

The Fighting 36th
HISTORICAL
Quarterly



**PERSANO: ATTACK
AND COUNTER-ATTACK**

Volume III, No. 1

Spring 1983

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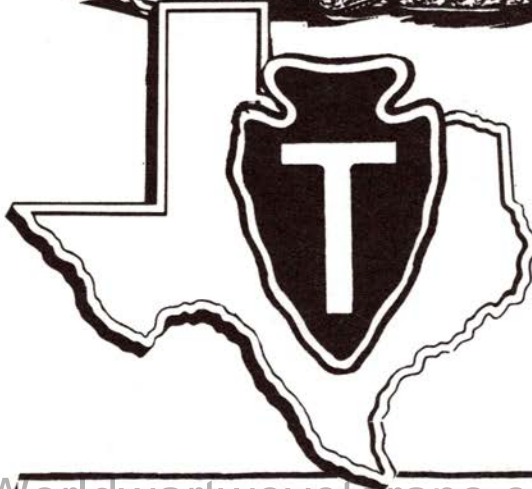
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The Fighting 36th



HISTORICAL QUARTERLY



TEXAS 36th Division
Association



Volume III
Number 1
Spring 1983



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

Activated 25 November 1940 at Camp Bowie, Brownwood, Texas, they were the first American troops to invade Hitler's Europa at Salerno, Italy, 9 September 1943.

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

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

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

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

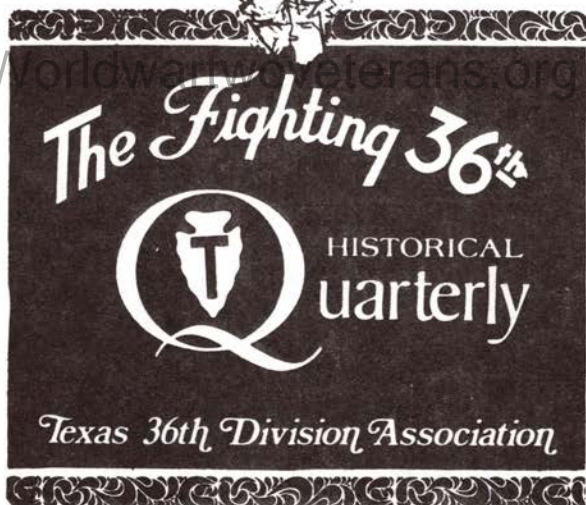


OUR THANKS to Colonel Vincent M. Lockhart, 36th Division Historian, for setting the record straight, after all these years.



Vol. III, 1983 Spring

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.





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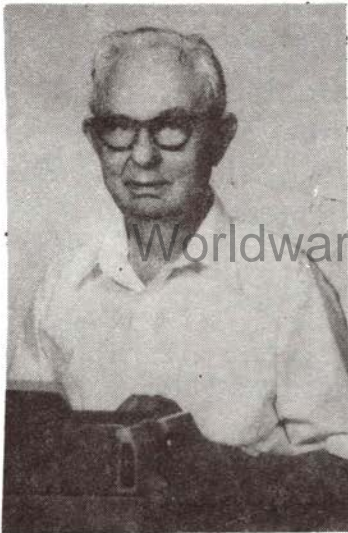
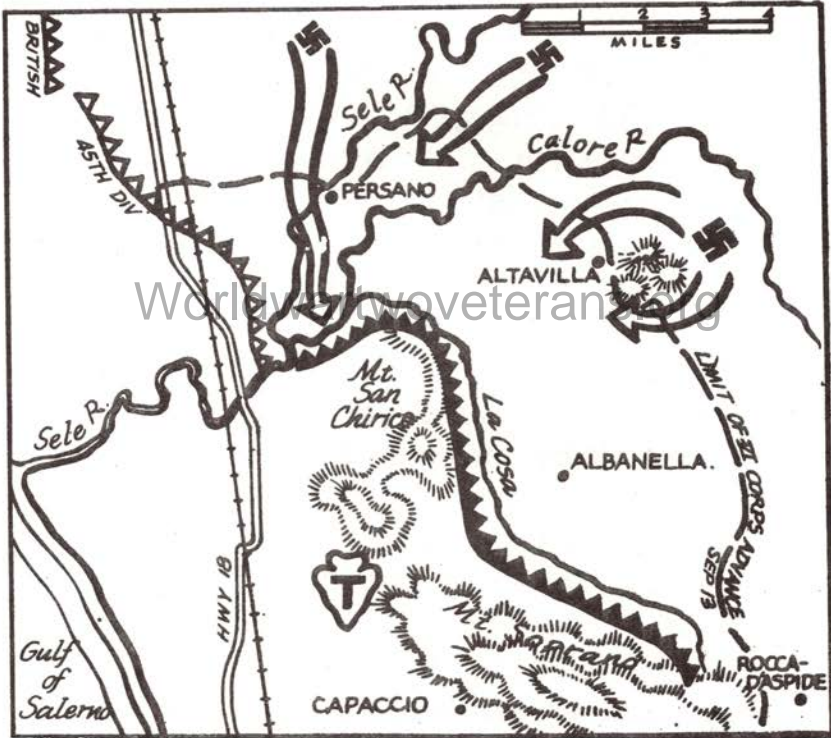
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COVER STORY

EXCLUSIVE – TOLD FOR THE FIRST TIME



Debacle at Sele-Calore Rivers Corridor

C.A. Williamson
12653 King Oaks
San Antonio, TX 78233

The Battle of Persano



by
Alan "Chum" Williamson

When the T-Patchers waded ashore on the Salerno beaches to launch Operation Avalanche, the 2nd Battalion, 143rd Infantry was in Division reserve. The battalion commander was **Lt. Colonel Charles H. (Hal) Jones**, of Temple, Texas. Before mobilization, Jones was CO of Co. D, 143rd Infantry. In civilian life he was a cotton buyer. He used to say, "**I work three months every year and make enough money to vacation the other nine months.**"

Colonel Jones was short in stature. There were jokes about his height, or lack of it. When out of earshot, the men of Co. D called him "**Mister Five-by-Five.**" His contemporaries claimed that during one of the summer encampments a visiting general at the Camp Hulen Officers Club saw Jones dancing and asked, "**Who is that officer over there on his knees?**" According to another story, fellow officers claimed they short-sheeted him and he didn't know it.

Hal Jones was erudite, had a sharp wit, and was every inch an officer and a gentleman. What he lacked in height, he made up for in courage. When his battalion assembled at the railroad station near Paestum on D-Day morning, the found Jones sitting on a stone fence, as unperturbed as if it were a field exercise.

During the first four days ashore, the Battalion remained unblooded. General Walker states in his book, "**A General's Journal,**" date of Sept. 12:

"At about 4:00 P.M. (**Major General Ernest J.) Dawley** told me to send one infantry battalion to the low ground between the Sele and Calore Rivers, faving northeast. He pointed to the position on a map, indicating the front to be about 1½ miles long and about 1½ miles east of **Persano** . . . to cover the gap between the 45th Division on the left and the 36th on the right. I was a little surprised at this because I understood that a regiment of the 45th Division was advancing between the rivers and protecting our left flank. Dawley indicated that units of the 45th Division would be just across the Sele

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River opposite the left flank of the position the battalion was to occupy.

"I told Martin to send his 2nd Battalion, which was in Division reserve, because it was nearest and would have only 5 miles to march. I went to see the battalion commander, Lt. Colonel Charles Jones, explained what he was to do, and told him not to expose his men to enemy observation after getting into position."

It was after midnight by the time the battalion moved into the area. **Captain James Bond** of Waxo, Texas was CO of Company E. I was executive officer. Bond selected a wooded gully for our CP. Our group included 1st Lt. Brantley B. Hart, leader of the Weapons Platoon, 1st Lt. Burdette F. Berry, a spare officer, and a soldier assigned to me as a runner, (whose name I have forgotten). Smith, as I shall call him, carried extra ammunition and, his most important duty, extra containers of water. Combat tends to give soldiers an unquenchable thirst, as Kipling related in his immortal poem, "Gunga Din."

We spent the remainder of the night trying to dig the shallow trench deeper, a difficult task. The ground was so hard one would need a hammer to drive a nail into it. Most of those killed or wounded during the debacle that occurred the following day were men who were in holes too shallow or had no cover at all.

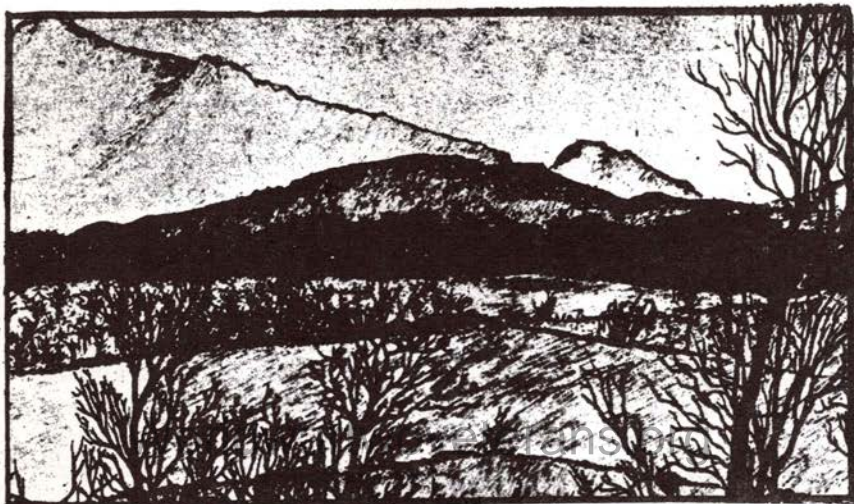
In the book, 'The Fighting Forty-Fifth, The Combat Report of an Infantry Division,' the writers state: "*During the night of September 12-13 the 179th Infantry was shifted to the left of the 157th Infantry Regiment. It's 3rd Bn. was relieved by the 2nd Bn. of the 143rd Infantry, 36th Division.*"

Not so. As Attorney Julian M. Quarles of Miami, Florida entered in his diary in Sept. 1943, "*New position had been held by one infantry regiment from 45th Div. supported by tank destroyer, company of tanks and 2 battalions of artillery. Col. of 45th Regiment said ours was a suicidal mission. In the end it was proved that was so.*" At the time, Quarles was Executive Officer of Company F.

Since the area to be defended was much too large for one battalion, Colonel Jones deployed Co. G in the forward area that would normally be the outpost line. **Captain Milton Steffen** of Huntsville, Texas, CO of Company G, was instructed that in case of attack, the unit should withdraw through the main line of resistance, cross the river, regroup, and counterattack. The MLR was manned by Co. E on the right, Co. F on the left.

Meanwhile, **Col. William H. Martin**, commander of the 143rd Infantry, was preoccupied with other problems. Earlier, Walker had

The Battle of Presano



THE GRATAGLIA borders the Sele River northwest of Persano. Buildings at Persano appear on the right behind the plain, and Hill 424 with Altavilla on its eastern slopes is in the center background. On 11 September German tanks went through this plain, crossed the Sele by a ford, and attacked the rear of the 179th Regiment.

been directed by General Dawley to reinforce Lt. Col. Gaines J. Baron's 1st Battalion, 142nd Infantry, at Altavilla, occupy the high ground north and east of the town and connect with the right flank of the 45th Division along the Calore.

In his Journal, General Walker states, "I gave the job to Colonel Martin. He is to use the 143rd Combat Team, less the 1st Battalion now with Darby's Rangers and less the 2nd Battalion in Division reserve, with the 1st and 3rd Battalions, 142nd Infantry attached." This was code-named "The Martin Force."

During the endless postmortems that followed the Persano debacle, it was brought out that Lt. Col. Jones asked Martin for the regimental pioneer tool set to enable his men to dig in. Martin said, "You don't need it. The 45th is going to attack up the Sele River tomorrow morning and that will take any pressure off you."

Walker had believed the 45th was going to attack up the Sele on the 13th until Dawley informed him otherwise. Apparently, Martin didn't get the word.

Jones also asked for artillery and antitank support. That too was denied. Martin said, "You won't need it. I told you nothing's coming that way."

General Walker told Jones he could call on a Corps artillery battery when it wasn't firing other missions. However, the unit proved to be too far away for any effective support.

Throughout the morning of Sept. 13, it appeared that Martin was right. Nothing came our way. However, the 45th was not wher Dawley

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said it would be. According to **Judge Clarence M. Ferguson** of Groesbeck, Texas, who was Battalion S3 at the time, **"Sergeant J. D. Bates and I made repeated efforts to make contact with the 45th Division, but they were not there. Since the 2nd Battalion was detached from Division and under Corps control, this was reported to Corps Headquarters. Each time, Corps staff officers claimed the 45th was there."**

1st Lt. Quarles entered in his diary on Sept. 13, **"First reports at 1300 of enemy armor units across river on left flank. Shellfire began falling. Could hear signs of severe fighting to left and rear of our position across river. 1500 Lt. Zink (Co. G) and 10 men left of his platoon drew back to our position and I guided to Battalion CP. Enemy tanks firing machine guns and 75s came into our position followed by infantry. Tanks would stop and fire, and German infantry would advance under fire."**

Meanwhile, mortar and artillery fire literally churned the ground around Company E's CP. After each salvo, Captain Bond checked by voice for possible casualties. Miraculously, no one was hit.

The barrage lifted. Men from the outpost line came running back through the MLR. Asked what was going on, one said, **"It's getting too hot up there!"**

On a battlefield, panic, like bravery, is contagious. Smith said, **"Let's get the hell out of here!"**

"We can't," I replied. **"Captain Bond's orders are to hold the ground at any cost."**

"I don't give a Goddamn about him!"

"There's nowher to go. They're all around us." I didn't know it at the time, but that was a true statement.

Crew of two 57 mm antitank guns posted at positions supporting the MLR, turned tail with their guns and headed for the rear. Colonel Jones stopped them at the Battalion CP. **"Go back to your positions,"** he ordered. **"The fight is there, not back here."**

Two self-propelled 75 mm guns posted at positions supporting the MLR turned tail and headed for the rear. Gun and crew then had to go to the rear. The other returned to its position, its weapons carrier was hit and was still burning that night.

It was a bright, sunny day. Cows grazed peacefully in the green pastures.

At about 1530, a German soldier armed with a light machine gun crawled into the opening in the hedgerow on the left flank of our position. A burst of machine gun fire struck him full in the face. His head seemed to explode. A salvo of artillery shells screamed overhead, probing for the machine gunner.

The Battle of Presano

Soon after, an enemy tank rolled through the opening in the hedgerow, accompanied by a squad of infantry, crouching. Tank and infantry stopped inside the hedgerow. A German officer nonchalantly stood beside the tank, its cannon and machine guns sighted down the length of our shallow trench, in the classic enfilading position.

I had joined Co. E a few days before **Avalanche**. My experience during the preceding ten years, National Guard and active duty, was in supply and transportation. It was the first time I had seen or heard of tank-infantry teams. I thought we were supposed to stay in our foxholes until the tanks passed, then fight the infantry that followed. But the tank didn't go through. It remained with the foot soldiers, to act as a mobile pillbox. In several cases during this engagement, the tanks fired their big guns at individual soldiers.

Captain Bond held a hasty conference to decide if our little group, armed with nothing heavier than the M-1 rifle, should try to fight our way out. The decision was unanimous: **Surrender**.

In retrospect, the fact that the Germans held their fire indicated they were willing to give us time to decide.

"Have you got white handkerchief?" Bond asked.

I did have. I passed it to Smith, who was at the end of the gully nearest the tank. He put the white square of cloth on the point of his fixed bayonet and waved it aloft. There was no response from the enemy soldiers, who remained in place.

Acting on my instructions, Smith stood up. Still no response; but they didn't shoot him. He walked out toward the tank. As he approached the German officer, he looked back and said, **"He says for the rest of you to come on out."**

We came out with our hands up. As we approached the tank, not 20 feet away, a shot rang out. Someone fired at the officer, missing him and also barely missing Captain Bond.

The officer remained unconcerned; but not the squad leader. Angered by the apparent attempt to take advantage of our surrender, he swung his submachine gun toward us threateningly, its muzzle not six feet from my midsection.

We hurried around the dead enemy gunner. What had been his face was a bloody red mess. His body looked grotesque, unreal, like something painted in a picture.

Out on the road leading to the position, I was amazed at the number of tanks and trucks loaded with troops, bumper to bumper, moving to the front. I wondered where our air support was. Our planes were never around when we needed them.

We passed the bloated body of an American soldier, bandaged from the waist up, his arms raised as if in supplication. He had died as

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he was being bandaged. The 179th CT had been mauled on this same ground two days before. The nauseating stench of the dead rose from the ditches and the fields.

For a while we had no escort. Guides at each road junction directed us toward the rear. Then we were joined by guards who escorted us to a POW collecting point. Enroute, a German soldier relieved me of my watch. During the next few weeks, I didn't miss it nearly so much as I missed my handkerchief.

At the collecting point, we were reunited with men of our three rifle platoons, including Lieutenants John Hannan, Floyd L. (Leonard) Vaden and Arthur D. Morrow, the platoon leaders.

In his Journal under date of Sept. 13, General Walker wrote, "At about 5:00 P.M., a report was received that the 2nd Battalion, which Dawley sent yesterday to fill the gap between the Sele and the Calore Rivers, was being attacked; that the greater part of the Battalion had been captured; and that the remainder had fled. At first I jumped to the conclusion that this was a disgraceful performance. But as more and more information became available, I changed my mind.

"For one thing, the 45th Division, west of the Sele River, was repulsed in its effort to advance, and a gap of some 2 miles or more existed at Persano, leaving the Battalion dangerously isolated and exposed. As a result, strong German forces of armor and infantry struck the Battalion from both front and rear simultaneously. Being without antitank weapons, and being too distant from its own artillery to receive effective close support, it was quickly overwhelmed, with a loss of some 500 officers and men, including the Battalion commander, who was captured."



The actual figure was 508 killed, wounded and captured.

The Battle of Presano

In another Journal entry, Walker stated, **"The Battalion was routed."** Not so! It was destroyed.

Later, Walker stated that the blame should be shared by himself and Troy Middleton, CG of the 45th Division. **"When Dawley gave me his instructions to move** (the 2nd Battalion into position), Troy Middleton was present. He arrived before I did. He heard the instructions.

"When Dawley indicated the front line of the position the battalion was to occupy, and stated that the right flank of the 45th Division would be on the left of the battalion across the Sele, Middleton made no comment." Walker blamed Middleton for apparently being unaware of the position of his regiments, and himself for not checking the information.

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After the war, as late as the 1982 Division Reunion, I heard rumors that there were plans to court-martial Colonel Jones **"for surrendering the 2nd Battalion."** He didn't surrender it. His command post was the last to fall. It was overrun about 6:00 P.M.

Major General Ernest J. "Mike Dawley, commander of VI Corps, was made the scapegoat. He was relieved and reduced to colonel, his permanent grade. I met Dawley in 1954 and got his version. But that's another story.

While a student at the Infantry School, Fort Benning, in 1948, I met an instructor who was a former T-Patcher. He said, **"Chum, the battalion didn't fight. After the ground was retaken, we went over it to see what happened. We found bandolier after bandolier of ammunition that had not been fired. We found the bodies of men on the outpost line who lay in their slit trenches after the barrage was lifted, and were bayoneted to death."**

"When you were there, nobody was shooting at you," I replied. **"If you had nothing but an M-1 rifle, with no support of any kind, and you were outnumbered three to one by infantry, tanks and artillery, what's the school solution?"**

"To be somewhere else," he chuckled.

Julian Quarles, looking back 40 years, expressed it best: **"It was not a defensive position, and never before or since did I see a combat unit placed in such a vulnerable position, with the enemy in front of it and nothing on either side or behind it. Considering the Battalion had no prior combat experience, it was like a high school football team facing the Dallas Cowboys."**

When Captain Carl R. Bayne, the unit commander, and Quarles, his Exec, were taken, the Co. F command post was overrun from the

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rear. Quarles credits 2nd Lt. William R. Swanson of El Centro, California, one of the company officers, with saving his life. A German soldier was about to shoot Quarles when Swanson, who had already been captured, intervened. Quarles was slightly wounded by a grenade. Company F lost 22 men killed and 68 missing.

Bayne and Quarles escaped eight days later (Sept. 21)* by leaping from a moving train under cover of darkness. After 33 days behind enemy lines, they rejoined the 143rd Infantry. But that too is another story.

(See Vol. II, No. 1 Spring 1982, ESCAPE FROM PRISON TRAIN, Pages 13-18, reprint of illustrated story as printed in LOOK Magazine)

Despite the overwhelming odds, men of the 2nd Battalion did resist the enemy juggernaut. And there were a number of individual acts of heroism.

A soldier whose name and unit I don't recall fired an anti-tank rifle-grenade at an approaching tank, knocking off one of the tracks. Members of the tank crew took him prisoner and forced him to put the track back on.

When men of the outpost line began to withdraw through the MLR, **Lieutenant Clifford L. "Bucky" Boyd**, a Company F platoon leader, asked "What's going on?"

One of the soldiers replied, "They're all giving up out there!"

Boyd shouted, "Well! Let's go get them!" He grabbed his carbine and ran out toward a Mark IV tank.

A single shot fired by a German rifleman went through his body and struck a tree above his foxhole.

When Panzer Grenadiers called at Lt. Colonel Jones' Battalion CP shortly before sundown, Captain Clarence M. Ferguson had a mound in front of his slit trench. A panzer-mounted machine gun began to take the top off the mound. Captain Ferguson barely managed to avoid being decapitated.

Sergeant Dennis E. Steck of Company H, who was at the command post, stood up and began firing with his submachinegun on full automatic. Enemy machine gun fire almost literally cut his body in half.

Colonel Jones, Captain Ferguson, 1st L. Teddy Roggen, and other members of the Battalion staff were taken prisoner. **Major Frank J. Buldain**, the Battalion Exec, had gone to get help. Captain Theo Andrews, CO of the Battalion Headquarters Company, had gone back across the Sele on the same mission: to get help that never came. The

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fall of the Battalion Command Post completed the enemy mopping up operations. The 2nd Battalion, 143rd Infantry, had ceased to exist as a combat unit.

One entire platoon of Company F managed to evade capture. It had good cover, in a ravine, in an out of the way place, and the Germans overlooked it. **Lieut. Dasile Dragomir**, the platoon leader, ordered his men not to fire unless fired upon, to keep down, and to make as little noise as possible. The platoon remained in the position undetected for several days, until the Germans withdrew.

Captain Milton Stefen, commander of Company G, also lived to fight another day. When men of his company manning the outpost line withdrew across the river to regroup according to plan, "Steff" of course went with them.

Some four months after, during the first of the four battles for Cassino, he succeeded in crossing the Rapido. However, he was wounded and captured. His leg was amputated in a German field hospital, where he later died.

Captain Carl R. Bayne was also killed during the disastrous attempts to cross the Rapido. By that time, January 1944, Bayne was Battalion S-3, Captain Julian M. Quarles Commanding Co. H.

On Sept. 14, I was part of a long column of American POWs being marched down the Via Appia, the historic "**Appian Way**." During the time of Christ, and before, Roman soldiers trod this same highway, with captives. Allied aircraft, so strangely absent when he needed them, flew overhead, wagging their wings in recognition.

One of the flank guards posted at intervals along the outside of the

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column was walking next to me. He spoke fluent English, and mentioned that he had an uncle in New York, whom he hoped to visit after the war.

He said, **"You Americans are a lot like us. When you get in a tight spot where you have no chance, you give up. We do the same thing. But not on the Eastern Front. There, neither side takes prisoners, except in large numbers."**

Colonel Jones' jeep passed, driven by a German soldier. A German officer was riding in the back. Jones was beside himself. This was the unkindest cut.

My guard said, **"You can have Italy. But you will never get into Germany."**

"Perhaps not through Italy," I replied. **"This is just a sideshow. But we will eventually get in through France and the low countries."**

Grinning, he said, **"For you, the war is over."**

The End



RARE PHOTO — Men of 2nd Bn. 143rd at Oflag 64 - Poland 1945 . . . front row: Lt. Graham; Capt. Clarence Ferguson; Lt. Col. Charles H. Jones; Lt. B. F. Berry and Lt. Davis (from left). 2nd row: Lt. Brantley Hart; Lt. William Swanson; Lt. Ted Roggen and Lt. Young. 3rd row: Lt. Brent; Lt. C. Alan (Chum) Williamson; Lt. Arthur Morrow; Capt. James B. Bond and Lt. Ivan Carlisle. Back row: Lt. John Hannon; Lt. Haag; Lt. C. L. Livingstone; Lt. Leonard Vaden and Capt. Brown. (Photo from Austin E. Webb).

The Battle of Persano

In Julian Quarles' notes written after Persano, he expressed admiration for the professionalism of the German soldier and his humane treatment of prisoners. I found this to be true, including life in the POW camps.

A number of the American prisoners taken at Persano, Altavilla and elsewhere during heavy fighting for the beachhead were seriously wounded. These, the Germans lacked the motor transport to evacuate.

The German officer in charge asked two medical officers who had been captured if either was married. Of the two, **Captain Aleman**, of Port Arthur, Texas was married. He was left behind with the wounded who were unable to walk, to be liberated by the advancing Fifth Army.



NOTES written after capture at Persano, entitled:
**"Things To Remember, Before Returning
To American Forces"**

By Julian M. Quarles

1. Germans firing into bodies to be sure they were bodies.
2. The way my carbine fired.
3. Roebuck plugging away at Germans with his M-1 in the middle of a field.
4. How mad you get in battle — it does away with fear.
5. How surprised you are at the way some people you thought you knew reacted in battle.
6. How quick you learn when a shell is going to land near you and when it is not.
7. How self reliant the lowest German soldier in this Panzer division was.

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8. How kind the German soldier was to the American prisoner. (soldiers of southern Germany)
9. How German motor convoys seem to be almost bumper to bumper a few miles behind the front.
10. Every German truck camouflaged no matter how far back.
11. How scared the Germans were of our planes.
12. The number of wrecked and burned trucks on the road.
13. The number of our own trucks that were destroyed by the drivers and were captured.
14. Two German guards taking a large loaf of bread and messkit away from Italian soldiers and giving to English prisoner.
15. How the German soldier when he is by himself says he hated Hitler and wishes the war were over.
16. How the Poles said they were taken in the German army by force and had to stay.
17. Herds of beautiful horses racing madly around fields, some with sides torn open from machine guns and shrapnel wounds.
18. From hearsay, the heroic attitude of the medics in helping the wounded in battle and also on the beach working amidst shellfire.

Before mobilization, Company E, 143rd Infantry, Texas National Guard, was stationed at Caldwell, Texas. When mobilized, all of the men were from Caldwell or the neighboring town of Somerville.

General Walker had not broken up the concentration of men from the two small communities through reassignments, as General Omar Bradley did when he commanded a National Guard division. As a result, after the battle of Persano there was hardly a home in Caldwell or Somerville that did not receive one of the dreaded telegrams from the War Department.

Acknowledgements: Material for the foregoing account of the second battle of the Sele-Calore corridor, in addition to personal observation, was gathered for the most part from stories told by fellow prisoners during the long days and nights in the POW camps. These include the late Colonel Charles H. "Hal" Jones, Captains Clarence M. Ferguson, James B. Bond and Richard H. Torrence (Dick died at Oflag 64), Lieutenant William R. Swanson — all of the 18 officers of the 2nd Battalion who were behind barbed wire with me.

After the war, additional input was received from Brigadier Generals David M. Frazier and William "Ray" Lynch, and Major General (Ret.) Ernest J. Dawley, the VI Corps commander who took the rap.

Grateful acknowledgement is made to Judge Clarence M. Ferguson and Attorney Julian M. Quarles for their invaluable assistance, through letters and long distance phone calls, during preparation of the manuscript.

References: "FROM TEXAS TO ROME, A General's Journal," Fred L. Walker, Taylor Publishing Co., Dallas, 1969. "THE BATTLE OF SALERNO," Irving Weinstein, Thomas Y. Crowell Co., New York, 1965. "UNITED STATES ARMY IN WORLD WAR II, The Mediterranean Theater of Operations, Salerno to Cassino," Martin Blumenson, Office of the Chief of Military History, United States Army, Washington, D.C., 1969.

The Battle of Presano

"ESCAPING IS NO LONGER A SPORT"

Or — Life in an Officers POW
Compound, Oflag 64, as recalled by
C. A. Chum Williamson

There were two schools of thought regarding relationships between POWs and their captors. The British believed in maximum confrontation — making as much trouble for the German POW camp officials as possible.

Colonel Thomas Drake, Senior American Officer at Oflag 64 until he was repatriated because of physical disability during the summer of 1944, believed in getting along with them. This, he reasoned, correctly, would result in better treatment and enable the American POWs to live more comfortably.

During Drake's tenure as SAO, we had parole walks, during which those who signed the parole (promising not to attempt to escape) were taken under light guard on a two hour walk. We were also permitted to attend a motion picture theater in town on some Sunday mornings, by signing the parole.

After Drake left, the Germans changed the wording of the parole to include a pledge to do nothing — prejudicial to the German Reich. LCol (later 4-star general) **John K. Waters** and the mew SAO, **Col. Paul R. Goode**, refused to let us sign the new parole. This ended the movies and the parole walks.

In 1944, the British staged an escape during which about 50 British POWs got outside the wire. Only one ever got back to England. Many of the others were killed. Meanwhile, the British published and distributed a posted in occupied territories telling the people to rise-up-and-kill-the-Germans. There was advice on how to seize German guards from behind and slash their throats.

Meanwhile, there was a sort of game being played between the American snior officers and the Germans at Oflag 64. At the least provocation, the Americans would write a letter to the Protecting Power (the Swiss government) complaining about alleged violations of the Geneva convention. The theory was that although the Swiss couldn't do anything about it, the Germans would have to answer the charges and that would, by taking up time and personnel, contribute to the Allied war effort.

After the British distributed their poster, the Germans put out a reply. It went: **ESCAPING IS NO LONGER A SPORT!** It went on to tell how when we tried to escape, they recaptured us alive. (This was true). However, since the British were playing dirty, the chances of escaped POWs being recaptured alive were nil.

When they came to put the poster on our camp bulletin board, LTC Schaeffer protested. He shoved Lt Schmitt in the way of the German who was putting up the poster. The German pushed Schmitt out of the way and went ahead and put up the poster. Schaeffer said, "**All right, you've used force!**" Then he fired off a letter to the Protecting Power.

Shortly thereafter, Schaeffer and Schmitt were taken to a nearby town, tried by a "**People's Court**," charged with obstructing a German soldier in the performance of his duties, and sentenced to death. Captain Clarence M. Ferguson (now Judge Ferguson of Groesbeck, Texas) acted as Schaeffer's defense counsel.

The Geneva Convention contained a provision that when a POW is sentenced to death, there must be a waiting period of six months before the sentence is carried out. Of course the war ended before the six months was up, in the case of Schaeffer and Schmitt.

On the whole, we were treated very well by the German gurdts at Oflag 64. **Very few of them were Nazis.** All or nearly all were veterans of the Eastern Front, who had been fighting the Soviets and were sent to Oflag 64 for a much deserved rest from the hardships of the Eastern front.

We liked one of the German Captains so well, Hauptman Minter, that we, or rather Col. Goode, the senior American officer, offered him the protection of an American uniform when there was danger that we would be overtaken by the Soviets during the evacuation of Oflag 64 and the long march back into Germany. The officer refused. Said he would 'go down' in the uniform of his own country.

However, we were not overtaken. The Germans broke out of the pocket and took us with them. That is, those who wanted to go. They made no effort to stop any who escaped in the direction of the advancing Soviets.



The Heroes

For
Conspicuous Gallantry...

worldwartwoveterans.org



Lt. Gen. Alexander M. Patch, Jr., Commanding General U.S. Seventh Army, congratulates Lt. Stephen R. Gregg, Bayonne, New Jersey, 36th Infantry Division after presenting him with the Medal of Honor, near Bernolsheim, France, March 14, 1945. Gregg served with Co. L, 143rd Infantry. (Photo courtesy of Lou Gronski, of Cape Canaveral FL, his old buddy from Co. L.)

How Kelly's Buddy Won a CMH



**Nation's Highest
Award is Given to
143rd Lieutenant**



GREGG, STEPHEN R.
(Then T/Sgt. of Co. L, 143rd)

Rank and Organization: Second Lieutenant, 143d Infantry, 36th Infantry Division. *Place and Date:* Near Montelimar, France, 27 Aug. 1944. *Entered Service at:* Bayonne, N.J. *Birth:* New York City, N.Y. *G. O. No.:* 31, 17 Apr. 1945. *Citation:* For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at risk of life above and beyond the call of duty on 27 Aug. 1944, in the vicinity of Montelimar, France. As his platoon advanced up on the enemy positions, the leading scout was fired upon and Second Lieutenant Gregg (then a Technical Sergeant) immediately put his machine guns into action to cover the advance of the riflemen. The Germans, who were at close range, threw hand grenades at the riflemen, killing some and wounding seven. Each time a medical aid man attempted to reach the wounded, the Germans fired at him. Realizing the seriousness of the situation, Lieutenant Gregg took one of the light .30 caliber machine guns, and, firing from the hip, started boldly up the hill with the medical aid man following him. Although the enemy was throwing hand grenades at him, Lieutenant Gregg remained and fired into the enemy positions while the medical aid man removed the seven wounded men to safety. When Lieutenant

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Gregg had expended all his ammunition, he was covered by four Germans who ordered him to surrender. Since the attention of most of the Germans had been diverted by watching this action, friendly riflemen were able to maneuver into firing positions. One, seeing Lieutenant Gregg's situation, opened fire on his captors. The four Germans hit the ground and thereupon Lieutenant Gregg recovered a machine pistol from one of the Germans and managed to escape to his other machine-gun positions. He manned a gun, firing at his captors, killed one of them and wounded the other. This action so discouraged the Germans that the platoon was able to continue its advance up the hill to achieve its objective. The following morning, just prior to daybreak, the Germans launched a strong attack, supported by tanks, in an attempt to drive Company L from the hill. As these tanks moved along the valley and their foot troops advanced up the hill, Lieutenant Gregg immediately ordered his mortars into action. During the day, by careful observation, he was able to direct effective fire on the enemy, inflicting heavy casualties. By late afternoon he had directed 600 rounds when his communication to the mortars was knocked out. Without hesitation he started checking his wires, although the area was under heavy enemy small-arms and artillery fire. When he was within 100 yards of his mortar position, one of his men informed him that the section had been captured and the Germans were using the mortars to fire on the company. Lieutenant Gregg with this man and another nearby rifleman stared for the gun position where he could see five Germans firing his mortars. He ordered the two men to cover him, crawled up, threw a hand grenade into the position, and then charged it. The hand grenade killed one, injured two; Lieutenant Gregg took the other two as prisoners, and put his mortars back into action.



NEW BADGE - Sheriff Peter J. DiWardo is pictured pinning his department's new California style, seven-point gold badge on supervising Court Officer Stephen Gregg

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 1981

Stephen Gregg of 143rd Receives First CMH License Plates From New Jersey



CREDIT LINES: Above photo was sent in by Joe Maschi of Dumont NJ of Can/Co 143rd a couple of years ago. Then the glossy photo on page 20, was sent in by Lou Gronski of Cape Canaveral FL, who is a real buddy of Steve Gregg (photo of Lou and Gregg appeared in the T-Patcher in 1981). Clip from DAV Magazine, April 1982 of Gregg and Taddo Beppu was sent in by Shelby Krouse.

These loyal T-Patchers have our thanks for their help in putting this story together.

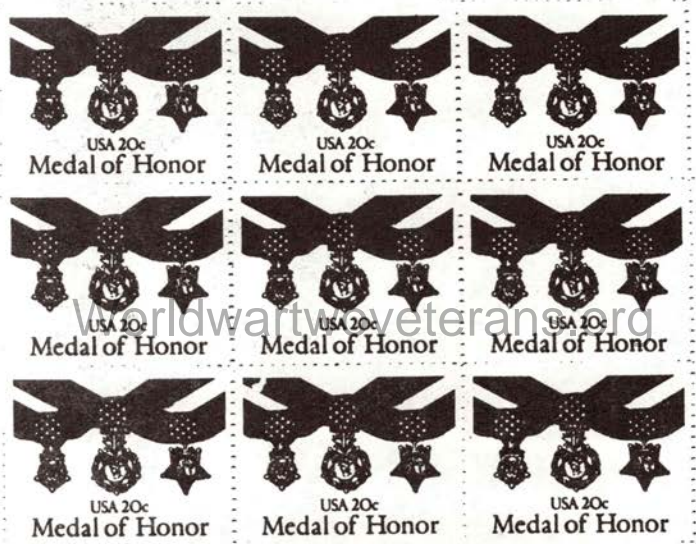


DAV MAGAZINE

Hawaii Reunion

Stephen Gregg, right, Congressional Medal of Honor recipient who served in the 36th Division during World War II, and Taddo Beppu, left, Hawaii DAV Department past commander who was with the 442nd Division, exchange war experiences at a Congressional Medal of Honor Society reunion at Fort DeRussy near Honolulu. Beppu's unit rescued a battalion of the 36th Division in Italy during World War II. Gregg is a life member of P.J. Hogan DAV Chapter 5 in Bayonne, N.J.

FIFTEEN T-PATCHERS WON THE C.M.H. in World War II



We've printed 9—With 6 More to go . . .

NEW COMMEMORATIVE Medal of Honor Stamp, issued June 9th (at presstime). Shown here are fifteen of these CHMs . . . representing the 15 T-Patchers who won this 'highest' honor. ABOVE: are the first nine: In Vol. I we had: Edward C. Dahlgren; Arnold Bjorklund; Homer L. Wise and Charles H. Coolidge. Stories in Vol. II—were Emil Deleau (KIA); Thomas E. McCall; Charles (Commando) Kelly and James M. Logan.

In this issue is number 9 — Stephen R. Gregg.

We now have six to go: Morris E. Crain; Bernard P. Bell and Ellia A. Weicht to be in next 3 issues of Vol. III, and for three issues of Vol. IV 1984—Gerald Gordon, Silvestre S. Herrera and William J. Crawford.



OLD BATTLEFIELDS OF ALSACE

Memories Galore for Bartlett



By H. M. Bartlett
Co. E 141st Inf.

I had occasion to travel to Germany on business recently, and while there I had a few free days. I seized the opportunity to journey into the province of Alsace to visit some of our old battlefields.

Near Colmar there is a cluster of small villages, **Riquewihr**, **Kientzheim**, **Sigolsheim** and **Amlerschihr**, that occupy a special place in my memory. It was in this vicinity that **Company E of 141st**, (with which I served as rifleman and communications sergeant from June 44 to the war's end) distinguished themselves, being awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for the action there.



Above: H. M. Bartlett at the entrance to Riquewihr, vineyard covered hills in background.



Right: Hill 393 in background. A familiar scene to E/141st men, where we 'homesteaded' the place for 13 days.

I traced our steps from Riquewihr to the mound of French real estate known to the men of E Company as "**Hill 393**". The contour of the hill, the ancient vineyards on its slopes, and even the foliage at the top was just as I remembered it. As I made my way up the slope, I became aware that the 38 years that has passed seemed to add to

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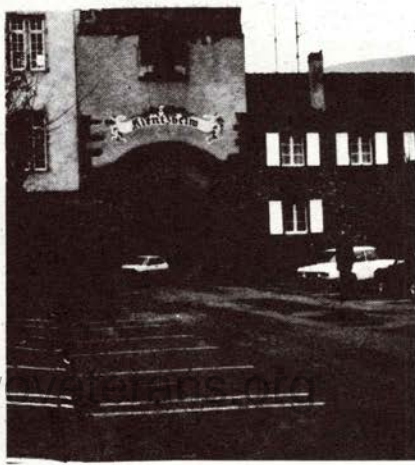
the steepness. I was out of breath before I reached the top, just as I remembered being 38 years ago, but for a different reason this time.

When I reached the top I found that most of our foxholes are still there, covered with a light mat of the natural ground cover that grows in that area, but still very distinguishable . . . I located practically every one in the company area. As I stood by each hole I tried to remember who the former tenant was, and did remember quite a few. At the crest of the hill I could see **Kientzheim and Ammeerschwihr** in the valley, our objectives in the campaign.

An Awesome Feeling . . .

It was an awesome feeling to stand there. I felt somewhat guilty for being alive, when so many of my buddies didn't make it down the hill alive. The area is very quiet now, so serene and peaceful. Perhaps that's what we were fighting for.

I proceeded down the hill into **Kientzheim** where I discovered a monument erected by the French. It consists of a marble plaque, crediting the French armour with liberation of the town. The remaining part of the monument is a well preserved and newly painted WWII Sherman tank. A wreath of cut flowers had been placed at the front of the tank recently, probably about December 22nd, the anniversary of the liberation. (I was there January 6th, 1983.)



WWII Sherman Tank (above) used by French General Montsabert's men. Monuments in foreground is "To Liberators of Kientzheim, Dec. 1944". U.S. Forces not mentioned. This "DeGaulles" me, no end (pun intended).

Right: I'm standing by the entrance to KIENTZHEIM, Co. E didn't use front door, we came in the rear from Hill 393 barely shown in background. Little sign of damage, wasn't bombed, just shelled.

Old Battlefields of Alsace

Ammerschwihr held very little of my interest since I had never seen it in daylight. We captured and cleared it after nightfall of the day we took Kientzheim and proceeded onward before day (being relieved by the 3rd Division). I did take note that both **Kientzheim** and **Ammerschwihr** showed no signs of damaged, although, as I remember it, they did sustain heavy damage during the fighting.



This house (replaced) the one I used to avoid shelling. Complete re-built, now in home of curator of Jewish Cemetery. When I returned to my reel of wire, it was destroyed by shrapnel.

From this area I journeyed to **Hagenau** and traced our route through the city, down to the Moder river. The houses just across the river that E Company held in preparation for the bridging and crossing have been rebuilt. German armor completely demolished them while E company "**sweated it out**" in the basements below. I found the cemetery in the middle of town where I had dropped a reel of phone wire to dive into the house across the street to avoid shrapnel. When I returned to my wire, the reel was demolished, convincing me that I had used good judgment (at least once). The area, though refurbished, is still recognizable, if one compares the pictures I made to the ones that appear in our Division history book as shown here. . .



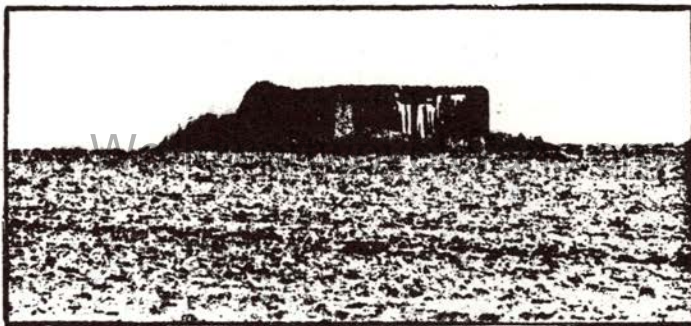
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I visited the spot on the other side of the cemetery where **T/Sgt Morris Crane** of E Company lost his life while performing a deed that won him the CMH. I paused there for a while, thinking of him and of his family, whom I have never met nor hve I been able to correspond with them. I'd like to share this experience with them if I could.



I'm standing in front of spot where T/Sgt. Morris Crane, C.M.H. winner was found. I was there, and took a Nazi helmet and photo of one of his German victims in March 1945, as a reminder of this heroic deed.

Beyond **Hagenau**, to the north, I traveled the tree lined road that the 111th Engineers had such a difficult time in clearing. The Germans had blocked it with cut trees and had mined and booby trapped it, I'm told. Younger trees line the road now, and it is such a peaceful scene that it is difficult to imagine the former atmosphere.



Just south of **Wissembourg**, and the German border, I found two pillboxes that have defied all efforts to demolish them. They are blackened with smoke from demolitions, but there they stand, much as they were when they were occupied.

Old Battlefield of Alsace

At the customs gate on the Franco/German border, I discovered a paradox — I first took note that the swastika that formerly appeared in the eagle's claw (see the picture of the gate in the Division history) has now been replaced by the great seal of the Federal Republic of Germany. In positioning myself at the gate for a photo, I glanced at the sandstone wall behind me and noticed some sort of engraving.

Examining it closer I found that it is a very accurate map of the state of Texas, with a star in the upper right sector. Also inscribed above it is the name "Jere Gill". Adjacent thereto is another inscription, "Min. Wells", which I take it to be Mineral Wells, Texas, Jere's home town. I don't know Jere, but I would like to contact him and let him know that his artwork has endured longer than the swastika!

Worldwarrveterans.org

I did not see any evidence of the Siegfried Line in Germany (only two pillboxes in France). It seems to have been completely erased, as does the enmity between our countries. The younger generation of Germans with whom I am associated in my work know very little of what happened in those war years. It is not included in their history. I suppose it is for the best that it was handled this way. The persons that were responsible for perpetrating such misery on the world have been arrested, convicted and justice administered. We would do well to close the book on that. We have enough work to do to ensure the future without dwelling on the past.

During a previous trip to Germany, June of 1982, I travelled from **Koblenz to Ulm** to see how that sector of the country looked now. I was particularly interested in the Cathedral, how it was refurbished. The area, and the entire countryside, is so beautiful. I enjoyed it very much, but it doesn't compare with revisiting the areas where we were so close to each other in combat.

As I walked over the ground in Riquewihir, Kientzheim, and Hagenau, I felt as if the ground was hallowed. I feel that, to a great extent, I am right about that — the blood of many of my comrades, buddies, friends, brothers, is mingled with that soil, and for me, that makes it hallowed.

H. M. BARTLETT,
Rt. 1, Bo 49, Athens, AL 35611



THE TROUBLE WITH HOTEL OSTHEIM



By Del Kendall

You came upon him, sloshing back and forth thru a mud puddle on a rutted road winding amongst a small stand of pine, above the vineyard covered hills overlooking Riquewihr. You had been firing harassing fire into town.

"Alex," you said, "just what in hell do you think you're doing?" He looked at you with that easy smile of his and said, "Workin' on a good dose of Trench Foot, have been for the past two weeks. Think I got it made. Not gonna take any more of this crap no way. Gonna get myself a nice rest in a hospital someplace. I've had it".

You shook your head in disbelief. He was a good man and you were going to miss him, and one thing was for sure; he wasn't joking. Pondering, you turned your back and walked on, as some "big-stuff" smashed into the hills beyond.

That night, the 3rd. plt. AT/Co. 143 left those hills and headed across the Alsatian Plains, several kms. away to the town of Ostheim, on the left flank of the Regt. line. Your squad, setup around a dingy, traveling salesman's kind of hotel, fifty-yards across the tracks from the bombed out, Ostheim-Beblenheim railroad station; 8 kms. from Colmar to the South. Along with F. Co. a couple tanks and the rest of the plt.; you were in a holding position, as the 'Battle of Colmar' ground on, yard by bloody yard.

You soon had your 57, setup, covering the railline and an open stretch of plains, with Beblenheim beyond. A 50 cal. MG. ws setup in a corner, second floor window, covering the same field of fire. The rest of the plt. took up positions, leading into town, tying in with F. Co.

A tank took shelter behind the remaining standing wall of the station, pointing into town. There were several horses roaming around, and you knew from past experience; "roaming horses" meant "roaming Krauts." It never failed. You wondered when the s-t would hit the fan.

As dawn broke the town was fairly quiet with only an occasional rattle of smallarms fire. The Krauts must have known the hotel was being used as an O.P., as they had done, seeing as how the 3 story building, was the only one standing out above the tree-line. They rained mortars on it, continually, the one hot spot in town.

As you searched thru the hotel, you could see that the Krauts had left in a hurry. Empty silverware chests lay scattered about the din-

The Trouble With Hotel Ostheim

ing room, the only room with any furniture in it. A new bathroom off the dining area was filled with crap. The toilet was filled, the bathtub was filled, even the corners of the room. Phew! You took out the key from the inside of the door, slammed and locked it, and tose the key away.

The squad took over bunks made up in the basement, they were still covered with some "feldgrey" blankets. One end of the basement, held 2 or 3 giant wine barrels, so huge you could have parked a jeep in one. Dammit, they were empty.

You checked out the second floor. Ten empty bedrooms, and one clean bathroom. The third floor, held two small rooms, one at either end of a hall. One of the rooms roof was missing, blasted away, as you counted about a dozen "dud" mortars lying on the floor. In the other room an F.O. man from Div Arty was setup. Looking out the window, you could see about a half mile down the tracks till it curved out of sight, behind the trees. To your right you could see a line of woods about the same distance away, ending into flat open fields, with Beblenheim beyond.

You stood there as the F.O. called in, correcting some fire on his targets. Suddenly, out of the blue, BLAM, BLAM, BLAM, BLAM! You both hunkered down as mortars slammed into the hotel. As you looked down the hall, you saw another dud round, roll to a stop against the wall in that roofless room. The F.O. said to you, "**In case I'm not here sometime, and ya see a target out there, givem a call**". You said you would. He showed you his map and co-ordinance for all targeted spots. Places like Beblenheim, and Bennwihr, where the heavy battles were being fought.

One morning early, as you checked out your right front, thru the glasses, you spotted dirt flying, where no shells had landed. Funny so you watched. Sure enough, a helmeted head popped up out of a hole, followed by two shovels, and then two Krauts. The bastards were digging in. You cranked up the EEB-phone and told F.Co. mortars to adjust some fire on them. They targeted in, and in moments sent several of the Wehrmacht scattering, as a couple Spitfires gunned low along the rail line, bombing targets on the outskirts of Colmar.

That afternoon as you stood in a window, looking up the road, you spotted a jeep coming toward your position. It held a driver and someone at his side. They were boiling dust and coming like a bat out of hell, as they carommed into the side entrance of the hotel skidding to a stop. Mortars rained in, BLAM, BLAM, BLAM! Down below you, you heard shouts and someone running up the stairs. BLAM, BLAM, BLAM, you hunkered down in the small hallway on the third floor, as you spotted a figure at the top of the stairs.

You stood up and saluted, it was a one star General. He quickly checked the F.O.'s map co-ordinance and took a peek out the window as another mortar barrage sailed in . . . BLAM, BLAM, BLAMMM!

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You, all three ducked for a moment, when he looked you in the eye, and said. "C'mon son, you don't hafta stay here".

The General was gone, as quickly as he arrived; in a cloud of dust and more mortars dropping in. On the first floor now, you shouted to the Lt. "Who the hell was that." He replied with a smile spreading across his face. "Brigadier General Robert Stack. He's a real goin Jessie ain't he." You both laughed, as you said, "Good thing he didn't hang around here too long, or there wouldn't be anything left of that third floor."

Those Krauts musta smelled top-brass when they saw that jeep barelin' down the road. **BLAM!** That one caught you off guard, and you knocked your canteen cup full of coffee, off the table as you reached for it, Son of a bitch! You hollered, your ears still ringing. "Hey Muscles, toss me another K-ration willya?"

Later, as you were checking out the second floor rooms, you saw that all the windows in the place were blown out; and that one of the rooms facing the railline, was a storeroom of sorts. There was a closet with loads of women's clothing hanging on two double racks. The floor had hat boxes and shoes of all kinds. Along a wall, stacks of books and bundled stacks of menus.

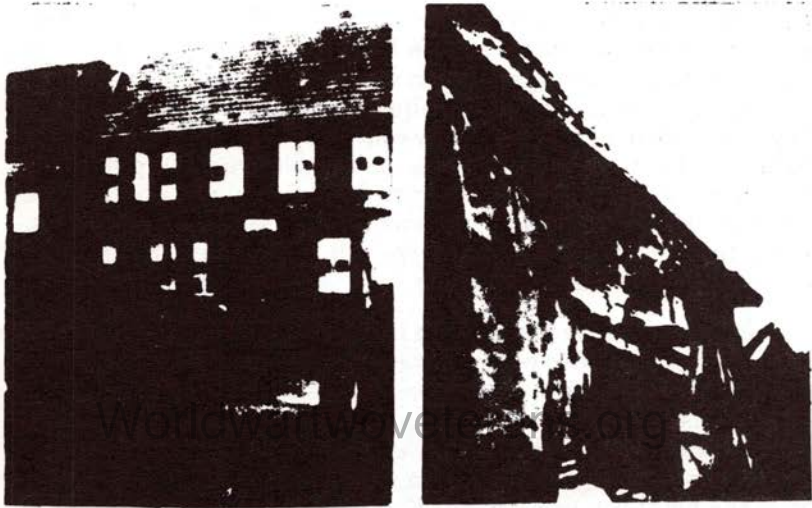
Just at that moment two Spitfires zoomed by at treetop level, gunning along the rail line, shaking the old hotel on its very foundations. Jeez, for a split second, you could see the pilot in that last plane. You started going thru the stack of menus, all printed in German, but some dated to May, 1894.

Off in the distance you could hear the bomb strike, Kah-Boom! Your stomach started to growl as you thumbed thru the menus, thinking of all that wonderful food. One of the planes had already returned from its strike, as you got up to watch down the line for the other one. Here it came, down the tracks, but flying slower than usual, holy mackerel, the bomb was 'dangling' from the undercarriage.

You stood there motionless, by the window, and like in a time-alpse-movie-frame; you saw the bomb release, arching down strikiing the rail line a few hundred feet from the crossing. The earth heaved, spewing rail ties like matchsticks in a great font, as the two rails sprung skyward. A great weight slammed into you, sending you falling backwards, with arms flaying. For a moment all went black.

Kreest, you were being smothered to death. You were kicking and clawing, and blinking your eyes but you couldn't see anything and your left eye hurt. Your heard cleared slowly, and you realized what had happened. You could breath again, as you clawed your way up from the bottom of the clothes pile. The bomb blast had tumbled you into the closet, sending the two racks of clothing on top of you. Wire hangers clutched at you like fishhooks, as you gently removed one hanging in your left eyelid. You scrambled to your feet kicking, a dress was snagged on one of your boot buckles. Sonofabitch! The blast had even slammed the closet door shut on you.

The Trouble With Hotel Ostheim



The following day, battles raged all along the front, Beblenheim, Bennwihr, Riquewihr. There were attacks and counter-attacks. The only quiet spot was Ostheim, with only a few mortar rounds coming in; one of those killing a man in the plt. as he ran down the tracks to the gun position.

You entered the F.O.'s room, he was gone now. You checked thru your glasses, the battle going on around Beblenheim, now enveloped in smoke. As you scanned from right to left, your glasses picked up the edge of the woods. Jeez, you couldn't believe your eyes. The Krauts were fleeing thru the woods by the hundreds, their long greatcoats flapping in the breeze. They had lost Beblenheim, that was for sure.

You looked at the Div. Arty. map and got on the phone. You said, "Your man isn't here right now, but you had beaucoup targets for'm". A voice crackled back. "Let's have'm, and they'll be on the way". In a few moments, after one adjustment, the shells whistled in, stalking the woods with bolts of fiery steel.

You hollered to yourself . . . **"Hitler count your children now"**, as you watched them run, stumbling, deeper into the woods. You called back. **"Lift that fire about 300 and walk it back and fofth, the f-kers are gettin' away."** Someone tapped you on the shoulder, and a voice said, **"How ya doing"**. It was the F.O. He had returned. **BLAM, BLAM, BLAM, BLAM.** Those Krauts were out to get that F.O. sooner or later, that was for sure. You went down stairs to make some coffee.

The hotel kitchen had two sinks, one with a tap that didn't work, so you used the hand pump; on the other, pouring some water into your canteen cup and setting it on the hissing Coleman stove, as one of the crew walked in, saying, **"Boy, that room on the third floor, sure gotta lotta duds lying around. Those Krauts haven't ad-**

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

justed their fire since we've been here". You replied, "That's okay, that way they don't hit the F.O.'s room one little bit." You both stood, looking out the kitchen window, and broke into a laugh, as you spotted a huge old goat nibbling into one of several sacks stacked by a rear shed; lick the powdery contents, spit it out backing awa, dancing on his two hind legs. The sacks held washing powder.

You woke up with a start. Were you dreaming about a battle going on or was this the real thing? It was the real thing alright, the s-t had-hit-the-fan. Those Krauts were out to destroy the F.O. and everyone in it. It was 0500 hours.

The hotel was being hit, and hit hard, and not with just the usual mortar barrage. SP fire was coming in also. You hollered to the guys in the bunks, "Let's go!", and raced upstairs, as the barrage lifted. Slammarms started to pop all around, as the 50 barked back.

Bullets whined thru the windows like angry bees, as you and a coupla men lobbed grenades down on the Krauts below. At the far end of the hotel you saw several Krauts heading for the next house down the street behind which, the barn was already in flames. "Put that new man on the back basement door, and tell'm to shoot anyone that approaches".

You got on the EE-8 and told F.Co. to put up a flare over the hotel as it was still dark out there. Shots pinged and spanged thru the rooms, as the men continued to fire on the enemy below. PLOOP! the flare lit, swinging, its white light seemed to put a double image on every thing, as it swung back and forth. You looked, there was nothing moving. Someone hollered, "There's the bastards over there". Tommy guns chattered away, as you heard a cry.

Damn, you were outta ammo, and as the flare died out, you could see two Krauts loading a Panzerfaust and aiming it at the window of the room you were in. PSSHHHHH, BOOM! The explosion sent you and another guy reeling backwards, falling on your ass, but it had missed its mark, hitting the window frame instead. It was getting light out, as the firing died down, and you watched second squad herd some prisoners down the street, you heard hollering in back of the hotel.

Yo thought Jeez, the new man. You raced for the basement, nobody there. You opened the cellar door, and there across a plowed field came running the new man, with two Krauts chasing him. He kept hollering, "Don't shoot - don't shoot, it's me". You fired a warning shot, and the Krauts dropped their guns. All three approached out of breath. The Krauts had flashings of SS on their uniforms, and one spoke up. "Ich nicht bin Deutchlander, Ich bin Auglander".

You said - "who gives a s-t, Fer-shtay-en-zee".



THE LISTER BAG INCIDENT

By RAY WELLS

I would like to go back a few years to the time I was a rookie, in "H" Company, 141st. The year, 1939 and my first incampment which was during the summer of 1939, Camp Palacios, Texas. I was a kid at the time seventeen years old but eighteen on my military record. At that time we had some old timers in the Company and some including Captain Pope who was the Company Commander who went back as far as World War I.

Summer Camp was the time these old timers sent the new recruits out looking for pie stretchers, left handed monkey wrenches and other jokes that had been the custom for years. One I remember very vividly was Muster Day. We didn't know what that was but on Muster Day, out came the Muster Paddle which was a flat, wide bord with holes in it and new recruits had to be mustered into the service with that paddle and my hind end stung for a long time.

Some of us young recruits had some ideas of our own, such as putting jelly fish that we had netted out of the gulf under the blankets of the Sergeant's cot, but the best one I can remember is the one where Ed Smith and I treated the drinking water in the Company Lister Bag. Remember the CC pills we could get from the Medics? They were used in place of Castor Oil when you were really in bad shape.

They were even more potent than castor oil. The last day of camp and before we pulled tent pegs and struck tents, Ed Smith and I managed to acquire a whole bottle of CC pills. After he adn I had filled our canteens with water we poured the whole bottle of CC pills into the Lister bag. For those who don't know what a lister bag is; it is a canvas bag, which holds quite a few gallons of water and has faucets all around the bottom and is hung on a tri-pod and several men can fill their canteens at the same time. Of course we made sure that there was plenty time for the pills to dissolve. It was 110 degrees in the shade and the troops were drinking plenty of that charged up water and it wasn't long before the whole Company minus two good men had the worst case of diarrhea that the medics had ever experienced. You can imagine what happened when 150 men began pulling up tent pegs and all of a sudden running for the latrine with only about 15 holes available. Ed and I of course would make a run for the latrine just for show. To this day I don't believe that Ed or I either one told anyone about our little escapade and we sure didn't tell anyone at the time.

Ed lives in El Paso now so any of you guys who were there and remember the incident such as Jack Townsend or Fred Ross can contact old Ed there. I was more innocent than Ed was and I will see you at the next Reunion and we can all laugh about this (I hope).

Anzio Breakthrough Recalled



TROOPS LAND ON ANZIO BEACH FROM LCL 1-22-44.

U S Army Photo 177-1



Dear Editor:

I am sending a few items about my war experiences, because I was proud to have served with the 36th Infantry Division. My first taste of combat was the breakout from Anzio which opened "the Road to Rome".

My Silver Star was awarded me for action in France in October 1944, and I was wounded Feb. 3, 1945 at Herrishiem, France and did not return to my Co. F, of the 143rd Infantry Regiment.

I'm a COAL MINER, and have been working the mines for the past 35 years. I really enjoy the 36th Quarterly.

Floyd E Rhodes, P. O. Box 37
Tesla, West Virginia 26640



'HISTORY'S GREATEST JAILBREAK'



5TH ARMY TROOPS AND EQUIPMENT POUR ASHORE AT ANZIO.

U S Army Photo 177-2

Re-printed from The Charleston Gazette Mon., June 1, 1959

(Editor's note: Kenneth L. Dixon was with Texas' 36th Division in World War II when it broke out of the Anzio beachhead. He is a former Associated Press staff writer and now is managing editor of the Lake Charles, La., American Press. The following anniversary story of the breakout was written bit by bit in a Galveston, Tex., hospital where Dixon is recuperating from an operation. "I've always felt the guys deserved that this story be told in full some day," Dixon said.

By Kenneth L. Dixon

Fifteen years ago this weekend a comparative handful of Texans — native and adopted spearheaded what came to be known as "history's greatest jailbreak."

They broke the Allied troops out of Anzio beachhead after four months' imprisonment there, and they opened the road to Rome.

And they did it without firing a single shot, without a single cartridge in a single rifle barrel, for the work that night was done in silence, with knives, bayonets, homemade garrotes and a hand grenade only as a last resort.

These men of the 36th (Texas) Infantry Division infiltrated the German Alban Hills defense lines, worked their way up and around the key town of Velletri and staged a Wehrmacht retreat that became a rout long before it reached the Tiber.

IT WAS A classic infiltration because of its silence, its success and its almost total lack of casualties. Yet it was doomed to obscurity for three reasons.

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

First, Fifth Army Commander Mark Wayne Clark did not believe in identifying individual units under his command. Second, Rome fell right on the heels of the operation. And third, the Normandy invasion caused the world to forget Italy.

But even had we known, none of that would have mattered to those of us dug in on top of the Alban Hills 15 years ago Sunday morning. I was along as an Associated Press war correspondent.

WE HAD WALKED, climbed, skulked, crawled and fought our way some eight circuitous miles to gain the ridge, some three miles behind German lines. And behind us, platoon by platoon and company by company, the entire second battalion of the 142nd Regiment had come, slowly spreading out after it crossed the combat lines.

By dawn, the entire regiment was in position — or near it — atop the ridge, and the next regiment was flanking its way up on our right. Before it was done, almost the full effective combat strength of the division had moved through a widening hole where, short hours earlier, a single rifleman could not have walked in safety.

Up there at long last, we were looking down the Germans' throats, and they didn't know it yet. We turned and started down — and what fighting there was to be done was done.

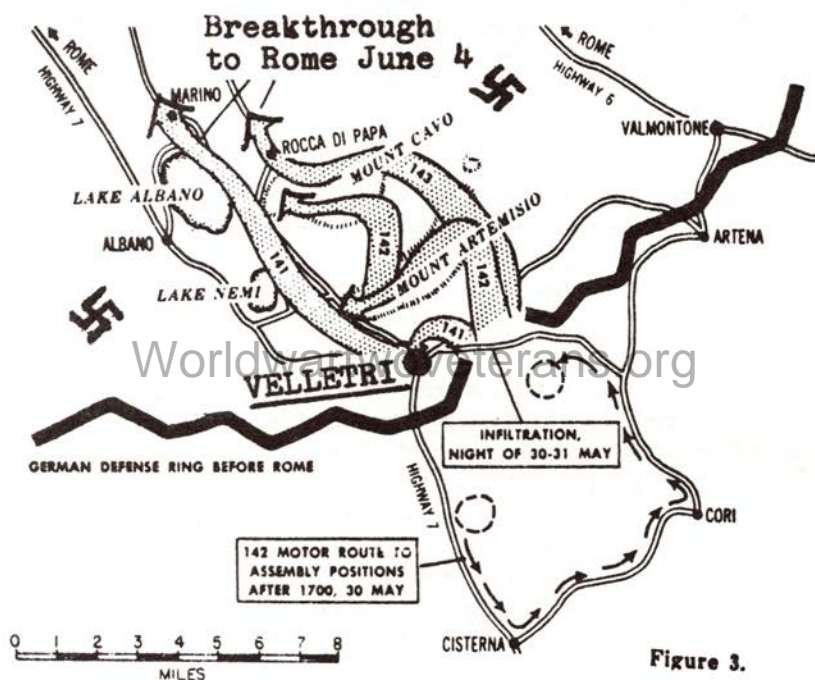


Figure 3.

History's Greatest Jailbreak

NERVES TIGHTENED an hour before dusk when we stated a feint in a swing back away from the lines. The Germans could see every move from the hills.

They grew tighter as we swung toward the combat line at dark. A sniper killed a lieutenant five yards in front of me. They caught the sniper, a man in civilian clothes. Two men took him back into the woods. There was a shot. They came out. The line moved on in silence.

At the checkpoint before crossing the combat line, the regimental commander — a raw-boned bemoustached West Pointer — gave the orders tersely. Not a shot was to be fired. To make certain, all rifle barrels were cleared. Clips and magazines could be full, but not a cartridge in a rifle chamber.

"GET THIS CLEAR," the colonel said, "one shot can ruin the whole operation. This is a night for knife work — knives, bayonets, bare hands, strangling any way you can. As a last resort, you can use a hand grenade; they may mistake it for an on-coming mortar."

We crawled and climbed almost as much as we talked. There was no smoking and no talking. Once after a brief halt, the man in front signaled to me and pointed. Over against a tree sat a German soldier, wearing two grins in the moonlight — a white one where his teeth were bared, and a red one three inches below . . .

A planned firefight broke out along the line to our left to distract German attention.

FLARES PINNED us down in a vineyard. A dog held up the whole stragglng line until one of the scouts silenced him. A scout, sheathing his knife, said, "It must be safe here if you guys from regiment are along."

We passed one or two exhaustion cases. Weariness became a nightmare. So did nervous strain. One man went berserk and had to be gagged until he calmed.

So went the Veller infiltration. When the Germans awoke to the fact that a full regiment was above and behind them, they panicked and headed out of Velletri and up the road to Rome. Those who didn't were captured or killed.

The rush to Rome was on. Except for delaying tactics, roadblocks, snipers and occasional resistance pockets, the back of the last German defense before Rome was broken.

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly



SUBJECT: Award of Silver Star
TO: Staff Sergeant FLOYD R. RHODES, 35760405
Company F, 143rd Infantry Regiment
1 December 1944

Under the provisions of Army Regulations 600-45, you are awarded a Silver Star for gallantry in action.

CITATION

FLOYD R. RHODES, 35760405, Staff Sergeant, Company F, 143d Infantry Regiment, for gallantry in action on 28 October 1944 in France. Sergeant Rhodes, leading the right assault squad of his platoon, was assigned the mission of knocking out an enemy strong point composed of two machine guns and a number of riflemen. When the squad's advance was delayed by rifle grenade and machine gun fire, Sergeant Rhodes left his riflemen with the assignment squad leader and led his automatic rifle team in a flanking movement across an open field. He had almost reached his objective when the enemy suddenly opened fire, forcing the automatic riflemen to withdraw. Sergeant Rhodes valiantly remained to face the hostile troops alone. Firing clip after clip from his sub-machine gun and hurling hand grenades into the enemy position, he pressed dauntlessly forward in the face of the heavy fire. As he neared the emplacements and engaged the machine guns at close range, the hostile soldiers fled, leaving one of their dead behind. After smashing this strong point, he reorganized his squad and seized a second machine gun position, enabling his company to advance and take its objective. His gallant action reflects great credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of the United States. Entered the Service from Widen, West Virginia.

JOHN E. DAHLQUIST
Major General, U.S. Army
Commanding

History's Greatet Jailbreak



IN FRANCE — December 1944 — Major General John E. Dahliquist, Commanding the 36th Infantry Division pins the SILVER STAR MEDAL on Staff Sergeant FLOYD E. RHODES for gallantry in action, October 28, 1944.

NOTE: Be reminded that a total of 2,354 brave men of the Fighting 36th were awarded the Silver Star Medal.

For additional reading: See Vol. 1 Number 2, Summer 1981 pages 13-24 — "A CLASSIC STRATAGEM" by Dr. Ernest F. Fisher, a reprint from MILITARY REVIEW (Feb. 1963)—who was assigned to office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1959. His story covers the Velletri action in a volume in the Mediterranean series of the official history of US ARMY in WORLD WAR II.

NORTHWEST PASSAGE

George (Wrong-Way) Kerrigan served with Co. A, 142nd Infantry, is best known as the Brooklyn 'Mark Twain'. His humorous style adds excitement to all his 'tales'. This is one more of his great vignettes.



Worldwartwoveterans.org

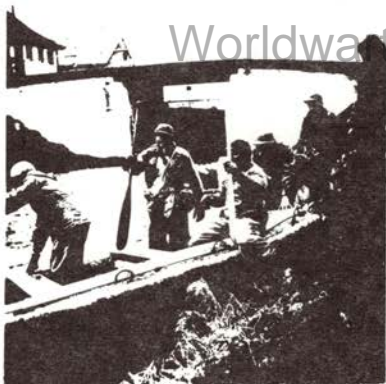
We were known as the P.B.S. in Italy. (Pack Board Specialists) . . . so when a **'Rogers & Clark'** situation arose, we were called upon once more to do a job.

Company A 142nd Infantry was marched along the base of a mountain, somewhat north of Rome, until we came abreast of a long line of pontoons.

Each squad was assigned a pontoon, and we were told by a G.I. that we were to haul them up and over the mountain. And, after we arrived on the other side, we had to carry them a few miles over the plains, as there were two very wide rivers that had to have the pontoon bridges constructed, for us and other traffic to use.

I very politely asked the gentleman in charge of the pontoons, **"Hey buddy, what outfit are you with?"** He very proudly replied, **"We are combat engineers!"** . . . and you guys get those pontoons to the rivers on the other side of the mountain. We will build you fellows two bridges to keep your feet dry.

So, using my choicest. 'Brooklyn' vocabulary, I said — why in the



Worldwartwoveterans.org

Your editor asked Kerrigan to furnish a photo of a PONTON, in order for those who did not know what they looked like—could understand what they had to 'pack' over the mountain, as related in this story. He failed to give the approximate weight (but rest assured, it was much heavier than a six-pack).

Northwest Passage

hell don't you carry your own 'blankety-blank' pontoons over the mountain . . . **"we will swim across the rivers when we get there."**

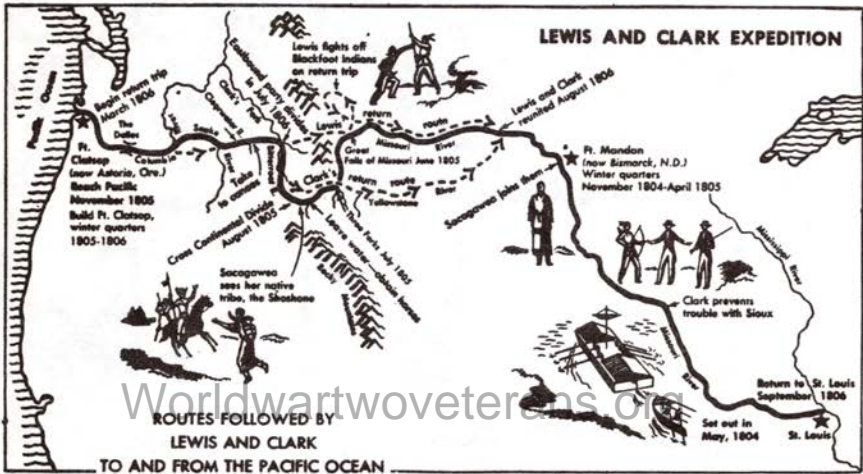
Of course, it was all in vain. So we had a helluva time hauling those pontoons, along with our packs, rifles, bazookas, B.A.R.s, ammo, etc. all the way up to the top of the mountain, then holding for dear life all the way down to the bottom.

Imagine what an avalanche we would have had if one had broken away. But, we were all experienced in mountain climbing and fighting. We did the job.

When we arrived at the base on the other side, and proceeded two miles with our pontoons to the first river, and IT WAS BONE DRY. So, we continued on one more mile to the second river, to also find — that it also was bone dry.

As furious as we were, we were still happy as hell to dump those damn pontoons.

I don't know if the 36th Air Force (Observation planes) were on R&R, or they mixed the Holland Air Maps with the Italian Front . . . but we proved once again — that the 36th could move mountains — if necessary.



SHOWN ABOVE is the map route of **LEWIS & CLARK EXPEDITION** of 1803 as ordered by President Thomas Jefferson to find a passage to the **NORTHWEST**. Their laborious trip of 1,600 miles in the wilderness of the un-explored part of America took several years. But to Kerrigan, his expedition is about the same, give or take a few years and all the privations.

NOTE: In the first paragraph, line two, Kerrigan makes reference to "**Rogers & Clark**" . . . situation. We did not change this. Kerrigan is a 'Musical buff'. He knows all about **Rogers & Hammerstein** and the great musicals they produced. Like 'South Pacific', 'Oklahoma!', and many more. So, why not call it — the '**Rogers & Clark**' — and maybe a new show about this historic event will be on Broadway.

The Badge of Military Merit

General George Washington personally designed the heart-shaped award to honor soldiers of extraordinary courage.



Above: Badge of Military Merit—the "Purple Heart Medal" awarded Sergeant Elijah Churchill. Courtesy of the New Windsor Cantonment, New Windsor, New York.



Roy R. Brown Jr.'s Purple Heart (in Inset left) was awarded to the Hallsport Road resident nearly 40 years after he earned it in action in Italy in World War II. The medal and accompanying citation have been added to Brown's collection of wartime commendations (below). (Reporter Photo)

A Purple Heart, 39 years late

This is a re-print from news story that appeared in the home town newspaper of Wellsville New York, February 10, 1983.

By **GAIL FLESCHUTZ**
Of the *Reporter* staff

"For wounds received in action in the European Theater of Operations on Dec. 16, 1943," reads the citation presented to Roy R. Brown Jr. of the Hallsport Road.

But the citation and Purple Heart it accompanied were not presented to then-PFC Brown in the Naples field hospital where he recuperated from his wounds.

Brown received his medal in Wellsville only three weeks ago — 39 years late.

Why has it taken so long to catch up with him? He had been told when he was hospitalized for a serious arm wound — he still carries the scars — that he would receive the Purple Heart. For personal reasons at the time, he said he wasn't really interested, but was told it would catch up with him some day.

It took the interest of his wife, the former Anna Fanton, and the death of both his parents to make the award a reality. It was while disposing of things at the home of his parents on Florida Avenue that he came across his letters home, and some other remembrances.

Among these was the telegram notifying his parents that he had been wounded in action, proof that he qualified for the Purple Heart. His wife used a copy of this to request the award, and the prediction came true — it finally caught up with him.

The Purple Heart shines among the other awards he received in World War II, now tarnished with age: the Silver Star earned on July 26, 1943 "for gallantry in action, although exposed to heavy enemy fire"; the Infantry Combat Medal, the Good Conduct Medal, the National Defense Medal for fighting in World War II, the American Campaign Medal (1941-1945); and the Bronze Star.

Brown doesn't mind reminiscing about the war and his part in it. "I like to talk about it," she says. "It's an outlet; if you hold it in it makes it worse."

"I'd do it again if I had to," says Brown, "I'd hate to — but to save young folks from going . . . I've lived my life; they've got theirs ahead of them."

A light machine gunner with the 36th Division in Italy, Brown

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

recalls that he was wounded during action in San Pietro, as his unit moved back to take up a better position.

He was taken to the field hospital — which consisted of tents — and from there to the 70th Station Hospital in Naples. He was wounded in action a year and a half after he had been drafted into the U.S. Army at age 22.

From Naples he was taken to the replacement depot on a big racetrack outside Naples, and from there back to Africa, where he had begun his tour of duty, earning the Silver Star on July 26, 1943 in Tunisia.

In Africa the second time, he was assigned to kitchen duty with the Second Convalescent Detachment and later returned to the United States by ship. In May 1944 he returned to Wellsville on his first leave since being drafted two years earlier. He then served at Fort Belvoir, Va., until being discharged in September 1945.

Brown says that his experiences in the war made him more sensitive. Besides his arm injury, his nerves suffered, he says, and he feels he gets easily depressed.

When Brown got out of the service, he worked in the oil fields around Wellsville for a few years and then went to Air Preheater, where he worked from 1951 until 1972, retiring on disability. He and his wife have three children and four grandchildren.

The Purple Heart, established on Aug. 7, 1782 by General George Washington at Newburgh, was awarded to Roy R. Brown Jr. at a full formation ceremony of the 98th Regiment 4th Battalion in Wellsville by Commander Merrill.

THANKS to Shelby Krouse, our super-birddogger who sent in this news story about Roy Brown who served with Co. F, 141st Infantry. Old Shelby says, "Roy saw my notice in DAV Magazine, and that's how we rounded him up." He added, "Roy served with the 1st Div. in North Africa, was awarded the Silver Star."

YOU ARE ELIGIBLE
IF YOU HAVE BEEN AWARDED THE
PURPLE HEART MEDAL BY THE
GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES
OF AMERICA

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP
Military Order of the Purple Heart
CHARTERED BY CONGRESS

National Headquarters
P.O. BOX 9286
ARLINGTON, VA. 22209





SHOWN ABOVE: George Washington presenting the Badge of Military Merit at Newburgh, May 3, 1783 (that's 200 years ago). Illustration by Charles McBarron, courtesy of United States Army Art Collection.

REFERENCE: See page 26 through 31 of the AMERICAN HISTORY ILLUSTRATED, May 1982 (one year, 10 issues \$16.95) and well worth it. In practically every issue, they feature a story about the military and especially WWII. If you are a war buff, you should get this great magazine.

Write to: American History Illustrated, P.O. Box 1776, Mt. Morris, IL 61054. You'll be glad you did.



The Gun Crew That Saved Salerno



AMERICAN HEROES
LOOK

39TH IN LOOK'S AMERICAN HEROES SERIES
STORY BY DON WHARTON—DRAWINGS BY GLEN THOMAS

“THE GUN CREW THAT SAVED SALERNO”

Look Magazine, March 1945

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

The members of this great gun crew, all of whom have been decorated for their valor, were: Lt. John W. Whitaker, Fort Worth, Tex.; Sgt. [Name], [Location]; Sgt. Seth Groce, Caldwell, Tex.; Cpl. [Name], [Location]; and Camello J. Caminetti, [Location].

Editors note: Go back and re-read the above story in Vol. 1, No. 3, Fall 1981. This illustrated feature was lifted from our files as printed March 1945, while the war was still going strong. LOOK Magazine ran a series of these kind of articles. They had their own reporters to gather the ‘exciting’ stories of valor. In this case, the story covered an event that happened 15 months prior to their printing date. Be reminded — there are many great stories — which have not yet surfaced. Maybe this will start a new trend.

REBUTTAL . . .

"Gun Crew That Saved Salerno" Story Title is in Error

Dear Editor: Since I read the Vol. I, Fall 1981 issue of the Quarterly, I have been wanting (but reluctant) to challenge the story on page 21 — "The Gun Crew That Saved Salerno".

Even before this story appeared, I have always wondered why our gun crew (Btry C 133rd) never received any recognition for doing a feat similar to this one. Both occurred in the Salerno area.



For numerous reasons the location would be difficult to determine. I will say that on page 17 in the Pictorial History at the bottom of the page looks like it could very easily be the road or one like it where our encounter with the German tanks took place. Our gun section received orders that we, along with another gun crew were needed for anti-tank purposes.

Information received indicated that German tanks were in route to the Salerno area. While traveling to our destination we came upon two German soldiers that had captured two G.I.'s and their amphibious duck. They surrendered without offering any resistance. After carefully checking the location we elected to make this our position.

Since a 105 howitzer is not an anti-tank weapon we knew that we had to take advantage of everything concerned for us to survive and defeat a column of German tanks. We felt this straight road offered us some advantage provided we saw them before they spotted us. Enhancing our chances plus the element of surprise was a must.

After waiting about one hour we spotted a German recon cycle with side car traveling towards us. We opened up with rifle fire causing the cycle to cross the road into the ditch. The two German soldiers escaped into a nearby house. Our first thought was to give chase, but realized that tanks were bound to be following the cycle recon.

This turned out to be a good move because fifteen minutes later

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

here they came. The element of surprise plus the straight road proved to be the deciding factor. After firing several misses I bore sighted the next shot and we had a direct hit on the lead tank. The tanks not damaged retreated.

We remained in this position until the infantry arrived and later in the day were told that we sure made a mess of those tanks. I am sure that stopping these tanks from entering into the beachhead area had some bearing on its success.

No Discredit intended...

This letter has no intentions to discredit the accomplishments of 143 gun squad only to say the title is in error . . . the TITLE of this story, the GUN CREW THAT SAVED SALERNO, is wrong, and does not take into consideration the other units, who also 'saved' the beachhead.

The gun crew I was on — C Btry. 133 F.A. Bn., suspect 'we' had a hell of a lot to do with Salerno being a success. Incidentally we received nothing for our endeavors only the satisfaction of knowing we kept these tanks from destroying and killing in the beach area.

The 36th was a terrific fighting unit and contained a lot of heroes and gallant men. Some lived— Some died. Some received recognition. Some did not.

Jack H. Singleton
119 Oleander St.
Lake Jackson, TX 77566



THEN & NOW . . . Forty years separate these two photos of Jack Singleton. His rebuttal to this is what makes the world go around. Yes, we know that all the stories have NOT yet been written, and we welcome anyone who has another 'side' of a story we print. That's what the Quarterly is all about.

Historic abbey was reduced to rubble 39 years ago

Death — and rebirth of Cassino

Tuesday, March 1, 1983 • THE STARS AND STRIPES

Worldwarveterans.org
By BRAD DURFEE
Staff writer

As one travels throughout Europe viewing some of the most tranquil and scenic sites in the world, it's hard to imagine the devastation of the war-torn continent just a few decades ago.

The Benedictine Abbey of Monte Cassino, overlooking the city of Cassino on the Rapido River in central Italy, is a classic example.

Today, it appears as serene as the monks who live there, but, 39 years ago, on Feb. 15, 1944, the Abbey was reduced to rubble by an Allied air attack.

The Abbey had been destroyed three times previously — by the Lombards in 581, by the Arabs in 883, and by an earthquake in 1349 — but this was the most devastating.

German garrison

The Allies said it was necessary because a German garrison was using the abbey as a fortress.

In the early years of World War II, the Germans had declared the monastery a battle-free territory, putting it off limits to their troops because of the reverence the Italians attached to it.

Although the abbey and the art treasures it housed were destroyed, the monks were able to salvage a collection of historic manuscripts.

No Germans there

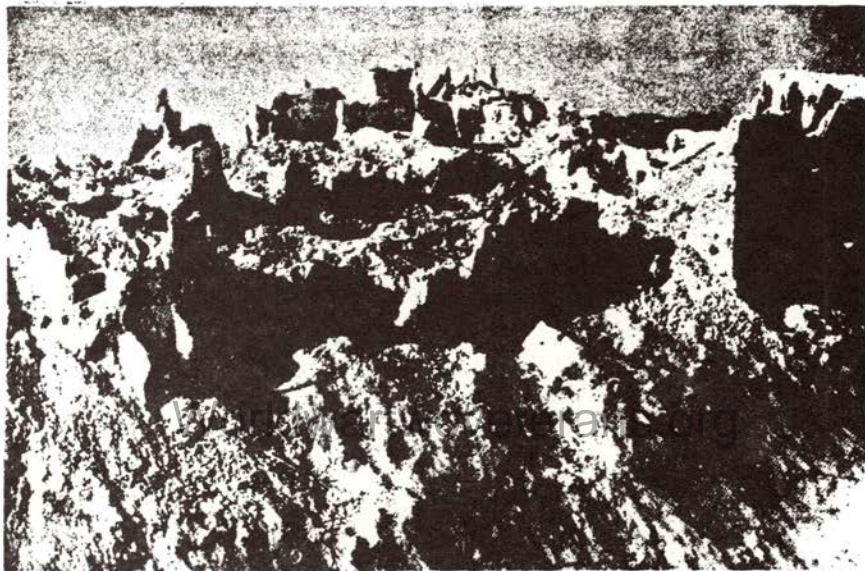
Although some Allied generals thought German troops were using the abbey, **war historians claim the only people in Monte Cassino were 200 monks and 800 refugees.** In a radio interview after the bombing, the abbot said there were no Germans in the abbey.

Ironically, after the bombing raid destroyed the abbey and its neutral status, a regiment of German paratroopers moved in amidst the rubble and held out for 45 days.

After concentrated ground attacks and attempts to divert German troops by landings at Anzio and Nettuno, the Allies finally captured it in May 1944.

Most-devastated city

The assault on Cassino, the Italian city most devastated by the war, was opened the night of Jan. 20, 1944, by the U.S. 36th (Texas) Div. Against the unseen enemy, the slick riverbanks, mines, mortars and artillery, they were pinned down. Only those who could swim made it back across the river. In 48 hours the 36th Div lost 1,681 men.



Only rubble remained of the Abbey after the Feb. 15, 1944 bombing attack by American aircraft.

Prior to a second assault, Gen. Mark Clark reluctantly agreed to one of the most controversial decisions of World War II — the order to bomb the monastery.

Leaflets were dropped on Feb. 14 warning of the attack. The following day the bombs fell.

Twenty years after the attack, a 78-year-old Italian was asked by a reporter for *The Stars and Stripes* about her feelings and experiences.

She replied: "What do you want me to tell you? About the hunger? About the fear and terror? About the dead? About the months of bombings which left my home a pile of rocks? About living for weeks like animals in a grotto beneath the abbey where the monks used to keep their rabbits? About the noise that wouldn't let you sleep?"

Second land battle

The second assault took place the night of the 15th, when British troops backed up by New Zealand and Indian troops attacked. In two nights of fighting the British were cut to pieces by machine-gun fire and grenades. The British lost 162 men out of 313, the New Zealanders lost 128 men and the Indians 196.

The third attempt was undertaken by New Zealanders and Indians at noon on March 15. For five days and nights they battled. At the end, the Germans were still in command. The Allies lost 1,500 New Zealanders and 3,000 Indians.

The Benedictine Abbey of Monte Cassino



Completely re-built Abbey Monte Cassino again sits atop its 1,800 foot elevation (funded by U.S.), is popular attraction for tourist from around the world. It's only a 90 mile drive from Rome or Naples.

The fourth assault was conducted by the Polish II Corps, when two divisions attacked on the night of May 11.

Waves of Poles swarmed over machine-gun emplacements and engaged in hand-to-hand combat at the approaches to the abbey. Savage bombardment drove the Poles back down the mountain.

They reorganized, and 12,000 Moroccan troops joined them and infiltrated from the right flank. The Poles assaulted the hill May 17. Ignoring casualties, the Poles charged in waves. The German paratroopers were driven off the mountain, and Polish colors were raised above the rubble May 18, ending the five-month battle and opening the road to Rome, some 75 miles away.

Military men throughout the ages realized the importance of holding the high ground, and the Allies participating in this struggle were no exception.

In his book "The Battle of Cassino" author Fred Majdalany, writing from first-hand experience as a British army officer who served at Cassino, said, "The relationship between the summit of Monte Cassino and the important main route which it commands is so exceptional that it invariably impresses military men as the finest observation post they have ever seen."

OUR THANKS to Martin E. Vandiver, of 36th Signal Company for sending in this story, as printed in the European edition of Stars & Stripes. He notes: "the part about—only non-combatants refugees were inside when it was all over. All I can say, is that we sure received a helluva lot of fire from some place". Vandiver gets mail at: CCCE-CE-SW, APO NY 09056.

The abbey, seat of the Benedictine order, was founded in 529 by St. Benedict of Nursia.

Throughout the centuries it has developed a reputation as one of the great centers of Christian learning.

The only remains of the original abbey, known as San Germano, are the tomb of St. Benedict (built before the Lombard invasion), which contains his remains and those of his sister, St. Scholastica, and the tower.

Tourists from around the world flock to the abbey, about a 90-minute drive from Rome or Naples, especially in the summer months.

Northwest of the abbey, off the Autostrada del Sol, there is a cemetery to the memory of 1,100 Poles who died attacking the abbey. Visiting hours are from 7 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and from 3:15 p.m. to sunset or 7 p.m. in the summer months.

OUR THANKS to Harry R. McGreevy (155th FA Bn), Woodland Drive, Versailles OH 45380 for sending in the clip of the above Polish Veterans Medal, and it arrived, by coincidence just at right time to be attached to this story. A war-buff and stamp collector, McGreevy had read "The Battle For Cassino" by Brigadier E. D. Smith, who highlights the Polish II Corps who suffered 3,000 casualties.

COIN WORLD, Wednesday, May 4, 1983

Polish veterans recall battle on medal



The victory at Monte Cassino in May 1944 is recalled on a medal developed by veterans of the event.

Veterans of the May 18, 1944, battle for Monte Cassino recalled the event with a special medal design, in gold, silver and bronze.

Arthur J. Majewski, Detroit, said the 40th anniversary of the Polish contribution to the victory was marked by the Association of the Veterans of the Second Polish Corps. The General Anders section is located in Detroit.

Monte Cassino behind a singed tree appears on the obverse and the legend

MONTE CASSINO 1944 MAJ 1984 and the Polish legend ZA WOLNOSC NASZA I WASZA (For our Freedom and yours). Names of countries where the Polish army served appear on both sides of the singed tree, including Syria, Franca (France), Norwegia (Norway), Palestyna (Palestine), Egipt (Egypt) Wlochy (Italy), Irak (Iraq), Iran, ZSRR (Soviet Union) and Libja (Libya).

The Monte Cassino Cross was awarded to all Polish soldiers participating in the bat-

tle. On the reverse of the medal appearing on a cross are the four arm patches of Polish units in the battle.

Involved in the battle for Monte Cassino were the armed forces of the United States, England, Canada, India, the French Colonies, New Zealand and Poland.

Inquiries may be directed to him at 17105 Chandler Park Drive, Detroit, Mich. 48224.

141st CP's



We've had a few 36thers whom have submitted a personal day-by-day whereabouts during the years overseas, but this is our 'first' of official Regimental Command Post loctions. At first glance it looks kinda dry. But, look at the movement, and it'll give you a clue.

This old (original) mimeographed document was sent in by DOUGLAS PLACE, 506 W. Alice Ave., Harlingen, TX 78550, of Co. M, 141st — says, "my buddy, BRIDGER P. HOPDAY gave me a copy of this, which he kept from days when he served in Regimental Hqs. 141st in the S-3 section, and was Major R. K. Doughty's left hand man.

LOCATION OF 156 COMMAND POSTS of 141st Infantry Regiment — 15 Aug. 1943 to 20 May 1945

August 1943

- 15 Aug 43 — 8 mi E of Porte aux Poules, Algeria
- 17 Aug 43 — 6 mi W of St Leu, Algeria

September 1943

- 3 Sept 43 — Aboard ship bound for Italy
- 9 Sept 43 — Vic Ogliastro, Italy
- 11 Sept 43 — 4 mi NE of Agropoli, Italy
- 14 Sept 43 — 1 mi S of Battapaglia, Italy
- 20 Sept 43 — 1 mi W of Altavilla, Italy
- 22 Sept 43 — 2 mi W of Altavilla, Italy

October 1943

- 13 Oct 43 — 3 mi SW of Guigliano, Italy

November 1943

- 2 Nov 43 — Nisida Island, Italy
- 3 Nov 43 — 3 mi SW of Gigliano, Italy
- 6 Nov 43 — Pignataro Maggiore, Italy
- 7 Nov 43 — 4 mi SW of Pietravairano, Italy
- 16 Nov 43 — 2 mi SE of Mignano, Italy

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December 1943

- 14 Dec 43 — 1½ mi N of Mignano, Italy
- 30 Dec 43 — San Angelo D'Alife, Italy

January 1944

- 12 Jan 44 — 1 mi NW of Mignano, Italy
- 15 Jan 44 — 1½ mi SW of San Vittore del Lasio, Italy
- 19 Jan 44 — 2 mi NE of San Angelo in Teodice, Italy

February 1944

- 8 Feb 44 — Pastinelli, Italy
- 9 Feb 44 — Cairo, Italy
- 27 Feb 44 — Pratella, Italy

March 1943

- 8 Mar 44 — 2½ mi NW of Maddaloni, Italy

April 1944

- 8 Apr 44 — Celsi, Italy

May 1944

- 6 May 44 — 4 mi W of Qualiano, Italy
- 22 May 44 — Anzio Beachhead, Italy
- 24 May 44 — 3½ mi NE of Nettuno, Italy
- 26 May 44 — ½ mi NE of Cisterna, Italy
- 27 May 44 — 2½ mi SW of Velletri, Italy
- 28 May 44 — 2½ mi E of Velletri, Italy
- 31 May 44 — 3 mi NE of Velletri, Italy

June 1944

- 1 June 44 — 2 mi NE of Velletri, Italy
- 2 June 44 — ½ mi NW of Velletri, Italy
2 mi NW of Velletri, Italy
- 3 June 44 — ½ mi SE of Nemi, Italy

ROME FALLS TO ALLIES

- 4 June 44 — 1½ mi S of Rocca di Pappa, Italy
3 mi NW of Marino, Italy
2 mi SE of Rome, Italy
- 6 June 44 — 1½ mi N of S. Maria di Galeria, Italy
- 7 June 44 — 1½ mi SW of Allumiere, Italy
- 8 June 44 — 2 mi SW of Allumiere, Italy
- 9 June 44 — Montalto di Castro, Italy
- 10 June 44 — 8 mi SW of Orbetello, Italy
- 11 June 44 — 6 mi SW of Orbetello, Italy
- 12 June 44 — 8 mi SW of Orbetello, Italy
- 14 June 44 — Scansano, Italy
- 15 June 44 — 2¼ mi S of Vallerona, Italy
1¾ mi S of Vallerona, Italy

Location of 141st CPs In WWII

- 16 June 44 — 1½ mi SE of Vallerona, Italy
7 mi SE of Campagnatico, Italy
- 17 June 44 — 5½ mi SE of Campagnatico, Italy
5 mi SE of Campagnatico, Italy
3 mi SE of Campagnatico, Italy
- 18 June 44 — Campagnatico, Italy
- 21 June 44 — Paganico, Italy
1½ mi NE of Sticciano, Italy
- 25 June 44 — 8 mi NW of Rome, Italy

July 1944

- 1 July 44 — 1½ mi N of Paestum, Italy
- 7 July 44 — 1½ mi SW of Battapaglia, Italy
- 24 July 44 — 5½ mi W of Aversa, Italy

August 1944

- 10 Aug 44 — Pozzoi, Italy (Aboard ship in Naples, Italy Harbor)
Salerno, Italy harbor
- 12 Aug 44 — Aboard ship moving N and NW past Pontine Islands
- 13 Aug 44 — Aboard ship, moving thru straits between Sardinia and
Corsica to anchor in Ajaccio, Corsica, harbor
- 14 Aug 44 — Aboard ship, moving NW towards France

D Day — Invasion of France

- 15 Aug 44 — Drmmount, France
¼ mi N of Agay, France
2½ mi NE of Agay, France
- 16 Aug 44 — 9½ mi SW of Cannes, France
- 17 Aug 44 — 4½ mi W of Theoule-sur-Mer, France
- 20 Aug 44 — Draguignan, France
- 21 Aug 44 — Digne, France
- 22 Aug 44 — Aspres, France
6 mi NE of Montelimar, France
- 24 Aug 44 — 1 mi SW of Mersanne, France
- 29 Aug 44 — 4½ mi S of Chabeuil, France
- 30 Aug 44 — Bourt de Poage, France

September 1944

- 1 Sept 44 — Seatem de Poage, France
- 2 Sept 44 — Janneyrias, France
Buslgnan, France
Moyzieuk, France
- 3 Sept 44 — St Andre de Corcy, France
- 4 Sept 44 — Pont de Veaux, France
- 5 Sept 44 — St Germain du Bois, France

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- 6 Sept 44 — Poligny, France
- 7 Sept 44 — St Ferjeux, France
- 8 Sept 44 — Vic Besancon, France
- 9 Sept 44 — Pelousey, France
Moncley, France
- 10 Sept 44 — Oisely-et-Grachaux, France
- 11 Sept 44 — Mailley-et-Chaselot, France
Andelarre, France
- 12 Sept 44 — Flagy, France
- 14 Sept 44 — Mailleroncourt-Charette, France
- 17 Sept 44 — 1 mi S of Fougerolles, France
- 18 Sept 44 — Fougerolles, France
- 20 Sept 44 — Raon-aux-Bois, France
- 21 Sept 44 — Lonquet, France
- 22 Sept 44 — St Nabord, France
- 23 Sept 44 — St Etienne-les-Remiremont, France
- 27 Sept 44 — 1 mi NE of St Nabord, France
- 28 Sept 44 — Xamontarupt, France

October 1944

- 3 Oct 44 — Le Boulay, France
- 24 Oct 44 — Belmont-sur-Buttant, France
- 25 Oct 44 — Machiefour, France
- 26 Oct 44 — Grebefosse, France

November 1944

- 7 Nov 44 — St Jean-du-Marche, France
- 15 Nov 44 — Rehaupal, France
- 19 Nov 44 — Granges-sur-Vologne, France
- 20 Nov 44 — Gerbepal, France
- 23 Nov 44 — Anould, France
- 25 Nov 44 — Le Chival, France

December 1944

- 2 Dec 44 — Vic Wustenloch, France
- 3 Dec 44 — Echery, France
- 5 Dec 44 — Aubure, France
- 6 Dec 44 — Bergheim, France
- 8 Dec 44 — Riquewihr, France
- 19 Dec 44 — Illkirch-Graffenstaden, France
- 26 Dec 44 — Lorquin, France

January 1945

- 1 Jan 45 — Montbronn, France
- 5 Jan 45 — 2¼ km NW of Soucht, France
- 13 Jan 45 — Montbronn, France
- 23 Jan 45 — Morswiller, France
- 30 Jan 45 — Wingersheim, France
Gries, France

February 1945

- 4 Feb 45 — Wyersheam, France
- 5 Feb 45 — Marienthal, France
- 8 Feb 45 — Herrlisheim, France
- 21 Feb 45 — Hohatzenheim, France

March 1945

- 4 Mar 45 — Haguenau, France
- 18 Mar 45 — Surbourg, France
Hunspach, France
- 19 Mar 45 — Riedseltz, France
Altenstadt, France
- 22 Mar 45 — Rechtenbach, Germany
- 23 Mar 45 — Berg Zagern, Germany
- 24 Mar 45 — Hayna, Germany
- 25 Mar 45 — Westheim, Germany
- 30 Mar 45 — Heuchelheim, Germany

April 1945

- 2 Apr 45 — Reichenbach, Germany
- 7 Apr 45 — Oggersheim, Germany
- 22 Apr 45 — Eisenberg, Germany
- 26 Apr 45 — Langenau, Germany
- 27 Apr 45 — Dinkelscherben, Germany
- 28 Apr 45 — Schrabmuchen, Germany
- 30 Apr 45 — Seeshaupt, Germany

May 1945

- 1 May 45 — Bichl, Germany
- 2 May 45 — Bad Tolz, Germany
- 4 May 45 — Vic St Quirin, Germany
- 5 May 45 — Bayrischzell, Germany
Kufstein, Austria

V-E Day — Victory in Europe

- 9 May 45 — St Johann, Austria
- 13 May 45 — Schongau, Germany
- 20 May 45 — Barkt Oberdorf, Germany

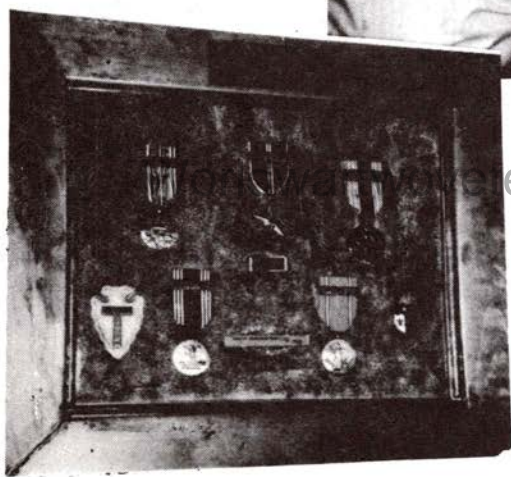
High-Point T-Patcher Go Home!

Location of 141st CPs In WWII



THEN & NOW . . . Camp Bowie Brownwood, 1941—at right is DOUGLAS PLACE with old buddy, RICHARD LARSON of Arlington TX both of Co. M, 141st Inf.

NOW—40 years later—these two T-Patchers (below) are happy to see each other at the 1981 Reunion at San Antonio.



Wall plaque of medals and insignia grace the den at home of Doug Place. Bronze plates at top reads:

DOUGLAS W. PLACE, Company M, 3rd BN., 141st Inf., 36th Division, June 1940—June 1945.

(Every T-Patcher outta have one).

**SONS OF THE 36TH DIVISION
ARE PROUD
OF THEIR FATHERS**



Dear Editor:

My father was in the 36th Inf. Division during WWII; he was a 1st Lt. in the 111th Combat Engineers. I am very proud of my father and his military record. He has been a member of the 36th Division Association for a few years now and enjoys reading the "Fighting 36th Quarterly". When he is finished with them he passes them on to me to read. I have been trying for years to get Dad to write down his own personal history of the War, maybe one of these days he will find the time to do it, he has many interesting stories to tell.

He joined the 36th Division in North Africa after graduating from OCS, and was with them until they returned to the States. He was wounded at Rapido River while removing land mines.

I thought you might like to know a little information about him. I am enclosing copies of the citations he received for the Silver Star Medal and the Bronze Star Medal, both with 'V' device.

I enjoy your publication very much, keep up the good work!

Bruce Bowers
1416 Woodside Dr.
Crawfordsville, Indiana 47933

SILVER STAR AWARD

FOR GLENDON D. BOWERS



HEADQUARTERS 36TH INFANTRY DIVISION
APO #36, U.S. Army

AG 200.6

25 July 1944

SUBJECT: Award of Silver Star

TO: First Lieutenant GLENDON D. BOWERS,
01106608,
111th Engineer Combat Battalion,
APO #36, U.S. Army

Pursant to authority contained in Army Regulations 600-45,
you are awarded a Silver Star for gallantry in action:

CITATION

GLENDON D. BOWERS, 01106608, First Lieutenant, 111th Engineer Combat Battalion, for gallantry in action on 11 June 1944 in Italy. When enemy artillery blasted the battalion command post area with heavy shell fire, four officers were buried beneath the debris of a shattered building. Although he was wounded, Lieutenant Bowers refused to wait until the barrage lifted and went immediately to aid his comrades. While shell explosions shook the ground around him, he worked rapidly, ignoring his pain and bleeding hands, to remove the several feet of debris and release the officers. He continued tearing away the rubble until his comrades were freed. His gallant action reflects great credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of the United States. Entered the Service from Indianapolis, Indiana.

JOHN E. DAHLQUIST
Major General, U.S. Army
Commanding

STALAG VII-B



Dear Editor:

As a subscriber of the 36th Historical Quarterly, I thought you might be interested in a LETTER that I wrote to my parents from Germany, after I was liberated from Stalag VII B on April 26 1945.

Be reminded that I was only 20 years old at that time. I have had the original letter — typed for your convenience. At my early age, I omitted the gory details and hardships so as not to distress my parents. I think the Quarterly is just GREAT!

Truly yours,
Russell W. Holcombe
P.O. Box 34, Hopewell NJ 08525

April 27 1945
Menningen, Germany

Dear Folks,

Well, I am a free man again. Of course I am still in the army but this is heaven compared to **Kriegsgefangenen** (prisoner of war to you) life. I don't know whether you received any of my letters or not. I sent one every week but I don't believe "Jerry" (Germans) let all of them through. I imagine the Red Cross kept you well informed of my whereabouts.

I don't know whether you have received any of the letters that I sent to you from France or not. I will try to reinform you of what happened. It took us 7 days to cross the Atlantic. We landed at Liverpool, England. That night we boarded a train and traveled across England for a day and a night arriving at South Hampton boarded a boat headed for France.

We layed in the harbor that night and pushed out the next morning. I think it was past noon when we landed at LeHavre, France. We stayed at LeHavre for three days living in squad tents (8 men tents). From here we went by train to Fpinal to a replacement depot.

I stayed here for about two weeks then joined the Company (Co. A, 141 Regt., 36th Div.). It was a rifle company and was back for a few days rest. We moved out of here to a city that had just been taken, Selestat. We were supposed to move in a garrison. In other

Letter From Stalag VII-B

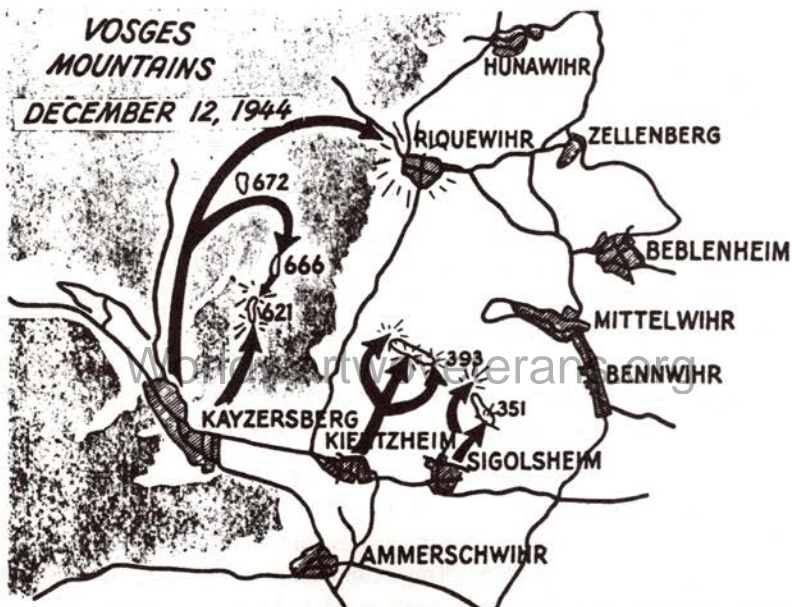
words, the city had been taken and we were supposed to move in to take over and clean-up snipers.

When we got there after riding half the night in trucks they put us on a road block to keep the "Jerrys" from counterattacking back into the city. That night there were small Jerry patrols roaming around and a lot of Jerry artillery being thrown into the city.

That first night we were pretty lucky a house on both sides of us was set afire by artillery but not ours. The next day we were taking turns at standing guard at the front door. It was pretty close to noon and we were all in the dining room eating our K rations, it was my turn to be on guard but during the day we weren't to particular about somebody being at the door all of the time, when all of a sudden we heard a flop and bang, a mortar shell hit just outside the front door.

We hit the floor about the time the shell exploded. The front door had holes through it and all the glass blown out of windows in the door and windows in the kitchen and in the dining room that we were in. We got up and went down into the cellar as fast as we could because usually there is more than one shell when they start firing. It must of been a stray round because there wasn't any more that followed. We went upstairs to see the damage and where our front gate used to be was a wide open space. The front gate and part of the fence was up against the house.

I inspected the front door and there were holes scattered around



THE GERMAN ATTACK ON RIQUEWIHR WITH COORDINATED ASSAULTS ON HILLS 666, 621, 393, AND 351

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

the door. It was a thick door of about four inches and it was cut up pretty well with shell fragments. If I had of been on guard at that door I probably would have been hit. We were on this road block for about four days then we moved out to Riquewihir.

We stayed here over night then moved out in the attack the next morning. We took hill 393 the "Jerrys" were supposed to be holding without opposition but this wasn't good enough for the CO (Company Commander). So we pushed 'over the hill and into the town on the opposite side. We took a few prisoners but not many.'

The next day "Jerry" came in and surrounded the town of Sigolsheim. After a four hour fire fight we had knocked out a tank and a half track with a bazooka. Later after they found out that we had nothing bigger than a light machine gun they brought in tanks right up the street and blew us out of the houses. The whole company surrendered bu tme and Janel D. Leiphart of Munsing, Mich.

We hid in the hayloft of a barn on the outside of town. The next day they found us and took us back to the rear where we joined the rest of the company. This was at Kolmar (COLMAR. (By the way the town that we were captured in was Seigolsheim, France (Alsace Loraine).

In a couple of days we were marched across the Rhine to Breisach. Here we stayed for about a week and a half. Then we boarded a train and went to Freiburg. From here we walked to Villingen, Stalag VB. We stayed here for three weeks. Then we walked to Rottveil a large Stalag (Stalag VII A) for British, Americans, French, Russians, etc. Here I stayed for about three months or more.

We would go to Munchen (Munich) to work three times a week. We got up about 4:30 in the morning and go by box cars over forty miles of track. We would get there at about 9 or 10. Work all day on a bowl of thin soup that we got at noon. Then at 4:30 we would start back. We would arrive at camp at about 9 o'clock sometimes as late as 11:30. For the last week I was there we would work one day in Munchen and the next day in Landshut seven days a week.

The Allied lines were getting closer and Jerry wanted to use the camp to keep officers in because it was a large camp and they thought it would be one of the last camps taken, and then too there were a lot of officers coming in from camps near Berlin that had been driven out by the Russians. So they were sending out what they called to farms and other towns to work. I was on one kommando (work crew) list to go to Memmingen.

Letter From Stalag VII-B

We walked 105 miles through Freising to Augseburg where we used to watch our planes straf everyday. We stayed here a week then took a train to Memmingen (Stalag VII B).

The Nazis Knew The Jig Was Up

They said no more kommandoes were going out because the lines were so close. A couple of days went by and we could hear artillery, Jerrys retreating down the main road then went past our Stalag. Then the officers and most of the guards of the camp took off leaving only a few guards that were to turn the camp over to the army that got here first, French or Americans.

A few days later we could see tanks in the distance. Then go into town. Pretty soon a white flag rose on the church steeple and not long afterwards everybody was rushing to the main gate yellong they're coming. Sure enough up the road came four lieutenants. They threw open the gates and we rushed out and down the road to where a major was standing in a jeep.

He addressed us and then came the big moment. They raised the Americn flag to the top of the flag pole that was in the Jerry camp yard. I elt very proud and a lump in my throat. I had tears in my eyes for the first time in I don't know when. It was a beautiful sight "Old Glory" waving in the breeze. We then returned to the Stalag waiting to be evacuated.

A couple of days later they took our names and told us that we would be flown out to LeHavre and from ther we would either go by boat or plane to the States, which ever was available at the time. Of course right now I can't tell you if we took a plane or not because I am writing this at the Stalag waiting so they say for the weather to clear up so we can take off. **We were liberated on April 26, 1945. Oh! Happy day.**

Good luck, Love, Jr.



Guest Column



FINAL EDITION—July 14, 1945—this issue, Vol. II, Number 58 was sent in by a loyal T-Patcher to your editor. This unique publication was a 'daily', with the current news—right off the wires. We had in our files a few dozen issues, but this one was printed after your editor and Bill Quinn had returned to the states (high-points). The following story is published, per request to the man who was the editor—Bill Quinn. We first met at Anzio and had the pleasure of seeing a linotype machine set up in a GI truck . . . ready to move at a moments notice. READ ON . . .

BEACHHEAD NEWS



VI CORPS
Fought in Sicily, Italy,
France, Germany

**BEACHHEAD NEWS—Only Mobile
Daily Newspaper in WWII**
Born at War-Torn ANZIO!
by Bill Quinn

Worldwarwoveterans.org

LIKE GI's themselves, Army newspapers had "buddies"—and closest friend of the T-Patch was the Beachhead News, a daily paper that was started on Anzio at the insistence of Lt. Gen. Lucian K. Truscott, VI Corps Commanding General.

The VI Corps, as most of our readers will recall, was comprised of the 36th Division, the 3rd Infantry Division (an old Army division that has been in existence since before WWI), and the 45th Division, a Texas-Oklahoma National Guard unit.

The Beachhead News was undoubtedly the most unique newspaper in any theatre of war during WWII in that it was a mobile publication that literally followed the troops from Anzio back to Naples, made a landing with units of the VI Corps in France, and stayed with corps headquarters through Southern France, Alsace-Lorraine, Southern Germany and Austria.

Yes—this daily paper was a mobile unit in every sense of the word. One 6X6 GI truck contained a giant generator which in turn furnished power to another truck that contained a Linotype (typesetting machine) and a makeup table; to another truck that mounted two Miehle Vertical letterpress presses; and to a captured German ambulance that doubled as editorial headquarters when a building was not available.

How did that Linotype get to Europe? It didn't! Like the German ambulance it was "captured" from an Italian printing shop in a tug-of-war between the shop owner and the GIs Commander of the VI Corps. Interestingly, that tug-of-war continued for over 20 years after the German peace was signed, in the form of lawsuit from the Italian printer who wanted payment from the War Department, which forwarded all such

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

correspondence to the Beachhead News' former officer-in-charge, Major J.C. Grimes, of San Antonio. Major Grimes, before joining his home state unit, the 45th Division, had been a Boy Scouts of America field representative in several towns in Texas, and he leaned heavily on his adopted "citizenship" to draft **Texans** for his editorial and mechanical staff. Sgt. Bill Quinn, now a publisher of trade publications in Fort Worth, was the central figure in getting the paper published on a seven-day-a-week basis in France and Germany. Mechanical head of the unit newspaper was Lorin F. Roark, also of Fort Worth, who was probably the only man in the whole of Europe capable of patching a Linotype in the dead of night with makeshift parts to make it continue to spit out the slugs from which a paper is printed. Sgt. Roark, who had a strong taste for alcoholic spirits of any kind, seemed to work better with overdoses of such lubrication.

Sgt. John L. Cozby of Houston was another key member of the organization—as makeup man and chef for the tiny unit (10 to 12 members) when the newspaper was nearer to action than was corps headquarters. Other members of the staff included an editor of Cue Magazine from New York City; another was a publicity man from MGM Studios; another was from the Detroit Daily News; another was an Associated Press writer with credentials a mile long.

The Beachhead News was indeed a unique newspaper. Our visits with them would tend to describe the bunch as an unbelievable mix of characters. But, somehow, in the worst of surroundings, in the coldest of cold, even after traveling miles and miles on the worst of roads, the Beachhead News was always—but always—in the hands of the GI's on the front lines within hours after each day's issue rolled off the press . . . in sharp contrast to the Stars & Stripes, delivery of which was a day or two or three late in getting to **T-Patchers and their fighting brethren of the 3rd and 45th Divisions.**



Publisher Bill Quinn is about to get soaked with Cutty Sark by Fort Worth Mayor, Bob Bolen at the recent dedication of Quinn Publications' lavish new national headquarters. Quinn's come a long way since he was editor of the Grand Saline weekly rag in East Texas.

Oflag 64 Reunion

Never die was the aim in Nazi prison

The Miami Herald Sunday, October 10, 1982

By MICHAEL BROWNING
Herald Staff Writer

Out by Christmas, out by Easter, out by Christmas again: The years behind barbed wire rolled by and the American prisoners of war stuck inside Oflag 64 lived on hope, from holiday to holiday. The food was rotten and scarce. Water was strictly rationed. The escape tunnels never led to freedom.

It was the bitterest, and yet somehow the most meaningful time in their lives.

There are memories of how the men sang the "Hallelujah Chorus" from Handel's *Messiah* one Christmas Eve; how one GI carved a crucifix for the altar using broken razor blades; how the Art Committee managed to stage a play complete with makeshift props and paper flowers.

Above all, the dreary prison camp taught its inmates how to survive, forgive and be grateful they are alive today.

Some 180 former inmates of Oflag 64 are together again on Miami Beach this weekend, at the Newport Beach Resort. They are past middle age now, old soldiers, a gray, bald group of men. It has been 38 years since that time, but some have never missed a single one of the biennial reunions held since they were liberated. An occasional newsletter called the "Post-Oflag Item," keeps them abreast of each other. Many visited the old camp on a trip to Poland in 1971. It's still there.

It's a reform school for juvenile delinquents.

It's the friendship that keeps them coming back, the knowledge that they won something by hanging on.

"I think if someone had told us, 'All right, you're going to be stuck

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

here for 2½ years and that's it,' a lot of us would have given up," said Warren Curtis, 66, who was a 27-year-old first lieutenant when he was captured by the Germans in North Africa in 1943. "As it was, we lived on hope. Next week, next month, the war would be over and we would be out."

Curtis got captured on his last patrol before he was due to be reassigned to Fort Benning, Ga. He can afford to joke about it today.

"I just went out there a little too far. I was trying to play Sergeant York, I guess."

The Nazis took him to Gabes, Tunisia, then to Tunis, then to Sicily in a JU-52 transport plane, then to Capua, Italy.

"Then they put us on a train up through Italy. I had a sightseeing tour that I'd never be able to afford again," he says dryly. From Germany's Eichstadt camp he was finally shipped to Oflag 66, the Polish prison camp that held 1,500 American troops captured by the Germans in Africa and Europe. For them, the outside war was over and the interior battle began.

"Food was the big problem," Curtis said. "The 11-pound Red Cross parcels helped a lot, but when the Allies invaded the south of France, that cut the supply line. It got down to where four men would share one parcel."

Ingenuity was a way of life

Men made stoves out of tin cans and used wads of paper and bed slats for fuel. You could use all but the last three slats. You needed those to put beneath your feet, your hip and your shoulder. Bridge and poker games went on endlessly. There were courses in math, history, music, taught by one prisoner to another. One man learned to play the cello. Another studied opera. Others learned German, Russian, or Polish, or all three. Committees were set up in charge of health, security, art, escape.

~~Tunnels led to nowhere—and you~~ get five days in the bunker

"We had our share of tunnels going," Curtis recalls. "A few managed to get out but I don't think anybody managed to get clean away. They'd bring them back and the old German commandant, *Oberst* Schneider, would throw them in the bunker for five days. He recognized that it was a prisoner's duty to escape."

The Rev. Stanley Brach is 73 today and works in a Catholic church in San Antonio, Tex. He was the only American priest to stay at Oflag 64 from the time it was opened in June 1943 until the time it was

Oflag 64 REUNION at MIAMI

liberated by the Russian Army. He still has the big iron keys to the front gate. A German officer named Hauptmann Mennen gave them to him when the Red Army drew near.

"You know the hardest thing about digging a tunnel?" asks the priest. "It isn't the digging. It's what to do with the dirt. We started a garden to raise vegetables and that garden kept getting bigger and bigger and bigger. It was where we dumped the dirt."

The prison guards were mostly old men, unfit for combat. Although a few were vindictive, most were indifferent, sometimes even friendly.

"They'd come up to you and ask if you knew their relatives in *Milvau-kee* or *Schi-ca-go* or *Cleef-land*," Curtis says with a smile.

"The incredible ingenuity these men had is something you never forget," Father Brach says. "They could make practically anything out of tin cans. It was like you had to invent everything all over again, and once you'd accomplished something, you felt very, very good.

"It was a process of becoming human, staying civilized. Whether they were religious or not, I think everybody had some sort of religious outlook by the end. They had to have."

"It changed our lives," says Curtis. "The last kindness anyone does for us now, we're so grateful. I really think I can find some good in anything now."



This re-print of a feature story printed in the Miami Herald during the Oflag 64 Reunion last year was sent in by JULIAN QUARLES, Attorney at Law in Miami, of Co. F 143rd, was captured at the Battle of Presano (see cover story), but did not get to Oflag 64, as he and Capt. Bayne escaped from the prison train. Here is his memo:

Dear Editor: Leonard Spence of 142nd invited me to a dinner of this group reunion of "64" men. Spence was in the same 40 and 8 with Bayne and I. Capua was the prison camp where we were held before they put us on the train. It was great to visit with the men of Oflag 64, and visit with Roger and Ruby Cannon and Floyd Vaden at this reunion.

Julian Quarles, 5948 SW 73rd St., South Miami FL 33143.



"BLUE DISCHARGE"

National Guard of the United States



AND OF THE STATE OF TEXAS

To all whom it may concern:

This is to Certify, That LYNN A SWEATT, Pvt. A.C. 142, 111th San. Train
Under Autho. letter fr A.G. Army to The C.G. 36th Div. Sept. 6/17, and Ind.
dated Dec. 1/17. U.S. Army (N.G.) is hereby Discharged from the

NATIONAL GUARD of the UNITED STATES and of the State of TEXAS
by reason of: MINORITY CONCEALED AT ENLISTMENT

Said LYNN A SWEATT was born
in WAXAHACHIE, in the State of TEXAS

When enlisted he was 16 years of age and by occupation a STUDENT
He had BROWN eyes, BROWN hair, FAIR complexion, and
was 5 feet 7 inches in height.

Given under my hand at CAMP BOWIE, TEXAS this
4th day of DECEMBER, one thousand nine hundred and SEVENTEEN

Major H. C. T. N. G. Commanding.

Form No. 228-1, A. C. O.
Use National Guard;
Rev. Mar. 1-17-15, 1920.

*Insert grade and company and regiment or corps or department, U.S. "Brevet, Company A, 1st New York Infantry," "Company, Company
"Company," "Company," "Private, First Class, Illinois Ordnance Department,"
"National Guard" or "National Guard Reserve," as the case may be.
Please fully set out name of discharge, giving number, date, and nature of order or description of authority thereof.

1-2027

The enlistment of this over zealous volunteer was short-lived . . . joined up Sept. 7th, discharged Dec. 4th 1917 at Fort Worth's Camp Bowie. This must be a rare document, as shown here. Lynn Sweatt died in 1973 at age 72 in Fort Worth.

Blue Discharge



A LITTLE "WHITE" LIE GOT YOU A "BLUE" DISCHARGE

Military historians for centuries, have been aware of the 'young bucks' who get carried-away in their feeling to defend their country, when a war has been declared. Patriotism is a very soul-stirring thing. It excites the young and adventuresome, because all wars were fought by YOUNG men, probably since the days of Atilla The Hun.

Your reporter was a mere lad of six, when the old Camp Bowie, Fort Worth was being built on the west side of town. Thousands of national guardsmen from Texas and Oklahoma would move in TENT CITY in the fall of 1917. I was an eye-witness to the whole thing, and PATRIOTISM in those days was rampant. Everyone got into the act . . . posters and pagentary proclaimed — "Let's Get Old Kaiser Bill".

Here is where the BLUE DISCHARGE comes in. I had heard about this, but thought it was probably for having a social disease, or something . . . but knew it carried no punishment.

AFTER WWII, I became acquainted with an old-timer, a salesman, and we would visit every week (for years). Then one day he found out, that I had served with 36th in WWII. He said, "I'll be damned, so did I at old Camp Bowie, 1917. Joined up the Texas National Guard 111th

Sanitary Train Unit, and was inducted Sept. 9, 1917”.

Over the years, during our visitations, in various bars around town, I asked him to explain to me what a BLUE DISCHARGE was all about.

He gave me his original ‘paper’ (which I had copied) and it is shown at your left. The type is too small to translate, so here is the content of the wording:

LYNN A SWEATT, Pvt. A.C. 142nd, 111th Sanitary Train, under authority letter from A/G Army to Commanding General 36th Division, Sept. 6, 1917 and on Dec. 1, 1917 U. S. Army is discharged from the National Guard of the United States and the State of Texas by reason of: MINORITY CONCEALED AT ENLISTMENT

(of course the word minority in those days did not apply to ethnics, but under-age).

My friend, Lynn A. Sweatt grew up in Waxahachie Texas, was raised by two old maid aunts who spoiled him. He was 16 when he signed up, probably just to ‘be on his own’.

In order to earn my keep as editor, I called our division historian, VINCE LOCKHART of El Paso to ask about such a certificate as a BLUE DISCHARGE was given in WWII. I was aware that he had served in G-1, the Adjutant Generals section, and his answer would be a great help in understanding the BLUE DISCHARGE.

Vince Lockhart (author of T-Patch to VICTORY) replied, “*I can’t recall a discharge given to anyone found to be under-age of enlistment. If the word got out, and the suspected man was, via grapevine, underage, it would be checked, and his commander would see that he was ‘sent home’. No official discharge”.*

Vince also added, “*yes, there were quite a few 16 year old kids that got in, but most all were discovered, sent home, and did not get overseas”.*

PLEASE note that the discharge certificate is from NATIONAL GUARD OF UNITED STATES (not the U.S. Army) even though at that time, the Guard was mobilized into the Army, because War was declared on Germany in April 1917, five months prior to this man’s enlistment.

BLUE DISCHARGE was gone with the wind—in WWII.

A brilliance illuminated on its dark side

THE GOEBBELS DIARIES

1939-1941

Edited by Fred Taylor

Putnam; \$17.95

Reviewed by
SPENCER TUCKER

Joseph Goebbels was in many ways a study in contrasts. Gifted and articulate, he earned a Ph.D. in literature from the University of Heidelberg. But he could also speak the language of the streets, and his ability as a rabble-rousing orator and organizer were of vital importance to the Nazi drive for political power.

Urbane and sophisticated, Goebbels reveled in cavorting with the great and near-great of German culture; but he also organized the burning of books. His marriage to an attractive woman who bore him six children did not prevent frequent affairs with actresses. Goebbels was an impassioned Nazi who remained loyal to Hitler to the end, perishing with the fuhrer in the Berlin bunker by suicide, having poisoned all his children beforehand.

Goebbels was certainly one of the more powerful figures of the Third Reich. As minister of Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda, he controlled what Germans read, saw and heard. In the press, the cinema and over the radio, Goebbels shaped information to benefit the Nazi regime. He undoubtedly deserves to be known as one of

the most adroit masters of media manipulation in history.

He was also a fervent diarist. A portion of each day was set aside to record his activities and reactions to events and people, and this clearly was done with an eye to the future.

The original diaries were kept in the Reich Chancellery but copies were made in miniature on photographic plates which were then buried. Both sets of records were later recovered and some of the diaries have already been published. These include sections from the years 1942-43 and 1945 as well as portions of the prewar years. This present work, translated and edited by Fred Taylor, represents the largest portion of the diaries to appear thus far.

As with most things written consciously for posterity, these diaries must be read with care. There are frequent expressions of affection for his children, and even for the wife whom Hitler insisted must remain with Goebbels for sake of appearance; but the real Goebbels was a hard



Goebbels addresses a Nazi party rally

brutal man who did not shrink from the most horrible punishments meted out to Jews and others, and who urged all steps necessary to achieve final German victory.

Goebbels was surprisingly candid, however, in his reporting and judgments in the diaries. His appraisal of the German defeat in the Battle of Britain (which he endeavored to offset by playing up the concurrent German victory in Crete) is absorbing reading. So is his reaction to the defection of party leader Rudolf Hess.

In the diaries we see Goebbels constantly on the move, working longer hours, screening films and ordering portions refilmed, meeting with foreign dignitaries and Reich officials, assessing German morale, organizing the defense of Berlin against Allied air raids, taking steps to counter Allied propaganda, and moving to control the cultures of Nazi-occupied Europe.

Taken in toto, the Goebbels diaries are a useful tool for helping to understand the distorted world which Goebbels did so much to help create and shape.

(Spencer Tucker is a TCU history professor specializing in modern Europe.)

T-PATCHERS ONLY LAUGHED AT NAZI PROPAGANDA

We must give a lot of credit to the Nazi War Machine for their effort to use propaganda to the fullest. This of course, is why they got into power in Germany in the early 1930's. The mad-man, Hitler knew he had to use this approach — way back there in 1931, when he was trying to take over.

He found a fanatical rabble-rouser, club-footed, Jew-hater named **Dr. Josef Goebbels** and let him dream up all the wild and vindictive ideas about every one — that were not a 'true' German. Of course, the Jews were first in line. But after war started, the propaganda mill ground-out tons of leaflets to advise their enemy — that they **WOULD BE THE LOSERS!**

The well-educated Germans (schooled in England) who were responsible to write these leaflets — probably figured that the Americans (and the British) would understand their approach to the subject. Wrong!

The Yanks and the Limeies were amused at their approach to (surrender) . . . because the difference is — the Nazis were so brain-washed that their movement to take over the world, plus 'their superiority' of the races, and the 'decadence' of the French, British and Americans

— would be an easy mark to believe their hog-wash.

"The war will be over in six months"

That's what Montgomery told you, and the whole machine of British and American propaganda tried to make you believe that it would now be over in no time.

To you it may have looked like it for some days. But instead of breaking down, German resistance is stiffening again. It will stiffen the more the nearer you come to the German border defense lines.

Then, every mountain will be a fortress. Every fortress will be defended to the last. You don't know whether you can conquer them. But you know that thousands of you will never see their families again, that thousands will be maimed for life. Only P. o. W. will return home safe and sound.

These leaflets (shown here) were a re-hash of similar ones used by the Nazis in the North African Campaign, directed to the British troops of the 8th Army, whom were not impressed.

This version was distributed via artillery shells over the Anzio beachhead area during the days when the Germans seemed to be in command. That didn't last long, and Rome fell, thanks due to the efforts of the 36th at Velletri . . . a classic maneuver by our late, great leader, Gen. Fred Walker.

Salerno!



THE BEACHES OF SALERNO

There is blood on the sands in Italy
It's the blood of the brave and the true,
Of the men who fought together
With banners of red, white and blue.
As they battled for these beaches
of Salerno

To the hills where the enemy lay,
They remembered their objective
and orders

These beaches must be secured today.
Some thought of their homes
and their families,

Some of their sweethearts so fair.
And some as they crawled and stumbled,
Were softly whispering a prayer.
Forward they went into battle,
With faces unsmiling and stern.

They knew as they fought up
the hill side,
That many would never return.
There's blood on the sands of Italy,
It's a gift to the freedom they loved.
May their names live in glory forever,
And their souls rest

in the heavens above.

Charles Stimson
Salerno—1943
Co. G, 142nd Inf.

T-PATCH TO VICTORY

The 36th "Texas" Division
France — Germany — Austria



Colonel Vincent M. Lockhart

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SPEAKING EDITORIALY

As we go into our third year with this historical quarterly, it's time to reflect a bit about some of the policies that we try to follow.

Now after eight issues (of 80 pages each) we have tried to bring to you a variety of great stories, as related by our men who served in the 36th during that past two world wars.

As expected, we received some 'rebuttals' regarding the facts as related in a story of action. This does not alarm us, and everyone knows that there are (two) sides, sometimes to almost everything.

We are obliged to print the rebuttals. After all, it's just another opinion as to — who, what and where, and whether it was a company, battalion or even a platoon (or squad) that was evolved. We feel that by printing the rebuttals, to be only a democratic way to handle a 'dispute'.

Some of the items are 'picky', like a size of the millimeter of weapons used by us (or the enemy). BUT, please be reminded that, we are now talking about (our memory) that is in its 40th year since we first were baptized in the bloody action at Salerno, San Pietro, Cassino, Rapido and many, many more hot spots of blood-letting, the wounded, and the POWs.

IN all fairness, it is not the prerogative of an editor to pass judgment, so we shall print any legitimate rebuttal to a story we have published.

As an oldtime Civil War buff, we bought just about everything published during the CENTENNIAL celebration from 1961 through 1965. Every state that was evolved in this great struggle had their own histories, stories, books, re-enactments etc. We discovered that, many versions of battles were in dispute (still after 100 years).

Also we were aware that 60,000 books have been written about this (very bloody) War Between the States. Henceforth, **we expect the same from the action in which the T-Patchers were involved in the seven campaigns of WWII in Europe.**

We welcome your comments, additions or corrections to the content of these stories of your comrades. The future historians will research and decide for themselves — in print.





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