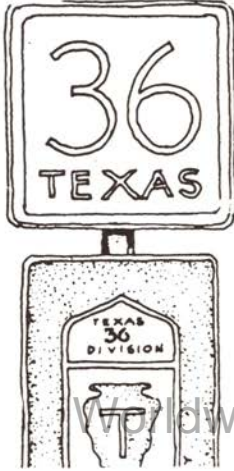
Texas State Hwy. 36 Dedicated

STATE HIGHWAY  
36

MEMORIAL  
DEDICATION  
CEREMONY



Saturday, November 13, 1982  
North Fort Hood  
Building No. 1



**DEDICATION CEREMONY  
PROGRAM**

- Posting of Colors ..... 2nd Armored Division Band  
Company G (ABN RGR) 143rd Infantry
- Invocation ..... Tommy Stone, Chairman  
Military Relations Committee
- Official Welcome ..... Keifer Marshall, Jr., President  
SH 36 Association
- Recognition of Dignitaries ..... Keifer Marshall, Jr.
- Introduction of Speaker..... Roy Goad, County Commissioner
- Speakers Remarks ..... Hank Gomez, Executive V.P.  
36th Division Association
- Unveiling of Marker..... Members of 36th Division
- Retirement of Colors..... 2nd Armored Division Band  
Company G (ABN RGR) 143rd Infantry

Worldwartwoveterans.org

Special Thanks to  
67th Texas Legislature  
Texas Highway Department  
and all of the city and county officials up  
and down the entire route of State Highway 36th,  
who donated their time and efforts to make this  
memorial designation a reality.

Also, Thanks to  
Mr. Ray Abbott, Designer of the Marker  
and  
National Guard Association of Texas  
for the catered luncheon.



# Highway 36 Markers Dedicated

The TEMPLE Telegram

November 14, 1982



Roy Goad (143rd) and Henry W. Gomez, 36th Association president unveil a marker of State Hwy. 36 at North Fort Hood, Saturday, November 13, 1983. (Killeen Daily Herald Photo)

**NORTH FORT HOOD**—About 100 spectators looked on Saturday as Bell County Commissioner Roy Goad and retired Lt. Col. Henry “Rondo” Gomez, executive vice president of the 36th Division Association, unveiled one of seven historical markers dedicated to the men who served with the 36th Division since its inception in 1917.

The markers are to be positioned at 75-mile intervals along the 350-mile stretch of State 36 from Freeport on the Gulf Coast to Abilene in west Texas.

Gomez, speaking before the unveiling at North Fort Hood, said it was “a pleasure to see a project of this magnitude completed” in the midst of a world in turmoil.

“The highways in Germany come to a halt at an iron wall,” Gomez said, referring to the Berlin Wall separating East and West Germany. “A sign on the wall says, ‘Achtung’—Halt. Our highways, thanks to a lot of people, are wide open.”

## Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

Gomez said it is fitting to "honor a proud outfit like the 36th" whose members died in combat to preserve freedom in the United States.

"We in America can go from the sea to the plains, from hell to high water, any time we please because of men like those who served in the 36th Division," he said.

The Texas Highway Department designated State 36 a memorial to the 36th Division in 1944 and the 67th Legislature allocated \$3,900 for the markers in 1981.

Temple Chamber of Commerce's State Highway 36 Commission, working with the State Highway 36 Association, was instrumental in securing the funds for the markers and the rededication of the highway.

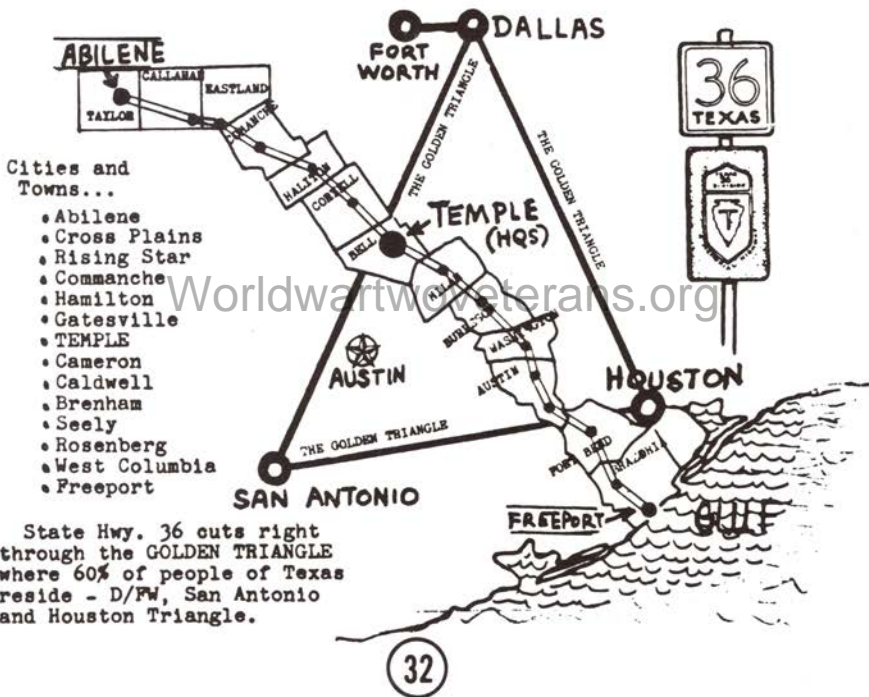
Many of the men who served in the 36th Division came from areas served by the highway.

### Marker Traces History of 36th

The markers, designed by Ray Abbott, trace the history of the division from its inception in 1917 at Camp Bowie, Fort Worth, to its retirement as an active National Guard division in 1980 at Camp Mabry, Austin.

During World War I, the division spent 23 days in active European sectors, captured 549 prisoners and suffered 2,528 casualties.

As a World War II fighting unit, the division spent 400 days in actual combat in North Africa and Europe. The division captured 175,806 of the enemy, including Air Marshal Hermann Goering of Germany, and suffered 27,343 casualties, the third highest casualty rate of all American divisions in World War II.



## Texas State Hwy. 36 Dedicated

### Give Credit Where Credit Is Due For State Hwy 36 Markers



ROY GOAD



For the benefit of our non-Texan T-Patchers, we offer this slice of geographics. The city of Temple has been one of our biggest since 1944, when McCloskey Hospital was opened and housed hundreds of our wounded. This triggered the original 'designation' of State Hwy. 36 to be a Memorial Highway honoring the Fighting 36th.

This was done in 1945, but bird-hunters shot up most all the signs along the route, and by the 1950's it faded away. But in 1979, the Temple Chamber of Commerce, with Keifer Marshall, Jr. leading the way—most all towns and cities along the route joined in...to revive it.

ROY GOAD, a county commissioner of Bell County, was active in this group. It was not easy. Months and years rolled by, but due to the dedication by Goad and associates, it all became a reality on November 13, 1982.

We salute the city of TEMPLE and others along the 350-mile State Highway 36.

### THE GOAD BROTHERS



#### GOAD, ROY D.

Capt. Roy D. Goad, son of Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Goad, Temple, graduated at Temple HS. Entered Army in 1940, trained at Camp Bowie, Texas. Served in N. Africa, Italy, France. Awarded Combat Inf. Badge, Silver Star, Purple Heart, Bronze Star with OLC. Wounded in Italy, 1943. Discharged in 1946.

#### GOAD, RAY L.

Capt. Ray L. Goad, son of Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Goad, Temple, graduated at Temple HS. Entered Army in 1940, trained at Camp Bowie. Served European Theater, N. Africa. POW of Germans. Awarded Combat Inf. Badge and Bronze Star. Discharged in 1946.

#### GOAD, JAMES E.

Major James E. Goad, son of Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Goad, Temple, husband of Cordella May, Moody, graduated at Temple HS. Entered Army in 1940, trained at Camp Bowie, Texas. Served in France.

**'I CROSSED IT FOUR TIMES, TWO EACH WAY'**

---

# T-Patcher Recalls Rapido River



**By Tom Caulfield**  
*Waco Times-Herald*

Dated—August 31, 1959  
during the 36th Reunion  
at Roosevelt Hotel in  
Waco, Texas

Robert Chudej (pronounced Hoo-jay) is a stereotyper for the Waco Tribune-Herald now, but in January, 1944, he was a staff sergeant with a machine gun platoon of the 143rd Infantry, 36th Division. The 36th is going to have a reunion in Waco starting Sept. 4, so it seemed a good idea to ask Chudej about the time he went across the Rapido River in Italy.

"H--, yes," said Chudej, "I crossed the place. I crossed it four times, two times going over and two times coming back.

"We got there about Jan. 18, I think, and we took up a position about 300 or 400 yards from the river and started to dig in, and it was so cold the ground was frozen, you couldn't stick a pick in it. There were some holes there, I guess the Germans had dug them, but mostly we just stayed on top of the ground. It was cold as a well digger.

"The next day our artillery opened up on the Germans across the river, to soften them up, supposedly, and when they did the Germans opened up on us—but good.

"That night we went down and went across the river. We were attached to a couple of rifle platoons from C company, and we started down to this river in a gully, or ravine, and the Germans were zeroed in on it and tore the hell out of us. We got the hell out of that gully into open ground.

"We finally got to the river, and the engineers had some rubber boats to

## Chudej Recalls Rapido River

get us across it, but the Germans were shooting at the engineers, and they punched the hell out of those rubber boats.

"The river wasn't too wide, but it was real deep, and real fast, coming right down out of the mountains. But we got in some rubber boats that were left and got across. The engineers were on the other side pulling us across with ropes.

"We got over the river and got set up and went ahead a little bit, and we came to another river. It was a tributary of the Rapido, and they joined just below us, and we had crossed too high up. We couldn't get across this river even if we wanted to, because we didn't have any boats, they were all back at the other river.

"So some lieutenant, I think his name was Walker, no kin to General Walker, said to me, 'What the hell you think we ought to do, sergeant?' and I said I thought we ought to get the hell out of there. He said, 'That's a damn good answer.' It was getting daylight, anyway. So we went back across the river. There were one or two boats left, some of the men swam. We carried our machine guns. They were heavy... water cooled. We went back to our position where we were before we started out.

"About 2 o'clock the next afternoon they laid down a big smoke screen ahead of us so we could try to get across again, this time below where the two rivers ran together. That smoke was all the Germans were waiting for. They busted loose on us again. We were pinned down before we got to the river.

"Some captain said, 'What are you men doing here, not moving forward?' and I told him we were pinned down, and couldn't go. He said, 'Come on, let's go,' and he took out toward the river, and we all took out with him. The Germans cut loose again, and he said, 'By damn, I believe you're right, sergeant—we are pinned down.'

"Finally about dark we started down to the river again. This time the engineers were going to put up a bridge so we could walk across, and every time they would get one up the Germans would blow it right out of the water. Finally they got one set up.

"It was dark as the inside of hell, and there was a heavy fog, a terrific fog, you couldn't see your hand before your face, and they laid a white tape down on the ground to guide us up to the bridge, and some soldier got his foot caught in the tape and wandered off in the dark and pulled the tape with him, so the ones who followed the tape got lost.

"Anyway, we got to the bridge and went across again, and were in the flat, and the Germans had a lot of machine guns set up and shot us to pieces again.

"We never did get set up. There was talk about a bayonet charge, but it never did develop. We couldn't go. There wasn't but one thing to do and



that was withdraw, and that's what we did. We went back to our original positions.

"We stayed there two or three days and then we went up the river and crossed it where the French had crossed it, at Mount Cairo. While we were waiting we watched the Air Force blow a hill right off the map."

Chudej stopped and thought a minute. "Sure I was scared," he said. "A man would be a fool not to be scared. But I never did think I was going to get killed. Besides, I didn't have time to stop and think about it. If a man stopped to think about things like that he would go nuts. But I was mostly hungry, and cold, and tired.

"We were in fine physical condition, though.

"Coming back in the fog after we withdrew across the river, you couldn't take a step without stepping over a casualty. They were all over the field.

"I came to a man sitting in the path. I said, 'Move over, fellow, so we can get by would you mind?' and he didn't move an inch. He was dead as a

## Chudej Recalls Rapido River

door nail.

"There were 36 men in my platoon. I think 15 of us got back. Me? I didn't get a scratch."

### What One Man Saw

That was what one man saw at the bloody Rapido. Gen. Hugo Martin's report, in the history of the 143rd Infantry compiled and mostly written by Maj. Douglas Boyd, who was regimental adjutant, tells about the action in all its angles. The 36th was asked to attack strongly entrenched and prepared enemy forces numerically equal to our own, or even greater.

General Martin, then a colonel, and an eye-witness and participant, who walked up and down the river bank under fire directing operations, commented that such operations as the Rapido attack were best calculated as aids to the Germans, by destroying good U.S. fighting units. The division was pretty bitter about it.

The 36th did many impossible things. Crossing the Rapido was in itself an impossibility, but the T-patchers did it. When they got across, there were just too many impossibilities even for them on the other side.

Was the Rapido the toughest time Sergeant Chudej had?

"No, it wasn't," said Chudej. "The toughest job we had was taking Hill 1205. It was a mountain that overlooked San Pietro and the Germans were sitting up there watching everything we did. So some of us went around to the back side of the mountain and climbed up it.

"We had to use ropes and hooks and pull each other up the side, it was mighty steep. It was the first mountain climbing I'd ever done. The Germans were shooting down at us from the top, but there were so many rocks and boulders on the side of the hill there was some cover.

### They Catch It

"When we really caught hell was when we got to the top. The Germans were just about as far from us as that guy there," pointing to a man 30 feet away in the Tribune-Herald office.

"We had carried our machine guns up the hill with us, but we couldn't set them up. We used hand grenades and sub-machine guns. We killed about 15 or 16 Germans and captured 17 of them, and we took the hill."

Major Boyd's account of the action on Hill 1205 includes this quotation from Sgt. Willie B. Slaughter of Mexia. "One time on Hill 1205 one of the men in our company, Pvt. Twanda W. Nobles of New York City, and a German sniper were having a private shooting duel. They were crawling around in the rocks and every time one would stick his head out, the other would start shooting. They looked like a couple of lizards crawling in those rocks. To me, having a ringside seat, it was rather humorous to hear Nobles shouting, "Where is the SOB?"

### Necktie From Home

And Cpl. Henry C. Kranz of Lancaster, Pa.: "While we were up on 1205 I received a package from home, and when I opened it, what do you think I found? A necktie, of all things! But don't tell the folks at home, they just wouldn't understand."

In Waco this week, these and many other incidents will be topics of 36th Division Association talks. They will be here from all over.

Sergeant Chudej, by the way, won the Distinguished Service Cross for "extraordinary heroism in action." The citation says he "was instrumental in breaking up an enemy counter attack in the Maddolini Area in Italy, and in the action captured a number of the enemy." One of his fellow workers in the stereotyping department at the Tribune-Herald queried, "What did you eat that made you so brave?" and Chudej said, "Brave, hell, there wasn't but one way to go. . .we couldn't go back." That's what good soldiers are made of.

### Distinguished Service Cross For Chudej



TEXAN honored for heroism—Sgt. Robert L. Chudej of Temple, TX, receives the Distinguished Service Medal from Lt. Gen. Mark W. Clark, Fifth Army commander, in a ceremony at 5th Army Hqs. in Italy, March, 11, 1944. Sgt. Chudej of the 36th Division was honored for extraordinary heroism in action on Mount Sannucro. (Associated Press photo) and appeared in the TEMPLE TELEGRAM.



## Chudej Recalls Rapido River

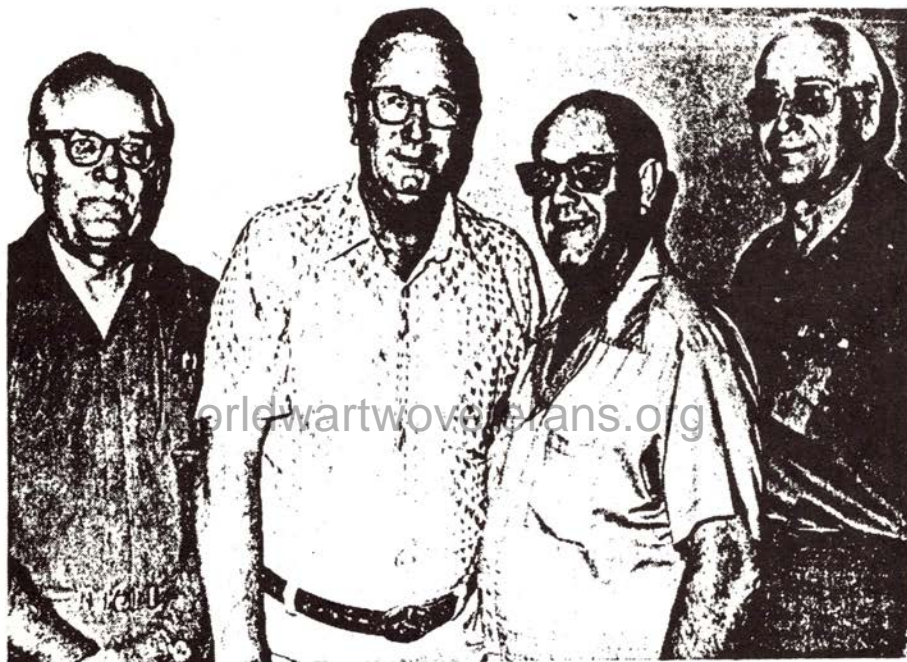


Photo above: ROBERT LEE CHUDEJ, at left, 3528 Frederick Ave., Waco, TX 76707, poses for this one at the 51st annual reunion at Houston with fellow members of the 143rd Infantry. . . Archie McDugal, Roger Cannon and Alvin Amlunke, also of Waco, and each of this threesome served as 36th Association presidents. Photo appeared in the Waco Times Herald on August 22, 1976, just prior to their departure for the Houston Reunion.

Chudej and Cannon both worked for this great newspaper, and both are now retired. The clip was sent in by McDugal and was published in the February 1977 issue of the T-Patcher.

Robert Chudej is active with the 143rd Unit Association and is a Life Member of the 36th Association, subscriber to the Quarterly and, most recently, attended the ceremonies at the dedication of State Hwy. 36 at North Fort Hood, along with his buddies from Company D 143rd. We salute a great T-Patcher!



## MAY IT PLEASE THE COURT



By Charles M. Beacham

The administration of military justice and the 36th "Texas Army" Division were no strangers. In fact you might list the T-Patchers among the winners on that too!! After World War II, they scrapped the system and enacted a new Universal Code of Military Justice in 1951. They even created a Court of Military Appeals where lawyers could huddle together and grade the disciplinary actions of the command.

But back in 1941 down in the 141st Infantry Regiment at Camp Bowie, Texas, Lt. Col. H. Miller Ainsworth, president of a court-martial, became a little edgy. They had been listening to lawyers most of the afternoon. It was late in the day. Finally the evidence was in, and oral argument ready to begin. The Colonel spoke to 2nd Lt. John M. Stafford rather testily: *"John, you lawyers are free to talk about this case all night if you want to. I just wanted to tell you that this Court is ready to vote, and we are going to supper in ten minutes."*

### "Going A-Wall"

In 1942 at Camp Blanding, Florida, we got so busy training that we held court at night. Lt. Col. Andrew H. Price was acting as special court-martial officer. We were in the day room. As Adjutant, I had about ten cases and had them lined up outside the door ready to go. Coloney Andy took his cigar out of his mouth and told me: *"Bring in the next victim."* I went outside and informed the next young man how to report to the Court. *"You are charged with being A-WALL three days, son,"* the colonel informed him. *"Now, son, there ain't no excuse for A-WALL—none whatsoever, but what's yore reason?"*

The man never blinked an eye. *"I left to kill a man that was messing with my wife."*

Colonel Price bit down on his cigar and almost swallowed it. His eyes opened wide as he stared at the man a moment before he spoke huskily, *"Did you kill 'im?"*

*"Nossir."*

The colonel recovered quickly. He roared. *"See there! You wasted three*

## May It Please The Court

days. *If it had been a legitimate case of murder, the Lootenant here would have given you a pass and issued you a gun. Three days on the rock pile son. Three days.*" He turned to me. *"Next case. Bring in the next case."*

Then there was the Company Commander who told me that the only time he never took disciplinary action was the first time he heard a new excuse for going absent without leave. If it wasn't a new excuse, he threw the book at him. Then he told me about the best excuse he had ever heard. He had a man before him who had overstayed his leave for one day. *"I asked him what happened,"* he related. *"Well, he explained that he had come from a small town in Texas. He said it was so small that they only had one train through it every day. When he got home on leave, they welcomed him as a hero. He was wined and dined and feted by the entire town. 'Captain,' he said, 'when I got ready to leave on that train, they had the whole town out to see me off. They even had the band from the local high school and a color guard from the Legion Post. Just as I started to get on the train, the band started to play the National Anthem. I came to attention and saluted. When the music was over, the train was gone. I had to wait a day for the next train.'"*

\* \* \*

## "Going AWOL"

Then there was the time in 1942 in Camp Blanding when the 36th Division was *"placed on hold."* No leaves or passes were to be allowed except special emergencies that had to be approved by the commanding general. Captain Claude Morgan of Fort Worth, Texas, came into my office seeking a few days leave for a man in his company who had a special problem. Everything he owned was represented by a herd of cattle he had left in the custody of a 4-F brother. The brother was stealing him blind. All he needed was one day back in Texas to get it straightened out, and he would be right back.

His request for leave was turned down at Regiment. By special request, he asked Colonel Perrine to take it up with the Chief of Staff at Division. The General turned him down. I always wondered why Captain Morgan didn't do a little private cussing of the command, but he took the news silently, thanked me and returned to his company. I had forgot about the incident until along in February, 1944, Major Claude Morgan, regimental supply officer, was beng evacuated medically from the Cassino area, and I was replacing him as S-4. *"Claude,"* I said, recalling the incident of the man who wanted the pass at Blanding, *"I was always surprised that you didn't squawk at me. What happened?"*

He looked at me and grinned. *"Beacham,"* he said, *"me and the First Sergeant loaned him the money to go home and covered him on the*

morning report."

"You mean," I said, "you carried him as present?"

"Yes. He came back all right."

"But you could have lost your rank over that."

"Well, Charlie, if you expect good men to do your fighting for you, you have to expect to take a few chances for them!"

\* \* \*

### "Loan Sharking"

In the winter of 1942-43 at Camp Edwards, Massachusetts, there was the court-martial case against the man in Division Headquarters Company who had 14 specifications of usury (loan-sharking) levelled against him. He had been doing all right in the loan business until he started getting some junior officers in debt to him. That was too much for General Walker. Militia officers were too friendly with enlisted men anyway. I was assigned to defend him before the Court. I asked him if the charges were true.

"Oh yeah, Lootenant," he told me, "they ain't even scratched the surface."

"Well," I explained to him, "about the best I can do for you is to make them prove it if they have a case and point out that we need men free to fight for their country and try to keep you out of the guard house. Are you able to pay a fine?"

"Oh, Lootenant, money ain't no problem. I don't want to go to the guard house. Besides, I have to be out pay day. That's when I do my collecting! I can't afford to be in the guard house on pay day."

"Well," I told him. "I'll plead you guilty and see if we can get you off with a fine."

When we went to Court, I got seven of the specifications quashed since they had been improperly drafted, and then I entered a plea of guilty and made my pitch to keep him out of the guard house. The Court retired and came back in with a sentence of forfeiture of two-thirds pay per month for three months. My client jumped up in the court room and shook my hand and said, "Lootenant, if we wuz in civilian life, I'd be glad to pay you." I was so embarrassed before the court room, which was now laughing, that I didn't recover sufficiently to say, "If I wuz in civilian life, I'd be glad to accept it."

That night somebody left a bottle of Johnny Walker scotch in a paper sack on the two-by-four over my bunk. I often wondered where it came from. But no too long.

But that is not the end of that story. About three months later, on the

U.S.S. BRAZIL, where I was acting as Courts-Martial officer, I was reviewing the table of punishments in the Manual for Courts-Martial, 1927, and I read that the *maximum sentence for usury* was forfeiture of two-thirds pay per month for three months. I really had not helped my client at all!

That was a good year for Scotch whiskey.

\* \* \*

### "Misbehavior Before The Enemy"

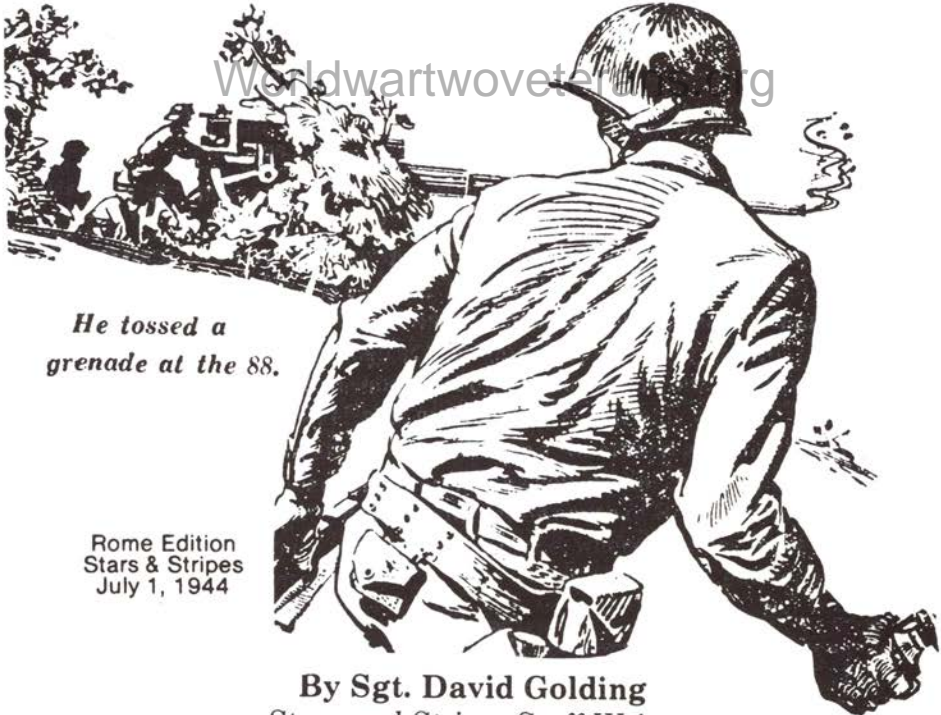
On September 29, 1943, under a kitchen fly on the Sele River in Italy, a man from Company G, 141st Infantry, was tried by general court-martial (the trial took a little over one hour from beginning to end!) for misbehavior before the enemy on Sept. 9, 1943, "*by refusing to disembark from U.S.A. to O-HARA with his command, which had been ordered to so by Captain Charles M. Beacham, Commanding Co G, 141st Infantry, to engage with the enemy, which forces, the said command was then opposing.*"

That evening at retreat, I read the specification and the charge and explained that this man had been found guilty on the specification and the charge and had been sentenced to be shot to death with musketry. After retreat, the man's platoon gathered out of my earshot to confer with their platoon leader. After a minute, Lt. Rex T. McCord left his men and started walking toward me. "*What's up, Mack? The men want to know if they are going to shoot him tomorrow morning.*" I explained some of the delays, review, etc. (it actually had to go to the President) and asked him why the men wanted to know that. "*Well,*" he said, "*if they are going to shoot him tomorrow, they want to volunteer to shoot him!!*"

CHARLES M. BEACHAM  
ATTORNEY AT LAW  
601 PETROLEUM COMMERCE BLDG.  
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS 78205

Last year at the Houston reunion, we suggested to Charlie Beacham that he should give up his law practice and devote his time to writing scripts for television. He just laughed. Then we reminded him that he could 'beat' the old HOGAN'S HEROES; make \$2000 a week, with studio car thrown in, and reside in a penthouse in Hollywood. He kept on laughin'.

# Ugly's Still A 'Damn Good Soldier' To Infantrymen Of 36th Division



*He tossed a  
grenade at the 88.*

Rome Edition  
Stars & Stripes  
July 1, 1944

By Sgt. David Golding  
*Stars and Stripes Staff Writer*

WITH THE 5TH ARMY—The 36th Division may have its Kellys and Childers, but the men in the line still talk about Manuel "Ugly" Gonzales even though he is in a hospital and no longer with the outfit.

Gonzales, a half-Indian, half-Mexican staff sergeant from Fort Worth, Texas, with jet black hair, massive dimples and a warm smile, gave himself the nickname. He always said if he found a man uglier than himself he would pay him ten dollars. So the name stuck.

When infantrymen are on the march they usually don't say much. For the doughboy who has walked and fought his way through from the

## 'Damn Good Soldier'

beginning, this war is an old story. Every mile forward means he's just that much closer to home. Only at night when they get a chance to rest or make some hot coffee, if they are lucky, they become the guys you knew back home. That is when they loosen up and talk about themselves. That is when you find out what makes a company battalion, regiment or division tick.

### MEN WHO COUNT

These are the guys, men like Gonzales, who really count. At night they lose their reticence, and you learn how proud they are of what they accomplished in places like Salerno, Avellino, Cassino, Velletri and of what they are doing now. They have their heroes, too, many of whom unfortunately never had the spotlight of publicity turned upon them.

Such a man is **Ugly Gonzales**. Soldiers don't toss superlatives around. When they say a guy is a damn good soldier, you know they mean just that. And there is no higher praise for the infantryman.

When Gonzales joined his outfit, he could not speak or write English. He has learned to do so since and now speaks well with measured diction. Ugly, however, rarely said much. When the officers and men tried to pump him about his accomplishments, he was noncommittal. He would just answer that he took care of the enemy. Few knew that Gonzales by Army physical standards should never have been a foot soldier. He was afflicted with a hernia which would bother him on long marches. But he never complained. He had a deep sense of loyalty for his outfit. The men and officers could sense this Indian's eloquent but inarticulate pride. Between Gonzales and his commanding officer, Capt. Robert Carey, Waterville, Me., there was a deep affinity that you can only find among men who respect each other's fighting abilities.

Ugly's achievements are now legend, but verified. At Salerno, a German sandbag emplacement of two machine guns and a mortar was playing hell with the men on the beach. When his M-1 jammed, Gonzales grabbed a BAR which had only two clips and fired until they were gone. He then crawled up the emplacement and wiped out the nest with three hand grenades. He and the captain, then a lieutenant, regrouped the platoon and moved forward. Gonzales spotted a German 88 protected by two machine guns which were firing at almost point-blank range at our landing craft. Gonzales started crossing down a ditch where he could not be noticed. That is when a tracer bullet hit his pack and set it afire.

He got rid of his pack and crawled up within ten yards of the gun. He tossed one grenade at the Germans, and they opened fire at him. His second apparently hit the ammunition pile near the gun, and the whole works went up in smoke.

Later in the evening Ugly met up with his company. He never could tell

## Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

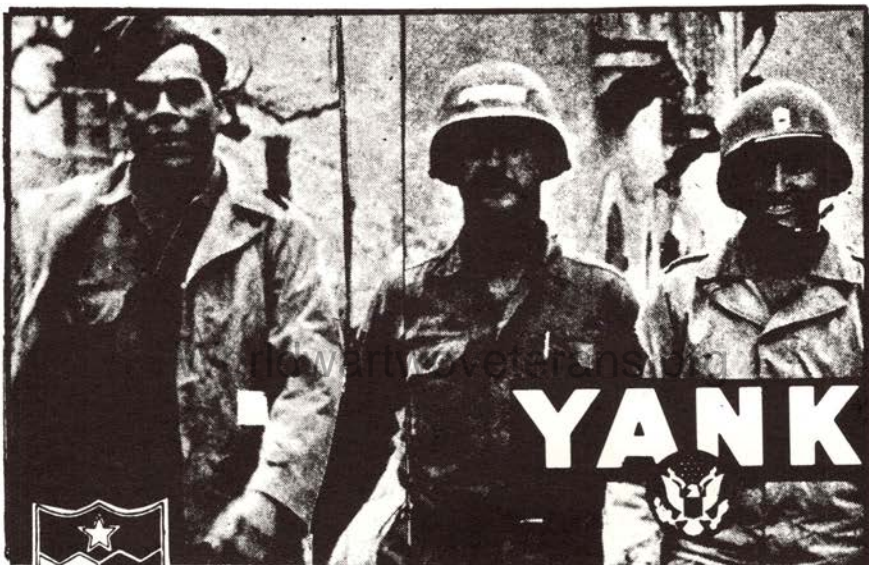
them how much damage he caused or how many Germans he killed because he never waited around to see. He always continued on to where there was more fighting.

### BACK WITH COMPANY

Gonzales' old ailment acted up, and he went to the hospital about four days later. It was at this time the medics wanted to reclassify him, but he threatened to go AWOL if he could get out. Three months later he was back with his company during the bitter fighting near Mt. Maggiore. Early in February at Mt. Castellone, Ugly was wounded badly.

It was typical of the man that he was hurt because he was more concerned about another soldier's life than his own. His platoon at the time was pinned down in their foxholes by raking German machine gun fire. A new replacement, scared by the fire, leaped out of the foxhole and started running blindly. As he passed Gonzales' foxhole, the Indian jumped out and dragged him back to safety. Before Ugly could get back, the machine gun fire ripped into his stomach.

They also tell how Ugly, although severely wounded, insisted he could walk down to the aid station and how he told the medics to use the litter for the other men who were hurt. This time Ugly was in the hospital for three months. When Carey came to visit Gonzales, he was so glad to see



This is the only photo we could find of Manuel 'Ugly' Gonzales. At left, he is shown with T/Sgt. Ed. M. Taylor of Co. H, 141st of El Paso and T/Sgt. Harry R. Moore, Co. F, 143rd of Fort Worth (see Vol. 1, No. 2) of Quarterly taken from YANK Magazine story.



## Damn Good Soldier

him that he jumped out of his bed and started wrestling with the officer. It was one of the few occasions that Gonzales showed any emotion. The doctors told Carey that Gonzales would have to go back to the States. But there was a stubborn passivity about Gonzales which even impressed the medical men.

A week later Gonzales was back with the company. His superior officers, however, transferred Ugly to the regimental headquarters company because they felt it would be better for him if he were in a place where he would not have to do any actual fighting.

Something went out of Ugly after that transfer. He still had that warm smile and carried out his duties cheerfully. But the spark was gone. He either could not or no longer had the will to laugh off his ailments. A man may be patched up after he is hit in the stomach, but he never is the same. So it was with Ugly.

### “He Should Have Gotten the C.M.H.”

The boys when they sit and talk at night about Ugly Gonzales say he should have got the Congressional Medal of Honor. Ugly might like to know that he hasn't been forgotten by the men of the 36th, and they still think he's a damn good soldier.



# "Back From The Dead"

By Harold 'Ghost' Donovan  
Houston, Texas

## AMARILLO DAILY NEWS

AMARILLO, TEXAS, THURSDAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 12, 1943

### Texas' Own 36th Is Praised as 'Hot Out' In Smashing Nazi Defenses on Salerno Beach

#### Nazi Cry from Iso

LONDON, Nov. 24.—United States bombers hit the Nazi railroads in the area of Salerno, Italy, today, according to a dispatch from the Associated Press.

The dispatch says that the bombers were seen to drop their bombs on the railroads in the area of Salerno, Italy, today, according to a dispatch from the Associated Press.

Having been injured June 8, 1943, by a bazooka misfire (rocket exploded on my shoulder during demonstration for 2nd Battalion 142nd) I went ashore with H Co. 142nd Inf. at Salerno. After the beachhead was secured, I was transferred to H Co. 143rd, last of September 1943.

With a lot of luck I made it through Rapido, over and back, the Cassino area and the breakthrough at Anzio, Velettri and Rome.

West of Grosseto I was wounded (two 38 caliber slugs through the right thigh) and was taken prisoner the same day, June 22, 1944. I was held in the German Hospital at Verona, Italy, until July 10, 1944. (The day I was supposed to have died from wounds received in action.) I was moved by German hospital train to Nurnberg, Germany, and held there in Stalag XIII D until liberated by 45th Div. April 17, 1945.

I was moved to an American field hospital on April 21st for 2 days and to a General Hospital in Paris.

From Paris I was flown to New York on May 2, 1945, then to McClosky Gen. Hospital May 6, 1945.

At McClosky General I visited a cousin who told me I was dead and buried. After more conversation, I convinced him we were cousins, and I was fully alive.

Since that time I have run into others who read or heard I was dead and buried in Germany.

#### Green Div Hit Nazi Like Vets

#### House Swiftly Passes Slashed Revenue Bill

#### Good Neighbors A Sure Forecast

WITH U.S. FIFTH ARMY... The division, whose men... The letter 'T' stood for... The story of that hero... The division through the... The letter 'T' stood for... The story of that hero... The division through the...

## 'GHOST' Donovan Service Record:



HAROLD DONOVAN

\* \* \*

## Harold Donovan Lost in Action

Harold Donovan, 22 years old, son of Mr. and Mrs. R. B. Donovan of Dumas, is missing in action.

Missing since June 22 at Salerno, Donovan's parents have heard no further word from him.

Mobilized with the National Guard in 1940, Donovan, now a private first class, has been overseas since February, 1943. He has seen action with the 36th Division in Italy and North Africa.

Before entering the service in 1940, Private Donovan attended school in Amarillo and Dumas High School. He was attending school when he was mobilized.

A sister, Mrs. Lola Emerson, resides in Amarillo.

### An Incredible Story

In all wars there is always someone declared dead who later appears alive and well—in Waxahachie (or somewhere).

Harold (GHOST) Donovan of Co. H, 42nd is well know to most T-Patchers who read all the news in the T-Patcher. At the Houston Reunion last September, Donovan gave your reporter a folio of material about his illustrious 'Return from the Dead'.

My first request was a complete recording of his service record. Here it is:

Aug. 1, 1937...enlisted in Co. H, 142nd.

Aug. 1, 1940...re-enlisted in same unit.

Nov. 25, 1940...mobilized at Camp Bowie with H/142nd.

June 8, 1943...injured in bazooka explosion.

Sept. 9, 1943...landed at Salerno (invasion).

Sept. 28, 1943...transferred to Co. H, 143rd.

June 22, 1944...wounded and taken prisoner.

July 10, 1944...DIED.

April 15, 1945...Memorial services at Dumas, TX.

April 17, 1945...Liberated from POW Camp.

May 2, 1945...Returned to States side.

Aug. 24, 1945...Discharged.

How many such cases that may have taken place during WWII, we do not know. But this one is the only one that has been brought to our attention.

**It just proves what we have said before... "There are 8 Million Stories in the 36th."**

**Getting the troops to tell their OWN story has been the big problem. Many are reluctant to 'tell' their own, because of personal reasons.**

**The stories that our troops tell are the kind that are needed to furnish—to future historians, the 'personal' feelings of men in combat. That's what the QUARTERLY is all about. Over and out.**

**HAROLD DONOVAN gets mail at: 12800 Briar Forest #23, Houston, TX 77077.**

# 'GHOST' DONOVAN Returns From The Dead

## VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES FOUNDED 1899



CURTIS KING COMMANDER  
OFFICE POWELL INSURANCE AGENCY  
DUMAS, TEXAS

CECIL F. RICHARDS  
SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER  
MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN  
P. O. BOX 813  
DUMAS, TEXAS

MOORE COUNTY POST No. 2213

P. O. Box 813

DUMAS, TEXAS

April 12, 1945

Dear Comrade:-

Death has placed its cold hand upon one of our most Distinguished Comrades, Sgt. Harold E. Donovan, while he was a prisoner of War in Germany, and it is our duty to see that services are rendered him with the honors of war. It seems fitting that we should leave our Comrade to rest under the arching sky, as he did when he pitched his tent or laid down in days gone by, weary and footsore by the roadside, or on the field of battle. May each of us, when our voyages and battles of life are over, find a welcome in that region of the Blest where there is no more storm-tossed sea, nor scorching battle field.

Our Comrade is in the hands of our Heavenly Father, and "God giveth His beloved sleep". He will be laid to rest, but let us cherish his virtues and learn to imitate them, reminded by the place he fills no more, that our ranks are thinning. Let each one be so loyal to every virtue, so true to every friendship, so faithful in the remaining marches, that he will be ready to fall out and take his place in the Great Review hereafter; not in doubt, but with faith that the merciful Captain of our salvation will call him to that fraternity which on earth and in heaven remains unbroken.

Comrade Harold served our country with Distinction since August 2nd, 1937, when he enlisted in Co. H, 142nd Inf. at Amarillo, Texas; he saw service in North Africa and Italy. Comrade Harold became a Member of Moore County Post No. 2213, V.F.W., March 22, 1944 and continued in good standing to the time of his death. Comrade Harold was wounded and taken a prisoner of war June 22, 1944, in Italy, and it is now with deepest regrets we must inform you that he has paid the supreme sacrifice for OUR country.

Memorial Services will be hold for Comrade Harold Sunday afternoon at 4 pm., April 15, 1945, at the First Methodist Church in Dumas, and it is the wishes of his family that Moore County Post No. 2213, V.F.W., take part. All members please assemble at the State Guard Armory, 2 Blocks East of the Court House, by 3 pm. Sunday, April 15th and take part in paying our last tribute of respect to our departed Comrade.

Yours in Comradeship,

*Cecil F. Richards*  
Cecil F. Richards, Commander,  
Moore County Post No. 2213, V.F.W.,

OFFICIAL:

*Curtis King*  
Curtis King,  
Adjutant.

# TRACKDOWN



BILL W EBERLE  
3880 SCHIRTZINGER RD  
COLUMBUS OH 43220

Dear Editor:

This is an incredible story—to me at least. Feel free to use all or any portion of this story in an upcoming Quarterly if you judge it to be of enough general interest. Incidentally, the last Quarterly was the greatest!

100 to 1? 1000 to 1? What do you think the chances of locating two brothers from New Zealand whom you met on the Cassino front over 38 years ago and you didn't even know their last names—just their home town?

While on the Cassino front during January of 1944, Battery A, 133rd FA was dug in for six weeks in the same gun position just south of the monastery. For several days, members of the 1st gun section had the unique pleasure of meeting and getting to know personally two brothers from the 2nd New Zealand Division, under the command of Lt. General Sir Bernard Freyberg. Before the two brothers had to move on, they met with us to say goodbye with hand shakes all around and a promise to keep in touch after the war.



CASSINO - (late Dec. '43 or early Jan. '44), men of Battery A, 133rd Field Artillery, from left: David Cassels of Gloucester, MA; John Jamison of Wellington New Zealand and his brother Bob; Joe Markovich of McDonald, PA, and Bill Eberle of Columbus, Ohio.

## “Trackdown”

Well, finally after all these years, curiosity got the best of me as I had always wondered if the two brothers (John and Bob) had ever made it through the war, and if they did, were they still living? A photo, first names and their home town was not much to go on.

I finally hit on the idea of writing to a newspaper in New Zealand for help and got an address from a book at the main library here in Columbus that publishes the names and addresses of newspapers from all over the world. I then wrote to Keith Aitken, editor of the Auckland Star, explaining the situation and asking if he could possibly be of help and enclosed the photo. On May 19, Mr. Aitken wrote back stating that he had forwarded my photo to the official newspaper of the Returned Serviceman's Association. The long shot paid off because on July 16th a letter and pictures arrived from Bob Jamison of Wellington, New Zealand. A portion of his letter reads as follows:

Dear Eberle:

If this letter causes you as much surprise as you caused me, then I'll call it "quits." Yes, I saw the photo you sent to the New Zealand Returned Serviceman's Association for inclusion in their "Lost Trail" column and I just couldn't believe my eyes. What—it must be 37 years since that picture was taken but it brought back lots of happy memories, and now enables me to renew a friendship when at that time it reasured very much. I know that I promised to keep in touch but unfortunately on our way up to the river Po all my personal effects were lost due to enemy action.

John and I managed to arrive home safe and sound and assume that you and your friends did likewise. After leaving you, we passed Cassino to the East and were finally withdrawn from action south of Rome. After a rest, we rejoined the push up to and into Florence, where we once more were pulled out, then switched to the East coast and finally ended up in Trieste.

WELLINGTON, New Zealand, June 1982  
from left: brothers John and Bob Jamison who posed for this photo especially for ole buddie - Bill Eberle.



## THE COURT-MARTIAL OF 1ST LT. IVAN M. KER as told by himself

My differences with Lt. Col. Fred L. Walker, Jr., commander of the 1st Bn., 143rd Infantry, began at Port aux Poules, North Africa, while we were getting ready for the invasion of Italy. Captain Gerald P. Elder, of Company C, was my company commander. He was at General Wilbur's school.

General Mark Clark came to the school and asked Elder what he thought about it. Elder was from the black lands of Texas, and he told him. Clark relieved him on the spot!

Colonel William H. Martin, commander of the 143rd Infantry, told me I could keep Company C if I wanted it. He said Lt. Col. Joe Barnett, CO of the 3rd Battalion and Hal Jones of the 2nd Battalion had both asked for me to command a company, but he had rather I would take Company C, as he didn't think anybody else could hold the men together. I accepted.

At the time, I didn't know Walker had the 1st Battalion. I'd seen him around the headquarters, as one of the S'es. My first official encounter with him happened a couple of days before embarkation. I had to check property and get everything straightened around, and I was tired. Walker came to my tent late that night and

---

Editor's Note: The events leading to the court-martial of Ivan M. Ker are controversial. However, "The Fighting 36th" is no stranger to controversy and has thrived upon it in fact. The incident is a part of the division's history, and Ker deserves to be heard. General Walker makes no mention of it in his book, *"From Texas To Rome,"* since the battalion commanded by his son was attached to Darby's Rangers at the time. Neither does Colonel Darby mention it in his book, *"We Led the Way."* The following is Ker's account, in his own words, of the most momentous event of his military career, if not his entire life.

## Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

said, "*Ker, three of your men just came in, drunk and raising hell, and they woke me up. I want their names on my table tomorrow morning at breakfast.*"

Only one of the men was mine. One of the others belonged to Waskow, Company B. Remember Henry T. Waskow? Next morning at battalion mess, I put the names by Walker's plate.

Walker said, "*I want you to draw up papers under AW 96.*"

I said, "*Colonel, I don't know about the other two company commanders, but I can't do that. It would be double jeopardy, I gave mine 104 last night.*"

Walker was not a tall man. He was sitting, and he shot up like a cannon. Straight up in the air. He said, "*Ker, you've got the wrong attitude.*"

I said, "*No, Colonel. I don't have the wrong attitude. I've got a company I didn't ask for, but as long as I've got it, I'm going to run it the way I see fit. Now you can relieve me, but I am not going to charge a man with AW 96 because he came in happy before going to fight.*"

Next morning we boarded ship. Two of my men were absent. The MPs brought them to me while we were boarding ship. Later, I was walking the deck when I ran into Walker.

He said, "*Did you get your two men?*"

"*Yes, sir.*"

"*I want you to draw up papers on those men.*"

I said, "*Colonel, those men are in the galley working their fannies off. They'll sleep in the brig until we land. Then they'll come out fighting.*"

Walker turned and walked away.

The next contact I had with him was on the beach at Salerno. The battalion was in corps reserve. I sat down to rest, and he plopped down beside me. We spoke, and that's all. Then we got up and went on in.

The following day, we left Salerno and moved to Maiori. This is where we joined the Rangers, under Colonel Darby. As we were coming in, we went forward on a reconnaissance, the company commanders, the battalion commander, the runners and the radio man. The Rangers were already in position.

There was one spot of about 300 yards of clearing at the top of this hill. It was clear all the way across and all



## Court-Martial of Lt. Ivan Ker

the way down, and the road down at the bottom. As the troops started marching up, some Germans came in on top of the hill with a mortar and knocked out my 3rd Platoon. Killed the officer and wounded almost all of them. We had quite a little fight there. That left me one platoon short. So when we reorganized up on the hill, I was made reserve company.

For the next two days, we just laid around. Nothing was happening. Then I was called to battalion headquarters and shown on a map a hill that I was to take, and also the route. I had no preference in the route. I had to go this way. I had no chance for a reconnaissance, because when we got through talking, my troops were there, and we were ready to move out. I was to have mortar fire from our weapons company.

We moved up without incident, except for the firing of the mortars. We got as close to the objective as we could get, when we ran into a precipitate cliff, about forty or fifty feet, and we had no ropes or way of scaling down. I called back—we had laid wire all the way and had direct communications—and told Walker what the situation was. Then came the mortar fire, and it was falling right in the midst of us.

I said, "*Stop the mortar fire! It's falling in our midst!*"

The fire stopped. Then it started again. I said, "*Stop the mortar fire!*"

Walker grabbed the phone and said, "*Stay where you're at! I'm coming up!*"

It was dark. Walker approached me, pistol drawn. As he walked up, he cocked his pistol. Every gun in my unit followed suit.

(Note: Joel Westbrook, Ker's defense counsel, states that he has no recollection of this incident being mentioned during the preparation of Ker's defense, or even of Walker going to the site. Ker said he didn't include the pistol incident in his testimony because he felt he couldn't prove it.)

Walker was fixing to ream my butt. He was fixing to give me a reprimand, with a gun in his hand, cocked.

I said, "*Colonel, I'm going to tell you something. I will not—*" these were the words I used—"*I will not accept a reprimand from you for this operation. If you have any*

## Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

*complaint against me, I want you to prove it in court. I want a court-martial."*

I was relieved, on the spot. That was the last contact I had with Walker until the court. I was charged with misconduct in the face of the enemy.

I was transferred back to (regimental) headquarters. Colonel Martin asked who I wanted to defend me. I said, "*Captain Joel W. Westbrook.*"

(Note: Attorney Westbrook states, "Ironically, I was the officer who drew up the charges and specifications against Ker, acting upon instructions from Colonel Walker. I had some misgivings about a conflict of interest. But Colonel Martin said, "You will defend Ker.")

Westbrook is a very thorough man. We went over that whole area. The battalion had moved away by then, but we drove back over it, and I took him to where the cliff was. He said, "*Ivan, you couldn't have made this. No way.*"

During the trial, I was on the stand, and Colonel Walker was on the stand. I showed the court, on the map, the objective, the route and what the situation was. When Walker took the stand, he testified that the area was a gradual slope, but he couldn't find it on the map.

Colonel Oran C. Stovall, a member of the court, states: "*Our general opinion was that Ker was given a mission by an untried, inexperienced officer. Henry Waskow, CO of Company 'B' was a witness among others that I do not remember, and all told the same general story. The map showed a deep canyon with steep sides; there was actually no level or gradual slope in the area. It was noted that Ker was always at the head of his company throughout the operation.*"

Joel Westbrook did his job right. He went through every detail. When the sergeant in charge of the mortar platoon took the stand, Westbrook asked him about the firing, and about the second firing.

That's when Colonel Garner, a member of the court, stood up. He said, "*Do you mean to tell me, Sergeant, that after you had already fired your supposed support, and*

## Court-Martial of Lt. Ivan Ker

*you knew Ivan Ker had called in, Colonel Walker asked you to fire again?"*

*"Yes, sir."*

*"And did you fire?"*

*"Yes, sir."*

*"Would you do it now?"*

*"No, sir."*

---

(Joel Westbrook verifies Ker's account of the testimony regarding the firing of the mortars, except as follows. Westbrook states, "If I remember correctly, the witness was the captain commanding the Heavy Weapons Company, not the mortar platoon sergeant. According to his testimony, his orders called for 'scheduled fire.' His instructions were to commence firing at a certain time, on a target area forward of the friendly troops, and to continue firing for six to eight minutes. He was then to lift the fire a hundred yards and fire for another six to eight minutes. However, after Ker called in, Walker told him to repeat the entire schedule, which he understood to mean firing again on the same target area as the first firing. When he answered Lt. Col. Garner's questions about the second firing, he was trembling with fright. He concluded his testimony with the statement, 'I'll never do it again!' Incidentally, Colonel Garner was commander of the 133rd Field Artillery.")

---

After the trial, Colonel Darby said, "*Ker, you know that was an easy mission. All you had to do was go down the road. Walker made it hard with the route he gave you.*"

I was acquitted of all specifications and charges.

When Colonel Martin was relieved by Mark Clark after the Rapido fiasco, he offered to take me with him. He said, "*Ker, you're a doomed man as long as you stay in this outfit.*"

I refused. I stayed with the 143rd Infantry until the end of the war. I was wounded near Grenoble, France. I held a captain's job the entire time, but I was never promoted. Not even the terminal leave promotion everybody was supposed to get. Walker had given me an Unsatisfactory efficiency rating.

Westbrook was never promoted either, until he transferred to another command.

## Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

TAPS: Ivan M. Ker died in his sleep on July 7, 1981, at his home in Eola, Texas. He was buried in Oakwood Cemetery, Waco, the city where he and Joel Westbrook entered on active duty with Company K, 143rd Infantry on M-Day, 1940. He was 67.



The foregoing narrative was taped by T-Patchers Charles M. Beacham and C. A. Williamson in San Antonio, Texas, shortly before Ker's death. Ker was in the Alamo City for treatment at Audie Murphy VA Hospital for the service connected disability that later claimed his life. Although time had partly healed the wounds, the injustice he believed had been done to him still rankled, after nearly forty years.



LtC C. A. (Chum) Williamson, Ret.  
12653 King Oaks, San Antonio, TX 78233  
Phone: 1-512-654-9180

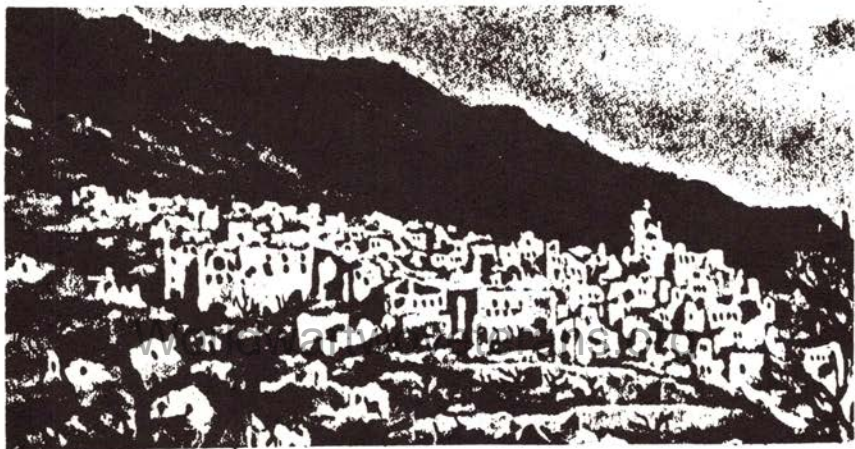
Editor's Note: We first heard of the Ivan Ker Court-Martial many years ago from Charlie Beacham. Then C. A. Williamson took on the assignment and was able to get a taped interview with Ker.

With the advent of the 36th Quarterly, Chum Williamson sent in a draft of this trial a year ago. Then a process of charges took place when the manuscript was submitted to Joel W. Westbrook, Attorney at Law, National Bank of Commerce Bldg., San Antonio, Texas.

Additions and changes were made, and finally, on October 3, 1982, your editor received the 'final' version as published here—FOR THE FIRST TIME. Our thanks to these three T-Patchers for this stirring account. It'd make a good TV one-hour documentary.

Wonder if we could get PAUL NEWMAN to star in this one? (You saw him in the new movie, *The Verdict*.)

## 'TWAS CHRISTMAS EVE IN VENAFCRO



By Del Kendall

In the darkness, the cries of "Medic!" were heard after the barrage had lifted; its dank and acrid stench drifted through the rubble-shattered terraces of San Pietro, as word came down the line. *"Men, be ready to move out in twenty minutes, we're being relieved."*

The men, as if awakening from a bad dream, gathered up their gear in numbed silence, as some big stuff shuffled overhead, slamming into the mountainside beyond. Without a spoken word, the men quickly, single-filed down through a rocky draw, down to the waiting trucks below.

Piling in, they dropped beside their gear as the trucks started to move out. Slipping out of their packs, tensions eased as some tried to light a cigarette while the trucks jolted down the shell cratered road. Someone said, *"Hey, you guys, wunner where we're goin'?"* A voice answered, *"Who gives a shit, as long as its far away from that Hell hole."* The men sat smoking, as someone jokingly said, *"Hey, Stachu, maybe you get lucky, get pass, go Napoli, blow yer wad huh."* The men laughed as the trucks whined in gear down the twisting mountain road. Someone mentioned tomorrow was Christmas Eve as it started to rain.

The convoy rumbled through the rain-slickened streets of Venafro in the dark grey dawn. The town, now a supply base, was loaded with men and materials, even a troop of Italian mounted Calvary assembling in the square. They looked pretty fancy in their colorful uniforms and white plumed hats, a far cry from this convoy of stubble-bearded hollow-eyed

## Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

mud-soldiers that was now passing them by. On the outskirts of town, the trucks turned into an olive grove, your CO area.

With pup tents now setup in the driest areas, the men answered chow call, wolfing down their first hot meal in some time. Later this was followed by care and cleaning of equipment and vehicles, as the men sloshed about their chores.

Mail call was sounded. Around an ever-growing circle of men, the letters passed overhead, or were tossed to the lucky recipient. Others stood, waiting patiently to hear their name called, as the armful of mail dwindled to the last few. The mailman held up the last three letters. "All for Jones," he said. Someone hollered, "He's in the hospital." The mailman turned and walked away.

A couple of the men, already back from a quick reconnaissance in town, said, "Jeez, you guys, there's nothin' there—only more GIs. The place is crawlin' with 'em. We searched all over and couldn't find even one stinkin' bottle of vino. Suppose all those rear-echelon commandos got it all drunk up. Even those Pizon soldiers said, 'Vino finito, multi soldat, nienti buono, capish?' What the hell we gonna' do fer Crisake? It's Christmas Eve."

The men, downhearted at this latest statement, took refuge in their tarp-covered halftracks as the rains pounded the area into a muddy morass. Someone lit a candle as you searched through your gear. Yes, here it was, a bottle of coke syrup you'd been sent in an Xmas package way back in November.

Now if you only had something to mix it with, you thought, as a wet head popped up from under the tarp. It was Bill, the platoon medic. A good man who could practically wring whiskey from a stone, if the need was there. Bill said, with a sparkle in his eye, "Men, I'll be a sad bastard, but even I couldn't find one bottle of vino in this Goddamn town. Not one bottle at any price. BUT," he added, with a smile spreading across his face, "I ran into an Italian medic who traded me this for some Luckies." and from out of his raincoat pocket Bill produced a bottle of pure grain alcohol.

A rousing cheer went up. "Nice going, Bill, we knew you could come up with something." Quickly, canteen cups rattled out as each man mixed his own drink. A little syrup, a little alky and some water. The men drank in hearty gulps. "Jeez, this is great stuff, ya' know it. Beats that Godam vino any day." Someone added, "Ya' just ain't a bird-a-turdin'."

The men sat there among ammo boxes, cased 57MM shells and wet camouflage nets, shooting the bull as the candle sent hot wax sputtering down the sides of an upturned helmet. The wind howled, as the men drank and kidded each other, their faces now flushed and more alive. That fox-hole pallor, gone for now at least, a reprieve from that killing ground, called San Pietro.

The flickering candle cast shadowy figures behind each man. As the

## Twas Christmas Eve At Venafro

bottle was passed around, the kibitzing started: "Hey, Stumpy, who's the stupid bastard tol ya' we're movin' out tomorrow? Jeez, we jus' got here." "I suppose Ace said he got it right from G-2, right?" "Yah, an Red said he heard it from a driver for Regt." Someone farted, a long low roll of a sound. "Now do that with yer mouth, why don'tcha."

Shotgun said, "Boy didja' see ol' Nickelnose go from the squat position to his foxhole in two seconds flat when that big stuff sailed in?" "Yah, thought he was gonna' trip tryin' to pull up his pants as he ran." "Too bad though, cause that's when whatshisname got it, y'know, that new guy. Christ, he'd been here just a week."

The wind slammed at the vehicle, the men pausing to look around. The candle sputtered as a pair of cupped hands reached out and steadied its small flame. A voice said, "This is a no fickee buono night, if I ever saw one." One of the men was wolfing down his second can of meat and beans; finishing, he wiped the sleeve of his combat jacket across his mouth and let out a great belch, smiling to himself. Bill the medic said, "Kee-rist man, how can ya' keep eatin' those godamn C-rations all the time? Ain't there no bottom to yer gut?"

One of the men hollered, "Outta the way you guys, gotta' drain the lizard," as he slid out under the tarp. Someone said, "You guys get a load of those Pizon sojers on horseback? Looked like they's dressed fer a parade, an not fightin' in those f-kin' mountains." There was now a sudden drum of hail, bouncing off the tarp overhead. "Whitey said the the kitchen was



Here's some of Kendall's buddies of A/T 143rd—from left: Alex (Monk) Wilhelmi, of New York, NY, and Ray (Kid) Winters of Pittsburgh, PA, in the Avellino, Italy area.

## Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

*gonna have fried eggs in the morning if they can get 'em thawed out. Sure as hell hope so.*" Surgalski, the coal miner, threw back his head and wailed. "Mama Mia, what I wouldn't give ta be in Napoli about now, whoooooeee." His buddy looked hard at him, saying, "Yah, well don't go lookin' for that same broad. Those sores on her legs weren't from any Tedishkee bombardmento, like she tol ya. You know what that PUPTENT poet said in the STARS n'STRIPES. GIs that get boozy, ain't very choozy."

The men laughed as a couple of them shifted their weight on the wet camouflage nets. The hail had suddenly stopped as the wind picked up again. "Wonder if Axis Sally's got any hot poop for us guys." Someone stuck his head in under the tarp and hollered, "Any you guys see Clem?" Bill said, "Nope, ain't seen him since mail call. Probably got the redass, happens every time he hears from home." "Hey, I'm outta cigarettes. Who's gotta Lucky? I don't want any of those horseshit Fleetwoods." Someone said, "Wonder if Monk'll get that case of Luckies he asked his boss to send him? Hell he worked for the tobacco company." "Five'll get ya' ten, it never shows up. Those port battalion guys got xray eyes for somethin' like that."

Through the haze of cigarette smoke and the smell of stale sweat, the bottle passed around for the last time. "Hope to hell supply gets some combat jackets in soon, I've been freezin' my ass off for weeks now." "Yah, well if supply can't get 'em, ya' can always buy 'em from those Pizons in Naples ya' know." As someone belched, they shouted, "Stugots—hey Stugots, wake up, the girls'll be here soon." The men laughed as Stugots, muttering to himself, curled up, warming his hands in his crotch and fell asleep.

The wind slammed at the tarp like rifle shots as some of the men now lay sleeping, slumped on their buddies shoulder or burrowed into the camouflage nets. Some of the men sat quietly, with their own private thoughts, as a body crawled up under the tarp. It was Muscles coming off guard duty. He said, "Jeez, ya' could freeze yer balls off out there t'night." Looking around expectantly, he spotted a cup with something in it. Taking a sniff, he downed it in one huge gulp. His eyes bugged out in mock surprise as he shook himself, and the men smiled. He added heartily, "WOW! Just what I needed. Merry Christmas, you guys." The candle sputtered and went out as a light snow started to fall.

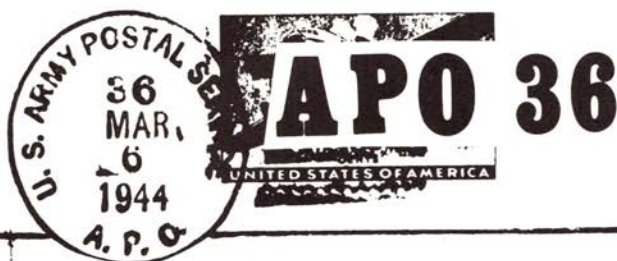


Del Kendall, Of Anti/Tanker of 143rd has been our loyal contributor for the Quarterly. He is a prolific writer of war stories, as far as we know. He has the true way to express the feeling of the troopers, which only a few can relate...how it was - at the time, and the situation that existed.





## MY EIGHT DAYS ON THE RIVIERA



by  
**RAY LEE**  
**THREE RIVERS, TEXAS**

It was the middle of August, 1944, and we were preparing to make the invasion of Southern France. A shipload of mail from the States was being unloaded on the docks as we were loading our equipment on our ship. We couldn't leave the mail there, so we started transferring it to our ship. By the end of the day we were all becoming very exhausted. I was leaning from an opening in the ship, hauling in bags of mail that were handed up to me.

We were almost through, and I was tugging on an especially heavy bag. I put too much pressure on my lower body against the bottom of the opening and heard a popping sound. I knew at once what had happened—broken rib!

I knew that if I mentioned the injury, I would be sent to a hospital in Naples and maybe never see my outfit again for the duration, so I decided to "take it on the chin." A couple of hours later, I was beginning to wish I had squealed! Finally, I decided I had better see a medic. I did, and they did. They took a six-inch piece of tape and wrapped it around my body as tightly as they could.

When we arrived in Southern France, I couldn't help unload the mail,

## Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly



and since I was of no obvious value, I was elected to stay on the beach and guard the mail. So, with one case of C-rations and a five-gallon can of water, I watched the convoy pull out.

Trucks were very hard to get since the troops were moving so fast and all transportation was needed up front. The first day, one truck appeared. The next three days were the same. On the fifth day, there was a no-show. You can't imagine the many thoughts that ran through my mind that sleepless night. The thought that occurred the most was that the truck had run off one of those mountain trails! I also thought that perhaps our troops were moving too fast, and that the whole division had been cut off.

The main thing I was thinking about was: "what was I going to do for water?" The food part didn't bother me, because I had a mountain of crumbled cookies in that pile of mail bags.

The next day, the sixth, two trucks appeared, bringing me two cans of water. I was very glad to get it, because I was needing a bath pretty badly by then. A helmet bath is better than none!

Two days later, we got enough transportation to get all the mail loaded and took off into the mountain country.

P.S. No Purple Heart!

Worldwartwoveterans.org



---

### NOTICE . . . To All Subscribers . . .

A few months ago, we changed the collecting procedure. All orders for 'new,' renewals, etc., are now being handled by our Membership secretary LEONARD WILKERSON, P.O. Box 2049, Malakoff, TX 75148.

So if you are missing an issue, please WRITE to ole LENWLK and we'll see that you get what you're supposed to have.

---

## “The Best-Dressed Lieutenant”



Worldwar2veterans.org

By Shelby — at Salerno

He was the best-dressed lieutenant I ever saw. That made him the best-looking lieutenant I have ever seen. He had his uniform cut to fit; his forty five hung just right; his gas mask was in the exact position; his binoculars and map case were just right. He also had a carbine over his left shoulder pointing straight up in the air.

He was sitting at attention beside his driver in a jeep.

Our platoon started our invasion of Italy at Salerno Beach in a British landing craft. It was one of the Higgins kind: light, low and fast.

A shell landed close, knocking a small hole below the waterline. We started taking water slowly. The extra weight made our craft slow up a lot.

We were astride our low seat benches, jammed against the man in front of us. We had lots of confidence, because most of us had taken two seasick pills just before we started for the beach. The water was getting higher and higher and got over our ankles. We began to complain to the English sailor to hurry up and get us to the beach. He said he had it wide open and going as fast as he could.

By this time we had almost stopped moving, and the water was up to our bottoms. The English sailors had started to yell for help at the many other crafts that were passing us. Most of the other crafts were U.S., and they went right on past.

By this time, there were a lot of shells coming in from the Germans on the mainland. Daylight was coming fast. The British were yelling, “O’ say, will you help us?”, but no one was paying any attention to them. Something had to be done! We had to get someone’s attention. The best way we knew was to yell, “Hey you son of a bitches, we are sinking, and we need help!”

Almost immediately a tank carrier came up beside us. The only thing

## Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

they had in it was one jeep, one driver and the best looking lieutenant I had ever seen. He seemed to be a little bit mad because we were messing up his schedule.

It did not take but a few seconds for us to change craft. On our way to the beach the lieutenant warned us two or three times to stay out of the jeep's way so he could get off first. In a few minutes we hit bottom. Our craft's ramp went down, and out went the jeep. The jeep went down, down and down. The last thing we saw was the lieutenant, sitting there at attention as he went under the water.

Immediately the craftman started to raise the ramp and back off. He said he would try to get in at another place, which he did. All of our platoon got on the beach OK but already wet. I certainly hope that the lieutenant came up and got to the beach OK. Over the last thirty-four years, I often think of him still sitting there, in his jeep, at attention, at the bottom of the sea.

Second Platoon Co. B 142 Inf.  
Shelby E. Krouse  
14200 E. 39th Terr.  
Independence, Mo. 64055

---

# LETTERS

---

Dear Editor:

I want to renew my subscription to the Quarterly, Vol. 2. Have my set of 4 issues of Vol. 1, 1981 series and have read each from cover to cover and enjoyed them very much. Jack Clover's "Boots of Freedom" story about picking up the dead GI's brought back memories. I took a detail from my Co. I, 143rd also on that Christmas morning 1943 . . . I can still recall some of the names of the dead we picked up and vividly remember the condition the remains were in.

Incidentally, General Dahlquist's son, Donald is a neighbor of mine. Thanks, and keep up the good work.

**James L. Fletcher, 6618 Bowie Drive  
Springfield, VA 22150**

ED note: Fletcher entered service in March 1943, joined Co. I 143rd and participated in campaigns of Naples-Foggia, Rome-Arno, Southern France and Rhineland. Awarded Bronze Star, Purple Heart with cluster.

---

## THINK !

---

## "ONE WHO RETURNED"

---

# "Rondo Rifles"

---



By Robert 'Buck' Glover  
Co. C, 141st Infantry

WorldWarTwoVeterans.org  
"The Tar Heel Texan"

My most memorable Christmas was the Christmas of 1943. I was in Italy with the 36th Infantry Division, out of Texas. It was not the sunny Italy that I had read and heard about all my life. It was the Italy of mud, mountains and mules that Bill Mauldin and Ernie Pyle drew and wrote about so well.

We had just moved up to Hill 1205 overlooking the town of Venafro, just across the Rapido River from Cassino. We were supposed to be relieved on Christmas Eve day by the crack 1st Special Service Forces made up of Canadian and American specially trained troops; however, they came under German shell fire on their way up. So many of them were killed or wounded that we could not leave our positions.

On Christmas Eve night, the mule train that was bringing our rations was shelled and could not reach us. On Christmas morning in a driving rain, I was sent by our company commander to make sure all the company was alert in their fox holes.

As I looked down the trail I counted eighteen Special Forces men dead from shell fire. As I moved on to alert the company, I picked up some C ration biscuits that were soggy and damp from the rain. As I reached each fox hole I gave the men their "Christmas dinner" and wished them a Merry Christmas. Not one man failed to return the greeting.

I have had many wonderful Christmases since that time, but I always look back and thank God that I was fortunate enough to return home, unlike those eighteen men I had seen on the trail in Italy the Christmas of '43.

Robert "Buck" Glover  
35 Burrange Rd. N.E.  
Concord, N.C.



**“Getting Our Troops Involved Is Essential” — Hank Gomez**



ince taking office as president of the 36th Division Association last September, Henry W. Gomez of San Antonio went to work on contacting many of the men of the 141st Infantry Regiment that he served with—far and wide. He mailed out letters by the score and the results have been great. Reprinted here is a letter to him from ‘Buck’ Glover, who operates Glover’s Landscaping Service in Concord, N.C. ....

Dear Hank:

I enjoyed our talk in the lobby the day I got to Houston, but I never did get to see the guy you were talking about that was writing a book. I sure would have liked to have seen him since I have a lot of good stories all about C. Company 141. I am such a terrible writer that I just never could get around to putting anything on paper.

I was with C. Company from Camp Edwards until across the Rapido River—even in Germany—and still keep up with the outfit through the T Bone that Acosta puts out. I sure wish I lived closer so I could be more active in the day-to-day activities since I feel I am a true Texan since the best friends I ever had are you guys that went through so much hell with me.

That we all were put there by the draft board doesn't matter. So many gave so much, and I guess sometimes we think it was a waste of time. At least once a year when we see each other we know it was worth every little bit of it if for no other reason than for the friendship that we are all still able to share.

I think old C. Company is still lucky to have so many guys left like Acosta, Dick Davis, Graham, Everett, Von Hollen, Kelsy and myself—also Marvin Steitle—who were able to get together again for the last two years.

Well, Buddy, that's about it for now. I am sending you a copy of a piece I wrote several years ago. It appeared in Concord in the local papers as my most memorable contribution—it explains itself pretty well.

Give my regards to the guys at the Christmas party, and tell them I will be thinking of them.

Best regards,  
BUCK GLOVER  
C. CO. 141st Inf. 1942-1945



THEN - Ole Tar Heel Texan in Italy 1944,  
and NOW - Ole 'HOSS' Ross Glover, 1982

## "THE LIE"



By William Weldon

144th INFANTRY

(The following is a "story" written by Col. Wm. C. Weldon, Jr., USAF Retired, former Sgt. of G Co, now located at 5696 Blyhe Avenue, Highland, California 92346. He states, "have tried to convey the feelings of a 14 year old as he is about to enter National Guard by rather untruthful means. It is possible that others of good association members went through similar experiences, and it might evoke some nostalgia.")

Without looking up from the papers in his hand, the medic absently pointed his thumb down the hall, "*OK, Weldon, wait for the recruiting officer down there.*" He vaguely indicated a wooden bench in an otherwise bare hallway.

Trying hard not to appear excited or nervous, I strolled to the bench, slouched down and leaned back against the cool cinder-block wall. I fought down the panic worms that crawled in my stomach.

"Golly," I thought, "*it looks like I'm gonna get in*"—just like Doug said, all you had to do was keep calm and not be smart alecky. Let's see—the papers filled out last week and the physical examination this week. That leaves only to be sworn in—"*Wonder what that's like?*" Realizing that I had been nervously biting my fingernails, I clasped my hands around one knee and thought about how I'd come to be there in the National Guard Armory.

You see, you should understand about Doug Wall and me. In our high school we had ROTC, and Doug, a senior, was the cadet company commander of the outfit in which I was a cadet corporal. Though I was only a sophomore, Doug had taken a real interest in me. He had given me extra training in close order drill and had coached me on the rifle range.

One day Doug had asked me to stay after our drill period, the last period of the day. He told me then about, "*G*" Company, 144th Infantry, a part of the Dallas portion of the 36th Division, Texas National Guard. He

## Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

was a sergeant in it and was looking for some recruits to fill out the company roster in the preparation for the two-week summer training encampment. Since I was so tall for my age, he thought I could pass for eighteen and be able to enlist.

The way he explained it seemed simple enough at the time. All I had to do was fill out some papers, take a physical examination and tell the recruiting officer I was eighteen years old. And, boy howdy, you got a uniform free. The drilling was just like we had in school. On top of that, you got to qualify with a real, honest-to-God Springfield Rifle, caliber .30 and wear a medal badge.

Doug had also explained all about the two-week summer camp and the pay, too. In 1939, a dollar a night for drill and a dollar a day and chow while in camp sounded mighty rich to a teenage boy. And, the best part about the pay was it would be all mine, without having to ask Dad for it. Did you ever have to ask anyone for money and feel you were shaming both yourself and the giver?

That's the way it was with Dad and me in the late thirties. Even when I was very much in need of money, and Dad wanted to give it to me there was so little to give. So, you see, I just had to find some way of earning some money for my very own.

Anyhow, a couple of weeks prior to the night I'm talking about, Doug came by to pick me up at the house. Man, he sure looked neat in that uniform. He had always been a good dresser, but in that uniform he was something else. His campaign hat was freshly blocked, his shirt had the three knife-edge creases, and he was wearing the khaki breeches, with the wrapped leggings. His shoes were so highly polished that you could see yourself in them. Later that night, when the company formed up, I was hooked. WATCHING THE PRECISION AND SNAP OF DRILL; hearing the commands and reports, I felt that I just had to be a part of it all.

Well, that had been two weeks before now. I had met the first sergeant and some of the other men of the company after that first session. They seemed to take to me right away. Most of all, they didn't treat me as if I was a kid.

So, there I was, sitting on that bench, trying very hard to look casual and grown up. I had leaned backed and was counting the lights in the ceiling when the company clerk came out of the orderly room to tell me the "Exec" would see me.

The company executive officer, Lieutenant Clark, was the one who was to enlist me. I could tell right away that he was "*all business*." He was a big man; most of the company was a little in awe of him because of his size.



## "THE LIE"

On that night, he seemed to me to be a forbidding giant. In a polite but no-nonsense way, he asked me the necessary questions. Doug had told me how to answer, clear and to the point and not too loud. I responded as best I could, praying that my changing voice would not betray me.

One question threw me for a moment, though. At one point the lieutenant stopped typing on the enlistment form; his enormous hands hovered over the typewriter, both index fingers poised to stab down on the keys. He half turned to me, raised one eyebrow and asked, "Got your birthday figured out yet, young man?"

Figured out? Heck, Doug and I had done all that the night before. But, because he asked the question as he did, I was tongue-tied for about fifteen seconds. Long enough, I'm sure, for both of us to realize the enormity of the moment.

"Yes, Sir," I blurted, and gave what was a mutually understood but never challenged, lie between gentlemen-at-arms. I had just become four years older.



---

### COMING UP NEXT. . . Vol. II Number 4, WINTER 1982. . .

Yes, we are late. We got started late, but have played catch-up. Your final issue of Vol. II, will be out in the mails in February '83.

Here are some of the exciting stories you'll have in that issue: **OFLAG 64, POW at Szubin, Poland** where dozens of T-Patchers were held, with reports from several who were there.

**The Sweep From The South.** . . various accounts of the invasion of Southern France at the Riviera. **The 36th M P Platoon**, which has not had their proper recognition for their part in the war.

**The Red Cross Doughnut Dollies.** . . everyone remembers these great gals who added cheer to the grim winter fighting.

**James M. Logan**—of I/141st who received the CMH for heroism at Salerno on D-Day—and later action at Velletri (which he should have had a Cluster).

First time—**History of the 144th Infantry Regiment**, and a story on the **736th Ordnance**, both have been neglected in previous history books.

Any, many, many more stories about the men of the 36th that wrote pages of great history in WWII. So, it's time to RENEW your subscription for 1983.

---

All subscribers to the QUARTERLY are cordially invited to send in their comments on the stories featured in each or any issue (good or bad), but constructive comments are welcomed.—Editor.

---

# The Re-Enactors



## World War II Historical Re-Enactors Southwest Region

**B**eginning with the Civil War Centennial celebration of the 1960's; and, continuing on up to the present, thousands of people have chosen to commemorate and perpetuate the History of America in a most unusual fashion. Instead of confining their interest to "arm chair" activities; or, simply hanging their mementoes on a wall or in a closet where they can't be fully appreciated, these folks choose to dress the part; and, to re-live our History by "re-enacting" selected important episodes. It is easily understandable that most "reenactment" events are military in nature.

The Civil War Centennial produced thousands of "Rebs" and "Yanks" attempting to duplicate the great battles of that period. The 1976 Revolution Bi-centennial saw "Red Coats" and "Continental's" again taking to the field. And, so it is also with the World Wars.

The Second World War became the subject of reenacting interests in 1975, when the WWII Historical Reenactment Society was founded. The idea spread, several more (regional) organizations were started; and, finally, things got started in Texas, in 1980. Even though the old 36th has not been an active division for several years, now, the T-patch can again be found on the left sleeve of an O.D. shirt.

There are currently about 150 "reenactors" in Texas. Some collect German militaria; and, therefore, they portray Krauts at events. Those who collect U.S. or other Allied items get to be the "good guys". We have nine different local groups, scattered from Galveston to Ft. Worth; and, the main thing we all have in common is authenticity standards.

Even though this is all a hobby, we realize the seriousness of the subject matter. We owe it to anyone who was around in those days to take no short-cuts with historical accuracy. So, our standards are high, right down to having a hair-cut inspection before we let a man participate.

Believe me, sometimes it isn't easy! I have already referred to "O.D.'s" — and, I mean O.D.'s! They don't make those anymore, you know. In fact, none of those old issued items are being made, anymore. So, being antiques, they're expensive, when they can be found in the correct size. A typical German or G.I. is worth about \$1000 on the collector's market.

Those of you who have seen us "perform" at Camp Mabry have agreed it's quite a show. We will be at Muster Day again this year; and, we would like to see you all there.

Mike Cobb  
6333 Dorchester  
Ft. Worth, Tx 76180



# 36<sup>TH</sup> INFANTRY DIVISION

COMPANY G 2<sup>ND</sup> BATTALION 143<sup>RD</sup> REGIMENT



LEFT Photo—Lt. Marvin F. Schroeder and his men of Co. G, 143rd RE-ENACTORS who wear WWII uniforms and use WWII equipment. At center in white shirt—Virgil White, Exec/VP 36th Association. RIGHT photo—Roger Eberhart of 144th (on hood) and Walter Bischoff on jeep driven by 36th Re-Enactors of Houston.

## CORK FOREST VIGNETTES

by Alan "Chum" Williamson



We Close At Ten O'Clock



Williamson

The day after the 143rd Infantry moved into the Cork Forest near Rabat, I was sent with a detachment of five EM of the Service Company to El Hajeb, a French garrison in the Atlas Mountains where we were attached to the 2nd Moroccan Division. Our mission was to set up an organizational maintenance shop and train mechanics.

For recreation, the men used our weapons carrier to drive to the city of Fez, 30 miles away. There, one of their favorite haunts was a French bistro that featured hostesses who would go upstairs at the drop of a 1,000 franc note (\$20.00).

Like all cities and towns in North Africa during World War II, the natives began rolling up the sidewalks at sundown. There was a sign back of the bar that read "22 Heures" (French for 22 Hours. The place closed at ten p.m.)

One night during the drive back to El Hajeb, a sergeant said, "We ought to make them take that sign down."

"What sign?"

"That sign that says '22 Heures.' There's only eight. I counted them."

\* \* \*

### Have You Killed Your Ten Flies Today?

Most T-Patchers remember North Africa best for the ragged urchins who dogged the footsteps of the rich foreigners, begging for alms and offering to sell anything from worthless gew-gaws fashioned from C-Ration cans to sister's virtue.

There were also flies. Swarms of them. Restaurants in Algeria and Morocco provided customers with a spare fork, for raking flies cooked in the food to the side of the plate.

When the 143rd Infantry moved into the Cork Forest near Rabat, the flies were there. And their tribe increased. Lt. Col. Henry H. Carden, the regimental executive officer, decided he would do something about the pesky critters. If every man in the regiment killed ten flies every day, he

reasoned, the fly population would soon be decimated.

Signs reading, "HAVE YOU KILLED YOUR TEN FLIES TODAY?" were nailed to trees at vantage points throughout the bivouac area. Armed with a fly swatter, Carden inspected the screened unit kitchens daily. And woe be unto the commander if he found a fly in one of them.

One Sunday morning, Carden called at the orderly tent of the Cannon Company and demanded to see Wiley Stem, the unit's CO. The charge of quarters explained that Captain Stem was absent and that 1st Lt. Philip J. Prichard was the senior officer present.

Prichard was in his tent sleeping off the effects of a night on the town, where Americans drank the low-priced domestic champagne like it was Coca-Cola. When Carden and the CO finally succeeded in awakening him, he sat on the side of his bunk, wiping the sleep from his eyes and trying to shake the cobwebs from his mind.

Carden said, "Lieutenant, I just killed three flies in your mess hall. What have you got to say to that?"

And now Prichard missed a chance to make Reader's Digest's "Humor in Uniform." He could have said, "Colonel, you can get the other seven right here. I killed seven with one blow."

However, his actual retort made him a legend in his own time, at least in the 143rd Infantry. Pondering the question for only a moment, he replied, "No shit."

Carden was furious. He stormed into the Regimental CP bent on offering the culprit his choice between Article 104 and a summary court.

Fortunately, Colonel William H. Martin, the regimental commander, had a sense of humor. He persuaded Carden to be content with the traditional military pound of flesh, taken from the appropriate part of the offender's anatomy.

The End



## PATRIOTISM

"Patriotism is that love for country in the hearts of the people which shall make that country strong to resist foreign opposition and domestic intrigue—which impresses each and every individual with a sense of the inalienable rights of others and prepares him to accept the responsibility of protecting those rights."

American Tribune, March 7, 1890

## Personally Speaking

# T-Patch to Victory

TEN YEARS ago, Robert Wagner introduced to men of the 36th his own "THE TEXAS ARMY" which covered the action of the T-Patchers in ITALY. A very fine book, well documented and was widely received by our members. After a few years, Col. Stovall started a crusade to find someone to do the 'other half' of our exploits in WWII.

That was a chore. To round out our history, we needed action from **Southern France to end of the war.** No one wanted such a challenge.

Finally, after much arm-twisting, Col. Vincent Lockhart, who was official 'historian' overseas, decided to take a shot at it. He knew what the odds were, but spent the time and money to travel thousands of miles across the United States to get first-hand interviews. The publishing business is a risky business at its best. . . and he knew the odds.

Then last spring (1982) the final product "**T-Patch to Victory**" was a reality. So now, after 10 months, we asked Lockhart to give us the 'facts' as they are now (Jan. 83). . . and here it is:

In ten months, the book "**T-Patch to Victory**" by Colonel Vincent M. Lockhart, has sold more than half of the printing, according to a report from Vince. All remaining books are in stock in El Paso and orders should be placed directly with him.

This exceptional book, which at long last fills the gaps in the history of the Fighting 36th, will soon be **out of print**. Vince says there will not be a second printing, "because I simply can't afford to do it." Vince has invested three years and about \$20,000 of his own money into getting this book out. He says he'll soon have his head above water, and he wants to keep it that way.

**More than a dozen major newspapers of Texas** have reviewed the book, all very favorably. The latest to come out is the Dallas Times-Herald. The Dallas Morning News reviewed it last September. There will be a big spread in late January in the San Angelo Sunday Standard-Times, not only reviewing the book, but a lengthy interview with Vince and his career in the military and the Central Intelligence Agency.

Vince has travelled all over the state, from Amarillo to Harlingen, from El Paso to Houston, from Wichita Falls to Waco. "These trips are expensive," Vince says, "but I simply don't know any other way to get the book before the people of Texas. It is selling very well, except in El Paso.

**"You know, 'A prophet is without honor in his own country!'"**

Vince's latest trip was to Abilene, Coleman, Brownwood, Ballinger and San Angelo. Books sold well in every town.

"The point is this," Vince says, "I know there are good old T-Patchers who really want the book. Some may shy away from the \$17.50 price, but in today's world that's not expensive as new books go. Others have just been putting it off. They better get with it, because when it's out of print, it's out of print."

If you think that's not a problem, try to find a copy of **General Walker's "From Texas to Rome"** or **Bob Wagner's "The Texas Army."** Both are selling on the collector's market for **from \$50 to \$150 a copy!**

By this time next year, "T-Patch to Victory" will be a collector's item.

Make check to: VINCENT LOCKHART for \$17.50 (postpaid) and mail to: 10236 Ridgewood Drive, El Paso, TX 79925.

## BOOKS

Sunday, December 26, 1982. DALLAS TIMES HERALD

# Texans' distinguished service

"T Patch to Victory," by Vincent M. Lockhart. (Staked Plains Press, \$17.50.)

By KATHY SMITH

THE T PATCH was an insignia worn on the arms of the members of the 36th Infantry Division in World War II, worn with pride in a day when it was "cool" to be patriotic. The 36th Division was symbolic of Texas in two world wars. It was organized in 1917 as a Texas and Oklahoma unit. The big T on the patch represented Texas, and the arrowhead denoted Oklahoma. Its units took part in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive in World War I, which helped to turn the tide for the Allies. Between the two world wars, the 36th Division became strictly a Texas National Guard division with units and armories spread over the state. The division was called to active duty again in November 1940.

Vincent M. Lockhart joined the 36th Division at the age of 19 as a private in a unit at Canyon, Tex. When he received his commission as second lieutenant, he served under his father, Capt. William E. Lockhart, company commander. Col. Lockhart is retired from service in the Army and the CIA and lives in El Paso.

"T Patch" takes up where most historians leave off — after the campaign in Italy — and follows the 36th Infantry Division through France, Germany, into Austria and to the end of the war. Throughout the book, photos and maps help the reader understand the positions and progress of the troops and the strongholds of the Germans.

Although Lockhart devotes himself to factual accuracy, his personal warmth and journalistic ability flavor the writing and make it real and vivid. Three years were devoted to travel to interview survivors of the division and to dig into the archives in Austin and elsewhere.

For the men who were there, this book will have special meaning, but for friends and family who were not, it provides insight into what these men went through shivering in cold, wet socks in foxholes, feeling the frustrations and fears of men under fire, experiencing the daring and intrigue of men who were trapped behind the enemy lines and fought with the French underground. Fifteen members of the 36th Infantry were awarded Medals of Honor.

Vincent Lockhart was with the 36th Infantry headquarters and was historian for them. "T Patch to Victory" is not only a portion of the history of World War II, but it is part of the history of Texas. The 36th Infantry began the war as an all-Texas division, but by the end of the war, casualties and replacements reduced the number of Texans to one-fourth, but many of the replacements from other states considered themselves naturalized Texas citizens.

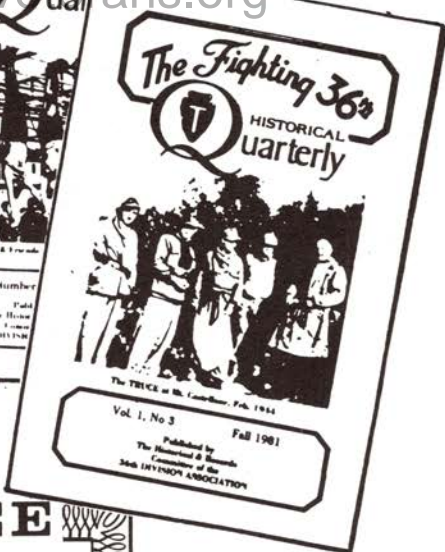
"T Patch to Victory" should be required reading for every student of history, as well as for anyone just wanting to read a good book.

ORDER A COMPLETE SET OF ALL

FOUR (4) ISSUES  
OF VOL. 1,

**1981**

LIMITED SUPPLY - ONLY A FEW  
SETS OF Vol. 1  
Available!



*Now -*



Leonard Wilkerson  
P.O. Box 2049  
Malakoff, TX 75148

\$12 postpaid in one package.

## GUARANTEE

If you offer a good product, you can afford to give a money-back guarantee. We do, and you can't lose. Order a set of Vol. 1, four issues published in 1981.

If you are a first-time subscriber, please let us know, as it will help speed-up the mailing...

Make Ck to: Fighting 36th  
Historical Quarterly for  
\$12 and mail to.....



Leonard Wilkerson  
P.O. Box 2049  
Malakoff, TX 75148



# RENEW *for* 1983

There's one more issue of Vol. II - on the way...so it's time to RENEW for Vol. 3 - with No. 1 issue - coming out in March 1983.



And...we are NOT increasing our \$12 Annual Subscription, even though our costs keep on going up. This low price hardly covers our bottom-line cost.



A WORD to the wise...the Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly WILL NOT be, as far as we know - RE-PRINTED. That means that your copies of the Quarterly will increase in value - as they years go by.

You are aware of the value a publication has - when it is out-of-print, like the original Pictorial History goes for \$100. (It sold for \$3.60 in 1946).



Annual Subscription

**Renew**

**1983**

Mail to:

Leonard Wilkerson  
P.O. Box 2049  
Malakoff TX 75148

**\$12**

I want to RENEW my Annual subscription to the Quarterly for Vol. 3, four issues during 1983. My check for \$12, made out to: Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly is enclosed.

My Name is: \_\_\_\_\_ (please print)

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly Unit Served \_\_\_\_\_

My code number for 1981 was...

AS81/\_\_\_\_\_

*The Fighting 36<sup>th</sup>*



HISTORICAL  
Quarterly



Worldwartwoveterans.org

[Worldwartwoveterans.org](http://Worldwartwoveterans.org)

[Worldwartwoveterans.org](http://Worldwartwoveterans.org)

WorldWarTwoVeterans.org



*The Fighting 36<sup>th</sup>*

WorldWarTwoVeterans.org

