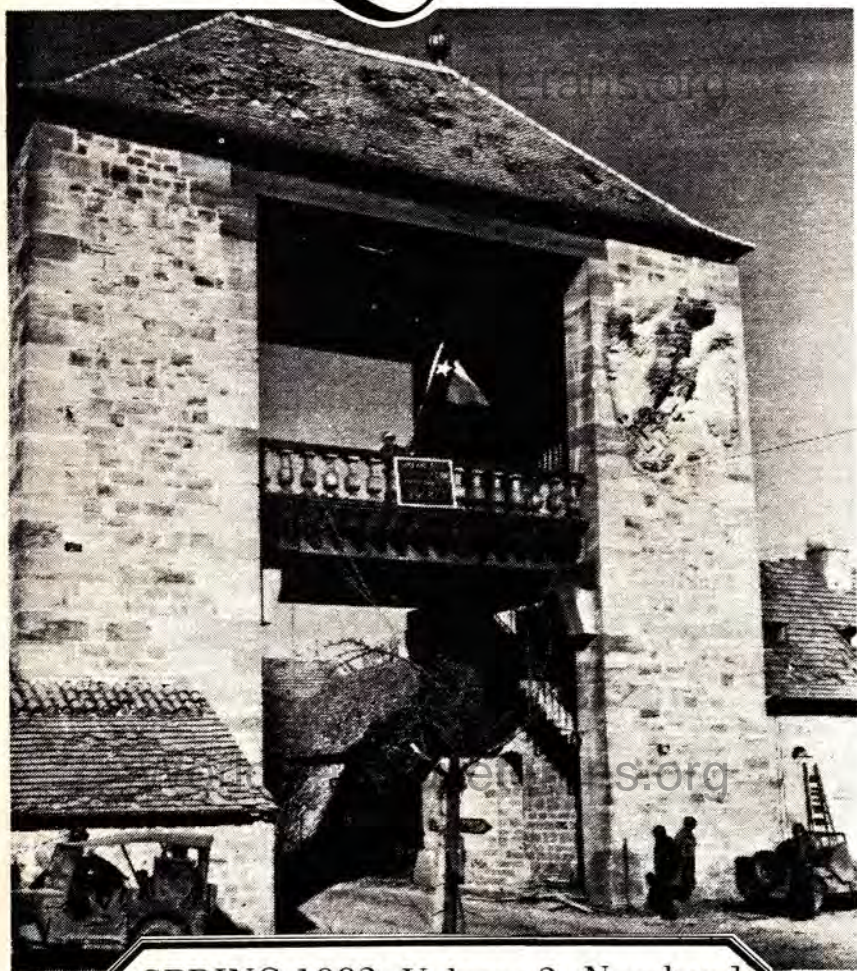


The Fighting 36th
HISTORICAL
Quarterly



SPRING 1982 • Volume 2, Number 1

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

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The Fighting 36th



36th Division Association

COVER PHOTO: "You are now entering Germany through the courtesy of 142nd RCT. Lone Star flag flies over the customhouse at the border town of Schweigen, Germany, 22 March 1945. (US Signal Corps Photo) from Fighting 36th Pictorial History 1946. Cover story on page 6.



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

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

AWARDS and CITATIONS OF THE 36th...

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



SPRING
1982



Volume 2,
Number 1



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.



Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly



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Charter Subscriptions are \$50.00 (3 years), annual subscriptions are \$12.00 for paid members of the 36th Association. War buffs and friends of the 36th Division are \$16.00 per year. Make checks to: Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly.

CONTENTS

Volume 2, Number 1 SPRING 1982

1. Weissenburg Revisited Dick Dougherty	6
2. Escape From A Prison Train Look Magazine Reprint	13
3. Jackass Brigade By Del Kendall	19
4. Christmas On The Rhine By Sam E. Kibbey	22
5. Hungary's Admiral Horthy Released Reprint from Overseas T-Patch	27
6. Cannon Company 143rd at Salerno by Payne Rucker	29
7. John Portis - Autobiography Company G, 142nd, Snyder Texas	31
8. Memories of Anne-Maria By Bob Gans	37
9. The Saga of Corporal Leslie By the late Jack Clover	39
10. Highway Robbery by Chum Williamson	43
11. Claude V. Birkhead (Camp Bowie) by T/Sgt. Charles Beacham	46
12. Sheriff Hiram Fenton by Charles Glenn	56
13. Return to Ribeauville France by Otis P. Turney	59
14. Six Gun Battery of Pack 75's by Henry J. Haurand, Jr.	61
15. The Devil's Brigade Sent in by George Eckols	63
16. T-Patcher Gets 'Order of Red Star' Reprint from Overseas T-Patch	66
17. Emile Deleau (KIA) CMH Winner	68
18. Anecdotes of Co. G, 143rd by F. M. Hackbusch	70
19. I Count To Five, We Dive by Shelby Krouse	72
20. Book Reviews	74

WEISSENBURG Revisited



Battlefield searchers discover wrong war

It was an eerie, frustrating feeling, revisiting the battlefield where several hundred of us spent that day in March 1945, pinned down by machinegun fire in front of the Siegfried Line.

Two weeks ago the Doughertys and their in-laws spent an entire sunny Sunday afternoon roaming the back roads outside of Weissenburg, Germany, trying to find something that looked familiar. After four hours we'd found only the ruins of one blackened concrete fortification overgrown with trees. It looked neither familiar nor menacing.

Did World War II really happen? To me?

Sure it did. Remember the terror? Remember the mortars and *nebelwerfer* rockets falling all around us as we lay there trying to scrape holes to crawl into? The terrain was like a golf fairway. No place to hide. Remember fighting the panic as we pulled back under the cover of the smoke? Remember the helpless feeling when the radio went out.

Battlefield searchers discover wrong war

DICK DOUGHERTY

Rochester Times-Union
Rochester NY April 28, 1982
... Reprint ...



Remember moving into the wooded hills the next day? Those hills right over there look vaguely familiar. That must be Steigen just beyond the German border. Or was it Schweigen?

In the medieval walled city of Weissenburg we tried to ask about the *guerre*. What happened to all the “dragon’s teeth” tank traps and the huge concrete bunkers? The Alsations shrugged indifferently. “Fini la guerre. . rien. . .nicht. . .nothing.”

Is there a large gate around here somewhere, we asked? I remembered a *grosse Tor*, big gate. A customs gate. “Voila, monsieur,” a woman said, pointing down the street. It was just a painting of a gate on the side of a building, and wasn’t the right gate anyway. The one I remembered was much larger. **There is a picture of it in the 36th Division history book.**

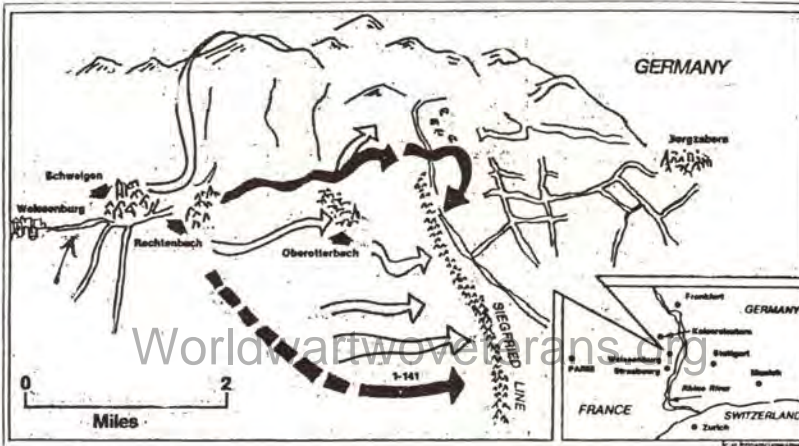
(I wished I had brought the book, with its maps of the action, but we hadn’t planned this pilgrimage. We had been sitting in my brother-in-law’s home in Weisbaden, looking at road maps, when I spotted Weissenburg and he suggested we drive down for a look.)

The sidewalks of Weissenburg that Sunday afternoon were clogged with German tourists. Some of them had gray hair like mine. Where were they in 1945, I wondered? Were some of them trying to find the past too? We wandered aimlessly through the narrow streets, then back to the car.

“This is silly. Let’s forget it. It must have been my imagination. There never was a war here,” I said finally.

I was wrong. As we were leaving the city we spotted a monument on a ridge in the distance. (“Maybe it’s a war memorial. Let’s go see.”) We found it outside the tiny community of Geissberg. It was a war memorial, all right, a tall obelisk overlooking the battlefield. In front was a map showing the

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly



The map was drawn especially for this story by the staff artist at Rochester Times-Union from data supplied by Dick Dougherty (from *The Fighting 36th Pictorial History* 1946).

dispositions of the attacking and defending forces.

It was the same battle, all right. The same terrain, the same objectives, but the wrong war! It was the Franco-Prussian War of 1871! The Germans won that one, the last war they ever won.

The Germans were under the command of Crown Prince Friederich III of Prussia, who later became emperor. They stormed this ridge, quickly routed the French and Algerian forces of Napoleon III and drove them back toward the town of Woerth. Eventually, the French collapsed and the Germans took Paris.

Our WWII battle, 74 years *later* on the same ground, was the reverse. After withdrawing from our exposed positions on the valley floor, our battalion moved into the wooded hills behind Steigen and fought from pillbox to pillbox to outflank the valley fortifications and open the way for the tanks.

I tried to explain to my inattentive audience of three how our infantrymen would fire at the slits of the concrete bunkers to button them up while demolition men wriggled up, planted their satchel charges, and brazenly blew the huge emplacements. Blackened Germans would come boiling out like bees out of a hive.

It was slow work. It took five days. The Germans would duck into their bunkers, then call mortar and artillery fire down on top of their own positions. They'd be protected by 10-feet of reinforced concrete but we'd have to dive into a nearby hole in the dirt, if we could find one.

"What did you do during all this. what did you do in the Big War, Daddy?" the lady with me asked playfully. "I distinguished myself by not running

Weissenburg Revisited

away," I told her.

My radio was broken. When I finally got through by field telephone and ordered artillery fire from my battalion, it was refused. The situation was too confused, they said. We might hit our own people. The infantry company commander grabbed the phone and cursed into it, mostly to impress his assembled platoon leaders. I became a sheepish spectator.

The suddenly, on the fifth day, the Third Army tanks penetrated the lines to the north, fanned out and threatened to encircle the Germans in front of us. Our battle was over.

The division trucks appeared, we mounted up and raced to the Rhine between long lines of surrendering Germans. We crossed near Kaiserslautern, went down the Autobahn and headed south into the Alps. There was one more unpleasant overnight fight at a roadblock on the Austrian border at Tegernsee, but the war was really over for us at Weissenburg.

Spring had come by then, and even before we had crossed the Rhine the farmers were heading for the fields with their manure spreaders. In the villages we passed, old men and women were standing in the rubble stacking bricks, just as they probably did in 1871 when the battle moved on.

Now, in 1982, there was no trace of the Great War. At the border a young German glanced out of his glass booth and casually waved us through. He



Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

wore a cap that looked like the old peaked Wehrmacht garrison hat that his father probably wore and he carried a Luger that looked like the one I found on a dead lieutenant.

Should I stop and identify myself as the man who once tried to blow up this town, and would have if my radio had worked? Probably not a good idea.

Suddenly, as we turned a corner in Schweigen, there it was. The big gate. The *grosse Tor!* Just like the picture in the division history book.

"See?" I said. "What did I tell you? I told you there was a war here, didn't I?"

Of course it wasn't quite the same as in 1945. The Texas flag was gone. The holes in the roof made by artillery shells had been repaired.

There was an attached restaurant with a large glassed-in circular room overlooking the battlefield. After studying the menu, we decided it was too expensive.

A man about my age mumbled something in German and I said, as I had many times in 1945, "Ich spreche nicht Deutsch" and he asked in English, "Do you know where is the bathroom?" "Ick weiss nicht," I said.

We bought a postcard at the souvenir shop. It was a picture of the gate showing the battle terrain in the foreground. None of the cards in the rack mentioned the battle of Weissenburg, either 1871 or 1945.

Later, back in the States, I looked at the map in the division history. We'd driven right by the spot where I'd spent that long morning and afternoon expecting to die at any moment, unaware that after five long years the war had only a month to go.

Perhaps it's just as well.

If I had known, I'd only have stood there in the field feeling foolish and overly dramatic and trying unsuccessfully to think deep thoughts. Then I'd walk back to the car and feel obliged to maintain a mournful silence the rest of the afternoon or else launch into one of my interminably boring war stories (after which my wife could be counted upon to say, "I guess you have to have been there," and everyone would giggle all the way home.)

Better to do as Friedrich III did, and as I'm doing right now: write a short memoir and forget it.

FOOTNOTES - To understand more about the Germans, let's take a look at Frederick III (1831-1888), the only son of Frederick I, first King of Prussia. he commanded the Franco-German War of 1870-71. He had married the Princess Royal Victoria, daughter of Queen Victoria of England. Their son Kaiser William II (known to WWI T-Patchers as 'Kaiser Bill') was the most infamous of them all. He died in 1941, but prior to that while in exile, he "approved" of HITLER, and his son became an active Nazi.

Weissenburg Revisited



It's regrettable that we could not reproduce this beautiful pastoral scene (postcard) with all the color and restored buildings, green pastures etc. The legend says "bei Schweigen-Rechtenbach". Please note the "GATE" in foreground, and to the right is now a restaurant, so reports Dick Dougherty. Now look back at the cover, you'll see the Nazi "Eagle", which somehow still remains on the gate (less the swastika).

GANNETT ROCHESTER NEWSPAPERS

55 EXCHANGE STREET ■ ROCHESTER, NEW YORK 14614 ■ (716) 232-7100



DEMOCRAT AND CHRONICLE ■ TIMES-UNION

Memo from Dick 5/4/82 - Dear Editor, please advise the troops that Dougherty says he really wasn't with the 141st. He was a P.O. with 131st Field Artillery. "But I spent most of my time cowering in holes with A & C Companies of 141st, so I think of myself as an infantryman. I didn't think my readers could swallow all the military numbers, so for the purpose of the story I made myself one. I hope the 141st will forgive the libel".

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

The Lone Star Flies Over Germany

In Germany

15 April 1945



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

Photo by Paramount News.

The photo and story above is an exact reproduction of page 1, 15 April 1945, which we could not resist the use of this one to tie in with Dick Dougherty's great story about Weissenburg Revisited. (Note difference in the spelling of this town, French version).

This photo was taken, after the one you find on the cover of this issue. That was made by the US Signal Corps. This one by PARAMOUNT NEWS, which released this to hundreds of newspapers all over America, and of course - EVERY rag in the State of Texas. Major Armin F. Puck, our 36th Provost Marshal suddenly became an over-night celebrity - nationwide.

But the big stories were yet to come - when the ole Fighting 36th would 'capture' all the Nazi biggies starting with Hermann Goering.



Escape From a Prison Train



AMERICAN HEROES

**Two U. S. officers get back into the fight
after 33 days behind German lines**

STORY BY DON WHARTON—DRAWINGS BY GRAHAM KAYE—36TH IN LOOK'S AMERICAN HEROES SERIES

Over three decades ago, LOOK Magazine (along with LIFE) were the leading pictorial weeklies, with millions in circulation. This series of AMERICAN HEROS was a great effort by their editors. Most T-Patchers never saw a copy (we were still busy in France and Germany). We offer here, the second of these stories from LOOK... published MARCH 12, 1945.

One of the most thrilling prisoner escapes of the war was effected by Capt. CARL R. BAYNE, of Yoakum, Texas, and 1st Lt. JULIAN M. QUARLES, of Stauton, Virginia. These two Infantry officers of the 36th, ages 29 and 27 respectively, landed at Salerno with the Texas Division, which was the spearhead of the 5th Army's attack.

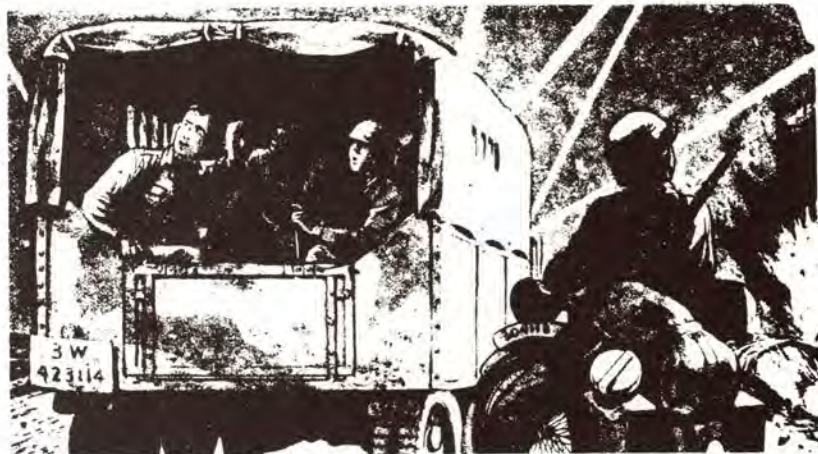
Captured, Bayne and Quarles immediately began looking for a chance to escape. They watched their guards, waited patiently for a week, then seized their opportunity: they jumped in the night from the prison train carrying them to Germany.

Resourceful and alert, the two worked their way through the Italian hills and, after 33 days behind German lines, returned to their outfit, Co. F, 143rd Infantry Regiment.

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly



- 1** In a grave hour at Salerno, German tanks break through, push toward the beach. Capt. Bayne's company is surrounded, 22 of his men killed, 68 missing. He and Lieut. Quarles are among prisoners hurried to the German rear.



- 2** After two days in an improvised German prison pen, Bayne, Quarles and ten other officers are herded into a truck for an all-night ride to Benevento. En route the truck halts repeatedly while Allied bombers sweep overhead.



Footnote: The reproduction of this story was not sent in by Julian Quarles. So happened that this rare 1945 illustrated story as published by LOOK Magazine was included in your editors files, compiled by his devoted mother who - clipped and kept - ANYTHING about the 36th during the war years. This is just one more of the many items about the exploits of the 36th that have appeared in national media. (Not many other units can make the same claim.) See Vol. 1, No 3 for "Gun Crew That Saved Salerno", another feature from LOOK Magazine.

Escape From A Prison Train



3 Later Bayne and Quarles are shifted to a prisoner-collecting depot. The German commander warns five men will be shot for each who escapes. When an American protests, the Nazi snaps, "We do things the Russian way."



4 Next day, American prisoners are marched twelve miles northwest of the collecting depot to board a prison train for Germany. The loading takes all afternoon, but Bayne and Quarles are finally hustled into a baggage car.



5 The prisoners hear guards slamming car doors as the train prepares to pull out for Germany. The guards reach the baggage car, find the lock out of order, move on. As the train starts, Bayne and Quarles plot their escape.

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly



6 **Night falls.** Bayne and Quarles are ready. For food, they have saved a small piece of German bread, a pepper and a handful of macaroni. Now they stand at the car door, pick their spot, quickly pitch their canteens into the dark.



7 **First to jump** is Julian Quarles, Carl Bayne following on his heels in the moonless night. While the train rattles on, their bodies fly through the dark, thump against the ground. In a lucky landing, the two Americans hit where the ground is soft, narrowly miss one precipitous spot where the main railroad line soars over a number of wild ravines in its climb from the Campania plain. Captain Bayne is shaken up but uninjured, Lieutenant Quarles not hurt at all.



Escape From A Prison Train



8 The two men lie low while the train roars on. When it disappears, Quarles hurries to the track, puts an ear to a rail. He listens until the humming fades out, then whistles softly, and with Bayne gropes for the canteens.



9 In the cold Bayne and Quarles head southward, come upon the main road from Rome. At the sound of trucks they hide in a ditch. Later, they encounter more German trucks parked by the highway and decide to take to the fields.



10 Just before dawn, Bayne and Quarles crawl down the thorny bank of the Puciano River, wade the shallow stream, creep half-dead into a thicket. They sleep until dusk falls, then set out again through the rough countryside.

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly



11 **Military secrecy**, aimed at helping other Americans escape, hides all details of the two men's next three weeks. Then, thirty-three days after capture, Bayne and Quarles return to their outfit—get back into the fight!

END



HAPPY REUNION
AT FONDOLA, ITALY
August 15, 1977

Julian Quarles embraces Antonio Pagliaro (at right) and Mike Carusone, these two old friends who were helpful doing the escape from the prison train. This photo was published in the Nov. 1977 issue of The T-Patchers. Quarles adds - "**Antonio, now age 76, hid Capt. Bayne and I in his hayloft after our escape for several nights, just before we returned to our unit, Co. F, 143rd on Oct. 1943. Mike was a 12 year old lad at the time, was always under foot. Antonio is wearing a shirt that my wife sent him years ago.**"

Julian Quarles related his story to a reporter at the Dallas 1972 Reunion. Oran Stovall added this comment - "**Their effort was one of the finest by a T-Patcher, but the tragedy is Capt. Bayne was KIA a few months later at the Battle of Rapido.**"

THE JACKASS BRIGADE



By Del Kendall



Down around venafro, the latest rumor spread quickly thru the Company area, in that November of '43. "Hey you guys! Getta loada this. The whole Co. gonna become a bunch of muleskinners". "Bullshit, what hole dija get that offa"? "No, honestly, you wait n see, got it right from G-2, s'help me".

As the men lined up for chow the next morning, there in a clearing was, sure as shit, a bunch of mules and horses. You never could figure how Red always got the right poop, but he did, most of the time. The Co. was called together and instructed into the fine art of becoming a muleskinner, and making up a packtrain, by an obviously Cowboy in G.I. clothes. He could load up a mule in a few seconds flat, and throw a diamond hitch around the whole thing so fast it would make your head swim. Some of the Texans took to it, like a duck to water, it was the city boys got all tangled up, in those hitches and things. They tried hard, and as the day wore on, were now getting the hang of it, as stores of things to be taken up the trail, were being stacked nearby.

The next morning dawned bright and clear, as the men loaded their own mule. The Cowboy, going amongst the animals tightening a knot here, and a loop there. Once everything was secure the packtrain started on its climb about 0800 hrs. You crossed the road and down thru a gully, then up thru an olive grove. As you entered a small copse of trees, the trail got steeper. Up and up you went, zigzagging back and forth, like a sailboat, tacking in the wind. Soon in the open, you could see below, the long packtrain, snaking its

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

way up the mountainside. Upward you climbed, slipping and sliding at times. The mules with their heavy loads, bent to the task as they plodded on.

A couple of hours later the packtrain was halted for a ten minute break, taking the time to adjust some of the loads that had loosened. The going was getting rougher and steeper. The kidding and the catcalls had stopped as the men and the mules plodded onward and up. To the left over a far ridge you could here the rattle of smallarms and the crump of mortars. Thank god, Jerry hadn't spotted you yet, or had he? The trail continued thru a rocky draw, and then into the open. You felt like a sitting duck in a shooting gallery along this open stretch of the trail. Off in the distance, you could see the white plumes from a smoke shell, as up and up you went, the men and the mules. No incoming mail, so far so good.

Up ahead, a mule slipped and went down, kicking as he lay there pinned by his heavy load. The men quickly grabbing his flaying hooves, so as the downed beast wouldn't break a leg, as his load was taken from him and then stood up. The packtrain plodded around the downed mule, never reaking the ceaseless chain as it sended its way, always upward, up the trail ahead. You soon rounded a bend and a cool breeze struck you, feeling good at first, but latter chilling your sweaty body, as you plodded on. Up, up you went. Shortly the packtrain snaked around some huge rocks coming out on a small plateau, and there before you, the mountains peak and a BN. C. P. You sank down exhausted, it had taken 5 hrs. for the climb.

The men soon unloaded the supplies of stretchers, ammo, water cans, rations and mail, behind some protective rocks, as a few line Company men straggled in, to take them from there. The men sat resting, kneading their leg muscles, and some walked off a charley horse. You got up, too stiff to sit, you walked around. There as you passed a huge outcropping of rocks, a strong breeze whipped at you and you found yourself standing far too close to a mossy covered precipice, that seemed to drop to eternity below. Jeez, you could see for miles and miles, nothing but one mountain ridge after the other. The whole Goddamn country was nothing but mountains. You belched, a brackish tasted in your mouth, as you turned and joined the rest of the muleskinners.

Now it was time to head for the barn, back down the trail. Some Pizons showed up who would bring the mules down, so most of the men grabbed an empty watercan or a bag of mail, and headed down the trail. Some of you slipped and slid, cutting across the trail at times, like the dash in a dollar sign, shortening the distance to your Co. area below. By now your leg muscles screamed with pain, if you could just walk on a flat surface for a few seconds, but nope, down and down you went, slipping and stumbling. About four hours later you straggled into your Co. area.

After a few days with the muletrain, some of the men decided to back-pack it or form a two man team, with a pole over your sholders, loaded down like a jungle safari. You and a buddy lashed on a five gallon water can to a pole and started up the trail. Half hour later you decided, it maybe

Jackass Brigade

a quicker way of getting to the top, but now you were carrying the heavy load and not the mule, as the pole bent and yawed on your climb. At times it would start to swing like a pendulum, throwing you off balance, making you look like the town drunk as you staggered on. Four hours later, after much slipping sweating and cursing, there you were by God, back up on top. The muletrain still an hours climb below, as you sat there now, resting and having a smoke.

One day on returning to the base, you and six men carrying empty mail pouches, figured out a still shorter way back down the trail. Give or take a few gullies, this was not a trail, but an open barren slope, like a giant slide you could zigzag down. You led off, sitting on the heavy empty mail pouch you tobogganed down, gaining speed as you went, as the others followed. Down you went, like kids on a snowy hill in Winter, braking sometimes by digging the heels of your boots into the slope. Soon running out of a slide, you climbed thru a rocky draw to the next stretch you could toboggan down, riding the wind on the seat of your pants, down you went. Hellsbells, this was a lot easier than climbing down.

After several runs of zigzagging back and forth and climbing thru a few draws, there below you were a cluster of buildings, with a small hillmass beyond. A short hike over that hill and you'd be back in your Co. area. You hiked down a path and thru an olive grove, following a stone terrace. As you approached the farmhouses, someone hollered, and you spotted a few G.I.'s, deployed, with rifles pointing your way. "Hey, what the Hells goin on? Spotted you guys thru the glasses an hour ago, an thought you were a Jerry patrol. Just gonna call down a few rounds from those 105's behind us. Its a good thing, or it wouda been your ass, cause nobodys ever come down that side of the mountain, since we've been here". If you remember correctly they were men from another outfit, men from the RED BULL Division.

Del Kendall, OI 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.

Kendall is a very modest man. We had asked for photos, and had none. Then we discovered that he had sent his books, etc., plus photos to Bob Wallace - and that's where we found this rare photo of him - with the caption, "having a short beer in Houston". (This probably was during the Louisiana Maneuvers 1941.)



“CHRISTMAS ON THE RHINE”

by Sam F. Kibbey



“Off your meat and on your feet, soldier”, a familiar voice sharply ordered.

I moved quickly, unzipping my sleeping bag. The United States Army taught its Infantrymen to react quickly during World War II.

I looked up into the laughing faces of Brad Norton and his brother, Morris. It was rare that brothers were allowed to serve in the same line company during the Second World War. Brad and Morris are Texans and what's rare in most people is well done by Texans; — or, at least, so Brad and Morris told me on more than one occasion.

Brad, whose nickname was *“Fever”* because he scarcely missed making five when he had it as his point in crap games, was our Platoon Sergeant. He was 28 in 1944. He possessed a smile with the gentlest face a man can have and still be a Platoon Sergeant. His brother, Morris, eight years his junior, had the bidding blue eyes and fresh scrubbed look of a Texas farm boy at a pie social.

“Morris has reconnoitered this joint, Billy-O,” “Fever” said, “He’s found himself some real loot, particularly as this here is Christmas Day.”

I was out of my sleeping bag now, suddenly aware of where we were. Our company was billeted in a paper factory in Strasbourg, Alsace-Lorraine. It was Christmas Day, 1944 and we had found a parcel of peace on earth being leisurely placed in Army Corps reserve. The Rhine River was visible from our third story quarters. The Rhine had the cold, foreboding look of a Nazi General.

“Found myself a case of champagne and a case of cognac in one of the offices downstairs”, Morris said a little thickly. It was apparent that the

Christmas On The Rhine

brothers Norton had sampled the wares just to be sure of the contents.

I looked at my G.I. wristwatch. It was ten o'clock in the morning. There had been no reveille. We had seen too much combat for that. Besides, I had pulled guard duty with Morris Norton from 4 to 6 A.M. I had gone back to bed. Apparently, Morris had scouted our temporary quarters. World War II was something of a global scavenger hunt.

"Fever's" room was in disarray which is not the fit subject for criticism after a dog-face has spent ninety straight days on the line without relief.

Jerry Markwell was making a strong effort toward guzzling it all down. Jerry Markwell was one of West North Carolina's most promising moonshiners until they probated him from a jail term, on condition he enlist in the Army. He had to be about the bravest machine gunner in the E.T.O. Markwell carried three canteens; one filled with water, one filled with wine, and the other filled with hopes of something better. He was a year older than I which means he was twenty in 1944. At nineteen I was the youngest man in our Company and what I wanted to be, most of all, in 1944 was to be a good foot soldier; that next to wanting to get out of the war alive.

"Hey Billy-O", Markwell twanged with a twang not unlike the twang found in my native Eastern Kentucky, "*war shore is hell, ain't it? Uncork me another bottle of champagne*".

"Up your barrack's bag, 'Shiner'", I replied, not trying to hide the respect I had for Markwell's accomplishments at such a tender age.

"How about you, Leon?" Markwell said thrusting his fair features, with corn-tassel colored hair on top, into the contrasting dark face of Al Leon.

Al Leon was from Cleveland, Ohio. It was difficult to judge his age as Leon was close-mouthed on everything except sex and race horses. There was a youthful pout which perpetually played around his mouth but his face was — well, sort of — archiac. There was almost a neanderthal man quality about Leon. His eyes, nose, and ears meandered morosely. Leon was built like a Dump Truck. He had pitch dark black hair and heavy inexpressive eyebrows which shaded eyes broodingly brown. I knew him fifteen months and never heard him utter an encouraging word except when negotiating with whores or black marketeers. Leon was different, disturbingly different.

"I'm not pulling detail for you or any other rebel Son of a Bitch", Leon said unkindly but he gave that 'possum grin of his as he said it. No man in the outfit dared cross Jerry Markwell. Markwell only weighed 140 lbs. but the guys remembered how he handled two paratroopers over in Naples before we invaded Southern France. He had the knife in and out of them before they knew it, or so they told the medicos.

"Well, let's go liberate us a town then", Markwell said, staggering playfully.

Leon scowled, "*F.D.R. can take this war and cram it. The war's run by a bunch of greedy millionaires and half-assed ninety-day wonders*".

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly



Around two o'clock in the afternoon "Fever" announced that he needed a Contact Patrol. The word was going around that the Jerries were going to pincer us as part of the Ardennes Forest counter offensive they had launched a few days previously. "Fever" asked for volunteers. He has his twelve men fast, as there was only a small danger in making physical contact with Company L, billeted about ten blocks away in Strasbourg. Morris Norton, Jerry Markwell and I were on the patrol. Al Leon stayed behind saying, "*The only thing I'll volunteer for in this god damn army is a furlough*".

Strasbourg was deep banked and slumbering after a heavy snow storm. The city was so motionless it seemed a corpse; another casualty of the war. Cities die in wars. When a town's people are fighting for survival there is no civic pride, just the reaching out by one citizen to another seeking to endure the hardships imposed by man gone mad. War is not hope: it is action born of fear.

As I walked through Strasbourg on Christmas Day in 1944, I thought of home and other Christmas Days. The ancient cathedrals of Strasbourg reminded me of the small Baptist church back in Carsonville. God does not require pompous architecture as a place to worship. God resides any place where love abides, even within the human mind. As my feet, ensconced in combat boots, traversed the bitterly cold streets of Strasbourg, my thoughts were in the unpretentious chapel of a small town church in Eastern Kentucky. Being close to God is the warmest thing in the world.

Everyone knew of Leon's fierce hatred of the brass. He had made some ominous predictions about what he was going to do to officers in general, and our Company's officers in particular, if he ran into them in civilian life. He had especially despised Lieutenant Deaton who had been killed in the

Christmas On The Rhine

Vosges Mountains. For days after Denton got it Leon had gone around with that 'possum grin, wider than usual, on his face. It had sickened me to see hatred so ironically rewarded.

"*What's ole Santa goin' to bring you, Al?*", Morris Norton asked. Morris was naturally friendly. He tried to hold down trouble 'cause trouble in the Fourth Platoon was a worry for "Fever". I never knew two brothers more sensitive to the well being of each other than the Norton brothers.

"*A one way ticket back to the States, I hope*", Leon muttered. "*With a French broad sharing my bunk aboard ship*".

"*How about one of these half-kraut, half-frog girls from here in Alsace-Lorraine?*", Morris inquired. "*I understand they goosestep when they do it*".

"*I like the frenchy style, Norton*", Leon responded. Then he added with mock ecstasy, "*Oh, la! la!*".

We sat around drinking until the champagne and cognac was gone. There was about ten of the troops partaking so nobody got loaded. With the heaviness of the war hanging upon us (the situation to the North was shaky) there was nothing wrong with our being temporarily light headed. Especially as we were in Corps reserve.

It was almost four o'clock when we returned to our billets. "Red" Curd, our company clerk, was conducting mail call. "Red" made quite a production out of mail call. "Red" made quite a production out of everything. He had a wife and four kids back in Tennessee.

Generally, the happiest time in combat is "mail call". I've seen grown men with tears streaming down their cheeks, unrestrained, finding some sudden joy in a letter from home. When the folks wrote me that my Aunt Mable had died, I sensed that I had been there with them in their grief though she had been buried three week before I got the word.

"Red" Curd was through with mail call all but one package. He announced nasally, "*To Bradly R. Norton and the men of the Fourth Platoon*", following it with our unit designation and the A.P.O.

"Fever" stepped forward. Most of the platoon leaned forward as "Fever" opened the bright-wrapped package. "Fever" took a card from the inside of the package. He read it, then handed it to me saying gently, "*Billy-O, you're the reader and writer of the outfit. Read this aloud*".

I read it first to myself. Then I read aloud: "*To my son's fine young men. Jim wrote me, the day before he died, about what fine young men you are and how much he cared for every man in the platoon. It helps me to believe he gave h is life for all of us*". Signed: Mrs. Samatha Deaton, Mother of Lieutenant James C. Deaton, killed in action against the enemy, October 12, 1944.

There was a suffocating stillness, one of those moments of solitude where

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

there is a vacuum of the emotions and a void of thought.

"What do you know", Morris Norton said incredulously, "She sent us a fruit cake. Looks like it's home-baked".

Morris lifted portions of the fruit cake from the package. The cake had crumbled into assorted pieces during its long journey from Buffalo, New York.

"Fever" took pieces, in various shapes and sizes, from Morris and handed them around to the guys of the platoon. I remember as I received my piece of the fruit cake a tremor ran through my body. A soft, reassuring voice from Carsonville — or maybe Calvary — (at least, not from any of my buddies in Strasbourg) whispered, "Do this in remembrance of me".

Everyone in the Platoon accepted a piece of fruit cake with reverence. Everyone, that is, except Al Leon.

As "Fever" approached Leon who was half-cringing in a corner, a look of mortal fear caused Leon's dark features to pale. "Fever" brought the piece of fruit cake to Leon's eye level. Leon's eyes danced nervously away and toward the hall door. Dragging his feet as if they were the feet of an animal caught in a trap, Leon bolted from the room, muttering words mixed with pain and profanity.

Now, I would never try to prove in court of law that it had been an American hand grenade and not a German potato masher that was thrown in Lieutenant Deaton's fox-hole in France back in 1944. War is horrible enough without having one's imagination added to it. I do know this: Al Leon never smiled his 'possum grin again, leastways, not where any of the Fourth Platoon could see it.

There is something else I learned that Christmas Day in 1944 in Strasbourg. Evil is its own undoing. There is no hate that can destroy one of the greatest gifts of the first, or any, Christmas: The love of a mother for her son.

SAM F. KIBBEY of Co. K, 143rd, is no novice with the written word. He is a most articulate Attorney, formerly with Ashland Oil Corp., now resides and practices law at Grayson, KY. Last year he compiled a 36th page "Collection and Recollections of WWII and its aftermath". Copies were distributed at the Mid-West Chapter, June 1981.

Sambo was kind enough to forward a copy to the editor. We found this to be a 'gem' of great vignettes about those days long ago. We chose this one, "Christmas on the Rhine" for this issue. The photo of Kibbey was taken at the 1972 Houston Reunion, and later became affectionately known as the 'Jolly Green Giant' in the T-Patcher. Sam gets mail at: 302 East Fifth St., Grayson, KY 41143.



HUNGARY'S REGENT, ADMIRAL HORTHY, RELEASED FROM GERMANS BY 36th



Brig. Gen. Walter W. Hess, Jr., Division Artillery Commander, shakes hands with Admiral Horthy, former Regent of Hungary. The Division Commander is pictured in the background. *(Photo by Baker)*

This is just more in the long list of notables on the Allied side that were 'freed' by men of the 36th. This story appeared in the 21 June 1945 issue of the T-PATCH, was written by Pfc. Anthony S. Amoscato, a staff member of the 36th's famous overseas tabloid.

Regent of Hungary, Admiral Nicholas Horthy and his family were released from the Germans by an advance headquarters detachment of the 36th Division.

Led by Headquarters Commandant, Maj. Arnim F. Puck, San Antonio, Tex., the advance party motored to Weilheim and there sought the location of the Schloss Waldbichl, said to house Admiral Horthy, who was being held in custody by the Germans.

Guided by a repatriated Pole and warned that SS troops might still be in the area, Maj. Puck's group which included Maj. Isaac Baker, Norfolk, VA, M/Sgt. Lester Chumbley, San Antonio, Tex., Pfc. Dominick Franceneri, Bayonne, N.J., and Pfc. Herbert Wysong, Dayton, Ohio, passed forward infantry elements in the process of mopping up. They turned off the main highway and followed a narrow winding road leading to the castle.

When they arrived at the main gate of the castle, Maj. Puck stopped a man who was walking by.

"Who are you?" asked the commandant.

"I am His Excellency, Horthy, brother of His Highness, the Regent of Hungary," was the reply.

Maj. Puck was then advised that the Regent was still living in the castle

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

with his family, that they were unaware of the presence of the Americans, but that they would be very happy to meet them.

After a butler opened the door, the Regent's daughter-in-law notified the Regent that the Americans had arrived.

Maj. Puck and Maj. Baker were ushered into the Regent's quarters and formally introduced. After presenting the members of his family, the frail 77-year-old admiral explained his presence at the Schloss Waldbichl.

When he realized that the fate of Hungary depended upon a quick peace settlement with the Allies, Admiral Horthy considered making overtures to that effect. Before beginning negotiations, he informed the German government of his plans. The Nazis immediately ordered him to report to Germany where he would be treated as a guest of the German State.

Accompanying the Regent were his wife, Magda, his brother, Eugenius; his daughter-in-law, Ilena; her five-year-old son, Stephan; a lady-in-waiting, a butler, a chauffeur and two maids.

Representing the German State and acting as official host to the Regent was Dr. Hellenthal, member of the German Diplomatic Corps., accredited Council-General of the neutral state of Monaco, and a close friend of the admiral.

The diplomat explained that the Regent had the free run of the castle, was not considered a German prisoner, but for safety measures was guarded by an SS Company and eight Gestapo agents at all times.

When the Commanding General, Maj. Gen. John E. Dahlquist, was notified of the presence of Admiral Horthy, he visited the castle and the Regent was introduced to him.

The Schloss Waldbichl, an imposing structure, stands majestically on a knoll in a forest just outside the city of Weilheim. Formerly owned by a Jewish baron, the castle was taken by the Nazis with the express purpose of using it as a place to entertain important foreign officials. A constant visitor was Mussolini, who left the castle only several weeks ago while trying to escape into Switzerland.

Worldwartwoveterans.org



HELP WANTED

Since we started this Quarterly over a year ago, we've had several T-Patchers send in stories about the earlier days (before WWII) about their service in the C.C.C. (Civilians Conservation Corps), also known as - "Roosevelt's Forest Army". Frankly, in looking back, it was a great thing for the youth of the depression era. If you served, we'd like to hear from you - give time and places etc. Don't be bashful, the CCC is 'real' history!

CANNON COMPANY 143rd INFANTRY

by Payne V Rucker
Sargeant/Cannon Co. 143rd Infantry



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Cannon Company, 143rd was assigned to a specific ship and all section leaders were assembled and were briefed on what our assignments were to be after landing on the beach. I was in charge of a half-truck armed with a 75 howser and a 50 caliber machine gun and a 7 man section. At the briefing we were told to follow markers on beach and not vary or it was possible for us to run over a mine. We then were to continue on to a railroad station that would possibly be a stronghold of the Germans. We were then issued ammunition for our rifles and to my surprise a carton of contraceptives (rubbers). I could not understand how we were to kill Germans with these items. A good feeling came over us when we heard that the Italians had surrendered. We felt this would make our landing easier.

On the landing craft that returned from the beach before our departure were dead and wounded sailors. They were allowed to let the soldiers leave the craft and as they headed back to sea the Germans machine gunned them. Also, one of the life crew told me one of the sailors left the craft at landing point to see what was going on and was killed. Our time came to debark and our half-track was lowered into the landing craft. We then climbed down rope ladders to the craft. As we were moving toward shore I noticed a man at the front of the craft with a large box. I was told he was taking pictures. This did not impress me for I was up-tight thinking what would happen and what I was to do when we landed on the beach. Also, there was some German Artillery shells falling close by.

I found out later the pictures this man took were shown in the News Films in theaters over the United States and also was seen in Dallas. Also, I have seen the same pictures in excerpts made especially for Salerno Day. The wife of my Driver saw this film in the Dallas theater and recognized her husband at that time. She became very excited and was able to obtain a small clipping of negative and had a picture blown up from same. After marrying in Dallas, my wife obtained this negative and also had a picture made for us.

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

When we finally got close to shore the half track and crew were allowed to leave the landing craft in shallow water. The half track was water proofed at Oran Africa for this purpose. As we approached the beach my driver was a little excited and I had to give him some hard advice for he was trying to drive straight across the beach and there was no markings or tracks in that direction. I almost had to help him drive to get him to go the way I felt was out of the mine field.

We moved forward about 50 yards where we were stopped and told that the Germans would not allow us to get to the railroad station at that time. Driving from the beach I can remember artillery shells were exploding all around us and being in a foreign country in the heat of my first combat I should have been more scared, but my concern was to reach this railroad station and destroy it. Also, during this move I noticed a little bloody spot on my driver's left shoulder but did not say anything to him until we were stopped. I said "Blear, what is wrong with you?" He pulled back his shirt and there was a knot with a little hole in it. He had been so excited he had not felt the shrapnel entering his shoulder, but after discovering the injury he felt it and the medics evacuated him. That meant I had to get a volunteer and inexperienced driver at the point where we stopped.

I noticed a One Star General with a 45 caliber pistol in his hand ordering soldiers out of crevices and other safe places and telling them to get out and see what was going on. Our company was scattered in different places and I tried to contact my platoon leader to find our next move. My hand radio had gotten salt water in it and had rusted up. I threw it away and figured I would be found.

I was found later and had a mission later to fire on the mountains that Altivilla was astride the aid in the attack. We were then assigned a holding position with the knowledge how the Germans were going to push us back into the sea and enemy paratroopers were to be dropped into our area that night. The next day most of my platoon were captured but I managed to break my section out to fight another day.

P.S. Cannon Company 143rd, was supposed to be a support Company but due to our close contact with the enemy and with losing so many vehicles we were given M-8 Tanks. Even though we sometimes were in support it looked as if more of the time was spent fighting eye to eye with the enemy.

PAYNE RUCKER, 6337 Tulip Lane, Dallas, TX 75230 is all time champion 36th Reunion-Goer. He's made all 37 since end of WWII. He's been active in the Association, board member many times, is retired postal executive of the first-water, a super-devoted T-Patcher, and has a wife named Liz who has been active in the Ladies Auxiliary. Need we say more.



JOHN C. PORTIS

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Here is truly a heart-warming story covering 50 years - in and out of the military, CCC and as a member of Co. G, 142nd Infantry, served 11 years, 6 months and 23 days at discharge.



I was born January 1, 1915 in Snyder, Texas, raised up around a blacksmith shop and coal yard. I went to Tom Mix movies and owned a donkey, who, I thought was just as good as Tony "Tom's horse". There were several kids in town who owned donkeys. We rode them up and down Deep Creek. We fished, hunted and trapped on the "Old Deep Creek" and spent a lot of pleasant hours swimming in the "Ole Pump Hole". The kids call it skinny dipping now.

When I was twelve years old, I decided I was smart enough, and I quit school and went to work for Western Union, worked four years, and the depression hit, and I was laid off. I then worked on farms, ranches and at different jobs.

I was in Company "G", 142nd Infantry in 1931, and 1933, I signed up for Civil Conservation Corp., "C.C.C." and was sent to Silver City, New Mexico where I learned erosion work, explosives, truck driving and ambulance driving. After my hitch was up, I returned to Snyder and signed up again in Company "G". I was made Sgt. about this time.

I met Fern and we were married in 1934. I was 20 years old at this time. Our son, Herbert Don was born in 1936. I was still working at any kind of job I could get.

In 1940, I was still in the National Guard and we were mobilized November 25, 1940. As the government did not have our camp at Brownwood, Texas completed, we trained around and in our armory here in Snyder. I was put in charge of the newly added Weapons Platoon. They were called light weapons, however, if you carried these on field manouvers, you wondered where they came up with the term, "light weapons".

After some time our camp was ready at Brownwood and it was called

▼ Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

"Camp Bowie". One morning we were entrucked from there. It was cold and foggy, our wives, girlfriends and families were there to wave to us as we left, and as the truck drove off, I suppose there were some sober thoughts going on in our minds. Who know where we were going and what was to happen on the long road which we were going to see in the next four or five years? Some of us would be killed, some wounded, some returned with wounds that were not visible, and all would experience events that would never be talked about because they were unbelievable.

Our first sight of our future home was mess halls and hutments that was to be our home for over a year. The camp was a sea of mud, as it had been raining for weeks and weeks. We set to work and before long it looked good, with chat rock for walks, a lot of paint and shovel work.

We started our basic training, the rifle platoons were armed and supplied, but I had a problem in that I had a weapons platoon and no weapons. I had some mortars and machine guns made out of pipe and stuff but we made do until the real things were supplied.

Gradually we improved until we started to resemble soldiers.

After we were in basic for some time, we were sent to Louisiana for field training. We manouvered near Leesville and De Ritter and the country around for about six weeks, living in pup tents, getting used to "C" rations, hot weather, dust, mosquitos, snakes and long marches. After training there, we looked and acted more like soldiers we were to become. We then returned to Camp Bowie.

Our battalion was picked to go to Ft. Sill, Oklahoma, so we were entrucked there. Fort Sill was a training school for Artillery Officers, and we were there to show us how they would work with us later in combat. We were to see them in action and found that they made it possible for us to operate in some bad situations. Our stay on the reservation was a pleasant time and I think we enjoyed it because it was a change.

After we returned to Bowie, we had some advanced training and manouvered along the Colorado River. At camp we had some instruction and drill. By this time we were getting toughened up, trim and confident.

We entrained for Blanding, Florida, and arrived there to more hutments, and we could not believe it snowed there about the time we arrived. It seemed that every place we went they started to have weird weather. Our training here was more like jungle training.

Meanwhile, we received more men, 1005 new recruits. I was assigned to a cadre of non coms taken from the regiment to train new men. We were to train them in six weeks in all phases of Infantry Training that had taken us two years to learn. It was tough, but they were in good shape when we completed the assigned time, they were absorbed into the division and made good soldiers, but I am sure some of them still remember those six weeks.

About this time a cadre of men were picked, and sent to England to take Commando Training.

John Portis Autobiography

After our training in Florida, we were sent to the Carolinas along the rough country of the Pee Dee River. More mud and manouvers with a forest fire to fight along with everything else. About the time we were getting along toward the end of this phase, I received emergency leave to come home for the birth of my daughter, Carla. I reported back to Camp Edwards, Mass. After that, our division was in pup tents on an island near that camp. Our non coms and officers who had been sent to England rejoined us, and we were given the same training that the Commandos received. We learned hand to hand combat, karate and the use of weapons we had not used before. We had our first amphibian training, speed marches and other training. By this time we were in the best physical and mental shape of all our lives.

Next we entrained for A.P. Hill military reservation in Virginia. Here we were given mountain training in the winter on the Big and Little Priest Mountains, also we were given bozooka training. At that time we thought that was a mean weapon.

After moving to Fort Dix for a quarantine period, we shipped out for North Africa on April Fools Day, and arrived on the 13th day of April. We docked in Oran, Algeria. After getting ashore, we were trucked to a place called Asa Ben Oka thirteen miles from Oran. After some two weeks, we



Foreign Legion Post, Sidi bel Abbis, Algeria 1943

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

were entrained for Tlemson, Algeria. This was to be our base while we guarded the border of Spanish Morocco. My platoon was stationed about thirty five miles from home base at a small village named El-A-Richa. Other platoons of the battalion were stationed elsewhere. There was a French Foreign Legion fort near us. The town was of Arab people mostly. The allies were closing in on the Germans around Tunis and a few of the enemy were getting through the lines and getting into Spanish Morocco. The Morroccans were Pro Nazi, and they would be safe.

Our purpose was to stop this. After Tunis was secured, we were brought back to the coast near a place called Aine-El-Turk. Here we taught street fighting and demolition work to troop of other units. Also we made a dry run to train us for the invasion of Italy.

We were put on ships and let off landing craft and put ashore on land similar to that which we were to invade. In September we were on ships heading for Italy and we heard on the loud speakers that Italy had given up, and everyone cheered, but that was not all there was to it, as we were to find out later. Our ships sailed to a place south of Naples off shore from a place called Pastum. We climbed down landing nets into the invasion craft in the small hours of the morning of September 9th and started to shore, everything was quite and dark. Off to the left we could see the fires atop Mt. Vesuvius which is an active volcano. Little did we know what a hell this would be in the space of a few hours. As our landing craft neared the shore, we were quite and tense. The craft scraped over one sand bar and ran aground some fifty feet on. The sailor in charge our boat dropped the ramp and about this time we began receiving some shells, flares went up and



Men of Co. G 142nd in the mountains of Italy 1944

John Portis Autobiography



Officers of Co. G 142nd, Majorie Valley, Italy 1944

machine guns began firing from the sand dunes in front of us. We came out of the boats and ran to the beach. I remember the boat to the right of us received a direct hit from artillery, and I heard men screaming. The beach ahead of us had barbed concentenas erected along as far as I could see. I ran to the wire and threw myself across it so that the boys back of me could step on me and jump over the wire.

After they had done this I took my knife and cut my clothes so that I could get out. Meantime the machine guns were firing up and down the wire. Just as I got free of the wire a torpedo boat arrived and shot two rockets, and the machine gun was out of action. I ran over the dunes until I met some of our men. By this time it was getting light enough for us to see a bit, and we were in the town of Pastum. We met some resistance but we took care of it. We were to get together and reorganize at a railroad about a mile from the beach. I had gathered a few of my men and was going toward the assembly area. We were walking along beside of what we thought was an irrigation ditch. It was about eight foot across and about six feet deep. We were fired upon by a machine gun from a farm house about 200 yards away. We jumped into the ditch for protection and found that it was a sewer ditch from Naples. "No one wanted to get near us for a few days." One of our platoons knocked out the machine gun. We proceeded along to the railroad. (Let me say here my weapons squads were all in different landing craft in the invasion, so that their guns could be used where they were needed).

The Germans in the meantime, were shelling the beaches back of us to keep supplies and re-enforcements from reaching us. After reaching the railroad and re-assembling, we pushed on toward Mt. Soprano which was our first objective in the flat country before we reached the mountain we were in a fight with some tanks and 88 artillery.

After defeating them, we reached the mountain and climbed up to the peak and secured it. While we were here we caught two tanks, two trucks and a motorcycle on the road below us, and we eliminated both trucks and the

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

motorcycle and the tanks withdrew. We continued on over the mountain until we came out above a small town by the name of Rocco-de-Speddi. Here we dug in and rested a bit. After night we moved back some 300 yards and spent the night. We received artillery fire on the first place we dug in. The next night we received orders about 10:00 P.M. to move over to the left to some high ground above the town of Altaivilla. The Germans were pushing in this sector and had driven of the battalions back. We moved into position and with the help of the airborne troops, we stopped them. Soon after, we were released and pulled back to re-group and retrain new recruits. We were called up again and our task was to take Mt. Maggore which was one side of the pass to the Lyre Valley. The 45th Division was to take the mountain across the valley from us. We were to take the lower half of Mt. Maggore.

Some special troops of Canadians were supposed to push through our positions and take the top of the mountain. We were to swing to the right and take some foothills on the back side of the mountain. We pulled out on time, the Germans moved down into our position and we were cut off on the foothills in enemy territory. We stayed in our positions for 108 days. The air force dropped rations and arms to us. The Germans tried several times to take our position but were unsuccessful. We received fire from screaming meemies and artillery for quite awhile. It was very cold and rainy during this time. After our situation was secured and a British unit took over, we moved down into the valley on another dark night. This valley was the gateway to the Rapido River and Cassino. Before troops, armor and supplies could be brought forward Mt. Longo, a low flat mountain in the mouth of Maggore Pass had to be secured. This was accomplished and Company "G" captured some forty of the enemy. This 141st and 143rd regiments did the most fighting at Cassino. The 142nd was held in reserve. The division tried it's best, but Cassino was an ideal place for defense, a deep, wide and swift river in front, high ground to defend. After repeated assaults and high casualties by many units on the broad front, the remainder of the 36th division, along with some French units were sent around to the right to encircle and cut Cassino Off.

I was wounded in this attempt and was sent back to Naples to a General Hospital, and after some time, about four months, was sent home and later was honorably discharged.

I worked for some time as a windmill repairman for the ranchers here, and finally went to work for Civil Service in the Postal Department. I retired in 1972.

I feel I have had a great life. I have lived from the horse and buggy days to the time we have put men on the moon. I have six grandchildren, a good home and a nice income, and what more could anyone want?

John C. Portis,
Rt. 2, Box 306, Snyder, Tx 79549



MEMORIES OF ANNE-MARIA



By Bob Gans
Co. I, 142nd Inf.



Wedding Bells Avellino?

Some of the most exciting days in my life occurred during the spring and summer of the year 1944. I was a combat infantry first lieutenant in the famous Texas 36th Division and we had fought out of Anzio and helped capture Rome. We barreled through Rome on top of tanks and fought our way northward, capturing Grossetto and Mgliano on the way.

The Germans were on the run and those were heady days, indeed. Finally at Giombino, the 36th Division was called back to Southern Italy to get ready for the invasion of Southern France. Company "I" settled around Avellino, a small lovely town 20 kilometers from Salerno.

I walked the streets one afternoon, enjoying the peaceful scenes of the village when I beheld a very young and pretty girl wistfully looking at a hat in the window of a "millinery shoppe." I walked into the shop and told the lady proprietor that I wanted to buy the hat for the pretty girl standing outside.

The proprietor looked startled. She took my money, grabbed the hat and went to talk to the young lady. Pretty soon she motioned for me to follow them and I soon found myself in the house of the pretty girl.

Her name was Anne-Maria. She was the daughter of the police chief of Avellino and, in Southern Italy, no single girl was allowed to talk to any single men, much less accept gifts from them. Well, I soon met her papa and her mama, her aunts and uncles, and her sisters and brothers.

I brought food to the house — olive oil and flour for pasta — but I never was allowed to be alone with her. Finally I told her papa I wished to marry her — and all hell broke loose. Everyone congratulated us and they posted

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

the bans in the church and preparations were made for the wedding.

Anne-Maria wrote a long letter in Italian to my Jewish mother in Chicago and the whole town buzzed with excitement. Our wedding was planned for Sunday, August 10. She and I were in ecstasy bathed in an aura of mutual love.

On August 9 I received orders to leave with my regiment and to proceed to Naples. Despite my protests I had to go, under sealed and silent orders, at once.

August 14, at 0800, we invaded Southern France and fought a dirty eight-month advance all the way to the Vosge mountains and Alsace-Lorraine. The division never was rested and finally I was wounded again and sent home.

I never heard from Anne-Maria. The other day a terrible earthquake hit the area of Avellino. I wondered again about papa and mama, and the aunts and uncles and . . . especially Anne-Maria.



BOB GANS



ROBERT J. GANS
1100 N. Alta Loma Rd.
Los Angeles, CA 90069
Apt. 1102

Began his career in the ink business 42 years ago with the old Sleight Metallic Ind Co., of Chicago. In 1950 he founded the Gans Ink & Supply Co in Los Angeles.

Gans is the innovator of modern rubber base inks, especially for A.B. Dick presses...has 350 distributors, offers 200 supply items - with 5 Telesales and four factories. I guess you could say, Bob Gans has left his (inked) finger-prints on the printing presses of the graphic industry.

Bob Gans is a relative 'new' member of the 36th Association, and so we must credit to TONY PELLERIN of Port Arthur of H/142nd for - sending in the news story which you have just read. But Tony related that he had received the 'story' from a friend - Michael DeHennis of Los Angeles.

That's how it works... and we welcome the "King of the Inkmen" - Bob Gans to the the clan!

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

THE STRANGE SAGA OF CORPORAL LESLIE

By Jack L. Clover

The day I joined the fighting Texas 36th Division in the waning days of September, 1943 on the beaches of Salerno as an eighteen year old pipsqueak, was a hot one. We had sailed from Africa on a limey boat which basically served lousy mutton and mint sauce and tea. This food made C Rations taste like eating at the Waldorf.

We finally disembarked with our A-bag, B-bag, gas mask, plus whatever —most of which we never really needed. After seemingly an endless, depressing over baked afternoon sitting in the sand, we were finally loaded on G.I. deuce-and-a-half GMC trucks and taken to our assembly area towards Altavila to be absorbed in our various companies within the famous "Lone Star State" division as replacements. By the time we were finished it was dark and we ended up in the morning camped in a draw near the Sele River.

Our men were paired with tested veterans of the Salerno beachhead invasion for the experience factor. Many were really unsung heroes with a plentitude of tales to tell. I was teamed up with a soldier by the name of Corporal Charles Leslie, with Hqs Company, 2 Bn., 143 Infantry. He was a strong man and had been a former Ranger before joining the famed 36th Division. He often talked of the training at Camp Blanding, Florida and the soft balmy nights he spent with his girl while stationed there.

When I first met the Corporal I did notice, however, that his hands, face and wrists were spotted and swollen with all sorts of large, red, puss-filled sores that were extremely ugly looking. Naturally in time I had to ask what had caused all this. Gradually he began to relate his sordid experiences of the initial three days of the invasion. Of course all the men had dozens of stories to tell, some quite shattering. I know one thing for sure, the 143 Regiment seemed to take the brunt of all the fighting in every battle throughout the war. It was almost automatic. The 143 Infantry led the way; the 141 Infantry took a sane position on our left and the 142 Infantry would be in reserve. I believe the casualty figures would bear this out if checked, but I don't claim to be a military genius or analyst. Neither do I want to discredit any of our fine people who comprised the the greatest division in the U.S.!

One day as the Corporal and I were chewing the fat we finally got down to the nitty-gritty and his three-day invasion nightmare unfolded like a Hollywood movie.

The invasion had been about what you might expect. The best trained division in the U.S. Army had been thrown off balance by an Italian surrender which only confused things. Also, as with all invasions, nothing quite times

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly



out right, the maps are off and some outfit lands in the wrong area.

In the interest of brevity, we pick up our story of Corporal Leslie as his 2nd Battalion became decimated by strong German Tiger and Panther tank attacks and a steel curtain of 88 MM fire from all directions. Flack wagons and about all caliber artillery virtually cremated the sun-drenched beach area from the high peaked mountains.

As I learned later after getting into the true combat phase of the infantry it is common for outfits to become disorganized as men panic, noncoms and officers are killed off. This was especially true in such situations as Kasserine Pass, North Africa when troupes were unseasoned.

As the invasion broke into bedlam, Corporal Leslie soon discovered he was lost, alone and armed only with his John Garand MI rifle. Eventually he made his way to a small Italian farm house after carefully checking it out. Inside were a frightened Italian couple who befriended him feeding him some goat's milk cheese and black bread. They said they thought the Germans were north of the area and he might cross the fields and vineyards to the east to locate the Americans. He felt he had no other choice but to give it a try so he started out on sort of a northeast course. He crossed several fields and although there were sporadic sounds of rifle and artillery fire fringing the area, there was really no way to tell who was who in the mass confusion. Soon he came to an open field which seemed to be edged with trees on the far side with possibly a small stream in which to cool off. Everything appeared clear so off he went at a dog trot heading for the stream. About three-fourths of the way across the grassy field he was suddenly set upon by three Jerries with Schmeisser Machine Pistols from the area he had just passed through. The burp guns holding 32 rounds per clip saturated his area rapidly so he hit the ground fast diving into a high, loose sandy mound of earth for protection. He then laid absolutely still and played "dead." The firing finally stopped and the krauts did not come over to challenge him.

The blistering sun had abated but there was one hang up. The sandy

The Saga of Corporal Leslie

mound he had plunged headlong into for protection was full of large, red fire ants! At once the ants began to savor their tasty meal of Corporal Leslie while he didn't dare move a muscle because of the Jerries in the area. The torture this must have been seems totally incapable of handling by only the toughest breed of man.

After a seeming eternity, darkness fell and Leslie felt he could head for his original tree-lined stream about 200 feet away. His hands and face were on fire and the water seemed inviting. He made his way to the stream bed which did contain some water that helped ease the pain of the ant bites. He then decided to lay low there for the night and sleep in a thicket along the edge of the dry side. All went well till sometime in the middle of the night when he abruptly awoke with a start. Echoing down the gully was the unmistakable "clank, clank" sound of a German Panther tank. The sand colored devils were plentiful, fresh from action in Africa and Sicily. The clanking behemoth edged closer and closer to where it came to rest within a few feet of the Corporal.

In a few minutes he heard the guttural tones of the crews' voices as they appeared to be pulling up for the night. At no time was the tank more than about fifteen yards from him and he imagined they could hear his every breath. The crew emerged from the tank and began relieving themselves, their hobnail boots crunching in the gravel basin. At one point when Leslie felt his legs were getting wet he held his breath entirely.

The crew soon broke out rations and smoked sitting on and around the tank. Once again the Corporal was trapped with virtually no way to escape till morning. By the time dawn arrived, however, he had managed to work his way a little deeper in the thicket which made him relatively undetectable. At daybreak a radio call soon dispatched the tank and he was able to unwind and stretch out his weary frame. He had been practically immobile and cramped in one position for fourteen hours since afternoon. He still had no idea where to seek out the G.I. troupes or had no idea how the invasion was going. The ant bites were driving him nearly insane with pain by now and he knew he needed help soon.

There was no other answer but to head out again in search of the remnants of the 36th Division. He decided to head his original northeast direction which was the initial invasion plan. He walked across more fields and through dense wooded areas still seeing no troupes around. But soon he came upon a modest river which was the Sele, a prime target of the battle scene. The river looked fordable so he slung his MI across his back and took off. All went well until he apparently stepped off an underwater shelf and the current pulled him under. He remembered seeing fish and all kinds of gunk as he was carried swiftly downstream in the undertow. His lungs were about to burst when he suddenly washed up in shallow water on the far bank. Boy that fresh air was good!

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

Using tree roots, Corporal Leslie managed to pull himself to the top of the bank and stand up to check the territory ahead. Almost immediately he was fired upon by troupes dug in foxholes several yards away. Having lost his helmet and looking like a drowned rat, his uniform could fit either side. But the thought now struck him. Those rifles firing were G.I.! It was the "spang" of the Garand and the "pop" of the Carbines! He again pulled himself to the top of the bank, "Hey you guys, I'm an American, 2nd Battalion, 143 Infantry." No answer. "Come on, I'm a G.I. from the 143 Regiment, 36th Division." Finally there came an answer. "O.K., who is Betty Grable?" Leslie replied: "Number 1 pinup girl in the US and married to Harry James." Pause, then, "What the hell, come on out, you've sold us."

At last Corporal Leslie had linked up with friendly troupes of the 36th who later in the day found other units and continued to defend the beachhead which was at this time in a precarious position. He soon got medical attention for his wounds but the ugly red bites remained infected for days after. He said to me at a later time, "If I had it to do over again, I might have taken my chances with the 'burp' guns as they couldn't have been nearly as accurate as those damned fire ants." I tend to agree!



Jack Clover is shown here in a Then & Now photo, as published in an early issue of the Quarterly. Clover died Dec. 14, 1981, and the story you have just read, was written only weeks earlier. Jack Clover, served with Hq. Co. 143rd, had sent in stories for, and were used in each of the Vol. 1, all 4 issues. He had an exceptional way to express his feelings, and I am sure you will agree, his narratives are an important part of our recordings of our history...a valuable reference source for future historians whom shall write stories about the 36th - on into the 21st century.

HIGHWAY ROBBERY

Tales of the Texas National Guard
By Alan "Chum" Williamson



National Guard Armories Were Popular Targets For Desperadoes

During the latter part of the 1930's, outlaws roamed the Southwest, robbing and killing. Their numbers included the notorious Clyde Barrow and his mistress, Bonnie Parker (*the infamous "Bonnie and Clyde"*), a Texas desperado named Raymond Hamilton, and a number of lesser known specialists in armed robbery.

In need of rearming themselves as they were released or escaped from prison, these bandits found National Guard armories, unattended much of the time, to be convenient and easy targets for burglary. As a counter-measure, the Adjutant General of the State of Texas issued an order requiring that the firing pins be removed from all automatic weapons in the hands of units of the Texas National Guard, and stored in a separate and secure location.

The armory of Company C, 143rd Infantry, at Beaumont, Texas, was located in the edge of the city's downtown business district. In addition to Thursday night drills, NCO school, and Sunday morning small bore target practice, it was used as a gymnasium and basketball court by neighboring Saint Anthony High School, for weekly professional wrestling matches, and for numerous special events.

The then commander of Company C had some doubts about the order,

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

which applied to the unit's eight Browning automatic rifles and thirteen Colt automatic pistols. Since it required that the firing pins be kept out of the weapons until arrival at Camp Hulen for the summer encampment, there was a chance some of them might be lost. Furthermore, considering the armory's location and multiple usage, it appeared unlikely that it would be burglarized. He therefore decided to ignore the order, and the supply sergeant was so advised.

A few years earlier, the position of caretaker was established for each unit of the National Guard. An enlisted man, his principal duties consisted of the care, maintenance and preservation of government property, particularly weapons. Hiring, firing, and supervision of the caretaker was a responsibility of the unit commander. Monitoring of the program was a function of the U.S.P. & D.O. (*The United States Property and Disbursing Officer, called by T-Patchers "The U.S. Piddling and Diddling Officer."*)

The pay was \$50 per month; not bad for a part time job during the Great Depression — provided the caretaker got the full amount. For as was to be expected, there were abuses. Among those cases which came to the attention of the U.S.P. & D.O. was one in which the first sergeant was collecting the \$50 per month as caretaker, and was subcontracting the job to the supply sergeant for half that sum. The number of caretakers required to pay kick-backs is anybody's guess.

Company C's caretaker at the time of this occurrence was the supply sergeant. Since the janitorial services could be quite a chore, considering the armory's many uses, he subcontracted that portion of his duties to an elderly man named Owens.

One Saturday morning, Mr. Owens went to the armory to clean up after a basketball game. He found the front door standing open and a half-ton panel truck parked at the curb, but gave the matter no thought. The supply sergeant often worked on Saturday mornings cleaning the weapons. For the same reason he paid no attention to the open supply room door.

As he entered the supply room, intending to talk to the supply sergeant, Owens was seized from behind and the muzzle of a handgun was thrust against the side of his head.

"Don't make a sound!" a gruff voice warned. "*One false move and you're dead!*"

A second burglar appeared from the shadows to join Owens' captor. The latter pointed to the only chair in the supply room and ordered his unwelcome guest to sit in it. Owens recognized from news photos the man with the handgun. He was Raymond Hamilton, one of two outlaws who had escaped from the Texas state prison at Huntsville a few days before. During the escape, they killed a guard.

They didn't bother to tie Owens up. As he sat in the chair and observed, the two went about the business of removing the eight BAR's from the arms rack (*they had broken the padlock before Owens walked in*), wrapping them in

Highway Robbery

blankets and loading them into the panel truck, along with a case of caliber .30 ammunition.

Hamilton's parting instructions were, "*Stay right where you are for thirty minutes. Stick your head out that door and I'll blow it off.*"

After hearing the truck's engine start and the vehicle drive away, Owens went to the orderly room, phoned the police, then notified the company commander.

Company C's commander, who shall be nameless here, held a hasty conference with his supply sergeant. Had the firing pins been removed from the weapons? No. Unfortunately, the sergeant had obeyed the order to leave them in. He immediately removed the firing pins from the automatic pistols, which the thieves hadn't bothered to take.

The captain, who resigned his commission a few months later, decided his story would be that the firing pins had been removed from the BAR's, put in an envelope, and placed in the middle drawer of his desk in the orderly room. Since they were now missing, Hamilton and his confederate apparently had found them. This story appeared in the *Beaumont Enterprise*, along with an account of the robbery and the comment that Hamilton knew exactly what he was looking for, and where to look.

A few days later, law enforcement agents found a spot in a wooded area near Beaumont where the stolen weapons had been test fired. Soon afterward, the two highwaymen were recaptured. Six of the eight BAR's were recovered.

A representative of the U.S.P. & D.O., an officer of the Regular Army, came to Beaumont to inventory Company C's property and determine what the robbers had taken. Like most National Guard units during that period, the company had property shortages that had accumulated over a period of years. The officer conducting the inventory obligingly agreed to "put as much of this shortage as possible on Raymond Hamilton's sore back."

What Hamilton said to his partner when he read newspaper accounts of his perspicacity in going to Company C's orderly room and "*finding*" the firing pins is not a matter of record. No doubt it was good for a chuckle.

The thoughts of the two thieves when the list of items they were accused of taking from Company C's armory was read in court are also unknown. They were on trial for their lives, and both chose to remain silent. Found guilty of the murder of the prison guard, they were sentenced to death and were executed.

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



CLAUDE V. BIRKHEAD

1878 - 1947



CAMP BOWIE Number Two: World War II

When the 36th Division Texas National Guard mobilized on Nov. 25, 1940 at the 'second' CAMP BOWIE, Brownwood, Texas, Maj. Gen. Claude V. Birkhead was commanding general, served until Sept. 13, 1941 when Maj. Gen. Fred L. Walker took over.

Confessions of The Secretary To The General



CAMP BOWIE
BROWNWOOD, TEXAS

By Technical Sergeant
Charles M. Beacham



Claude V. Birkhead had a good thing going. He looked like a general ought to look. He preferred the campaign hat, slightly drooped, cavalry style. He sometimes donned a red bandana handkerchief when in the field. In his special recon car, he would stand with hands in two special leather straps in order to “*survey the troops.*” You were never completely able to disassociate him from a equestrian statue of a Civil War general on the town square.

The effect was greater when he walked. He had a slightly rolling gait that seemed to suggest that he had just dismounted and was taking the feel of the ground. He liked to bluster dramatically and drove his own jeep inexpertly at top speed—“*like a bat out of hell*”—while his personal staff clung to what “*leather*” they could grab for the sake of life itself. When he was alone with his driver, he liked to toss his head back and sing his shouting song, “*Abul-Bul-Ameer.*”

I suspected Colonel George D. Sears, his able Chief of Staff, as being the unknown Lear-icist who once penned some descriptive lines:

To please the pious masses,
Generals' words we print with dashes.
But not so Birkhead, 36th,
His metaphors don't mix—
He just says, “Hell fire and molasses.”

In the winter, 1940-41, I became secretary to Major General Claude V. Birkhead, Commanding General, 36th Infantry Division, out of another of those little ironies that seem to breed with great abundance in the military.

At Camp Bowie, Brownwood, a mixed group of enlisted men and officers who had been associated together in business and civic work at home stations, ran afoul of the State Liquor Control Board and the military authority when they threw a party where liquor was served in bone dry Brownwood, Texas. Gleeful cops, having been tipped off, raided the party.

One of the most noted casualties was the enlisted secretary to Birkhead. He was reduced and given punitive duty as K.P. in Hqs. Company. After several days of missing his efficient service, Birkhead experienced a change

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

of ~~heart~~. He sent a message to his unshirtd secretary at his post of duty washing dishes and informed him that he would remit the unexecuted portion of his punishment if he would return.

"Tell the General," the man replied, "that considering the job of working of his personal staff and that of washing dishes, I prefer the dishes. They are cleaner."

Birkhead started to shop for a new secretary. He learned that I had previously been secretary to General Herbert J. Brees at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, and that I could take shorthand and he spoke to Lt. Col. Tommy Green, Asst. Chief of staff, G-1, about transferring me from my job as his enlisted chief of section. "I am right happy just where I am," I told Colonel Green. "You mean," he said, "that you don't want to work with the big brass?" "Sir," I told him, "I've had that pleasure before. These generals are like some artillery pieces. they are not bore safe. You can't tell when they will go off. I don't want to work for him or any other general."

"Well," he smiled, "I'll tell hime that you'd rather stay here." A few days later, he pushed a memo slip across the desk to me. I read it: "To: G-1. Have Sgt. Beacham report to me for duty. BRKHD."

"Looks like you lose." When I reported to old "Hell fire and molasses," he cocked his head to one side and shifted his bridgework.

"Sergeant," he said, "I'm the easiest man in the world to work for. With me you can be wrong twice about the same thing. Few people do that. I want you to understand that. The first time you are wrong, I assume it is because you don't know the way I want it done, and I will be glad to tell you. The second time you are wrong, I just take it as a human oversight, and I am glad to go over it a second time. The third time,—that just isn't done."

PENNIES—NICHOLS—and DIMES

The main problem I was soo to learn was getting along with the General's Aide, Capt. Weeden B. Nichols, known among the enlisted men as the "Great White Father" and as the "Albino Aide" from his silvery, wavy hair that looked like something plastered on a movie marquee.

I lost my first encounter with Nichols in Nov., 1940. He removed the sign I had placed on the Men's Room: *Assistant Chief of Staff, G-5*. I had decided that he had no sense of humor. Then he did not seem to be impressed with one staff solution to a crisis in the supply of toilet tissue to the Division. It seemed that the Regular Army was only supplying the needs of two-thirds of the men. One staff officer had suggested that the Division Surgeon, Colonel John J. O'Reilly, keep one-third of the men constipated. The idea seemed to me to have merit.

Weeden, in carrying out the General's desires, had the secretary maintain a personal log of all of the activities of the General. This recorded his arrival

General Claude V. Birkhead

and departure, his callers by name, and his telephone calls, by date and hour, and a brief synopsis of what had transpired, with decisions made and orders issued. This, on its face was not objectionable. It began to look rather silly when it dawned on me that Weeden went into such detail that any competent doctor could have read it and determined from it alone when the General needed a laxative.

Each morning, after the day's previous log had been approved by Nichols, extracts were made and during the day, a flood of these were directed to subordinate commanders. These bore the notation "*For appropriate action*" and were signed with the logotype "BRKHD." Again, on the face of it, there was nothing wrong with this until you realized that about 90% of these contained soul shaking revelations such as the following:

- 6:53 AM General observed from Hosp Hill that the fourth vehicle in the second row, rear, of the 142d Mtr Pool was about six inches out of line.
- 7:08 AM B Btry, 131st FA. Mop noticed hanging with mop end at the top. All other kitchens have mops hanging down.
- 7:18 AM A crumpled cigarette package noticed in the 111th AM area.
- 8:05 AM General noticed troops of 1st Bn, 144th Inf, marching to range and turning corners by "giving away to the right." Corners ought to be cut square. More military.
- 8:18 AM A beer can in the ditch about 2 miles down Malabang Trail.

In justice to the General, many of these trivialities originated with *Nichols*, but many, too many, of them came from the man with the stars. His age and physical condition notwithstanding, it was not difficult to see where he was headed.

After one occasion when the General was at the wheel and came near killing himself and a part of his staff in leaping a small stream line in the maneuver area, Nichols dictated for the log about three pages of "*road conditions in the maneuver area observed by the General.*" I don't believe he overlooked a single chug hole between the city of Brownwood and the



CAMP THEATRE - Brownwood as it looks today, tired and worn after 40 years. Sent in by Woodrow Baxter of Coleman Texas (B/142).

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

Colorado River. Much time and effort was expended in the preparation of this extract from the log, and it was to be sent to the Commanding Officer, 111th Engineers for appropriate action. It had not been dispatched when Colonel Richard Dunbar walked in the office informally chomping gum. Nichols handed the extract to him. Dunbar glanced over the papers casually, tore them in strips and tossed them in the wastebasket. "*Weeden*," he said in a tone of condescension as if speaking to a child. "*We don't build roads, we just repair them.*" It was very quiet in the office for a long time after the Colonel walked out.

One night Nichols called Hq. Co. and demanded that I report to the General immediately for some important work. I explained that I was on duty as Charge of Quarters and could not come.

"*What are you doing on CQ?*" he demanded. "*Sir, duty as charge of Quarters is required by Regulations of every noncommissioned officer.*" "*But YOU are different. You are the General's secretary and on his personal staff. Nothing whatsoever must interfere with your duty to the General.*" "*But that would require an order from the General to the Commanding Officer, Headquarters Company,*" I interposed. Nichols then called Captain Forgason and had me relieved.

Nichols then did not know how well this was to be handled. The next day I prepared a special pass for the General's signature which indicated that I could be anywhere, at any time, when off duty, and that I would not be placed on duty in the unit and that I would not be required to stand any formations in the unit.

The next morning, I remained in bed at reveille. First Sergeant Lott was infuriated at such indifference on the part of a Technical Sergeant and was just about ready to roll-me-on-the-floor when I reached under my pillow and handed him the special pass from the General.

"*Sergeant,*" I said, "*please don't disturb the General's Secretary. He needs his beauty sleep.*"

One day, while the General was out in the field, Nichols and I were alone in the office. I sat at my desk watching him with growing distaste as he made himself very busy about something or other. It was quiet in the room except for the papers he was busily and happily shuffling. I wondered if the General had ever regarded him in a similar light and mentally noted that he certainly must not have done so. Nichols had just been promoted from Captain to Major.

In civilian life he was connected with the Interstate movie interest out of Dallas. He considered himself the living extension of the authority of the General and nothing he ever said came from him as coming from one of his rank—it was always, "*the General desires.*" If these wishes were not complied with, even by general staff officers senior to him, he reacted as if they had been insubordinate. My reverie was broken by the ring of the phone.

General Claude V. Birkhead

"Office of General Birkhead, Sergeant Beacham speaking." "Is the General in?" I recognized the voice as that of Colonel Berry, Camp Executive Officer. *"No, sir. He's out in the field." "When will he be back?" "I don't know, Sir. His driver told me that they would probably be out there until 3:30."*

The caller hung up without identifying himself. As I replaced the receiver, Nichols fixed me in a cold stare. *"Who was that?" "I don't know, Sir."* I fibbed. *"You mean to tell me that you sit there and give out information about the movements of the General without knowing who you are talking to?" "Sir, the higher the rank, the less likely they seem to be to introduce themselves and state their business to a sergeant. They don't usually call on this phone unless they have the rank to do so." "Now look, Sergeant, you apparently don't understand the importance of your job and the importance of the General. You just can't go around telling any and everybody what he is doing."* Nothing was said for some time. Nichols went back to shuffling his papers importantly, and I became absorbed in a staff manual. Then the phone rang.

"Office of General Birkhead, Sergeant Beacham speaking." I glanced out of the corner of my eye and noticed that Nichols had stopped to listen.

"This is Jessie Jones in Washington." "Yessir." "Is General Birkhead in his office?" "Nosir. He's out in the field and not expected to return until later. I will be glad to take a message, Sir, or I can send word to him in the field."

"I don't want to bother him when he is about his duties. When he comes in, tell him that I want him to call me." "Yessir." I hung up and waited. Nichols was regarding me with rapt attention.

"Who was that?" His voice was loaded with dark suspicion. *"I don't know, I..."* He exploded. *"Now look, Sergeant. I told you before not to be giving out information like that about the General without knowing who you were talking to, but you still don't seem to understand. I simply must teach you the importance of this thing."*

"But I..." "No buts, Sergeant," he snapped. *"I am absolutely not going to tolerate this kind of conduct."* He got up and circled his desk. *"Look,"* he said slowly, *"just simply don't give out any information until you know who it is. If he doesn't tell you who's calling, just ask him who's calling. Now, isn't that simple?"*

"But, Major..." "Don't interrupt me." He was angry now. *"All right."* He turned and walked back to his desk. I waited a few minutes for him to simmer down and start playing with his papers.

"Major?" "Yes, Sergeant." he answered primly. *"I didn't know who that last caller was because I didn't recognize his voice. He said he was Jessie Jones in Washington." "What?"* I thought he was going through the ceiling.

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

"Don't you know who Jessie Jones is?" "Nossir," (I lied).

"My God, my God," he muttered. "Why, oh why, didn't you let him speak to ME?" "He didn't ask to talk to you, Major." I was struggling to maintain an expression of innocence.

"Driver!" he shouted. He bolted from his chair and ran to the stairway and then ran back to his desk and then quickly returned to the stairwell. "I'll send a messenger to him. No. I will go myself. No. I'll send a messenger to him. No. I'll send a driver one way, and I will go the other. Sergeant, try to get word to him immediately. Call the MPs. Call the Motor Pool. Call somebody. Call someone. Do something!!"

He disappeared down the stairway just as I finally broke out laughing. I walked to the window and watched his vehicle disappear across the Camp. He was breaking all speed regulations. A spiral of dust was billowing behind him.

In about 30 minutes, the General arrived. He was breathing heavily as he closed the door to his office and grabbed the telephone. The conversation was confidential, and it never went into the General's log. However, before the day was over, I knew the content. Jesse Jones had called by direction of the White House and demanded to know if it was true that Birkhead had directed the officers of the Division to support W. Lee O'Daniel in the political race for United States Senate. This, of course, was hotly and properly denied by Birkhead.

The General was a great sentimentalist about the American Legion. You are undoubtedly familiar with the "God and Country" type so prominently in existence from World War I to II. Some cynics even called them "professional veterans." He received floods of invitations to speak at Legion affairs throughout the state of Texas in 1941. Enjoying the fellowship of his buddies, he was sincerely grieved when he could not find time to be with them and renew his fellowship from time to time.

If he could not fill a speaking engagement, he felt impelled to write them a letter in which he would say all that he would have said if he had been able to



Here's old Headquarters Area, north part of the Camp Bowie area, going east to warehouse area, as it looks today. Lot's of memories.

General Claude V. Birkhead

deliver it in person. This was always a heart-warming task and one dynamically charged with patriotism and pride.

But duty has no manners. His duties had become so burdensome that he could not answer the letters personally. Finally he entrusted this to me, at first for drafts, then finally, I would write the entire letter. I had transcribed his style so much that I could write one that he could scarcely tell was not his own.

One of these invitations I remember in particular. Time was hanging heavy on my hands, and I really let go with several pages of purple prose. As an example of this somewhat questionable art, I still recall the concluding words:

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Having bathed in the warm blood of sacrifice together, having become comrades in pain and suffering, it is we who preserved out of that holocaust the real strength of Democratic America, became the bulwark of liberty, the protector of freedom and the custodian of the Constitution. For it was there, in the trenches and mud of France, in Holy Communion, we vowed that we would take the voice from the burning bush and plant it inextinguishably in our hearts. We have not, we dare not, we shall not. . . fail.

Yours, for God and Country,

The General was busy and signed this letter without reading it. A few days passed, and he received a full page wire from the commander of the Legion Post which informed him that his letter had left them in tears, had touched them deeply and moved them very much. Prayerfully, they asked his kind permission to reprint his letter in a full page ad in their local paper.

He asked me to obtain the file so he could see what he had written. I went over to the Adjutant General's office and found that Staff Sergeant John M. Stafford had filed it under "*Politics*." I made him change the binder before I would show it to the General.

After the General had read "*what he had written*," he dictated to me the requested permission, beaming with pleasure. "*Sergeant, you do the work, and I get the credit. You are the only secretary I ever had who sounds more like me than I do myself.*"

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One night when we were out in the field, Major Nichols ordered me or Private Loomis, secretary to the Chief of Staff, to remain awake all night in the General's igloo.

"Major," I explained, "*General Birkhead has instructed the switchboard to pull out his drop and leave it out after 10:00 PM and to refer all his calls to the Operations Section. He has informed Colonel Werner to use his judgment if he thinks he should be awakened.*"

"I don't care, Sergeant," he directed. "*We must serve the General around the clock when in the field. I know the telephone is disconnected. You will remain up, however, just in case it does ring!!*"

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

On another occasion, I waited up for Nichols until 3:00 AM so he could dictate the "log" for the day. He came into the tent and broke open a Thermos bottle and filled a cup with coffee. The aroma in the tent was so strong that its inviting flavor almost caused my empty stomach to retch.

"*Pretty smart, eh, Sergeant?*" Getting this coffee at that last mess. "*Yes sir.*" I noted the polite omission of an invitation to have a cup of coffee. (How many cups will it take to drown the memory of this insolence?)

Along about May, 1941, or thereabouts, Colonel Sears clipped a news item that indicated that Major General George V. Strong, Regular Army, had been assigned to succeed Krueger in command of the VIII Corps, Brownwood, Texas. Krueger was to succeed Brees at Third Army in San Antonio. He put the clipping on a memo slip and wrote under it, sending it to Birkhead: "*Watch out! This General hasn't had a field command in so long that you are likely to catch Hell!*"

And that was the summer that General Walter Krueger, Commanding General, Third U.S. Army, relieved Birkhead during Louisiana Maneuvers. I was more than a little sorry to learn of it when he became unstuck. A close friend on Krueger's personal staff later informed me that it seemed that Birkhead had not been relieved more than a few minutes when General Marshall was on the telephone talking to Krueger.

"*I do not question the relief,*" Marshall told him. "*But tell me something so I can face the congressional delegation from Texas which will descend on my office at any time.*" "*I consider Birkhead one of my closest friends,*" Krueger told him. "*No man worked harder at his job or was more dedicated. But he was spending too much time doing jobs that belonged to corporals and lieutenants and not enough time being a general.*"

I June, 1941, I arrived in the 141st Infantry Regiment as the lowest ranking second lieutenant in the U.S. Army. I had unpacked my personal bag in the small wall tent assigned to me on officers' row and it was about 5:00 PM when I looked through the screen and saw Captain James Y. Forgason passing by.

I opened the screen and invited him in to sample a little spirit water in celebration of my new rank. He poured out about half a glass of whisky and started to raise it to his lips when he noticed the autographed picture of General Birkhead sitting on my field table. He lowered the glass and reached for a face towel and carefully draped it over the picture. Turning to me, he explained: "*That old bastard told me that if he ever saw me take another drink, he was going to run me out of the service. I know how you think about him, but I don't even trust his picture!!*"

General Claude V. Birkhead

And if I could tell the General anything today, I would tell him that his old sergeant secretary still remembers him warmly as a great patriotic Texan who helped to build and preserve the great 36th "Texas Army" Division between two great wars.



CHARLES M. BEACHAM

BIRKHEAD IN WORLD WAR I...

131st FIELD ARTILLERY

"First In Spite Of Hell" 



Birkhead

Claude V. Birkhead was born in Phoenix, Oregon, May 27, 1878, and moved to Texas in 1885. He was educated in the Waco Public Schools and in the Fort Worth University. Was licensed to practice law in Waco in 1899. In 1904 he moved to San Antonio, where he continued the practice of his profession. He was District Judge of the 74rd Judicial District, sitting at San Antonio during the years 1910-11-12, when he resigned the judgeship to re-enter the firm of Tallafiero, Cunningham & Birkhead.

During the months of May and June, 1916, he organized Battery "B," 1st Texas Field Artillery, which was mustered into State Service June 30, 1916, with Capt. Birkhead commanding.

When authority for the enlargement of the Texas National Guard, on account of the war with Germany, was received, the commanding general of the Texas troops ordered Capt. Birkhead to Houston for duty in connection with this work. Here he was given specific directions for the organization of the 2nd Texas Field Artillery, which was to be organized around the existing Battery "B," 1st Texas F. A. On the completion of the organization, he was made its Colonel.

Colonel Birkhead commanded the regiment (later designated the 131st Field Artillery) from the date of its entry into Federal Service August 5, 1917, until muster-out on April 2, 1919, being in France in command from August 12, 1918, until February 27, 1919, when the organization embarked for America.

Colonel Birkhead can truly be called a "leader of men." He is a man full of initiative and ability, and is a clear, concise thinker. He was loved and respected by officers and enlisted men alike, and it is to him as a leader that the 131st Field Artillery owes its success as an efficient organization in the American Army during the Great War.

The above photo and story about Claude V. Birkhead as an artilleryman in WWI at Camp Bowie, Fort Worth 1917, is reproduced from a post-war booklet about the 131st.

It was used in the 1975 edition of CAMP BOWIE, 1917-18, FORT WORTH, published by Bernice B. Maxfield...it may add to Charlie Beacham's feeling about this great soldier.

SHERIFF FENTON



Charles R. Glenn, B/142nd Eastern
RR1, Selma, IN 47383

Dear Editor:

This is a rough draft of a certificate of honor that I wrote to recognize Fenton, and had Gen. George E. Lynch present the original to him at our reunion this summer.

To give you an insight into Hiram Fenton, and the basis for presenting this certificate of honor to him, I will give you some of the facts about Fenton's WW II history.

Fenton was the first man in the European theater to receive a battlefield commission. This alone denotes that he was a highly respected man and not just a replacement for experienced infantry officers who were hard to come by, which was sometimes the case later in the war.

He received several combat awards with oak leaf clusters because of his superior combat tactics and his willingness to be a part of the action with his men.

Fenton respected the Germans and was never a Gung-Ho type leader, but he had the ability to use the terrain and any other tactical advantages at his disposal to their optimum so that he could reach his assigned objective. As a sergeant he could run the platoon as well as any officer. The love and respect he had for his men was rather fierce. On one occasion an officer cursed Sgt. Fenton's men and the altercation that followed wasn't very pleasant for the officer, who then tried to get Fenton court marshalled, but approximately 60 days later Fenton was commissioned a Second Lieutenant.

With combat conditions permitting, Fenton would visit each hole and check out his men at night before he retired, checking their welfare, encouraging them, and giving them the daily situation. Fenton called this "chcking on his men" but I always kidded them that it was necessary to have someone to put the second platoon to bed.

To give you the other extreme, I was in the next platoon and for approximately 30 days in a stalemated position. I never once saw my platoon leader. The fact that Fenton respected, defended, and was interested enough to be in contact with his men on a daily basis gave him an extra dimension that most other platoon leaders did not possess.

As a platoon sergeant, the lives of the men in the second platoon revolved around Fenton. He was their leader and they lived on his every word.

Col. David Sisco has related this story to me on several occasions: When Sisco came to Co. B he was assigned as platoon leader of the second platoon. The platoon was in relief and Sgt. Fenton was away at rest camp.

As Sisco familiarized himself with the personnel and his duties, all he would hear was Sgt. Fenton says this, Sgt. Fenton says that, Sgt. Fenton does this. All he heard was Fenton, Fenton, Fenton. So Sisco decided to keep a low profile because of Sgt. Fenton's popularity with his men.

When Fenton returned, Sisco told him, *"I know nothing about running a combat platoon and you have been doing an excellent job, so just keep on running things until I get the experience."*

This mutual respect by Fenton and his men for each other made up one of the finest fighting platoons in Europe and I know for a fact that they got some very difficult assignments because the Co. commander knew that in difficult situations, they would make things happen.

When we talk about Fenton's battle accomplishments we think of an older man who had had several years to mature, but Fenton accomplished all this about the age of 21. He was an exceptional person for any age group, and he has continued to be an outstanding individual in later life.

If all leaders had been remotely as mature as Fenton, WW II would have been considerably shorter.



Sheriff Fenton Traps Moonshiners

SHERIFF H. F. Fenton (left) of Coleman County and Texas Alcoholic Bev. Comm. D. J. Goetz are front-page in the Coleman County Chronicle last month, when they raided and confiscated gallons of corn whiskey (which each are holding).



From left: Chester McKeen, H.F. Fenton, George Lynch, Dewey Mann and David Sisco - at Muncie Reunion.

◆◆◆◆◆ **CERTIFICATE OF HONOR** ◆◆◆◆◆
HIRAM F. FENTON

Fenton, as he was affectionately called by his men, rose from rank of private to 1st Lt., before being wounded, ending his combat service.

He was one of the first men in the ETO to receive a battlefield commission. For Fenton's first combat experience, he displayed the capacity for becoming an excellent combat soldier.

He received the Distinguished Service Cross and several other battle awards, but his superior performance as a leader of men far excelled any of the awards he received.

As a sergeant, he was capable of running a platoon and did so on many occasions. He was known in other companies as a man who could get-the-job-done. After reconnoitering an enemy position, Fenton possessed the unusual faculty of taking a difficult objective with relative ease.

The aggressive action of his platoon reflected his most outstanding quality, the ability to inspire confidence in his men that they could accomplish what he had asked them to do. He was respected by his superior officers and held a special place in the hearts of his men.



Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

limited and so did not want to waste it by going to the door and trying to find out where the Fuhrers lived. I could not speak French and most likely they couldn't speak English. So we went on to Epinal, France.

After I got home, I decided to write to this Jean Fuhrer to see if he knew of the Fuhrers I was looking for. Boy, was I surprised when I got an answer from him! He and his wife, Martha, were the nice couple that we had stayed with. He sent me this picture and a few more that he had taken in 1944.

I now correspond with them.



Men of 36th Signal Company at Ribeauville, France; front row, kneeling is Mr Fuhrer with his two small daughters and Mrs. Jean Fuhrer back of him, and 3 other children. Back row from left: Arsevio Gonzalez, Wm. Field, Chas. Simpson (no helmet), Otis Turney, Doyle Reed, Ira Hill, Byron Wilcox (-) and John Arvay. Photo sent in by Otis Turney.

OTIS P. TURNEY
3 Wheeler Court
Deer Park, New York 11729
(36th Signal Company)

SIX GUN BATTERY OF PACK 75's

**Haurand Is Looking
For More Information**

WorldWarWoveterans.org



Many yet untold stories of actions by the troopers of the 36th seem to surface from time to time - with questions to be answered. Here's one from HENRY J. HAURAND, Jr. of Richmond, Virginia 23235.

Hank joined the service Dec. 1943, was assigned to Hqs. Btry. 132nd F. A. Bn., and was with them until war's end. He requested information about the 6 gun battery of Pack 75's that the 155th had in Italy.

Haurand wrote letters, used Ma Bell to artillerymen all over America. The best response was this one from ...

Edward Keeton of Gretna, LA of Btry C, 155th, who happens to be the president of the 36th Association for the term of 1981-82.

Actual quotes from his letter, Dec. 9, 1981:

This Sunday past, I received a telephone call from H. J. Haurand, 8616 Choctaw Road, Richmond, Virginia 23235, who is a member of the association and served in Italy with the 132 F.A. He was assigned to the message center of DivArty.

His main reason for calling me was that he saw in the T-Patch that I was with the 155th and he was seeking information as to names and addresses of anybody whom may have served with the 6 gun battery of pack 75's that the 155th had in Italy.

I had completely forgotten the incident - do you remember? It seems to me that somewhere in the vicinity of Mt. Rotunda and/or Mt. Lungo, it Italy, the 155th was issued 6 75mm pack howitzers. This 6 gun battery was stocked with personnel from almost every artillery bn. in the 36th DivArty but, as I recall, a greater number of them were drawn from the 155th.

If my memory serves me correctly, this 6 gun battery was placed up within the very close proximity of the heavy weapons companies of the Infantry and would only fire at night, so as to alleviate, as much as possible,

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

counter battery fire. Their main objective was to harass the Germans and to prevent them, as near as possible, from bringing up supplies, reinforcing or otherwise improving their defenses.

I seem to recall that they were required to expend 2700 rounds of bullets, each night. I recall a story going around that one night when their received their quota of ammo (the only time that they could be resupplied without revealing their position) they became aware, the next morning at daylight, that someone had mistakenly delivered a quantity of Mustard Gas Shells.

It seems to me that there was a great deal of flack regarding this boo-boo and there was some thought given to calling upon the Germans for a truce until the gas shells could be safely removed, there being the fear that a stray German shell could set off the gas shells and cause a gas war to start. I am not aware that such a truce was called and the offending shells were snaked out of the position by every available "back" in the immediate area, be they artillerymen, infantrymen or whathave you. I think that this item could develop into some what of a story.

Regards, Ed Keeton.



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C Battery 155th FA Bn., in this early foto sent in by Bob Nowell of Longview, says, "I think that big guy at center is ED KEETON". OK, so we sent it to Ed for verification, and he identifies, as follows: George Shivers, _____, _____, Dutch Sthur, and 'me' with arm around Willard Plennel, P.D. Taylor and John Coskey. "After 39 years it's hard to be sure on these old faded fotos", says Keeton.

EDITORS NOTE: The purpose of this story is to try to discover some of the artillerymen who may be able to add to this QUIZ. We welcome any new information. Send it to: Henry J. Haurand, 8616 Choctaw Road, Richmond VA 23235...cause he is the man that seeks the story of THE SIX GUN BATTERY of PACK 75's.

“THE DEVIL’S BRIGADE”



Dear Mr. Eckols:

Thank you for your letter of June 6—a day which not only saw the invasion of Normandy, but which also signalled the fall of Rome. The First Special Service Force was the first allied unit into the Eternal city, capturing all the bridges across the Tiber, before being relieved.

Interesting you should be moved to write us, **for the 36th and the Force were in Italy together.** Indeed, while we had gone into combat before, against the Japanese in the Aleutian Islands, our first mission in the European theater was in Italy when we were attached to the 36th in the final successful effort to break through the German Winter Line. It was the Force (**now nicknamed The Devil's Brigade**) which successfully captured the hill mass La Difensa and La Rementanea which had been holding up the advance of the entire Fifth Army for five weeks.

When we first moved up, **36th was holding the advanced positions at the base of the major hill mass and somewhat up the slope.** I went on patrol several nights with men from one of your regiments, I forget which. Purpose was to scout the territory for our own attack. As it turned out, the Force decided not to attack the way others had done, **including the 36th and the 3rd**, but to use our mountain climbing experience and tactics to go up the steepest portion of the hill. Our Second Regiment was the assault force, and through the use of ropes, we were able to gain the top of La Difensa and surprise the Germans. The remainder of the hill mass was secured in the days following once the British had captured the adjacent El Camino hill mass. One of our hills, 907, looked right down to the valley **where the 142nd was fighting. We cleared the hill of German artillery observers who had been giving the 142 fits.**

The Force accomplished in two hours what the II Corps and 36th staff had felt would take at least three days. We were slower in clearing the rest of the mountain—took about five days.

We were together with the 36th in II Corps for some time until the time came for R&R. We helped capture all the big hills up to Cassino, and I can still remember the day when we finally emerged on the slopes overlook-

The 36th Division fought in connection with many units during WWII. The First Special Service Force (The Devil's Brigade) has quite a record. This narrative was from the efforts of GEORGE E. ECKOLS.

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

ing that hard-fought-for city. Later, we were supposed to use our Weasels (developed specially for the Force) to help in the Rapido crossing, but that was dropped when we were ordered to take off for Anzio. Once there, we held the entire right flank of the Beachhead, with the exception of an area held by the 504 who were on our left, next to the 3rd Division.

Facing us was the Herman Goering Division, held in such great prestige that it frequently operated as a corps, rather than a division, with other divisions attached. In reserve were SS companies. The HG also had a tank regiment. The Force had only one regiment at full strength—our Third. Our First was half a regiment (one battalion in our TO), while our Second, which had lead the Difensa attack, was down to about three companies. Using heavy patrolling tactics, the Force was able to drive the Germans back from the Mussolini Canal and open up a No-Man's land several miles wide at its widest point.

While the Force used the designations Regiment and battalion, to give the Germans the idea we were a Divison, in actuality, we were never larger than a brigade. Instead of 8,000 men, we had 1,500, plus a Service Battalion which did no fighting, but handled all service aspects. (We never did any KP to speak of, nor latrine duty, or any of the other tasks infantryment get stuck with in camp—good old Service Battlion handled all that, and, in a pinch, packed us up in a defense line.)

After the breakout at Anzio, we wheeled north to Rome, then were pulled out to train for the landing in Southern France. Once there, we again landed well in advance of the mail force, taking advantage of our knowledge and training in night-fighting gained on the Beachhead.

Once that was over we attacked East toward the Italian border, winding up right on the border, where we stayed until November, 1944, when word came form SHAEF that the Force, which all along had consisted of Canadians and Americans, was going to be disbanded because of the difficulties the Canadian Army was having in supplying replacements (we took only Sergeants and 1st Lieutenants).

Most everyone in the combat Regiments of the Force held the rank of Sergeant and up. There were always a couple of privates in each platoon, mostly guys who had been busted. Never any PFC's or Corporals. We received parachute pay, because we were trained jumpers (along with a lot of other training, like ski, mountain-climbing, amphibious, demolition). All replacements drew jump pay whether they had jumped or not. So, the Force was a pretty expensive unit to maintain; it was small in terms of the Armies and Army Groups which wre manoeuvring by the end of '44. So, we were broken up, Canadians went back to the Canadian Army, most Americans into the 474 Separate, which later wound up in Norway. Many Canadians later served with the Canadian Parachute Battalion, which jumped over the Rhine. I was one of the Canadians, but missed the drop because of a training exercise in England, where we had to become accustomed again to Canadian weapons.

The Devil's Brigade

The Force was the only unit in the U.S. Army to use the Johnson Light Machine Gun, originally developed in competition with the Garand. Merrill's Marauders used it in the Pacific. We had it because the Canadians couldn't stand the old longbarrelled, two-legged Browning, which was all the U.S. Army had in the way of an equivalent to the Canadian and British Bren gun.

So we bitched and moaned, and finally got the Johnnie gun, but we fell in love with the 30 caliber machine gun, and also with the 50's; when we took over what was left of the Rangers in Italy, we got their cannon company, with half-track 75's, and they were great. Fire power in one platoon (consisting of two 'sections') (15 men to a section), consisted of two 30 calibers, two Johnnie guns, two mortars, two bazookas, four M-1's with grenade launchers, two Tommy guns (usually four), and the rest M-1's.

We always had the backing of an airborne howitzer outfit. All in all, the Force had tremendous fire power for a unit its size. But, boy, did we have to carry ammunition. We looked like mules when going into an attack.

Well, you probably got more than you bargained for in this reply to your inquiry, but I was struck by the fact that you had been with the 36th, for whom we had the greatest respect. It saw a lot more action than we did, and took some awful pastings. I met lots of 36th guys in hospitals in Italy, especially at the 36th General.

Thanks for giving me a chance to sound off!!

William (Bill) Story, a Native of Canada
First Special Service Force Association
240 Thornwood Road, Stamford, CT 06903



Military historians are obliged to read just about any material available to get the true story about certain battles etc. This letter from Bill Story reveals information that many of us did not know. We hope that you agree.

George Eckols, 612 Industrial Blvd., Temple Texas 76501 says, "I met many of these troopers when they moved up front in the Winter Line of 1943."

**T-PATCHER GET THE
"ORDER OF THE RED STAR"**



**Artilleryman Wins Coveted Decoration
For Accurate Fire**



**Here is S/Sgt Frank J. Thomashofsky,
of A Btry 133 FA Bn one of the few
Americans ever to wear the Russian
decoration, "Order of the Red Star".**

S/Sgt Frank Thomashofsky, a section leader with Able Btry, 133 F A Bn, is one of the few GIs in the U.S. Army that has been decorated with the Red Star by the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics (Russia).

Thomashofsky, a husky, 39-year old ex-sportsman from Eynon, Pa., earned his decoration (the second highest military award given by the Soviets) late last April, near the Elbe River, Germany, when he led his 155 howitzer crew in supporting fire for the Russians against a pocket of Nazi troops.

The Red Star, a large ruby stone with a small silver hammer and sickle embedded in the center of it, was presented to Thomashofsky at a joint Yank-Russian ceremony, by Maj. Gen. P. Brikel, commander of the Sixth Russian Cavalry, at Lanz, Germany, May 16, 1945.

At the time the action took place for which he received the decoration.

Thomashofsky was a crew chief with C Btry, 327 FA Bn, 84th Inf Div.

Last April, Thomashofsky's outfit reached the Elbe River as one of the spearheads of the Ninth Army's drive to make a juncture with the Red Army, about 20 miles south of Berlin, where the 84th Div was halted to await the Russians. The Sixth Russian Cavalry was driving west through Germany. Between the two Allied Armies a huge concentration of German troops were fighting desperately to slip out of the Yank-Russuan trap.

The Red Army called on the 84th Div for artillery support and Thomashofsky volunteered to do the firing. His crew, directed by a liason plane which was in radio contact with the Russians, knocked out several Jerry 88's and tanks and the Krauts soon surrendered.

Thomashofsky is to receive a pension from the Soviet government, paid semi-annually, and he is entitled to make two trips yearly to Russia with all expenses paid by the USSR.

The award is good for five points toward a discharge, but the Sergeant doesn't believe he'll need them. He isn't sure if he'll need them. He isn't sure if he'll ever make use of the free trips to the Soviet, but he hopes the "moola" that goes with it is plenty.



Published by 36th Infantry Division Artillery

SATURDAY, SEPT. 6, 1945

ED Note: This item was sent in by BILL W. EBERLE, 3880 Schirtzinger Road, Columbus, OH 43220, who said this was published in the Sept. 8, 1945 issue of The Rumpus in Germany. Bill served with Btry. A, 133rd FA, and has been a long-time contributor to the T-Patcher & Quarterly. Since we were not aware of this publication we asked him - what is THE RUMPUS? He replied, sent the original tabloid copy of the 4 pager (similar to the overseas T-Patch), which I discovered was published by the 36th DIVISION ARTILLERY. Masthead carried - Vol. 1, No. 4, with PFC. Martin Arundel, Editor; Cpl. Bill Eberle, staff artist; Cpl. Justus R. Barnes, associat editor, and Capt. George J. De Jure, officer in charge.

It didn't take long for me to figure that THIS was a post-war effort, activated light years after all the "high-point" Texans had gone-home. Many of the old-timers will recall we were pulled out of the 36th, and transferred to 63rd Division, to await shipment home! (see page 49-50 of Vo. 1, No 1 Spring '81 - GREEN PROJECT).

Some of the artilleryman have asked WHY they don't get more stories! The answer is simple. You gotta "send 'em in before we can print 'em. So let us hear from you!

The Heroes



Worldveterans.com

For
Conspicuous
Gallantry...



Emile Deleau

**SGT. EMILE DELEAU, JR. (K.I.A.)
CONGRESSIONAL
MEDAL OF HONOR WINNER**



1 Rank and Organization: Sergeant, Company A, 142d Infantry, 36th Infantry Division. *Place and Date:* Oberhoffen, France, 1-2 Feb 1945. *Entered Service at:* Blaine, Ohio. *Birth:* Lansing, Ohio. *G.O. No.:* 60, 25 July 1945. *Citation:* He led a squad in the night attack on Oberhoffen, France, where fierce house-to-house fighting took place. After clearing one building of opposition, he moved his men toward a second house from which heavy machine-gun fire came.

He courageously exposed himself to hostile bullets and, firing his sub-machine gun as he went, advanced steadily toward the enemy position until close enough to hurl grenades through a window, killing three Germans and wrecking their gun. His progress was stopped by heavy rifle and machine-gun fire from another house. Sergeant Deleau dashed through the door with his gun blazing. Within, he captured ten Germans.

Emile Deleau

The squad then took up a position for the night and awaited daylight to resume the attack.

At dawn of 2 Feb. Sergeant Deleau pressed forward with his unit, killing two snipers as he advanced to a point where machine-gun fire from a house barred the way. Despite vicious small-arms fire, Sergeant Deleau ran across an open area to reach the rear of the building, where he destroyed one machine gun and killed its two operators with a grenade. he worked to the front of the structure and located a second machine gun finding it impossible to toss a grenade into the house from his protected position, he fearlessly moved away from the building and was about to hurl his explosive when he was instantly killed by a burst from the gun he sought to knock out.

With magnificent courage and daring aggressiveness, Sergeant Deleau cleared four well-defended houses of Germans, inflicted severe losses on the enemy and at the sacrifice of his own life aided his battalion to reach its objective with a minimum of casualties.



AMERICAN LEGION and the 36th have a lot in common. A T-Patcher named (Major) Maurice Gordon has credit for naming the organization at a meeting in Paris March 1919. The Bothwell Kane Post No. 21 was formed in Fort Worth (home of Camp Bowie) in May 1919 by mostly all former 36thers in WWI. The above memorial at Mount Olivet Cemetery with a lone doughboy was erected in 1930, with the WWII figure added in the 1950's - and it is site for Memorial Day and Veterans Day annual ceremonies.

OLD TIMES WITH THE GUARD

Anecdotes'
Co. 'G' 143rd Inf. Texas National Guard
by
F. M. Hackbusch - 1928-1936



THE CARTRIDGE

My first tour of guard duty at Camp Hulen, placed me at the furthestmost post away from the last Company on regimental row.

The post was along the fenced boundary that ended at the waters edge of the bay.

I remarked to the corporal of the guard, "*that being on guard duty at night without ammo didn't make me feel very safe!*" He said, "*don't worry, here is a cartridge.*" So I put it in my right shirt pocket, and with renewed confidence walked my post without an event.

On returning to the guard house I took the cartridge out of my pocket and weighed it in my hand. I thought it was kinda light. So I twisted the bullet out of the brass casing - there was no powder in it.

The corporal came in and I returned the cartridge to him, he said, "*now don't tell anyone about this,*" I didn't.

TEAR GAS PROTECTION

My first trip to Camp via troop train found me as guard in the baggage car.

On arriving at camp we were shunted on to a siding to unload the troops and gear.

Some erstwhile individual let go with a tear gas grenade up wind from the train. It cleared the troops out of the passenger cars as expected.

When it blew into the baggage car - I tried a method of protection as recommended by a veteran of World War I.

I urinated on my handkerchief and tied it over my face like a mask. If you ever find yourself in this kind of predicament — try it!

OLD TIMES WITH THE GUARD

SHORT ARM INSPECTION

The year before Camp, we had a champion light weight boxer, who was the best. We had not bet very much on him the first time he won his match.

So the following year we talked him into going to Camp. We planned to clean up. This time.

On our arrival we had Short Arm Inspection — the boxer then told us he had VD. Working fast, we put him in the rear rank of the First Squad.

The 'doc' went down the line-at the right time we had the boxer exchange places with the man in the front rank - of course the 'doc' couldn't tell by looking. So our plan worked.

Well our champ got the hell knocked out of him. Oh well, "*no one is perfect*".

OLD TIMERS SPEAK...

Our thanks to F. M. Hackbusch for these anecdotes from the early days in the Texas National Guard. He joined way back in 1928, so he is in a position to tell what it was like in the post-WWI days ... with Co. G, 143rd Infantry.

It was also our pleasure to have had a visit from Hackbusch not long ago. He left with us a story of THE HOUSTON LIGHT GUARD, 1873-1898. This was the fore-runner of what now is known as Company G 143rd.

This elite unit celebrated the 100th Anniversary in 1973, which all goes to show that the old units of the 36th Division have roots that go back to post-bellum service of what was known then as - TEXAS VOLUNTEER GUARD.

These items told by men like Hackbusch are vital to us to have a better understanding of the historical and iconographic survey of these units that made military history for the great State of Texas.

COMING in next issue - feature story about the "Houston Light Guard" 1873-1898 which later became Company G, 143rd Infantry, celebrate their 109th Anniversary.

“I Count to Five... We Dive!!!”

SHELBY KROUSE



Worldwartwov
There's no Fool
like the Fool
with one of those
new entrenching tools



The weather was nice. We had been moving along pretty good all day. Late in the evening Co. B 142 was told to set up a roadblock for the night at a crossroads. I was told by Lt. Fenton to put my squad on the left and a little in front and dig in. Most of us knew how important it was to dig in.

Bobby Stanley and I had been digging in together, so I told him where I wanted to be, then went to check on the other men in the squad. By the time I got back it was dark with only a bit of moonlight. Bobby had started digging a slit trench for us (the kind you get into for cover).

I got my old pick out, we started making some headway. Bobby had one of our new entrenching tools, a shovel that folded so one could use it as a pick. The ground was hard. We were picking, then throwing the dirt out with our hands.

About that time the Germans wanted to get into the act. They started harassment firing at the crossroads using an old howitzer. We could hear it fire, then we would dive in the little bit of cover we had. We were not getting much digging done. We could hear the projectile from the time it started until it hit in our area.

I could count to seven from the time we heard it fire until it hit. After counting a few to be sure the count was seven. We had a hole about four inches deep. I told Bobby that when they fired we would 'pick' five more times - then hit the hole.

Bobby and I were pretty excited by this time, with a large shell hitting

near us about every five minutes. We were digging. The old howitzer fired once again. I counted five. We hit the hole.

Bobby was quicker than I. He dived on my side and I landed on top of Him. He was, and still is, about four inches thick. Our hole was about four inches deep. That left all-of-me sticking up. (I stick up pretty far anyway.)

After the shell hit I explained to Bobby, that the next time, for him to stay on his own side so I could get in on my side.

Dig. Dig. Dig. Howitzer Fires! I count five! We dive! I felt the worst pain I ever had in my life. I had been wounded twice before and I knew it could really hurt to be wounded.

After I could get my breath I found I was not hit, but Bobby's entrenching tool was under me. He had got on his side of the hole but had thrown his entrenching tool on my side. Folded they stuck up about four inches.

After raising a little hell with Bobby we start digging again. Dig. Dig. Dig. Howitzer fires. I count five. We dive. Man! There was that pain again. He had thrown that tool on my side of the hole again.

I knew I had to stop him from throwing that damm tool on my side. I am not sure what I said. I think I explained the next time he did it, I was going to hold him up in the air while the shell exploded. Never the less our side won the war.

Shelby E Krouse
14200 E 39th Terr.
Independence, MO 64055

P.S. Bobby Stanley was one of the best soldiers ever. He has been carrying mail in Blackwell, Okla. Address is: 120 Ikerd

DEL KENDALL RECALLS THOSE DAYS WE SPENT IN ITALY

ITALY...that's 'Pizon' land, a country beachheads and Panzer divisions...Tedischi and Yanks...olive groves and grape terraces, rain swollen rivers and blown bridges. Donkey trails and S mines, and always up-up in the mountains...black markets and real Scotch whiskey made in a Naples bathtub...Cassino, the Abbey and Casino the card game...LST's and PVT's...barrage balloons and Mt. Vesuvius... typhus and tornadoes...Screemin' Memmies and the Shoo Shoo Baby. The American 5th and the British 8th...New Year's and New Zealanders... Mount Chirrico and the Purple Heart...Pompeii and 25 positions. Santa Maria and Santa Claus...ITC and SOP, Highway 6 and Via Roma...Caramelli and monjaree...Mark 4 and Mark Clark... "Hey Joe, my seester 17"...Pack trains and packettes...long toms and hard times...the daily British 'brew up' four o'clock tea...Hellfire Corners in Purpleheart Valley...Anzio Express and O Sola Mi O.

That was the year 1944—and you are there!

BOOK REVIEWS

T-Patch to Victory

BOOKS

Texas' famed T-patchers at war

T-PATCH TO VICTORY, by Col. Vincent M. Lockhart, Staked Plains Press, 324 pp., \$17.50

By **JACK KEASLER**
Special to the Light

What was a T-patcher?

For readers who were not in the military and those too young to remember, it should be said that the T stood for Texas, and that T-patchers were soldiers in the famous 36th Texas Division in World War II.

T-patchers planted the Lone Star flag atop the ramparts of the supposedly invincible German Siegfried Line, and flew the Texas flag over the customhouse at Schweigan, Germany, giving notice that "you are now entering Germany through the courtesy of the 36th Texas Division!"

T-patchers captured Reichsmarshal Hermann Goering, chief of the German air force, who was also president of Prussia and the "Nachfolger vom Reich" — successor to Hitler by designation. The famous German commander, Field Marshal Karl Rudolph Gerd von Rundstedt, surrendered to T-patchers, as did 19 lesser generals.

One of Hitler's girlfriends, Leni Riefenstahl, a famous film producer, was captured by T-patchers, along with Air Marshal Hugo Sperrle, inventor of dive bombing, and Max Amann, the publisher of "Mein Kampf."

All of this and much more is in *T-Patch To Victory*, a book about the 36th (Texas) Infantry in France, Germany and Austria by Vincent M. Lockhart, a retired USAR colonel. Lockhart downplays authoring the book. Instead, he says *T-Patch To Victory* is the result of his spending about \$20,000 traveling, interviewing, cajoling and begging T-patchers to tell him what they remembered about their days in the 36th Infantry Division.

"It's really the T-patchers' personal stories," Lockhart says. His message to them in a recent copy of "The Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly" was, "Okay, fellows, it's your story and it's off the press!"

Lockhart is a newspaperman and stickler for facts. He was state editor for the *Amarillo Globe-News* and later became publisher and editor of the *Canadian Record*. Now retired, he lives in El Paso.

To be on the safe side, he backed up what was told to him by T-patchers at 36th Division reunions in San Antonio, Houston, Dallas — and elsewhere by official action reports from microfilm records in the Texas State Archives in Austin.

For war buffs, T-patchers, friends of the 36th Texas Division, historians and war-record researchers, Vincent M. Lockhart's *T-Patch To Victory* is a book that should be read. It contains 21 photographs, 21 maps, and a comprehensive index of well-known military personages from General Eisenhower down to lowly GIs.

For the casual non-military reader the book is vague about the 36th Infantry Division's one failure — the Rapido in Italy — and touches too

lightly on the terrible price the German people paid for World War II.

The hardships of the T-patchers is told as they arrived at the Bains-les-Bains rest camp in France, after having been in continuous combat, with very little rest, for four months.

Carmel "Candy" White, a young American Red Cross worker, wrote in a letter to her mother:

"Most of them had been in the line for a month or six weeks or more without any relief, without changing clothes, with very poor food, muddy and dirty.

"They were physically and mentally exhausted. Some didn't know where they were. Their buddies were leading them along!"

After reading Col. Lockhart's book, it is easy to understand why T-patchers believe there was never a better Army unit than the 36th Texas Division. After the war, Field Marshal Albert Kesselring, the German master in the use of terrain in defense, was asked which of the American divisions did he consider the best.

He replied, "Beyond a doubt your 3rd and 36th divisions!"

Fifteen men of the 36th Texas Division were awarded the Medal of Honor; 80 received the Distinguished Service Cross; 2,354 were recipients of the Silver Star; and 5,407 the Bronze Star.

Col. Lockhart, who has 14 battle stars on his campaign ribbons, and who enlisted in the 36th at age 16, has done an exceptional job in putting together the story of the Texas Division. The T-patchers should be proud of it!

ORDER NOW...every T-Patcher needs this book - to get the whole story about the 36th in WWII. Hard back, 300 pages, over 60,000 words.

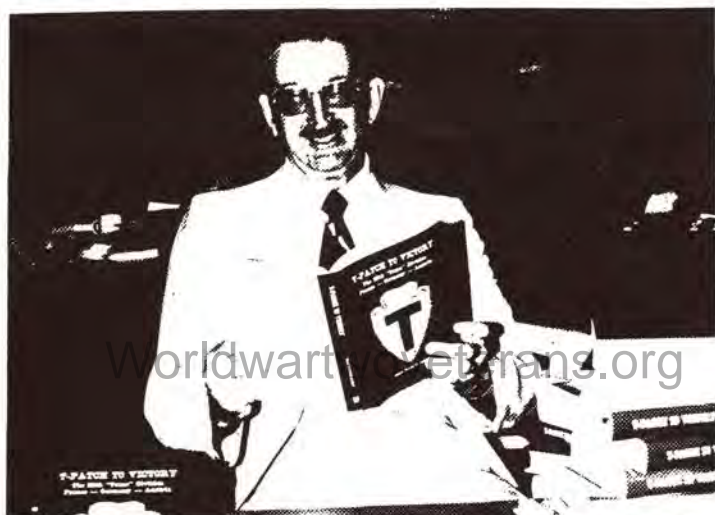
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Makes checks payable to Staked Plains Press, P.O. Box 779, Canyon, TX 79015 - and send that same address.

And do it NOW!!!

Lockhart's 'T-Patch To Victory' Getting Great Book Editor Reviews



AUTOGRAPH Party at a book store in San Antonio — Here's a happy author of a great NEW book, Vincent M. Lockhart, 10236 Ridgewood Drive, El Paso, TX 79925.

Colonel Vincent M. Lockhart of El Paso is the author of "T-Patch to Victory", the story of the 36th (Texas) Division in World War II from the landing in Southern France to the end of the war.

Colonel Lockhart writes from first-hand knowledge, having first enlisted in the 36th Division in February 1931. He was a captain and major during the action covered by the book, serving as assistant adjutant general and division historian. Much has been written about the Texas Division in Italy, but Lockhart's book is the first to be devoted exclusively to the T-Patchers in France, Germany and Austria.

A native Texas, Lockhart was graduated from the famous University of Missouri School of Journalism in 1936, then served on the Amarillo Globe News before entering the war in 1940 with Company F, 142nd Infantry, as a second lieutenant.

After the war, he returned to Canadian, Texas, as publisher and editor of The Canadian Record, and he resumed his devotion to the National Guard, becoming G-1 of the Division. He sought and was granted command of the 2nd Battalion, 142nd Infantry, from which position he went to military schools — first the advanced course in the Infantry School at Fort Benning, Georgia, and then to the full ten-month course at the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

While at C&GS, Lockhart was recruited by the Central Intelligence Agency, where he served nearly 19 years while still remaining active in the Army Reserve. Among his tasks with the CIA were two years as assistant to the Director, then Allen Dulles, and nearly four years as an inspector on the staff of the Inspector General. He served four years in Vietnam before retiring in 1972.

His decorations include the Bronze Star Medal for service in Italy, the Legion of Merit for service in Vietnam, and, from the CIA, the Intelligence Medal of Merit, the Certificate of Distinction and the Certificate of Exceptional Service. He has 14 battle stars on his service ribbons.

He has travelled all over the world — to more than 60 countries and every continent except Antarctica.

Book Reviews

TO ROME AND BEYOND

TO ROME AND BEYOND

John E. Drebs - NTM Press
Order from author Box 117-A,
Weatherford, Tx 76086 \$15.



Col. John E. Krebs

This is definitely one of the best unit historical accounts I have ever read. Packed with facts, and events, well documented with many detail maps, yet the book contains enough dialogue to hold your interest from page to page, as any good book should.

The 760th Tank Battalion was attached to the 36th Infantry Division in Italy in the fall of 1943 and winter of 1944. Many of the places and events described are familiar to the members of "C" Battery, such as Mt. Maggiore, the Rapido River, San Pietro and Cassino. If you like pictures, you will be rewarded with some of the best front-line photos of Allied and German soldiers and equipment in action. Many of these scenes are familiar to us, such as Highway 6, Cassino, the Abbey and the mountains around the valley before Cassino, as well as some very good Bill Mauldin cartoons.

Colonel Krebs spent over twenty years compiling the material in this book. His military service began as an enlisted man in the old 124th (Horse) Cavalry, which was with Patton in the Louisiana maneuvers in 1941. He attended O.C.S. in early 1942, and was assigned to the 760th Tank Battalion at Camp Bowie, Brownwood, Texas. He served in North Africa and was at Arzeu when the 132nd F.A. Bn. was there. This is a combat account written by a combat man as he saw and experienced it. It is one of those books you find hard to put down until you have read it through. Even then, you find yourself going back to re-read a page or look at the pictures again.

Joseph A. Justice
Btry. C, 132nd

“ROME ’44”
by Raleigh Trevelyan
(Viking Press, \$17.95)

This review was sent in by Henry J. Haurand, 8616 Choctaw Road, Richmond, VA 23235 with this comment: “It is a very good book on Cassino, Anzio and Rome from a Britisher’s viewpoint. As a member of Hos. Btry. 132nd FA Bn., I enjoyed the parts of Cassino and Anzio.”

Here are excerpts from the jacket cover:

The 1944 Allied drive for the liberation of Rome, from the January landings at Anzio to the entrance into the Holy City on June 5, is one of the great epics of World War II. Yet it has only been told in bits and pieces. Now, in a masterwork of narrative history, the full story is set down by that rarest of all authorities, a distinguished historian who was also a participant in the events.

Month by month the action is seen from three main vantage points, Rome, Anzio, and Monte Cassino. In the long-occupied city we see the struggle among Wehrmacht and Gestapo, the contending resistance groups, the Vatican, and Romans of all sorts and conditions, from contessas and schoolchildren to collaborators and random victims of the Ardeatine Caves executions. At the Anzio beachhead we know combat and stalemate as hideous as any in the war, while at Monte Cassino, the world-treasured mountaintop abbey whose aerial bombing by the Allies is still a sore controversy, we see a savage push upward that will always stand as a deadly landmark in the annals of attack and siege.

Raleigh Trevelyan was a 21-year-old British officer at Anzio and was wounded twice in Italy. In 1956 he published his trench diaries as a short book, *The Fortress*, and this in turn led to contacts and friendships with Germans who had been only yards away twelve years earlier. Their own diaries and memories join the myriad original sources of this remarkable book. Interviews with Americans, British, and Italians, high and low, are part of the mosaic. Indeed, every available authority on both sides of the Atlantic, published and unpublished, has been skillfully utilized to construct the definitive answer to the question the author was asked by so many Romans in 1944: “What took you so long?”

Raleigh Trevelyan was born in 1923 in the Andaman Islands. The son of an Indian Army officer, he spent much of his childhood in Kashmir. Following combat duty in World War II with the Green Howards, he served as part of the Military Mission to the Italian Army in Rome, remaining there until he was demobilized in 1946. He returned to England to work in a merchant bank and then to begin a career in publishing. A descendent of the famous Macaulay and Trevelyan clan of historians. Raleigh Trevelyan is the author of several books, including “The Fortress”, “A Hermit Disclosed”, “Princes Under the Volcano”, and “A Pre-Raphaelite Circle.”



1982

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1982

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DECLASSIFIED!

Eisenhower feared Nazis planned Alps redoubt

Associated Press

6-5-82

BALTIMORE — Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower was so concerned about a final Nazi stand in the Alps during the closing days of World War II that he diverted divisions south, allowing the Soviets to win the race to Berlin, a published report says.

The report, published Monday as the first of four installments in the *Evening Sun*, reviews declassified Office of Strategic Services documents.

The OSS documents were based on intelligence reports compiled by secret agents who parachuted into the Austrian and Bavarian Alps to confirm the existence of a national stronghold.

Nazi propaganda had been directed at the Allies to stir fears of a last stand from fortified Alpine hideouts, the paper said. The Nazi plans for the stronghold "will remain one of the enduring mysteries of World War II," the paper said.

Twenty OSS agents, some dressed in dark business suits and street shoes, were dropped into the snowy mountains during February and March 1945 to carry out their mission, the paper said. The teams operated under code names such as Greenup, Doctor, Virginia and Georgia. Other teams were active elsewhere in southern Germany. Most of the agents survived the war, but several were captured.

No huge fortress from which to stage a last stand ever was found in the Alps, the newspaper said. But the intelligence reports revealed Nazi efforts to develop hideouts in the mountains stretching from Adolf Hitler's Bavarian retreat at Berchtesgaden to Innsbruck, Austria.

The Nazis apparently designated four or five Alpine areas for different functions of government, the newspaper reported.

The documents were declassified five years ago but have been largely overlooked by historians.

* Read carefully, and then ask yourself, was the 36th one of the divisions that were diverted - south? More on this in some future issues of the Quarterly.

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