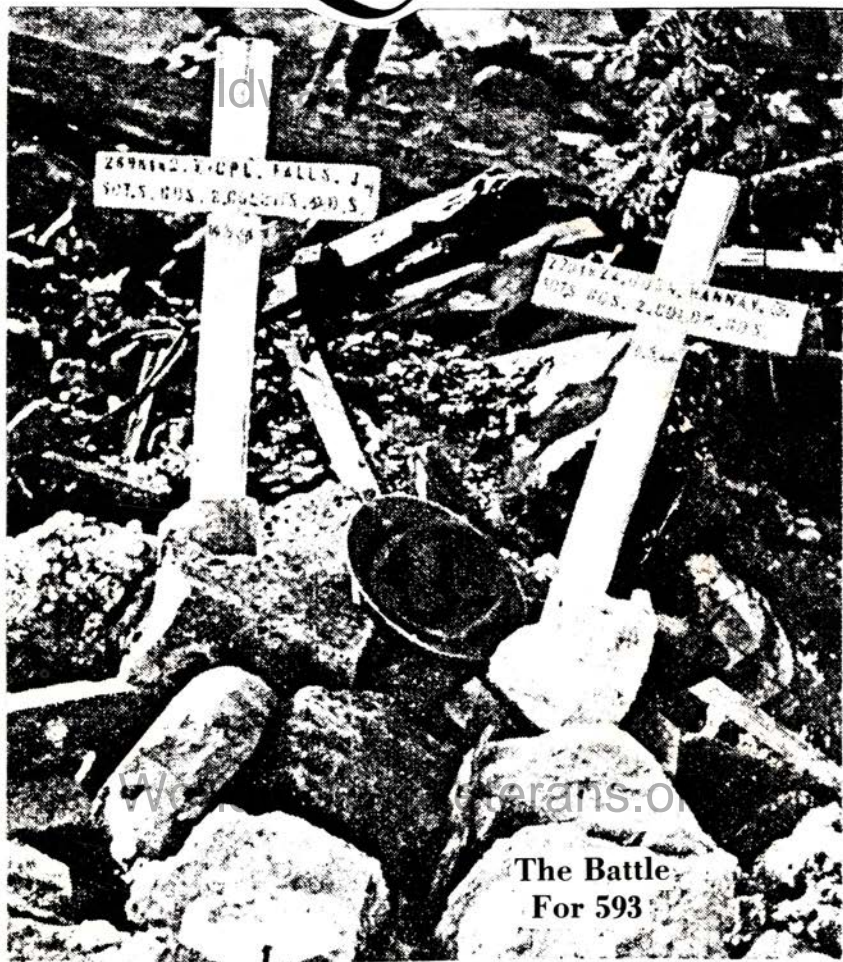


The Fighting 36th

HISTORICAL
Quarterly



The Battle
For 593

Vol. IV No. 2 ■ Summer 1984

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The Fighting 36th



HISTORICAL QUARTERLY

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Vol. IV No. 2 Summer 1984

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TEXAS *36th Division
Association*





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

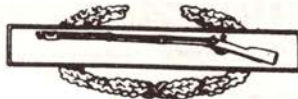
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Activated 25 November 1940 at Camp Bowie, Brownwood, Texas, they were the first American troops to invade Hitler's Europa at Salerno, Italy, 9 September 1943.

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

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

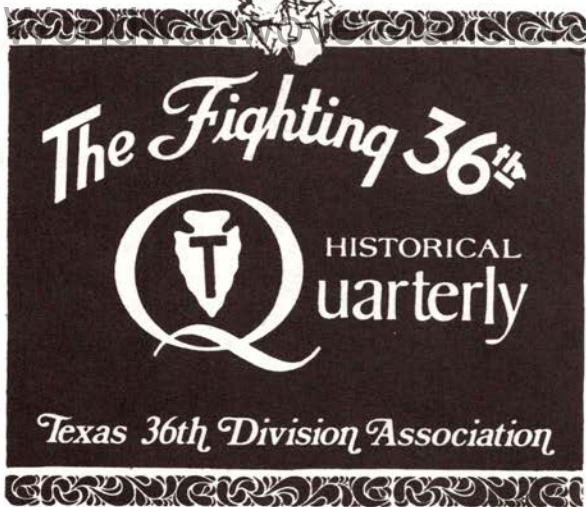
- **Naples-Foggia**
- **Anzio**
- **Rome Arno**
- **Southern France**
- **Rhineland**
- **Ardennes-Alsace**
- **Central Europe**

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. IV No. 2 Summer 1984



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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Editor/Art Director . . . William E. Jary, Jr.

P. O. Box 1816, Fort Worth, TX 76101

(817) 738-1467

(correspondence regarding manuscripts, comments pro or con should be sent to the editor)

SUBSCRIPTIONS:

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LEONARD WILKERSON, P. O. BOX 1049

MALAKOFF, TX 75148

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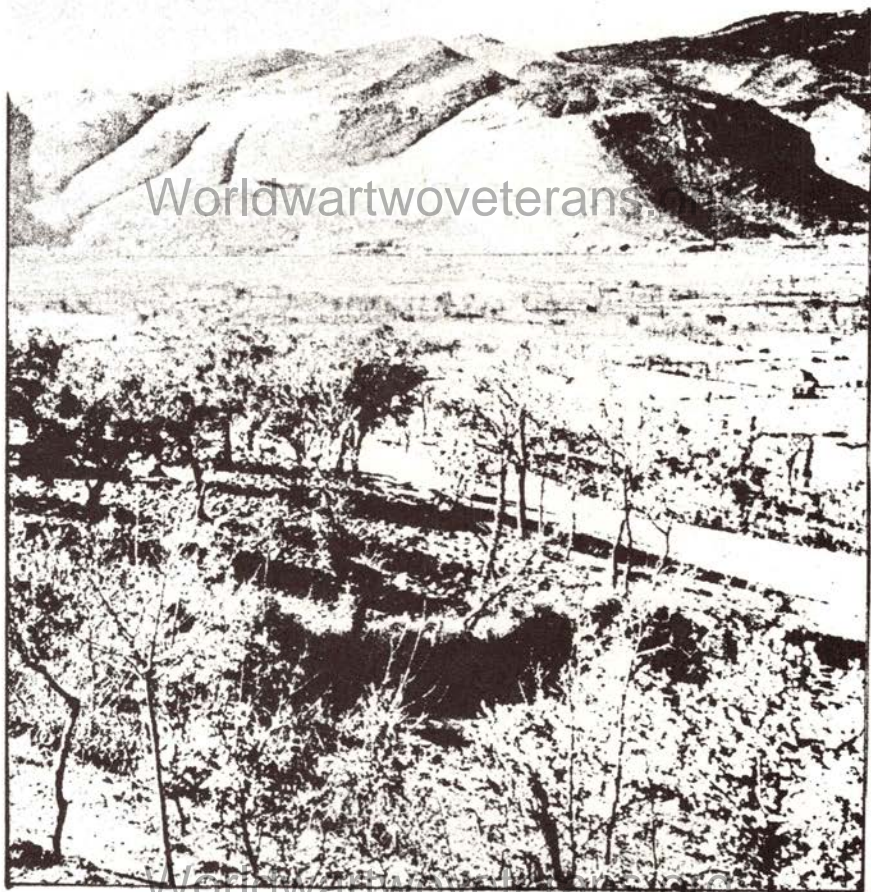
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COVER STORY



ACROSS THE RAPIDO VALLEY NORTH OF CASSINO RISES SNOW-CAPPED
MT. CAIRO, WITH VILLAGE OF CAIRO AT BASE.

IN THE HILLS ABOVE CASSINO

In a blinding snowstorm on the morning of February 11, the 141st and 142nd Regiments attacked to the south to seize and hold Hill 468, a bowl-shaped plain on which stood another ancient abbey which the Germans had fortified. During the day fighting was intense but by nightfall friendly troops were reported within 50 yards of the abbey on 468. The weather throughout this operation was bitterly cold.

Mac Acosta
Can Never Forget
February 11, 1944



The Battle for 593

“ORDEAL OF FIRE”

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I have three freshly sharpened pencils before me and am having great difficulty getting started. I have been asked numerous times by C.N. Red Morgan, Bill Jary, and now — Henry Gomez, to write this story. Henry is pushing so hard I can no longer find excuses to decline.

It is difficult to concentrate and write about this subject because it was a tragic event in my life. My ambition was to become an officer, with the Army as my career, and it all disappeared into the misty blue with one burst of a German machine gun. I failed to reach my chosen goal, and failures are not easy to write about.

Perhaps if I succeed in recounting the events that led to my disaster I may “unlock” the resentment that wells inside of me when my mind goes back to that fateful day of February 11, 1944 when Company C, 141st Infantry was locked-in-battle with the Germans on the mountain heights above Cassino.

About February 10, 1944, Company C was sent from the Rapido River front to the right of Cassino near Cairo. I was platoon sergeant of the 3rd platoon and my leader was **2nd Lt. William Robert Morehead**, a courageous warrior from Kingsville, Texas who showed fearless gallantry during the Rapido River battle.

Lt. Morehead was assigned to our rifle company as punishment: previously he had been assigned to the Anti Tank company. However, one day while his unit was holding a road block, he drove his jeep to Naples for a supply of cognac. He told me that while in Naples he decided to pay his girlfriend a short visit. After he came out of her apartment he found his jeep gone, cognac and all. A court martial assessed him a six hundred dollar fine and a transfer to my outfit as punishment.

As our company trudged along a dirt road in a column of twos towards the Cairo area, Lt. Morehead told me our mission was to launch an assault on a German position and more details would come later. That was enough to keep me worried; **we had just lost about thirty or forty men during the ill-fated Rapido River attack, and I wondered if this was to be more of the same.**

Our company stopped its march before we reached Cairo, and everyone was ordered to dig a slit trench on the side of a hill. As usual,

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We spent two nights in those hillside slit trenches. The following afternoon the order came to move out. We took that gravel road towards Cairo in a column of platoons, double file. We passed jeeps, trucks and rear echelon troops on our way forward. All were very quiet, each one deep in his thoughts. It was very cold, the sky was overcast — a somber and forbidding dark grey as dusk neared.

We turned left off of the Cairo road onto a narrow dirt trail between two mountains. As we trudged along, I spotted a pick mattock laying on the side of the road. Sergeant Jesse Moreno, my platoon guide, who was bringing up the rear of the platoon had lost his entrenching tool at Rapido. I grabbed the pick mattock and handed it to the squad leader behind me, saying loudly, **“Pass this back to Sergeant Moreno.”** I could hear the phrase being repeated as the tool made its way to the rear.

It was pitch dark and the rain had switched from mist to sleet and snow as we began to ascend a narrow mountain trail. As the trail pitched UPWARD, it was like climbing a staircase.

As we struggled upward, the trail became narrowed and steeper. Much of the time we used our hands holding on to the icy rocks and crevices as we pulled upward. With great difficulty we slipped and slid, and with an occasional muffled oath or cussword, announced a fall or scraped knee.

Mule Packs Carried Dead Bodies

Periodically, Capt. John McCain, leading our company, halted the column to allow the dark shapes of descending Pack Mules to pass. The mules' bulky burden were dead GIs strapped to their backs. The pack mules, as well as us dogfaces were having a difficult time with the icy mountain trail.

We took those delays with mixed emotions. They gave us a chance to catch our breath, but as we waited, the deep, wet cold penetrated our jackets, and our cold hands became numb.

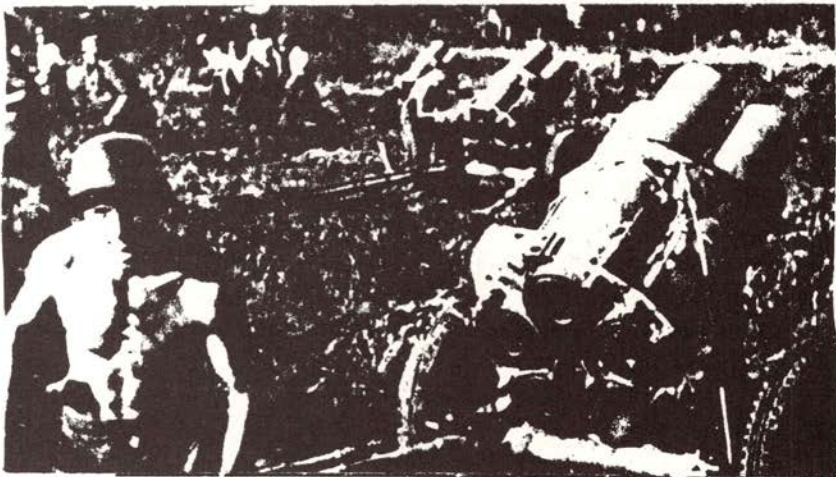
It was almost midnight and we were completely exhausted, soaked, cold and miserable. We had been climbing for at least six hours. I could tell we were getting close to the top because the terraces were getting wider and I could see more sky. Once when the column stopped, we stood in our tracks wondering, **“What now?”** A soldier standing near me pointed to an area in the distance and said, **“Look, I think there is a kitchen over there. Maybe we'll get something to eat.”** This nut infuriated me because I was hungry and I knew better. I said, **“Have you lost your mind you idiot? Can't you see it's just a bunch of mules?”** In the dark and snow I couldn't see the idiot that spoke, but suddenly realized the soldier I was talking to was Lt. Morehead. I thought, **“Oh Lord, now I've done it.”** I waited for the wrath of hell

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to descend on me. Second lieutenants have thin skins and are not receptive to such talk from subordinates. However, Lt. Morehead pretended he didn't hear and I was thankful for that.

It was a little past midnight when we reached the mountain top. We turned right and followed a goat trail, it passed a goat herder's stone shed. Later this became a CP and was utilized as our ammo dump. I thought, how wonderful it would be to take a nap inside that stone shack. To sleep in a dry place out of the cold and rainy snow would be like sleeping in a hotel.

We hadn't gone far when a screeching barrage of screaming meemie shells fell in the area. The screaming meemie was our nickname for the German rebel werfer rocket smoke mortar. It could put five or six shells in the air in seconds and blanket an area. The shell, a rocket — created an **“unnerving” sound in flight.** To me, they sounded like a very loud herd of charging trumpeting elephants. The noise made it difficult to tell where the shells were going to hit. You would swear they were coming straight down on your back.



Les projecteurs de nuages artificiels sont alertés.

I crawled alongside a large log, lucky to have such good cover. The shelling could not have lasted over five minutes, but it seemed like an hour. When it quit we moved forward again, maybe a couple hundred yards and took over a 34th Division position. Soldiers from the 34th were in shallow slit trenches. The trenches were shallow built up crevices. The mountain was bare rock with only a few inches of soil here and there. The GI's dug in as deep as they could, then they would pile rocks around the hole for a little more protection.

Lt. Morehead said, **“Inform the men tomorrow morning at ten hundred hours we launch our attack.”** He added, **“Sleep tight.”** I thought, **“Go to hell.”**

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Riflemen from the 34th Division allowed me to share their foxhole for the short remaining hours of the night. We slept in a sitting position because of cramped quarters. Next morning we awoke to find the ground covered with a blanket of snow.

Daylight afforded me an opportunity to survey our surroundings. What I saw was not a bit comforting. I saw dead soldiers laying all over that mountain top.

The sight of these bodies depressed me especially since we were scheduled to attack that morning. **My father had died about six years before, and the only consoling factor I could muster in the presence of death all around us was that if I were to die that morning I would not be alone. I would be with my father.** I knew the chances of surviving this attack were going to be tough. I had survived the landing at Salerno, the fighting on Mt. Longo, Mt. Sammucro and the Rapido River battle. How long can a person gamble continuously and keep winning? Eventually the dice are going to come up "snake eyes". It is like Lt. Morehead once said. **"We are like a virgin bride, we know we are going to get it and we wonder how bad it's going to be."**

At about 930 hours the order came down, **"Fix bayonets"**. I passed the command to our men; then as we waited for the order to attack, our own artillery opened fire on our objective which was another mountain across from us. As our artillery poured shell upon shell in support of our pending attack, we stood and cheered the outgoing barrage, we screamed some of the vilest insults imaginable at them and relished the sight of exploding shells on their position. We were venting our frustrations on the object we felt had caused us so much grief. In retrospect, **I believe we were "half-crazed" almost to the point of insanity; it was euphoria watching the enemy being lambasted.**

Suddenly the roles were switched, the Germans laid one of the most savage artillery and mortar barrages on us we had ever experienced, appearing as if though in reprisal. The whole mountain was convulsing under its bombardment. We were laying as flat on the ground as we could manage, any little pebble under our body felt as big as a baseball and if it had been possible, **we would have crawled inside our helmets.**

Hour of Death Had Arrived...

During the intensity of the bombardment, Pvt. Frank Vasquez who was laying on the ground near me gave me a very worried look and said, **"Sarje, aqui nos va llevar la chingada a todos."** Literally he said, **"Sarge, here is where all of us are going to get screwed."** What he meant was that the hour of our death had arrived. I tried to instill some courage in him as well as in myself by saying, **"Don't worry, we've made it through worse places than this."**

The barrage lifted and loud popping of small arms could be heard.

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We realized it was German rifle and machine gun fire, some of our men yelled, **"It's a counter attack."** The Germans had beaten us to the punch, and had attacked first. I saw Lt. Morehead holding a rifle with a fixed bayonet in his hands. Even in that moment of chaos, I thought it strange and amusing to see an officer with a rifle; (a .45 caliber pistol is the only arm I had ever seen them carry).

Morehead had transformed himself to the lowest common denominator. Now he was fighting to stay alive. He yelled at me, **"Sergeant, get the men in a position to shoot."** I hurriedly checked our men's positions. Everything looked in order; each man had an extra bandoleer of ammunition and two hand grenades. The enemy was firing as he came, it was an attack in force. One of the our surviving men later said, **"They were thicker than flies on Arab shit."**

A rock fence no higher than three feet ran through our position. That fence served no other purpose than to probably mark property boundaries. Lt. Morehead and several other men were on their knees kneeling against that rock fence and I followed that fence to the right for a few feet and detected a ravine coming up to our position. I thought to myself, **"This is the perfect place for the enemy to come at us, and I'm going to be waiting to give them a hot-lead reception."** I was carrying my hand grenades loosely inside my jacket. I knew I was going to need them in a hurry. I stood up and as I fumbled with my jacket's zipper trying to get to the grenades, a burst of German machine gun fire came from my right side and hit me in the left knee and right thigh.

LIKE BEING HIT BY A FREIGHT TRAIN

When those bullets struck it felt like I had been hit by a freight train. The impact of those bullets on my knee were so painful and I was so surprised, I let out a yell as I fell to the ground. The machine gunner continued to fire at me; instinctively I rolled behind some large rocks for cover. I knew immediately I had made a mistake by standing up.

The attack, at 1100 hours, February 17th, had to be launched from the uncertain positions gained along the slopes south of "Snake's Head" Ridge. These positions, reported clear by other units, were actually secured by fighting when the regiment moved into position. The 1st Battalion, coordinated with other attacking elements, began its advance at the appointed hour. Extremely heavy fire of all types was encountered. The chief obstacle consisted of enemy fire directed into our flank from German positions to the west. No means had been provided for countering or evading the fire. Only short gains were made, primarily by crawling along the barren and rocky surfaces of the ridge and dislodging the enemy from his positions with hand grenades. The fierce close-in struggle continued through the afternoon. Over 1300 hand grenades were used by the battalion during the fight.

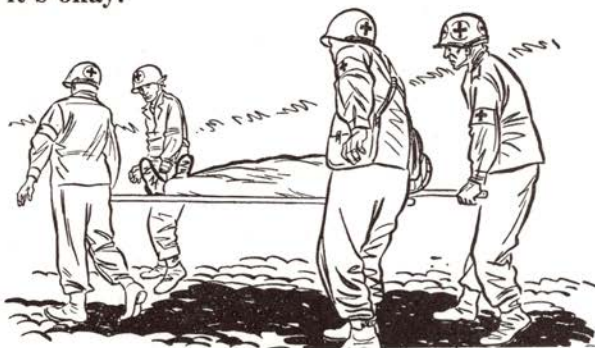
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I looked around for help and I yelled, "**Medic.**" I realized it was futile to expect any type of aid at that moment when the battle was in full bloom.

CRIMSON RED SNOW . . .

The snow I was laying on was crimson with my blood. It continued to snow heavily and as I lay wounded I looked around and saw two men of the 34th Division in a hole looking at me with eyes wide with awe or fear, I am not sure which. I asked them if they had something I could cover myself with; they threw a muddy raincoat to me and I used it for that purpose. **My pain was so intense I chewed on the edges of that raincoat and I did a lot of praying.**

I don't know how long I layed there. It seemed like an eternity when someone crawled up alongside of me. It was Pvt. Frank Vasquez. He asked if I wanted to be dragged to a hole. I told him he was an angel. He grabbed me under my armpits and began dragging. I helped as much as I could with my arms and hands. At one point I felt like he was pulling me over a log. I asked, "**What's this?**" He said, "**It's only a dead soldier, it's okay.**"



When Vasquez had me in a low place which offered a degree of protection, Sgt. Moreno came with a stretcher he had found and they layed me on it. An aid man from the 34th Division, while kneeling, applied a tourniquet above my left knee and bandaged my right thigh and cut a hole in the arm of my jacket in order to get a needle in my arm for a shot of morphine. After the morphine injection my pain ceased and I felt a sense of relief and well being. Sgt. Moreno brought me a canteen cup with hot coffee. Lord knows how he heated it. Lt. Morehead came to see how I was faring. He looked at me and said, "**You lucky son of a bitch, you will be back in the States in a few days drinking beer and we will still be here drinking this chlorinated water.**"

The enemy attack fizzled but it was only the first round and our Captain was dead. A shell hit our company command post killing Captain John McCain, 1st Lt Phillip Ortman, (company executive offier), and

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PFC Earl Cox, company runner, Sgt Ted Sturm, who was acting 1st Sgt, lost a leg below the knee.

Ted Sturm later told me the Captain had lost a leg above his knee. He said when hit, McCain looked at him and smiled, then layed back and died.

Potatoe Masher Grenades Flying Everywhere

That afternoon the Germans mounted another attack and it was like being in the center of a 4th of July fireworks. The enemy was throwing everything they had at us and our men were throwing it back. While laying on my back, twice I saw German potato-masher grenades flying through the air. They were just too close to suit me.

During the heat of this firefight, I spotted PFC Gerald "Moose" Morris and another man running towards the rear in a crouched position. I yelled, "**Moose, get your ass back here. Where do you think you're going!**" He came and kneeled by me and said, "**Sarge, we're outta grenades, we gotta go get more.**" I said, "**Okay, carry on.**" A short period later, Moose and his buddy were coming back up the trail running with a wooden chest full of grenades; they had the chest between them and were hanging on to the rope handles attached to each side of it. I looked at those boys with great pride. The training we had given them was now evident. They could have just as easily kept going once they were out of range.

None of our men ran from battle, they were either carried out feet first, or they walked away when relieved.

The enemy attack that afternoon finally came to a halt, and again they were unsuccessful in taking our position. That was round two and they were still laying behind rocks on that mountainside preparing for more.

COMPANY C CUT ALMOST IN HALF

Our casualties were mounting; C company was being decimated. A full complement for a company is 204 men. However, after Salerno, we were always under strength like all other units. When we came to this mountain, our total strength was about 130 men.

When I was wounded I had no idea I was to lay there for 3 days before being evacuated. I quickly realized it took 4 litter bearers 7 hours to carry one wounded person from the top to the foot of that mountain, and if all units were short of personnel the problem is easily understood.

When the firefight slowed to sporadic firing that afternoon, and as I lay on that litter, I saw Lt. Morehead and Lt. John Baum holding on to each other limping down the path towards the rear; I thought, "**You lucky bastards.**" I also saw Moose going towards the rear holding up a bloody forearm. This fellow had guts, he said he played

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football for his high school in White Sulpher Springs, W.V. Unfortunately he was killed in a later battle.

The action slowed down and by sundown there was an occasional blast of a mortar or artillery shell just enough to remind us we were still at the front. The evening was quiet until about midnight and the ruckus started all over again. I yelled at my men, "**Wake up! They're coming!**" It was a repeat performance, mortars, grenades, rifle and machine gun fire. Our troops in their depleted and exhausted state fought tenaciously never giving ground. **There is no way I can express how proud I was of the men of Company C; this battle was being fought with no spectators present, only the combatants in the dark fighting to the death.** Had television been able to show to the public the heroic action of our soldiers on that mountain each one would have been highly decorated.

One Hundred Casualties

Tech Sgt. Rudy Alexander, Platoon Sergeant of the 4th Platoon, was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for action in this battle.

Our casualties were very high, when our company was relieved after about four days of combat only about twenty-eight men were still on their feet; our company suffered about one hundred casualties, dead and wounded.

Lt. WILLIAM EVERETT ONLY SURVIVING OFFICER

The only officer that survived that battle was 2nd Lt. William Everett from Baltimore, Maryland. Lt. Everett was known as "**Junior**" because he looked like a youngster fresh out of high school. **That did not take anything away from him because he was a scrapper.** Originally he had served in the Air Force but somehow he had an affinity for the Infantry. That is somewhat like saying you like being mistreated. He survived the war and went home unscathed; anyone who can perform that feat can only thank his lucky stars and the old man upstairs.

I have heard some who served in other units complain about not receiving a promotion while overseas. Promotions in a rifle company while in combat come fast to the survivors; one day you're a private, the next you may be a Sergeant or a tech; unit leaders change so fast it is difficult to remember who is in charge, and the leaders go out just as fast as they come in.

The second night while still lying on that litter, the litter bearers came and apologized for not being able to evacuate me. They explained Sgt. Ted Sturm was in more serious condition than I and they were going to evacuate him first. I readily agreed with their decision and told them

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I didn't mind waiting. They were back the following night at about 11:00 P.M. and I was on my way. I felt a compassion for these four fellows acting as litter bearers; as they carried me down the mountain several times they slipped on the wet surface falling and I would have to hang on to the sides of the litter to keep from falling out of it.

It was daybreak when we reached the foot of the mountain and the aid station. Corporal Buck Schooley, aid man, greeted me. Buck had been a Company C aid man before being transferred to the aid station. The four litter bearers who had just carried me down the mountain which took the whole night were pleading with an officer to allow them to take a nap. The officer was telling them they had to go back up the mountain immediately because there were more wounded waiting to be evacuated.

I was transported to the 94th Evacuation Hospital by ambulance. The medics carried me to an operating tent, laying me on a table. A nurse placed a sponge over my nose and mouth and from a can, while pouring ether on it, instructed me to breathe deeply. I took one deep breath and felt like I was suffocating. I had to have air. When I pushed away her sponge she called an orderly for help, and when the orderly held me down I yelled at a group of doctors who were performing surgery on another hapless person.

"Stars and Stripes and Rockets Red Glare" . . .

I said, "Listen, this stuff is going to kill me. I have seen it in the movies and funny papers." I realized later I was delirious but at that time it was most real. The doctors raised their heads and looked at me and I heard them laugh. Their laughter gave me the feeling of utter helplessness and doom. They hadn't believed me. **As the ether took effect, I saw stars and stripes and the rockets red glare and I was out.**

Hallucination Galore...

When I awoke I was in a body cast from my navel down to my toes. I ran a high temperature for many days. The fever caused me to hallucinate. In my dream world I could see First Sgt. Clyde Henley. I would say, "**Look Sarge, I can walk with this cast, mark me duty, I want to go back with my boys.**"

Two or three weeks later I was transferred to the 36th General Hospital at Caserta. Several of my men came to pay a visit. Sgt. Moreno and Enrique Garcia smuggled a bottle of cognac into the hospital for me. I was so darn sick I declined and they understood. However, I was overwhelmed by their gesture; no soldier ever gives away a bottle of liquor unless it's to his best friend.

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Sgt. Moreno recounted the events that followed my evacuation. He said — **“the Germans requested a truce in order to retrieve their wounded and dead, and they witnessed more than one hundred enemy picked up from in front of our position.”** He said there were more bodies inside our position but refused to allow the enemy in close to prevent him from gaining knowledge of our defensive condition, which had suffered tremendously.

Three years and Eight Months and Ten Operations...

After three months I was shipped back to the State. **I spent the next three years and eight months in Army hospitals and underwent ten operations on my knee.** The war had long been over, everyone had gone home, and I was still in the hospital. I was discharged by the Army October 11, 1947. I was even promoted from Tech to Master Sergeant while still hospitalized. I guess they felt sorry for me.



Photo made January 1984 - Mac Acosta says, “a bullet fragment was removed, maybe been carrying the fragment for 40 years (Hit Feb. 11 1944). It was turned over to the San Antonio Police...policy you know.”

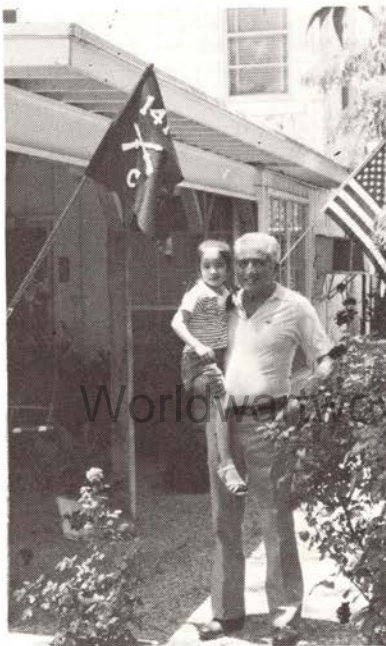
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Here's Mac Acosta (left) with his good buddy, Hank Gomez, who is responsible for insisting that he "write this story".

It's been working for several years, but Mac, a most modest soul would not budge until Hank gave him the Chinese-Water-Drip torture and he has our thanks for getting this epic story,

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A proud Grandfather holds his first grandchild, for this photo taken on JULY 4th 1984. Please note guidon - C 141st and Old Glory waving in the breeze. (Did you do that at your house?) (No, I didn't either).

Mac Acosta is an exceptional clever and articulate individual. His dedication, and desire to keep the spirit of the T-Patchers alive has been recorded in print, with his great job as Editor of Le T-Bone, the official "MONTHLY" newsletter of the famous San Antonio Chapter.

It has been my privilege to have known Acosta for many moons, and I feel I am better by having tried to earn his friendship. He's always had mine.



The Saga Goes On...

Sunday, November 11, 1984, DALLAS TIMES HERALD

'Mark Clark' biography doesn't give full story

"Mark Clark: The Last of the Great World War II Commanders," by Martin Blumenson. 306 pp. (Congdon & Weed, \$17.95.)

By RICK SMITH

ONCE IN A great while an author has a chance to write an outstanding biography — to compile the story of a man or woman that will satisfy readers who want to know what made the subject the sort of character he was. The author gets that chance through perseverance or luck, gaining access to diaries, letters and other records denied writers before him. The story of Mark Clark awaited one writer to do it justice.

In this case, justice has not been served.

Clark, a four-star U.S. Army general who operated in the same circles of power in World War II with Dwight Eisenhower, Omar Bradley, Chester Nimitz, Douglas MacArthur and others, has not previously been the subject of a biography. Although Clark published his memoirs years ago, he remained a private man, and other authors were rebuffed in their attempts to get the inside story.

Yet Clark, who died in April, chose to let Blumenson, editor of "The Patton Papers," delve into his private life. Diaries, letters and other records were provided. But despite Clark's openness, Blumen-

son managed to fumble his attempt, like Clark did in his grab for quick victories in Italy at Anzio or across the Rapido River near Monte Cassino.

The reader does learn how many pounds of books Clark moved from one military base to another but we don't discover Clark's deepest feelings about such failures as Rapido, during which the 36th (Texas) division was devastated.

Blumenson says Fred Walker, the division commander involved, was too harsh in his criticism of Clark for the bungle because Walker was unaware his attack was to be a diversion for a landing scheduled later at Anzio. Yet Blumenson then shoots a hole in his argument by speculating about whether Clark erred in not telling Walker how important his division's role was.

Blumenson does establish Clark's importance as an organizer and trainer of the awesome military machine that helped conquer Germany. But the merits of Clark the military commander must be based on his role in the Italian campaign, basically a two-year sideshow during which Allied forces slugged slowly toward the Alps.

Remarkably, Blumenson devotes less than a third of the book to the campaign.

Rick Smith is an assistant news editor of the Times Herald.

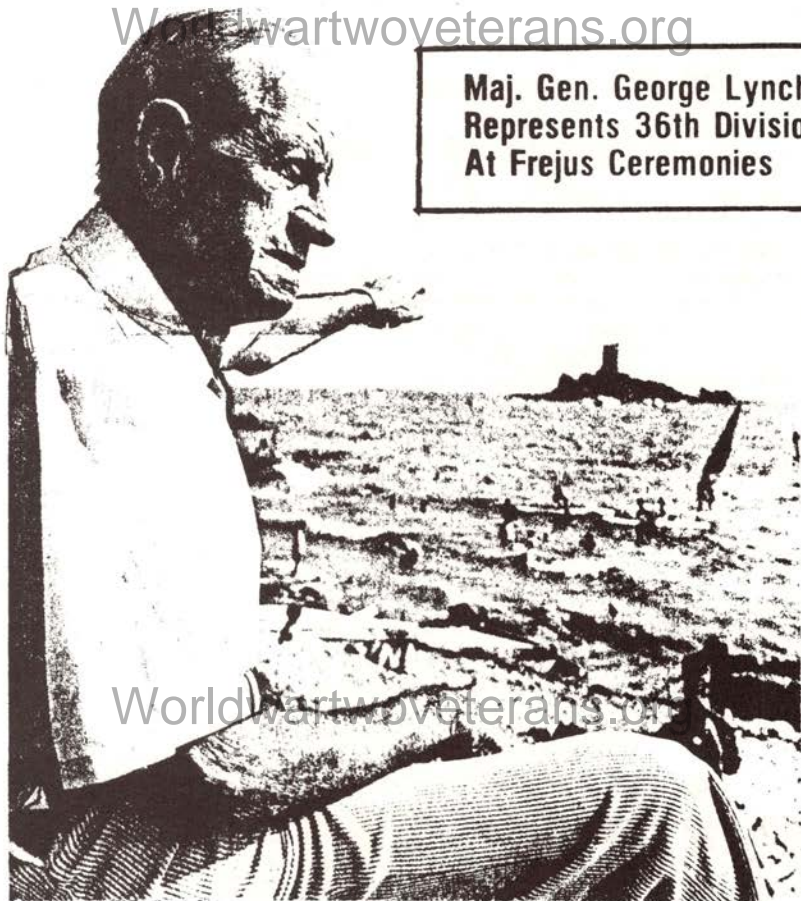
40^e anniversaire du débarquement de Provence : un hommage solennel

Plusieurs cérémonies aujourd'hui dans le Var en présence de M. Fabius

Le retour du général qui a libéré Fréjus

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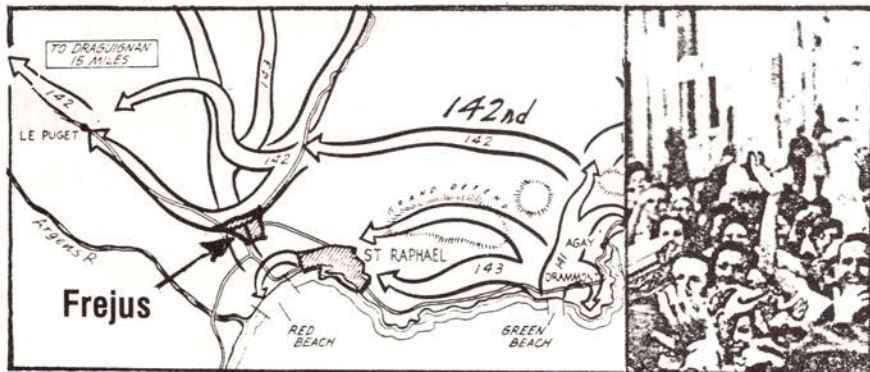
**Maj. Gen. George Lynch
Represents 36th Division
At Frejus Ceremonies**



Le quarantième anniversaire du débarquement allié en Provence est aujourd'hui fêté officiellement à Toulon, mais aussi à Saint-Raphaël, sans représentant du gouvernement. Cette commémoration a pris pour point de départ l'esplanade du Dramont, à deux pas de la plage où débarqua la 36^e division U.S. Le major-général George Lynch — qui était alors un colonel de 36 ans — n'a rien oublié de ce jour où il prit pied sur les galets avec son régiment, avant de faire mouvement sur Fréjus pour libérer la ville. Sur la plage du Dramont, le général a jugé cette seconde visite « bien plus agréable que la première ».

(Photo Diane Richard)

40th Anniversary Ceremony At Frejus



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Text of speech to Citizens of
FREJUS FRANCE on the
40th Anniversary of its Liberation
by Maj. Ben. George E. Lynch
(Former CO of 142nd Infantry)

"Mr. Mayor Leotard and my friends of Frejus. Forty years ago today, the 36th U.S. Infantry Division debarked on this coast and assaulted the enemy in Frejus. This is a great day, as it was 40 years ago—A Day of Spirit, of excitement and of courage; not only courage of the soldiers, but also the people of Frejus, for they suffered, as did the enemy, the massive bombardment delivered by aircraft and by Naval warships. I remember so well, the haze and dust of that day."

"But in the end, the enemy was driven from Frejus, fleeing to the north, our 36th Division followed closely, so we had very little time in Frejus; no time to enjoy its beauty and the pleasures of the region, which I am doing today."

Precious Liberty was restored. May it never again be lost; and to this thought and in memory of that Day of Glory, I am happy to present this plaque from the 36th U.S. Infantry Division to the City of Frejus".
(translation from the French).

SAINT-RAPHAEL - FREJUS
nice-matin

LE PREMIER QUOTIDIEN D'INFORMATIONS DU SUD-EST ET DE LA CORSE

General George Lynch was kind enough to forward tearsheets of the news coverage of the ceremony, as reported in the Mice-Matin (newspaper published for the Saint Raphael area)..and the photo of Lynch at your left was reproduced in FULL COLOR...the one we used is a reduced-version (sorry we could not also show in color).

**“A Most Impressive Ceremony Took Place
At Our 36th Division Monument...”**

It was truly a tremendous occasion for all present — many French, and about 200 members of 45th Division, 509th Parachute Bn., 517 Parachute Regmt and 551st Parachute Bn., and of the O.S.S.

I arrived at Frejus on Aug. 12th and departed Aug. 18th, 1984 after the ceremonies, and a leisurly visit to the region, Cote D'Azue.

On Aug. 15th an impressive ceremony took place in the Park of our 36 Infantry Division Monument at Drammont. Several thousand people were present, including the 200 Americans noted above.

Ornate flower arrangements were placed on the monument by over a dozen donors, French and American and even one from the City of Paris. Late in the day, another large ceremony was held at the U.S. Military graveyard at Draguignan (a dozen miles north of St. Raphael. I could not attend because later in the day I was to speak at the ceremony in Frejus and time did not permit both.

**Thousands of French People Were In
Attendance To Honor Their Liberators**



Maj. Gen George E. Lynch salutes the Memorial Monument at Drammont Beach; and many flowers and floral arrangements during the 40th Anniversary ceremonies. Given by the Mayors of Saint Raphael and Frejus. PHOTOS made by General Lynch's daughter.



40th Anniversary Ceremony At Frejus



DRAMMONT BEACH — General Lynch and young reporter of the Nice-Matin (newspaper for Saint Raphael-Frejus) discussing the invasion area on Aug. 15, 1944.



THEN & NOW...above at left - a younger (then Colonel Lynch, photo appeared in the 142nd "ROTATE REVIEW" published in post-war Germany, and at right photo made in 1956. We wish to express appreciation to Gen. Lynch for his very quick response in sending in the material, so that it could be published in the Nov. T-Patcher (page 11) and for use in the Quarterly. His address:

George E. Lynch, Maj. Gen USA (Ret), 2005 Stark Ave., Columbus GA 31906.





Comin' Home!

by Sam Kibbey
of Co. K, 143rd

WorldWarTwoVeterans.org "A Rebel Without a Coors"

On December 28, 1945, three days after Christmas, I was discharged from Uncle Sam's Army at Fort Knox. That's almost forty years ago.

I was twenty years old then. Six foot one, weighed 176 pounds, flat. (My bluber these days conceals what once was a lithe figure). Ah, the ravages of time.

I had a face only a Mother could love. I'd say, "**Mom, sometimes I'm not even sure of you.**" Mom would laugh musically. God, it was going to be great to see Mom again. She and Dad had worried me through World War II: Mom used prayer to allay her fears. Dad followed the war news like a chess player.

Stay in earshot of me very long and you will learn that I served in the famed 36th Division during World War II. The "**T-Patch**" boys were a National Guard outfit from the grand and glorious State of Texas. God created Heaven and Earth. Texas was thrown in as an alternative.

I wasn't no "**Commando**" Kelley. I was just a big, brawny basketball brat from the State of Kentucky. Recently, a TV Commentator, slightly exaggerating, said; "**The test for sexual perversion in Kentucky is whether you like sex better than basketball.**"

I arrived late in the ETO as far as some of the combat went. Twenty-eight days on a liberty ship to North Africa. The ship was so jam-packed, I didn't know whether I was a sardine or a soldier. Watch out Hitler, here comes "**Slinging Sam**" Kibbey who threw a basketball, occasionally successfully, toward the basket like a javelin thrower. Three years on the first five in High School. Saw a lot of action at Georgetown as a Freshman (that's Georgetown College in Kentucky, not Georgetown University in D.C.).

When I attend Division Reunions of the 36th, I recall that I missed a lot of the heavy slugging the 36th Division experienced in Italy. I was to serve later with those valiant Veterans who hit Salerno. I heard the

Coming Home

very bizarre tales of the Rapido. The Rapido was a tragedy in one single act. It was a silly "screw-up" by a pompous directing General.

I ingested the bleak stories of Cassino and San Pietro. At Count Ciano's farm (only eighteen and never been shot at) I applauded as the 36th Division broke out of the Anzio pocket. I was thrilled by the news of Velettri. Years later, I was to become an extremely close friend of Colonel Oran Stovall, the Engineer who helped make a rambling wreck of the Axis Command in the move toward Rome. Oran Stovall was then, and is now, a noble spirit. Stovall is the kind of a man who can take a 'licking' and keep on ticking.

I'm not going to over-gild the lily. I won't tell you that, after Grosseto, Italy, I won the War in Europe that John Wayne won in the Pacific. I just want to say that the real rough going for the 36th was in Southern Italy. Later in France we were to have acute periods of horrendous engagements.

After the Salerno landing on September 9, 1943 the outfit triumphantly trudged into Rome June 4, 1944. The going was constantly demanding. The casualties grew among T-Patchers. The 36th Division had no peer in World War II for being a tough yet efficient outfit.

T-Patchers Have - Nine Lives...

My point is this: I have an inferiority complex when I talk to the "old men" of the 36th. Those cats had to have damn near **"nine lives."** They made it through that phase of World War II called **"Mud, Mules and Mountains."** Compared to the valor of those guys, I was not worthy to carry their field packs.

But I'm one of them! **"I'm a M-I, A-I, T-Patcher. All the way with Company K, 143rd Infantry."** Sometimes semi-brave, most times scared as Hell. Sometimes the Snafu; Loud and proud. Cussing the war, the officers, and the pretentiousness that permeates the Military.

A case in point: His Highness, Fifty Army Commander Mark Clark made a PT-Boat trip to Anzio. He brought along beaucoup press, beaucoup photographers. Clark had his picture made with a GI, sharing a K-ration with him. After the picture was taken, his Highness, Mark I, is reported to have handed the uneaten K-ration to the soldier. **"Here soldier, eat this."** the General said.

I don't know whether the above story is true or not. The guys who were at the Rapido would, at least, say **"that figures."**

I have one distinction connected with my service with the 36th Division in World War II. The 36th is the only outfit I ever served in. I joined the outfit in June of 1944, give or take a day or two, and stayed with it for several days on the line North of Rome. Somewhere on Via Rome. Then, I was awarded this tour of Southern France, see, and I liked the country so well I just made a tour de force all the way from

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

St. Raphael through the Seigfried Line.

I came home with the 36th. Ten days on a victory ship in December of 1945. Newport News; Camp Patrick Henry, Virginia: **"Drinking rum and coca cola."** Chasing WACS. Some chased back. Marvelling at how strange the voice of the kids playing near the barracks sounded.

My wound Was Superficial - 5 points Were For Real...

I was in a hospital near Nance, France when V-E day came. I had been hit slightly but that had little to do with it. My wound was superficial but the five points were for real. I kept getting boils all over my body so they flew me back practically to Paris; then put me on a train traveling, I'd say, about 75 miles back toward where I'd caught the C-47. You don't have to be crazy to be in command of logistics in the United States Army but it helps.

I usually have a good memory for names and places in my exposure to the ETO. I can't remember the name of the small town near the hospital where I was a patient. I know it was in the general area of Nancy. I was in what I believe was called a **"Skin Ward."** One floor above me were the V.D. patients. (But Doc, she looked clean!)

I remember the night the penicillin dosage for the V.D.'ers was given, by mistake, to we of more virginal maladies. To this day, penicillin is a "no-no" for me. I'm happy to report I'm allergic to the cure not the cause.

A Nurse called "Paddlefoot"

I remember the nurse who, with derision, was called **"Paddlefoot."** She had the face of a horse; the disposition of a mule. She must have been 35! She was probably the reason twin beds were invented. She had a trace of a moustache on her face; hairy arms and legs. She didn't look masculine, she looked unreal.

The day the war ended with Germany I was in that little town near Nancy, France.

"Paddlefoot" saw me. I was under the influence of the Grape. I met her near a little shop on the Rue de Something or Other.

"Sargeant," she said to me, **"you are behaving in an ungentleman-like manner."** She glanced at her watch. She added **"I believe you were due back to the hospital an hour ago."**

"But Lieutenant, the war is over." (Under my breath I said, **"With you, ole gal, the war will never be over."**)

"Don't be obstinate with me, young man," she hissed. **"Sir, Madame, whatever,"** I responded. **"We have met the enemy and he is ours."** I half-saluted.

"You are impertinent."

"I win some, I lose some, Lieutenant."

Coming Home

She flecked the gold bars on her Eisenhower jacket, **"Do you realize you are talking to an officer?"** she asked.

I took a swig out of the wine bottle I was carrying. **"Sir, Madame, whatever, I would like to say to you what I would like to say to about 75% of the officers I've known over here. I'd say it, but in your case I wouldn't want to have to do it."**

"Paddlefoot" paddled on down the street. I don't recall how I talked my way out of my insubordination the next day back at the hospital. By Twenty-Two Hundred Hours I was bombed out. I woke the next morning with a male French civilian leaning over me. **"Le guerre is finis,"** he said.

I was really hung over. **"What else is new?"** I responded. I rolled over to dream within an hour of a happy homecoming; that is, if I didn't get sent to the CBI.

Town of Bitche - Really Was a Bitch

The last hundred days of World War II in Europe ended May 8, 1944. During that time the 36th fought gallantly in the Hagenau Forest, Colmar Pocket, and that area around Bitche was really a bitch.

Company K opened the way to Krautland with its lead off attack at Bitschoven. I don't know how many men lost their feet to Shu mines there. I know the casualties grew so swiftly that our mortar section (one squad under **"Sling Out"** Sam) was called into duty to aid the Medics. One of the Medics got the Silver Star. He deserved it. I incurred a slight wound in the hand. The one much deeper to my psyche was when two men were killed within a few feet of me. **"Two of my men"** I mourned. I was only nineteen.

"Hey, Kibbey" Boyd Morgan asked **"What are you going to be when you get back to the States?"**

"A mighty happy Civilian" I would reply.

One More "Bottle-Scared" Veteran

Sargeant Sam F. Kibbey, who Bursleson from North Carolina taught to carry wine in one canteen and water in the other, had made it through the war. It is questionable as to whether I came out of the war a wino or a hero. Maybe neither of either. In point of fact, I turned out to be a **"bottle scarred veteran."**

Kibbey, the show-off **"I'd walk a hundred miles for one of your smiles."** **"I don't want no more of Army life, GI want to go hom."** Plus, **"This is number one, and we're having lots of fun" . .**

A damp, dim-lit cellar near Bitche. The memory lingers still. Time on our hands. The German bombers made a quick pass at us. I didn't hear too many bombs in World War II. A bombing is a more helpless

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feeling than incoming artillery. With artillery you believe you have a chance to "shoosh it away." With bombs it is as if some punishment is falling straight out of the Heavens. It's a hell of a feeling.

Fractured Version of "Lili Marlene"

The bombing abated. This is the Army, Mr. Jones. No private booths or telephones. No movies or radio. Kibbey, front stage, center. Talk about a captive audience. The Mortar Section of the 4th Platoon, Company K, 143rd Infantry Platoon, Company K, 143rd Infantry Platoon Sargeant, **Gerald Charlton, Boyd Morgan, Norris Morgan, "Jew Baby" Greene, Al Hassler** from the machine Gun Section; **Robert Rice**, the sedate young/soldier from Missouri, **Gilliam** from Tennessee, one of the best 60 millimeter men in the biz. Welcome to my world. . .

Kibbey couldn't sing but Kibbey could write parodies. A swig from each canteen and, viole, "Instant entertainment."



"Underneath the lamp post
By the barrack gate
Stands Lily Marlene
And she's on the make
She waits for a GI with chocolate or cigarettes
And she will let
Him play with her machine.
That's post-war Lily Marlene.

Lily had a boyfriend
An SS Trooper, too
A grown up Hitler jugend
With cold eyes of blue.
He thought alles Americanos
Were a bunch of hicks
Until he met the 36th (my outfit)
And now he's so kaput
Lily's dumkoff finit.

Now Lily works at the Red Cross
All through the day
Then a Captain takes her away
Said Cap-i-tan, shows her scot-free
America's "big stick policy"
Happy Lily Marlene
Post-war Lily Marlene"



"Kibbey, did you write that?" (it was probably Hassler who asked).

"Made it up in my head" I replied.

"I can't believe it," one of the guys said.

"Well, I explained, "it just proves that something good can come out of a vacuum."

Coming Home

It was swift now. Across the Seigfried line. White sheets flying from windows as we marched into Germany. I remember thinking how backward the area looked. Ye gads, I thought, they've even got hillbillies here in Germany.

After the end of the war we were billeted in several small German towns. I most of all remember Sussen. We were in that little town for several weeks. It was from here that I was selected as one of two men to attend a special eight week course (Training Within Civilian Agencies) at the University of Nancy, France.

Back to the outfit from the University, being able to **"parlez Francais, un petite peu."**

I make the trek homeward starting from Sussen with the 36th. I recall going through the Rhone Valley and particularly the Montelimar area. The remnants of the 19th German Army still was strewn there. It was at Montelimar that Lt. O'Dean Cox, who went over with the 36th as a Private and came back with the outfit as Captain and it's Commanding Officer, kept his cool when others about him were losing theirs. I later heard that O'Dean Cox was killed in combat in Korea. I never knew a braver soldier. He epitomized the spirit of Texas born at the Alamo.

Marseilles: Sin City. Even off-limits to ex-cons. **"GI want to go, say I want to go home."** Aboard ship, good show, Crosby singing **"I'll be home for Christmas"** I was close but had to settle for Christmas in Virginia.

"OUR BABY" - Finally Gets Home

Back home, Mom and Dad were awaiting the return of **"our baby."** It is undeniable that I was the youngest child born to Delbert Valley and Susie Robinson Kibbey. Jack, the eldest, took Heavy Weapons in Basic Training. He ended up as an instructor at Yale University. Something to do with teaching the Chinese how to operate our machine guns. Jack was later to serve as Commonwealth's Attorney for 24 years. One of the great ones, everyone allows.

My brother Bill, later to be my law partner and lifetime podner, didn't cross the water, either. They admitted him to membership in the VFW. Bill explained that part of his service was in Canada which was outside the Continental United States. Bill later explained it all by saying, **"I went overseas in a bus."** Due to a terminal illness he resigned his Circuit Judgeship shortly before he was fifty. There cracked a noble heart! Also, a vibrant one. **Bill went out of this world literally with a Bible in one hand and a Racing Form in the other.**

As for me, in December of '45: **"Look out Stateside here I come; right back where I started from. . ."**

The **"Our Baby"** bit had been started by the local wit who also wholesaled and retailed liquor in the dry county of Carter. Susie and

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Delbert (as I often called them) were reported to have said at various times, "Well, we got a V-Mail from 'Our Baby' today. It sounds like he was somewhere near the Strausbourg." 'Our Baby' crossed the Rhine last night." 'Our Baby' is coming home."

Knock Off - The Our Baby Stuff...

Ye gads, folks, I did everything but get "tattooed" overseas. I'm built like a Repple-Depple Latrine and a lot of time in combat I probably smelt as bad. So knock this "our baby" stuff off. I'm free, white and going on twenty-one. You don't call Staff Sergeants "baby".

Then I was home. I don't remember what the weather was like. It was winter. Probably cold. I could of cared less. There was a mist in my eye as the Greyhound bus hit the Carter County line.

Our bootlegger Met All Buses

Then, the bus pulled in front of the Sweet Shoppe. (I used to work there, jerking sodas and cracking-wise). Our premier bootlegger was there. He met all the buses. Dad was there: D. V. Kibbey, one of the brightest men in Eastern Kentucky. He had served as an Infantry Lieutenant overseas in World War I. I didn't hold it against Dad: the fact that he had been an officer. A strong worker for the veterans. Never charged them a penny as they flocked into his law office to file veteran's claims.

Dad had never shown me much affection before, even though on the Crawford side there was much emotionalism. I grew up during his drinking years. Those days were now behind him.

Mom Didn't Cry In Front of Me...

Dad said, "Welcome home, son". He gave me a bear hug and surprised me with a wet kiss on the cheek. I didn't even mind the ambier.

We walked home, up Main Street, up the hill past the Courthouse which was my playground (much more then than later when I practiced law there). A turn or two and we were walking down Malone's Lane. The street wasn't paved then. I remember I walked cautiously. Bitschofen, and those damnable German Shu mines, were undelibly etched in my mind.

Inside the house. Perhaps a sign. It was over. Mom's nearness, her warmth, her kiss, then she turned away. Mom didn't cry in front of me. I kept noticing, however, that she went to the bathroom often. Sainthood thy name is Mother!

"Dinner will be ready in a few minutes, Sam Fred," Mom said.

I hated the double name with a double passion; but at that mment it sounded sweet and right.

I walked from the living room to the kitchen. The old familiar furniture. My army picture that somehow seemed strange to me. Past tense.

Coming Home

"Honey," Mom said as we sat down, **"I've fixed you pork chops, fried potatoes, green beans, cornbread and peach cobbler."**

It all was - I don't know - just a little strange. Nice but not quite natural.

"You forgot to wash your hands, Sam Fred." Mom chided. Suddenly it was like old times. I smiled stoically.

Dad said, **"Looks like you've got a new Commanding Officer, Sam."**

"Yeah, the sweetest one this side of Heaven." I replied. We all laughed. **"Now, we'll have a word of prayer"** Mom said. Old, often heard, words of supplication, but on that day with so much depth of feeling.

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Write it down! **"Our Baby"** was home from World War II.

The End



SAM F. KIBBEY, the Kentucky Kolonel who is an attorney, play actor, writer, dreamer, schemer, world-traveler and all time bullshipper of Ashland, Ky., sent this one in . . . shows ole Sambo giving a cross-examination to Liz Linley, in the play, "Inherit The Wind" (based on the life of Wm. Jennings Bryan). Sam of course took the lead as Matthew Harrison Brady, is former pres. of the Mid-West chapter and did his gold-bricking with Co. K, 143rd.

T-PATCHER, FEBRUARY 1975 Page 7



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SAMBO KIBBEY, attorney at law of Catlettsville KY is one of the "Three Ks" of Kolossal Komedey that we have as contributors to the Fighting 36th Quarterly...the other two are -Del Kendall (A/T 143rd) and ole Irishman George (Wrong Way) Kerrigan, of Co A 142nd Infantry.

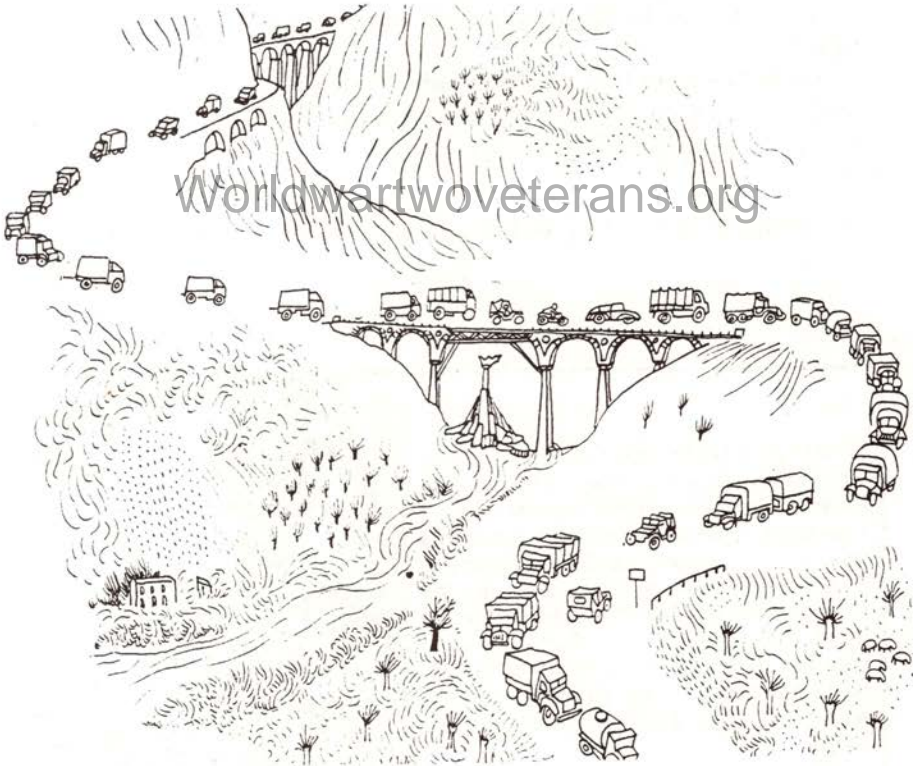
All of the KKKs have a capacity to write in easy to understand language...the humor that they spread or witnessed among the troops - when the fat-was-in-the-fire that helped make life more bearable during the trying-times of WWII.

We are ever grateful for their dedication to take time and record these events - that shall be recorded many times - by the future historians, that will be writing about the "Fighting 36th" in the year 2020 - and later.

Contact Kibbey at 2718 Louisa St., Catlettsburg, KY 41129.

THE UNTOLD STORY

The **BIG HAUL**



“The Truck-Drivers Nightmare”

This story has been two years in making. It has nothing to do with “who won the war,” because this junket took place before the 36th hit the beaches of Salerno.

Your reporter recalls vividly the ‘Clarion Call’ when higher HQS ‘stole 300 of our trucks and trailers’ for a mission that could not wait.

This little inconvenience left us stranded in the Cork Forest, as we had only enough wheels to supply the necessary items from Quartermaster.

The over 600 T-Patchers that made the 2000 mile round trip, admitted it really wasn’t to be compared with Greyhound’s Luxury Buses. Read on . . .

**MAY 13, 1943 — Rommel's Afrika Korps Is Kaput . . .
Quarter-Million POWs On Our Hands, Rations Are Nil,
No Ships Available, We Gotta Move 'em 1,000 miles to
Casablanca!**

End of the War in Tunisia

The prisoners were moved as far as possible by their own transportation, and assembled on the dry flatland near Ferryville and Mateur. The last-ditch defense of cave-like positions on the steep-sided Djebel Achkel by elements of the *Hermann Goering Division* ended three days later. An attempt to quell them by tank attack had foundered, but they were finally convinced of the truth of the complete Axis surrender.

By nightfall on 12 May, collapse was almost complete. At noon, General von Arnim burned a command trailer which he had inherited from Field Marshal Rommel. He took leave of his principal staff officers, sent a final report to the German high command, and prepared to give himself up. During the night, General Messe arranged to surrender the Italian *First Army* next day, and by the time he went into Allied custody, had been elevated by Mussolini to the grade of marshal.

On 13 May, hostilities in Tunisia ceased, and with that fact, Axis hopes of victory in World War II had gone. The loss of Africa cost the enemy the means of controlling the Mediterranean despite an expenditure of over 300,000—dead, wounded, or captured.

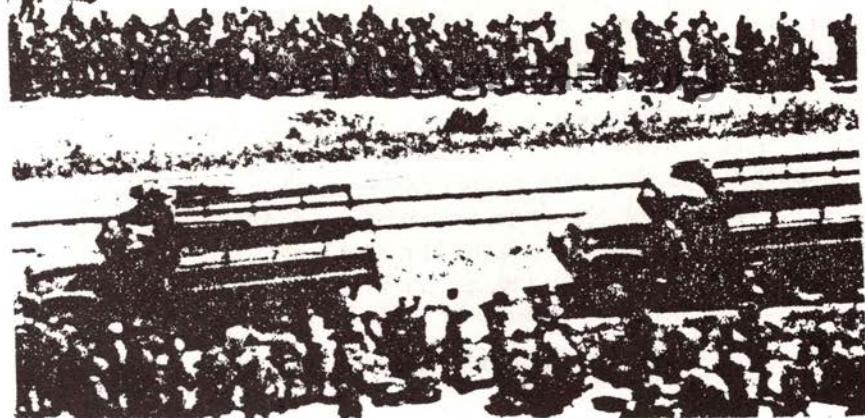
The Allied victory had been won by a prodigious effort, and in a manner which was not anticipated when the Combined Chiefs of Staff first decided to undertake an operation in French North Africa. It had become a thorough test of war potentials on the outer edge of the Axis-held area. Hitler's decision to commit so much in order to retain Tunisia converted what might have been an advantageous seizure of territory by the Allies into a major destruction of enemy strength. The Axis losses of men and matériel hurt them severely, and left the initiative in the West henceforth with the Allied powers.

OLD IRONSIDES, Battle Story of the 1st Armored Division, by George F. Howe, 1943, 407 pages.

The Problem-



Aerial view of 275,000 German and Italian troops who surrendered at the end of the North African Campaign, poured into POW compound west of Tunis, near Mateur. No ships were available for their moving, trucks from USA troops would have to do it.



THE BIG HAUL



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Major General FRED L. WALKER Commander 36th Division

His book, "Texas to Rome" published 1969, Taylor Press, here is his version of the BIG HAUL from his diary — Page 203-204 who tells it like it was . . .

Thursday, June 10, 1943

General Dawley sent for me today, said he wanted to talk to someone. He is having disciplinary troubles with the 1st Armored Division, General Ernest Harmon in command. The officers and men of the Division have just returned to this area from fighting in the Tunisian theater, and they feel that they own the town. They have been ganging up on the Corps MPs in Rabat, and trouble is in the air. Dawley tells me that unless there is an immediate change in the attitude of both officers and men of the 1st Armored Division, he is going to relieve General Harmon and send me over there to put the "screws on" and straighten them out. I consider this a distinct compliment.

Received a letter from General Desre expressing his thanks for courtesies during his visit. The French speak and write in a most courteous and genteel manner.

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Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

More than three hundred trucks and trailers are required by higher headquarters from the 36th Division to haul rations from Casablanca, Morocco, to Mateur, Tunisia, near Bizerte, a distance of more than one thousand miles, for the great mass of German and Italian prisoners of war who were recently thrust upon us as a result of Rommel's surrender.

On the return trip, the trucks will be loaded with prisoners of war who will be placed in barbed wire enclosures at Casablanca until they are sent by sea to their final destination, probably the United States.

It will require several round trips to get them all to the Moroccan port. It would be much easier to ship the prisoners from Bizerte to their final destination, except for the fact that there is little food for them in Tunisia. Nor are any ships scheduled for that port. The food and scheduled ships are at Casablanca.

In addition, we must send a large number of troops to Casablanca to guard and care for the prisoners as they arrive. All this immobilizes the 36th Division.

Because of the long continuous hauls, two qualified drivers per vehicle are required in order that one may rest while the other continues to drive. In addition, there must be guards, transportation officers and NCOs. The maximum number of vehicles have to be made available for this job, and each organization is required to furnish its pro rata share of men and trucks.

This means, of course, that what is left of the Division will have to squeak along with some inexperienced drivers and a paucity of vehicles which, in turn, demands a lot of rearranging and doubling up. An inconvenience, but a necessity.

Colonel Thomas J. Shryock, Executive Officer of the 36th Division Artillery, does not like this and is not cooperating with my staff. He did not turn over the pro rata share of trucks from the artillery until I went to Artillery Headquarters and personally ordered him to do so. He wanted to determine what the pro rata share of the artillery should be, but I did not permit him to change the allotment which I had checked before I approved it.

General Cowles was absent. I did not see him, and I doubt very much if he knows what Shryock is doing.

THE BIG HAUL

The 'Big Haul' of Nazi POW's Big Adventure for T-Patcher Truck Drivers

In May 1943 the 36th was strung-out in the cork forest near Rabat, Morocco. The AfricaKorps went kaput, and we had 250,00 POW's to dispose of in Tunisia. Higher Hqs. 'swiped' most of our 2½ ton trucks and drivers for the 2000 mile round-trip (see page 203-205 Gen. Walker's Texas To Rome).

I recall one of the drivers upon his return gave me an AFRICAKORPS arm band which he relieved from one of the Germans. Can't recall his name, so now I ask for ANYONE who made this trip to send 'your' story for use in a future issue of The Fighting 36th Historical QUARTERLY. Send it to: Bill Jary, Editor, P.O. Box 1816, Fort Worth, TX 76101

36th's Truck Drivers Invited To Tell of their Own Experiences . . .

EARL MANSEE, 36th MPs reports . . .

This title got my eye and I read it over — You mention that a few of the troops knew anything about it. Well, I happened to be in on this big haul and it was a great experience. I was a 36th Div. M.P. (There was aprox. 75 Divisional M.P.s). The M.P. platoon had one 6X6 truck assigned to it. W. D. Sauls of Austin, Texas was the regular driver, and I was his assistant. We were given orders to report to Casablanca. We didn't know what kind of an assignment it was. When we got there our truck was loaded down to the top of the side boards with cases of Gallon cans of Peaches, Pineapple etc.

This is the army way load every truck to the top of the side boards. It did not matter if it was dehydrated eggs or what, it was loaded to the top of the side boards. Well this caused some trucks to be over loaded with heavy cases and sacks etc., while some had a full load of dehydrated food which did not weigh half as heavy. Behind each truck was a ½ ton trailer for each truck, these too were loaded to the top of the side boards.

I shall never forget our experience in a mountain range shortly after we left Casablanca. There were a few drivers who were not experienced in "double clutching" in shifting gears. Double clutching is

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

a must when quick shifting is necessary. Well these drivers didn't shift quick enough and got stalled with their loads. Before it was all moving again they had to shift down to underdrive to start the load and then creep on over to the top of most the mountains. It made slow going and used up lots of fuel.

There was another occasion when one of the truckers got too fast around a curve and overturned his trailer. Nothing spilled out because it ws tarped down good. LThe fender on the side the trailer turned over on was flattened down to the tire, it turned blue from skidding. The trailer was uprighted eventually and the fender pulled away from the tire and we continued on our way. I can recall getting lsot when some of the lead trucks to out of sight and we took a different road. It must have been running parallel to a certain extent as we never did "turn-back" and we finally got caught up with the rest of the convoy.

The town we were headed for was BONE, and it was right across fromt he toe of Italy. I don't have a good map of North Africa but my memory is good on somethings. This territory was a different type of culture. It had Date Trees lining the highways for miles and miles. One big town we passed through on our way back to casablanca was C-Constantine. It was a typical medieval-type of town. It had hugh, high walls around it for protection. it really impressed me a lot.

We finally were loaded down with the German prisoners. I don't know just how many were to the truck but it was well loaded. There always seemed to be a German or two in each load who spoke some LEnglish. We were able to communicate someway. The convoy was prepared with plenty of Gas tanker trucks so we always had a gas up point along the way. We of course had a few 5 gallon water cans to fill up at our gas up stops. I know we were not supposed to trust the Germans but it got to where one would alway volunteer to fill the water cans and they always come back. I have a feeling they were only to glad the war was over for themselves. The French police would make it hot on them if they did escape as a stray German uniform would have stood out like a sore thumb.

I still recall an incidence that happened which was comical but a bit of an embarrisment for the prisoner. They didn't always keep their mess gear clean and would get dysentary. The prisoners managed to get the message to the driver and we stopped and let him releave himself. You see, the relief driver ws used as a guard and rode in the 1/2 ton trailer behind the truck. Us drivers took turns at driving and at guarding so it didn't get to boring to one or the other.

THE BIG HAUL

It was a long trip to have to make but it gave us an experience we never would have gotten in civilian life.

I'm sure I have left out many details but after all that was aprox. 39 years ago. I have a nack for remembering some things while someone else remembers what I forgot. May be there are others who can fill in more details.

Earl A. Mansee
Rt. 1 Box 158
Clinton Ark. 72031

Dear Editor:

I am a retired postman from Houston, Texas. I took a disability retirement from the postal service 1968. I now have my V.A. disability increased to 100%. I got out with a 30% disability. My condition is a nervous condition as well as deafness in one ear. I complained of it while in North Africa and I was offered a rear eschalon job in a different unit but I declined the offer and made the invasion of Italy. I never did get as far as Rome. I was reclassified and sent back to the states. I was able to see a big armada of ships gathered down off the coast of France as we sailed through the Straight of Gabralta.

Life is so much quieter here in Arkansas than it was in Houston. I got to be in one reunion there in Houston and will try to make another if I could always know where they are going to be held.

I hope my story will be of some help in details about those of us who made THE BIG HAUL.

Earl A. Mansee
Rt. 1 Box 158
Clinton Ark. 72021

BERN BALLARD, 36th QM Co says . . .

I am sure I made this trip as a member of the 360MC complement. It seems to me there were about 150 2½ ton trucks, all from the 36th Division in our particular convoy and we were under the command of my Company Commander, then Captain Clifton C. Carter.

(In later years Cliff Carter ws Chief Sgt. of Arms of the 1964 Democratic National Convention, National Secretary of the Democratic Party and Assistant to President Lyndon Johnson. Captain Carter passed away around 1970 at the age of 55).

There were two drivers in each truck who alternated driving, and the trip was made to our destination without the convoy stopping overnight. We made the usual stops to eat, refuel and for comfort. "B" ration was the "fare" of the day. The most amazing feat of the entire trip ws the coordination and efficiency through which we were able to make coffee on the short comfort stops.

When we arrived in Constantine (I remember the trip as being from Rabat to Constantine) we were able to shower and sleep over-

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night. I didn't get much sleep that night because by then I gotten accustomed to the vibrations of the truck.

The prisoners we hauled back were Italians. I do not remember any serious vehicle accident so everyone else probably remembers the trip as being tiring and stressful despite our youth, and uneventful since we were continually on the move.

My particular memory of the trip is marred by tragedy. On the first day of the return trip, after passing through some small town far enough to build up convoy speed, I noticed a young Arab man attempting to cross the highway. Just as we came along side of him he bolted into the highway looking only at the traffic coming from the opposite direction. I engaged my brakes to no avail. He hit the side of my truck and ws knocked back into the bar pit on the side of the road from which he had come. I pulled off the road and went back. It was not a pleasant sight. He was obviously dead. The pioneer rack on the truck had hit him in the head resulting in a severe head wound. A civilian ambulance with a French doctor arrived along with the police and an interpreter. I filled out a short form with the aid of the interpreter and the French policeman saluted me and I was allowed to leave.

Thirty-eight years is a long time to remember and just as long to forget.

Bern Ballard
3206 Beanna Street
Austin, Texas 78705



THE BIG HAUL

FRED GRIFFIN, 736th Ordnance says . . .

Dear Editor:

I drove with James Joseph Cotton, New York. The guard of the POWs on the return trip was from 1st Division.

At night, during the rest stops, the German POWs were placed on the inside of a circle, and the Italians on the outside — because the Nazis were more apt to run. We made the trip loaded with supplies and groceries with me had gotten at the huge depot outside of Casablanca.

J. J. Cotton found at the depot, rations of canned boned TURKEY, probably destined for the officers and headquarters mess.

He confiscated several cases of this choice item. Some of which were used for "bartering" purposes, but the remainder, we heated on the manifolds of our trucks and what a tasty meal they were . . . eaten with the big round loaves of bread.

All of us were impressed with the stature of both the German and Italian soldiers, literally — the cream of their military.

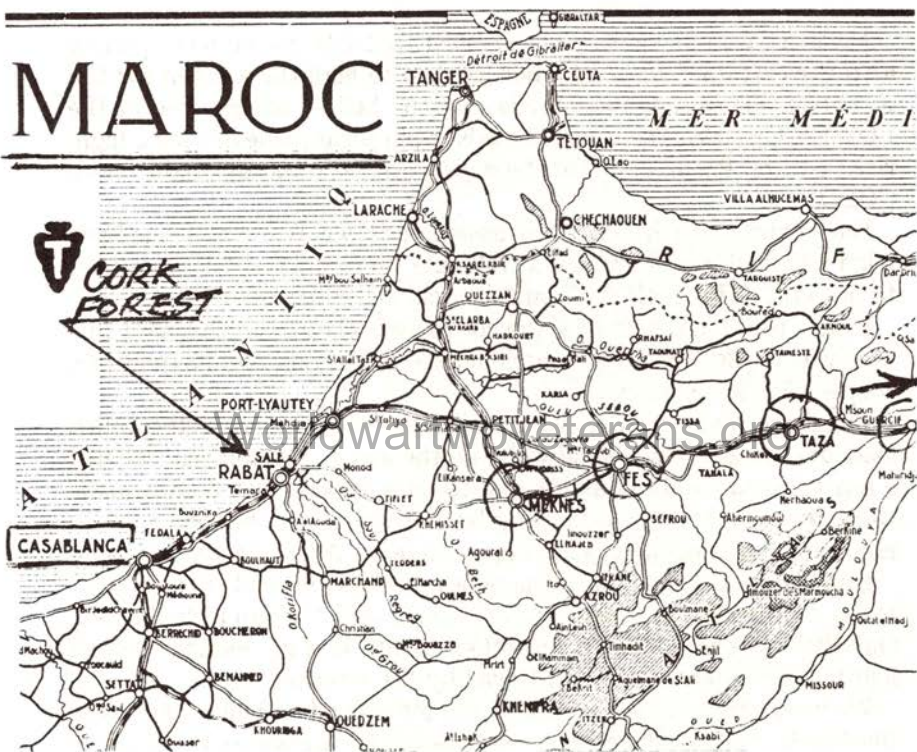
One drive was at the wheel while the others rested. Our drive through the Atlas Mountains was something else. At one point through the Atlas Mountains was something else. At one point in a canyon, it was so deep and dark — that the sky was only visible by looking upwards.

This 2000 miles round trip must have taken about ten days, more or less. It was a real experience!

In a small village along the way, we had to 'fight off' the townspeople (Arabs & French) and the American soldiers to keep them from attacking the Italian prisoners (our truck had only the 'Eyeties'). Our guard hollered for help, and we had to break out our weapons to defend the POWs in our care.

Fred W. Griffin, 736th Ordnance
4822 Dryden Road
Port Arthur, TX 77640





LLOYD W. GROCE, 141st reports . . .

Dear Editor:

I was a member of Service Co. 141st Infantry during the time we were bivouaced in the **CORK FOREST** near Rabat, Morocco. I was a driver of a "two and half" and was drafted for this surprise big overland trip.

First stop was Casablanca to load up with rations, ours was a truckload of one gallon cans of cheese. We departed posthaste for a long ride, we were not given too much info so we just rolled with the punches. The truck ahead of us was loaded with Graham Crackers . . . so we ate along the way — cheese and crackers. How 'bout that.

We knew we'd hit some rough mountains, but had no idea they would be that tough (cob rough). At night time, we had visitors . . . Arabs with sharp knives, and they ripped our tarps trying to steal 'anything' that wasn't nailed down. We also drove quite a bit at night, all ours were labeled "NIGHT HAWKS."

THE BIG HAUL

I was aware our vehicle was OVERLOADED, as we were pulling a trailer (the kind we used when we had to haul the kitchen for Co. K 141st). Those mountain roads gave us hell — using some of the LOWER GEARS. The treacherous hair-pin turns made driving a high-risk venture. Recall also that the days were HOT and the nights were COLD!

Each truck had a driver and an assistant driver. Was my luck to have a lad who had 'never' driven a GMC 2½ tonner. Therefore I decided to do ALL THE DRIVING, and he was along for the ride.

I can't recall just how long the convoy was, but I do remember this — it was trucks as far as you could see in both directions (maybe a couple of miles or more).

Finally arrive at BONE, and unloaded our rations at an airfield, then loaded-up with POWs — and we're on the way to Casablanca. We had a mix of Krauts & Italians. At rest stops, I noticed that the Germans were always a bit slow returning back to the truck, but the Eyeties ran back, meaning they were happy to be in Allied hands.

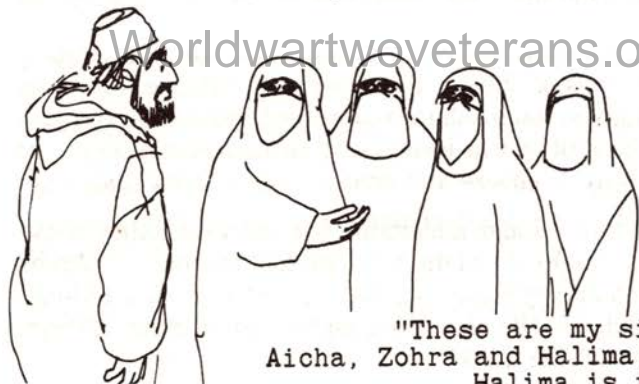
Had bad luck on way back, the pulley on the front end of crankshaft to fan belt broke off. A huge wrecker (4½ or 5 ton job) picked us up. Our POWs were squeezed into other trucks, and my assistant and I had to ride in our own truck towed by the wrecker.

We went straight back to Rabat, the others had to deliver their captives to the compound, and some were teed off cause we got back, before they did. Thinking back to that ordeal and many others, I must admit we had some real good people in our outfit — all dedicated to do a good job. Since I never finished high school, the old 36th was "MY Alma Mata" (four years and eight months).

Lloyd W. Groce (Svc Co 141)
Rt. 2, Box 549-B, Willis, TX 77378



Note: Bern Ballard (36th QM) whose story appears here, wrote to Lloyd Groce, whom he knew from the trip and he was responsible for Lloyd's story, and both have our thanks. Ed.



"These are my sisters—
Aicha, Zohra and Halima.
Halima is the shy one."

“... and A Happy New Year...”



Worldwartwoveterans

By George Kerrigan



On Christmas Day 1984, Co. A, 142nd Infantry Regiment was set up to relieve the 82nd Airborne - on top of one (if not highest mountains in Italy). We were not to take the mountain, but to HOLD it (was it Sammucro?)

As a member of the P.B.S. Team (Pack Board Specialists) I was wearing a size 13 shoe due to trench feet (normal size 11) so it was a very rough climb, but we made it as we did so many times before. At least, we didn't have to fight our way up there this time.

On top, the 82nd had a few shelter-halves placed over rock, to make a semblance of shelter - so we moved in to get out of the elements, as the snow was five feet deep.

We were actually frozen together, at least our clothes were, as we have at least four men to a shelter.

About dawn the next day, I heard someone kicking rocks and looking up I saw three pairs of German boots in the opening. So, I did the sensible thing and came out with my hands up, and said, "**Kammerad**", but the Jerries who also had their hands up, said "**Nein**", us!

They were colder than we were, and wanted to surrender to the first GI that wouldn't shoot'em.

I took them to our C.P. and turned them in. Of course, I never said how I "captured" them.

...and A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

On NEW YEAR'S DAY, Capt. James Minor (Post TX) called for me and said that he was going to send me down to the hospital - as many of our troops had lost toes, feet and legs from "**trench foot**" due to gangrene, and that all men whom had this horrible demon were to be sent to the hospital. I had already suffered for five weeks, and he knew it.

But he said, here's a man that is all frost-bitten and can't walk. I want you to take him down with you.

I replied, fine. It's all downhill from here. He pointed to a trooper about 50 feet away, who at that time, fell down in the snow, so I knelt over and fell on him, got him on my back and headed down. The poor guy was really in bad shape.

I walked, but fell down, but each step was that much closer to the hospital, until we sorta leveled off for a while. About 100 yards into the flat, I heard a voice from the rear, "**Hey, you dopey bastard, come back here**". I turned around and saw this GI way back, and replied, "**who are you calling a dopey bastard?**"

He hollered back, "**you, you are in the middle of a mine field**". I shouted back, "**why didn't you mark it?**" He replied, "**We did, but the snow is four feet higher than the white tape we used**".

I couldn't see my tracks due to the blizzard, so I told the story to my buddy on my back and he said he'd leave it up to me, to try to track-back - or go straight ahead. Added, "**I hope to Christ that we get blown skyhigh and get it over with**".

After a few kind words of advice to the guy who was 'supposed' to keep guys like us from walking into mine fields . . . I continued on blind, and thank God, we made it safely to the aid station.

I never had time to get this trooper's name, but I hope he made it, and is still around to enjoy life.

Upon reaching the Evac Hospital, I told the Doc my troubles, Trench Foot, no sleep, all loused-up. He said, "**I'll get the nurse to fix you up**". She did, gave me hot water in my helmet, and a tube of ointment, a towel and directions on how to use the stuff to kill the lice, and sent me to the rear of a long tent.

I was at the rear flap, which was closed, and started to wash the "**family jewels**" etc., when, lo and behold, the tent flap was open at the bottom, and a nurse all bent over, came within an inch of the 'old Shillelagh'. All I could say, "**ain't that a PIP**". She screamed and fell back out of the tent.

I dried up in a hurry and when I brought towel and ointment back to the front of the tent, my nurse asked, "**Kerrigan, did you hear a woman scream back there?**"

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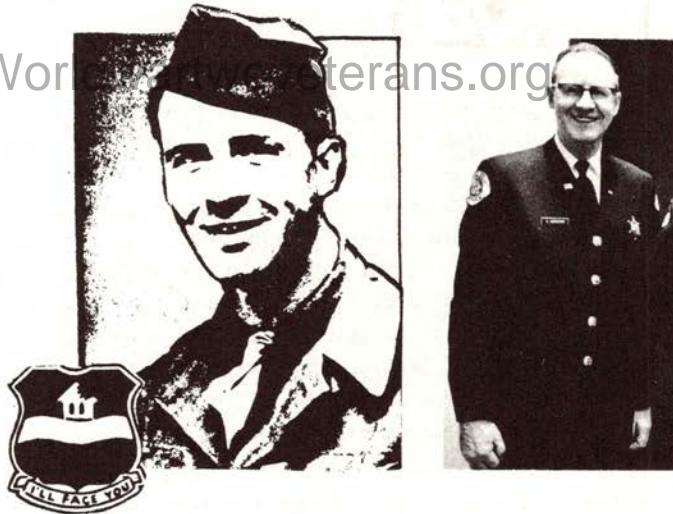
I said yes. I told her what happened, with that, she roared laughing loudly, told me that her girlfriend has been riding her for six months (for unexplained reason) and said, "at last I can get even with her".

By the way she said, "I'll take your word for it, no proof, but it really was a PIP". For an answer, I gave her a big smile.

Yes, it was a Happy New Year's Day . . . I was then flown to sunny North Africa to regain my strength to return and climb some more mountains in Italy and more in France.



WorldWarTwoVeterans.org



Kerrigan Kills Krowd With Klever Komedy Kapers

GEORGE KERRIGAN, 8008 Talman, Chicago, Ill, 60652 attended his first reunion in 1971 in Houston at the royal Coach Inn. Aparently he had a good time, and became one of our great boosters. He did a replay in Dallas in '72, and was in like Gangbusters at the Astroworld in '73.

George, a great Irishman who grew up in New York, served with Co. A, 142nd, ended up in the Windy City after the war.

Saturday night after the reunion Dance which closed at 1:00 AM, Kerrigan and his good buddy Steve Kujawa ended up in the Spec. Trps. CP which has been noted for operating "after hours". Somehow, Kerrigan started a few impromptu short funnies that

hadthe dozen or so T-Patchers in a series of belly-laffs. This was about 2:30 AM. Everyone howled, and George kept on. He told one after another . . . each one funnier than the one before. His informal routine would make a famous stand-up comic like Henny Youngman hang his head in shame. This went on and on. The troops kept laughing, and George kept his steady stattico of gags going. Laughter rang thru the now darkened hall of the Parlors, and finally at 5:40 AM (according to someone semisober) said it was time to give up, and a fabulous THREE HOUR monolog came to an end.

OCTOBER 1973 T-PATCHER



Fort Davis VFW Post Named to Honor Former 36th One-Man War Hero

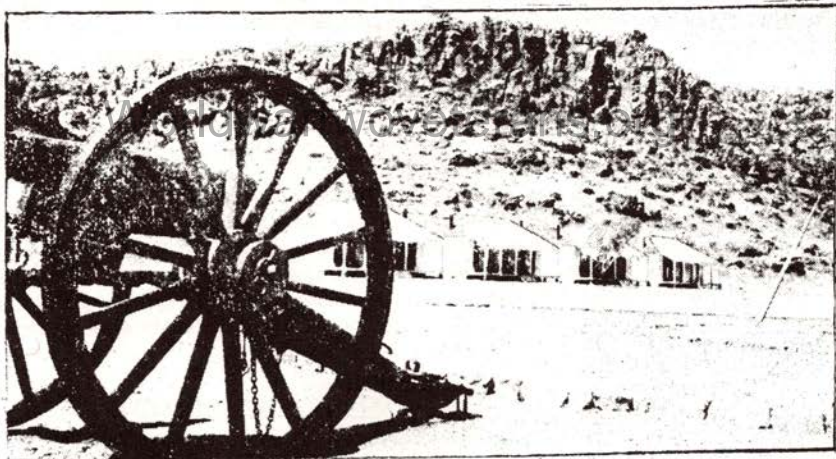
FORT DAVIS — The VFW Post in Fort Davis is called Manuel Gonzales Post 7867 in honor of Fort Davis' one-man war Tech-Sergeant who served with extreme bravery in the 36th "Texas" Infantry Division.

Gonzales, then 27, was among the first troops to reach the beach at Salerno on Sept. 9, 1943. Due to his action against machine gun nests, his company was able to advance. Wounded in the back and arm, Gonzales did not report his injuries and drove inland with the Division.

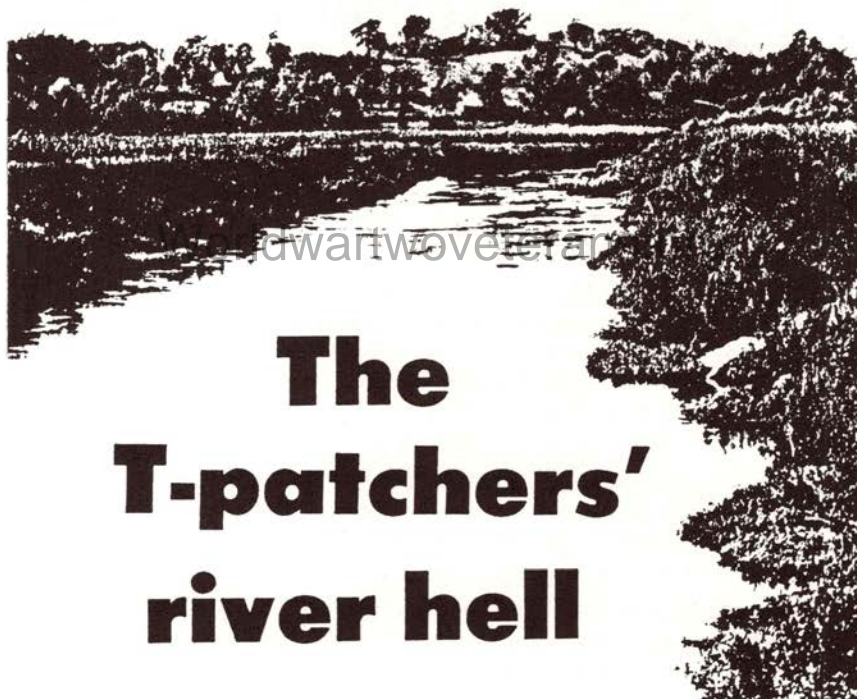
At Cassino, he won the Silver Star and his second Purple Heart. Earlier he has been awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, the second highest award that the U.S. offers.

At present, Post 7867 is preparing a bronze plaque that will forever record Gonzales' name and all other Jeff Davis County servicemen who fought in foreign wars. The list will start in 1898 and continue to the present time.

Bill Leftwich, Post Commander, and his members are hoping the plaque and display will be ready for Veterans Day in November.



Lt. Col. Grady C. Durham (ret.)



The T-patchers' river hell

Forty years ago the 36th 'Texas' Division arose from the devastation of the dubious Rapido River crossing and regrouped to distinguish itself in the rout of the Nazis.

Worldwartwoveterans.org

The author, now retired in Chantilly, Va., served as chief civil affairs officer and chief military government officer on the 36th Division staff. This article is part of a larger work he is writing about the war in Europe. The photos on the facing page are from a book titled *The Fighting 36th, A Pictorial History of the Texas Division in Combat*, published by The 36th Division Association, Austin, Texas.

The T-Patchers River Hell

THE FOLLOWING STORY written by Col. Grady C. Durham, was sent to Juliam H. Philips of Houston, when he became a new member of the 36th Division Association...he sent along the story he had published in the HOUSTON CHRONICLE'S Texas Magazine (Sunday Supplement)...and was then forwarded to your editor...who then wrote to Col. Durham - and here's his reply:

Dear Editor Jary:

Of course you have my full permission to use my tribute to the Fighting 36th Division which appeared in the **Chronicle's TEXAS MAGAZINE**. I feel honored that you would choose it for your pages.

It seems but yesterday that we were nearing the Port of Boston in the early days of October, 1945 as redeployed veterans from the 36th, the war in Europe behind us.

Aboard ship were the Commanding General of the 63rd Division, his staff, and a battalion of high point combat seasoned men from the old T-Patch Division, most of who wore the purple heart and other decorations, but who prided above all else their shoulder insignia. It merited both envy and respect from the high brass of the 63rd who had entered active engagement late in the war. It was my signal honor due to longevity and rank to serve as commander of this battalion.

As we neared within sight of the distant twinkling lights of early morning an order came to me from the general to have a detail alerted to run up the **Flaming Sword insignia of the 63rd on the port side of the ship upon approach of a tug boat, aboard which would be a WAC band whose sole mission would be to play a welcoming serenade.**

Now I should have know better. After all, **I had been told by a General Staff officer the day I reported to the 36th that if France, Great Britain, New York and some of our other allies would just fight like Texas, the war would have been over much sooner.** But prompted by urgency I send for a young officer from Texas and told him to pick some others and get that flaming knife up there where Boston could see it.

Soon everyone was topside. Through the smoke and haze of dawn now appeared the tug, its decks bulging with smartly uniformed young American women of our own army. **The suspense was awesome. Then it came—the unmistakable strains of "The Eyes of Texas."**

I rushed out to a point where I could see what was on that ship's mast, but inwardly I knew already. **There flying proudly in the breeze, not far from where Paul Revere had mounted up and where some other Americans had thrown a tea party, was the Lone Star flag of Texas.** No, I was not court martialled.

I tell this story because to me it illustrates in the fullest, the fierce pride with which the men of the 36th served.

I would like to **subscribe to the Quarterly** and trust you will enter me as an eager future reader. Bill me for whatever.

My hat's off to you who are carrying on in the finest traditions of the Fighting 36th. Count me in from here on out.

Grady C. Durham (LtC Ret) 36th Div. Staff
3404 Brookwood Drive, Fairfax VA 22030
(703) 385-6431

The T-patchers' river hell

Houston Chronicle TEXAS MAGAZINE

Sunday March 18, 1984

The battle was over. Visible through the slowly lifting smoke and haze, fluttering feebly in the breeze, stood a white flag of truce on the banks of the Rapido River.

Teams of litter-bearers, their faces masked to filter out the stench of the dead and dying, surged forward from both lines of combat to gather in their fallen comrades. An eerie quiet enveloped the area—so different from the din of savage fighting which for two days had seen the fine battalions of the 36th "Texas" Infantry Division ripped apart by relentless crossfire from German guns of all caliber.

Amid this sanguinary setting a German captain, his boots caked with the mud of several days, surveyed the field somewhat in awe of what he was seeing. Turning to his American counterpart, he asked: "Why did you fight so hard?"

There seemed but one answer. He nodded understandingly when told:

"We're Texans."

Forty long years have passed since that tragic World War II engagement—referred to by some commentators at the time as the worst loss to be suffered by Americans since Pearl harbor. Gen Mark Clark, commanding the Fifth Army in its drive up the boot of Italy, sought to justify the 1,680 casualties sustained by the 36th in those 48 hours as a *Calculated Risk*, the title of his later book. It was designed, so he explained, to engage the enemy at its winter defense line during Jan. 20-21, 1944, while VI Corps, comprising two American and two British divisions, stormed ashore at Anzio, 60 miles up the coast, in an effort to break the winter stalemate and lay open the Liri Valley and the road to Rome.

But much like the question asked by the German captain, other inquiries have persisted through the years, particularly in Texas, which throughout the war claimed the 36th as its very own and followed its exploits day by day. True, the 36th Division Association sought and obtained a formal hearing by Congress, taking Gen. Clark to task, with mixed results. True, both United States senators from Texas opposed Clark's promotion when it came before Congress. But these actions did not ease many perplexities which still bother friends of the old T'Patch division.

Was the tragedy of 'Purple Heart Valley' a result of the 'Alamo Syndrome?'

??

High on the list of questions are the following:

Why was the sector occupied by the 36th chosen—an S-bend in the river opposite Sant'Angelo— when its approaches had been flooded by the enemy, its entire frontage seeded with thousands of mines, its fortification strengthened by pillboxes, dugouts and all manner of gun emplacements?

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Why was there no close air support even though Allied planes controlled the air?

Why were the infantrymen not familiarized with the flimsy boats hastily supplied to them for crossing the tubulent stream, its banks steep and unreliable under heavy fire?

Why was not the recommendation of Major Gen Lucien Truscott followed—to engage every hostile gun with effective counter-battery fire?

Why was the 1st Armored Division snatched away from the 36th at the height of the battle? It was assigned to follow infantrymen across and exploit the bridgehead. Two days later it was landing at Anzio.

Why was there no diversionary action along the front to take some of the enemy firepower off the Texans?

Why was a second attack ordered when it was evident that the enemy could not be dislodged without greatly increased support?

Why was it not apparent that the element of surprise was impossible when the enemy occupied choice points of observation and witnessed engineers clearing minefields, taping avenues of approach and preparing for the night attack?

Worldwartwoveterans.org

Why? Why?

There are those who point to the determined effort at the Rapido as another example of an "Alamo-Syndrome," a "never-say-die spirit," that was present in the policies and actions of another Texan, Lyndon Johnson, when as president he refused to admit that victory in Vietnam was not possible. Perhaps. But like Phoenix, the fabled Egyptian bird who rose from cremation to fly again, the 36th was to soar to new heights in World War II in Italy, France, Germany and Austria.

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

Our purpose is not to pour salt on the wounds of what Margaret Bourque-White, famed Time-Life wartime photographer, referred to as "Purple Heart Valley" but to bring to light the tremendous combat successes of the 36th later in the war. At Anzio, it was to achieve one of the most classic examples of infiltration in force through an enemy line—one that would break the noose around the beachhead and make possible the elimination of German dominance in Italy. Again in Southern France, where at Montelimar with the 3rd and 45th divisions, the Texans were to put to rout an entire German army. And again in the Comar Pocket, while the world was watching the Battle of the Bulge, the 36th would find itself surrounded by Heinrich Himmler and his SS command, only to beat off the most elite of Hitler's troops and open the Alsatian Plain to further Allied successes.

Napoleon rated morale as the most important factor affecting combat troops. Needless to say the 36th almost lost that esprit de corps, that elan, at its river crossing. But it was to regain that pride, steeped in the legends of Texas lore, with its later combat record.



There is peace in the valley now. The Rapido flows swiftly down from the mountain heights which form the backbone of Italy for its junction with the Garigliano. Tourist guides halt occasionally to point out the spot where the Texas infantrymen fought so valiantly. But glory comes sparingly to combat troops. Perhaps it is meant for those who come later.



Blood and Fire



Bad Mergentheim, Germany

JULY 8, 1945

63d Vets Welcome 5,000 High-Pointers

Blood and Fire Vets Get New Battle Star

Now it's official — that long-awaited battle star for Central Europe.

Authorization for notation on EM and officers' records, including the all-important Adjusted Service Rating Card, was received by the Adjutant General this week.

Five points nearer home, brother.

Most of New Men From 100th, 84th And 36th Divisions

Almost 5,000 new faces have made their appearance in 63d Div. units during the last few days — all a part of the general swap of EM personnel between divisions within VI Corps whose categories call for Pacific duty, deactivation or occupation.

From the 36th (Texas) Division, an occupational unit, the 63d picked up more than 3,000 old-timers, men with 85 points or more who are eligible for discharge.

The 84th (Railsplitter) and 100th (Century) divisions, both in Category II (Pacific-bound) sent more than 1,000 men to be discharged through the 63d.

Bulk of the new men last week were assigned to the infantry regiments. The
(Continued on Page 4)

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We wish to thank Colonel Durham for letting us publish this fine "salute to the men of the 36th Division . . . as told in his letter of transmittal . . .

Since Durham aboard the ship with the CO of the 63rd, we dug out a copy of this "Blood and Fire" news tabloid, dated July 8, 1945 at Bad Mergentheim, Germany . . . it tells a pretty good story of how they put all-us-old-timers-out-of-the-36th to start on the long trip HOME.

As one of the participants, the month we spent there, quartered in a luxury resort-type hotel was a far cry from earlier days. We vividly recall asking an officer in charge of the 'trip' home. "Sir, can we go to Paris, while we await our call to leave." He firmly replied, "Yes, Sgt., you guys can go anywhere you want to . . . but, if your names come up for movement to Metz, then you'll have to wait a spell for it to be rescheduled."

A word to the wise is sufficient, so there went our only chance to see Gay Paree. (Good thinking it was, we left two days later for Metz.)

**Another Great Attached Unit to 36th
Division — Heard From, and Welcome!**

93rd Armored Field Artillery Battalion



I was a member of the 93rd Armored Field Artillery Battalion. We were Support Artillery and Direct Support Artillery for the 36th Div. in many encounters. We were there at Mt. Fiello, Mt. Camino, Mignano, and then Cassino and the Rapido River crossing. We were firing from the small town of St. Lucia below Mt. Trocchio supporting the 36th crossing of the Rapido.

Before that, it was Capua and Volturno River and Venafro. **I was a Forward Observer for the 141st and 142nd at Campanatico, June 20, 1944 — and many other missions.** How about Green Beach, Cape de Drammont in Southern France? We were your Direct Support Artillery at the landing, since we were self-propelled and could fire immediately forward after debarking from the L.C.T.s.

We supported the 2nd Bn. of the 141 Infantry on August 15, 1944, firing while still in the surf. With the 142 Infantry we took Agay and St. Raphael. It was then **“follow the Route Napoleone!”** — Draguignon, Sisteron, Gap, Grenoble, Montelimar pocket, Lyon, Macon,

PHOTO above: Here's old photo of our equipment for the 93rd Armored Field Artillery Battalion — a 105 mm Howitzer mounted on a tank chassis — called “M-7.” Photo from Arthur C. Dressler, new associate member of the 36th Division Association.

93rd Armored Field Artillery Bn.



Besancon, Vesoul, Luxeuil-les-Bains, to Remiremont and the Vosges Mountains.

We fired concentrated chocolate bars from our guns to the surrounded (Lost Battalion) 141st just outside Bruyeres. We broke through the Japanese-American 442 combat team to their relief. We received the commendation along with the 36th from Major Gen. Edward H. Brooks, commanding general VI Corps and Major Gen. John E. Dahlquist for clearing the Vosges Mountains and capturing the St. Marie Pass opening the Alsatian Plain near Ribeauville.

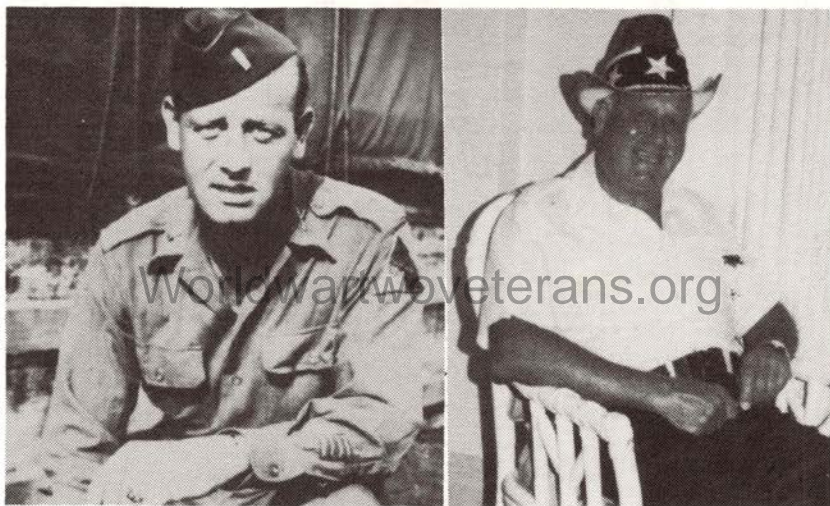
We participated in combat roles with many units but find that the **36th holds a special place in our hearts.** I am pleased and proud to be joining your fine association.

Sincerely,

Arthur C. Dressler, Capt. USAR
1355 Marlin Drive, Naples, FL 33962

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

We Fired 235,855 Round of 105mm Shells As of War's end — Lermos Pass, Austria! "That's a helluva lot of Shooting!!!" says Art Dressler.



THEN & NOW — This handsome young Lt. is none other than our new associate member — ARTHUR C. DRESSLER, taken in Germany 1945 — and a now photo 1984 — with his special (Texas) Lone Star cowboy hat. Maybe we can look for Art at the Houston 1985 Reunion.

Background Data On The 93rd Armored F.A. Battalion

The 93rd Armored Field Artillery Battalion was activated Feb. 15, 1942 at Fort Knox, Kentucky. It was originally the organic artillery of the 6th Armored Division. It was relieved from duty with the 6th Armored Division, Jan. 1943 to become the school troops at Fort Sill, Oklahoma in order to show and teach the ability of self-propelled artillery.

The 93rd finally got out of the school troop assignment and landed in Bagnoli, Italy in October, 1943. The 93rd was a separate battalion assigned to the 5th Army. The 5th Army then attached the 93rd to different Corps, who then attached it to any division in combat that **"needed extra firepower."** We were one of a very few light artillery outfits in the army in this category.

The 93rd A.F.A. Bn. consisted of five batteries, Headquarters Btry., Service Btry., A Battery, B Battery, C Battery. The firing batteries consisted of six guns each, making a total of 18 pieces. The gun was a 105 mm howitzer mounted on a tank chasis. This was called the M7. It was manned by six men who worked the gun in an open cockpit. The 105 shells were carried with the vehicle. There was a 50 calibre machine gun mounted on the right front of the M7.

93rd Armored Field Artillery Bn.

HISTORY: The 93rd in Italy went from the Volturno River to Cecina. It then landed on Green Beach in Southern France in **direct support of the 141 Infantry 36th Div.** Proceeded North thru France on the ROUTE NAPOLEON, turned East around Switzerland into the Vosge Mountains, cross the Rhine River and went thru the Siegfried Line in Germany then turned South into Austria to connect up once again with the 5th Army coming up from Italy.

93rd motto was: Susceptum Prefice Munus, "Accomplish the job at hand." Our insignia was the Scorpion.

FOLLOWING ARE THE UNITS WITH WHICH THE
93RD ARMORED FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION
PARTICIPATED IN ITS COMBAT ROLE:

ITALY FIFTH ARMY

3rd Infantry Division	VI Corps
34th Infantry Division ✓	II Corps
36th Infantry Division ✓	IV Corps
504th Paratroop Regiment	2nd New Zealand Corps
1st Armored Division	6th Armored Field Artillery Group
Canadian-Americ. Spec. Serv. Force	
88th Infantry Division	
760th Tank Battalion	
85th Infantry Division	
Task Force Ellis	
Task Force Ramey	

FRANCE — ALSACE LORRAINE

SEVENTH ARMY — FIRST FRENCH ARMY

36th Infantry Division ✓	VI Corps
3rd Infantry Division	2nd French Army Corps
Task Force Frazier	17th Field Artillery Group
Task Force Butler	
Task Force Whirlwind	
117th Cavalry Group	
79th Infantry Division	
2nd Division Blinde (French)	
45th Infantry Division	
14th Armored Division	
Task Force Herren	
70th Infantry Division	
101st Cavalry Group	
63rd Infantry Division	

GERMANY

SEVENTH ARMY

71st Infantry Division	XV Corps	36th Field Artillery Group
10th Armored Division	XXI Corps	405th Field Artillery Group
Task Force Richardson		

AUSTRIA

SEVENTH ARMY

103rd Infantry Division	XXI Corps
44th Infantry Division	



Hot Line

Del Kendall Remembers —

"She Was The  Symbol of France"

**Mama Jeanne
Shows Her Colors**



Mme. GASTON PIERRAT
known as "Mama Jeanne" to men
of 3rd platoon, A/T Co 143rd Inf.

Kendall Has Story Translated Into French — As A Gift To Grandchildren of MAMA JEANNE

His story about a French woman, whom all the men of A/T 143rd seems to revere, was published last issue of the Quarterly, Vol. IV, No. 1, on page 20 by our 'ace' reporter — Del Kendall, Muskegon Mich.

On page 23, as a footnote regarding MAMA JEANNE, your pore editor said he thought it was the 'best' of the 15 stories we have used since Vol. I No. 1. Well, maybe, that wasn't true. Most of Kendall's stuff is on the humorous side which is always welcomed. But, we did get some letters that his MAMA story was "all heart" and that was from T-Patchers whom at some time, found an attachment to the French people, mostly the older ones that had suffered through WWI, having their homes torn up at one time or other. These oldtimers were a strong breed . . . privations and subjection to the whims of the Germans who left deep scars that could not be erased.

Here' a quote from Kendall: "I have a lady friend who teaches French at college level, and she will translate and type the story for me

Del Kendall Remembers Mama Jeanne

— thusly I'll forward to Mama Jeanne's 3 grand children, and their 6 kids."

"I'm sure they all will get a kick out of it, seeing as how it's a side of Grandmere they never knew (but could agree upon, once reading of her wartime exploit."

Kendall continues: "Mama Jeanne was truly a remarkable woman for her age. I really missed the boat, After war's end, I should have gotten her over here and opened a French Restaurant. She could cook-up-a-storm, with little or nothing at all."

LAST TIME I SAW MAMA JEANNE

"When I returned to visit her in 1970s, she remarked that she wouldn't be there when I came back some other time. Of course, I asked, 'where would you be?' Glancing over her shoulder at the cemetery in the hills beyond, 'over there.'

"She died of cancer the following year, and in her small house she still had a piece of shrapnel (the size of a slice of bread) embedded in the inside kitchen door. 'it stays,' she said. a souvenir of le sal Boche'."

"Look out McDonald's...Here Comes Mama Jeanne's Rabbit Stew..."

The RABBIT STEW she cooked up that time was memorable. More so for the fact it was one of her 3 rabbits. It all went into a giant pot on the wood-fired stove, early one morning. From time to time she would add vegetables from her garden along with a good slug of brandy. By late afternoon the kitchen smelled heavenly. She had also baked a big round plum flan, what we call a plum pie, lacing that also with brandy when it came from the oven.

There was also a green salad in the making, taking lettuce from the garden and even a few weeds that grew along the roadside. The men in the squad were getting impatient. She took the lid off the pot and thrust in a large tined cooking fork, saying, "Regardez." Up came the rabbit, a tine of the fork was caught in the now empty eye socket of the skull, as the little lower jaw dropped down showing a row of sharp teeth.

The meat was practically of the whole of the skeleton. You gulped in amazement at the sight wondering what you would do if by chance you got one of those eyeballs, floating around in the stew, on your plate. Some wine was poured as ten of you sat down to the table, and Mama dished up the stew right-from-the-pot. You could practically see sparks fly as the men dove into their food, with their knives and forks. Mama beamed at her ten ravishingly hungry, soldats American.

After the pie and GI coffee, Mama brought out a bottle of EAU-DE-VIE (water of life) a red raspberry liquor that looked like water, smelled and tasted like a box of fresh red raspberries, and it would knock-your-sox-off with more than one small glass. What a meal. Amidst the laughs and burps as the men patted their now full stomachs, they agreed it was, "**Tres bon manger, Mama Jeanne, tres bon.**" To show their gratitude, the men after dusk took a truck up into the hills and brought back enough fire wood to last Mama Jeanne thru the coming Winter. A kindness she recalled years later.



“THE SILVER STAR”



Chapter II

Footprints In The Sands of Time

By Charles W. Stimpson, Jr.

Worldwartwoveterans.org

It was still cold and dark on that winter morning of January 2, 1941, as the long convoy of vehicles bearing “G” Company men and equipment started their engines. The time had finally come **to move out for Brownwood.**

As the lead jeep pulled upon the old Snyder square, the sleek black and white guidon of Company “G”, 142nd Infantry, 36th Division, Army of The United States, fluttered proudly in the crisp morning breeze. In the many months to come, **this same proud banner** would lead these same men of Texas more than half way around the world.

As the line moved out . . . a few of the homefolks braved the morning chill and gathered in small groups along the way to wave a sad and parting farewell. The convoy moved eastward past Stinson’s Drug, Horace Leath’s Cafe, The Fair Store, Bud Miller’s Station, and down by the Rainbow Market. It crossed the RS&P tracks, passed the Church of Christ and moved on out the Sweetwater Highway. Then came Bell’s Flower Shop, Bill Brown’s Fruit Stand, Vernon Littlepage’s Station, Chicken Green’s Cafe and the Well’s Brother’s Wrecking Yard.

There were no smiles or laughter at the departure. **Sadness was evident in every face.** Here and there an oldtimer would cough, turn away, and wipe at his moistened eyes. The men of “G” Company waved back! But nowhere was there any shouting, only an occasional call to a friend or loved one who waited at the roadside.

But only in a matter of minutes it was over. The last truck moved quickly by and only the dim tail lights of the long stream of vehicles could be seen by those left behind. Tears filled many eyes that morning for the **men of “G” Company were gone!**

As the convoy cleared the city limits, Nathan Shepherd and Raymond Curnutte could be seen gazing to the east in hopes of getting one last glimpse of their homes. Bub Kruse and Raymond Duke tried to crack

Footprints in the Sands of Time

a joke, but their remarks fell on deaf ears. Even Jeep Dawson and little Charlie Rhodes tried to liven the men, but it was to no avail.

The speed increased toward Hermleigh while Robert Groves, Hackberry Fargason, Peckerwood Prince and R. B. Etheridge stood to get a last long look at their home community. Then it was on past Wastella, Inadale and across the railroad tracks and into Roscoe. Bud Neal, one of the smartest card players to ever pick up a deck, moved forward in his seat to get a parting look at his hometown.

In a short while, the early morning sun was casting its rays over the eastern horizon, and the line of trucks moved into the city limits of Sweetwater. They sped hurriedly past the old Air Port Tavern. Almost too quickly the long line then turned back to the east and swung down Highway 80 toward Abilene.

It was now mid-morning and the bright morning sun had completely burned away the fine sleet that was falling as the men left Snyder. It was still awfully cold, but the warm sunlight gave comfort to the men of "G" Company.

Then it was on through Merkel and Trent until at last the skyline of Abilene could be seen in the distance. In Abilene, the convoy turned right and headed south down Texas Highway 84.

By now it was almost mid-day and the stretching column stopped for its first break since leaving Snyder. The men stretched their legs for a very short period of time and then quickly piled back on their assigned vehicles.

Then it was on again through Coleman, Santa Anna and the small community of Bangs. As the convoy approached the long Brownwood Hill, each man of "G" Company strained to get a first look at Camp Bowie. So much had been told about it. Where was it? What was it like? All eyes searched the Brownwood skyline for some evidence of the men of "G" Company's future home. Then, they saw it! Far to the right stood two tall gleaming water towers with the name, Camp Bowie, plainly visible. This was it, and the huge trucks seemed to roll faster as they roared down the long Brownwood Hill.

On they went at this hurried pace through Brownwood, motioned on by the 36th Division MP's who appeared at every road intersection.

Most of the early morning sadness had now disappeared. This was noted as big Pete Bills stood and saluted the erect and somber MP's. Pete then turned, and with his familiar sly grin, relayed the salute to Bob Rollins, who was also standing in the following truck.

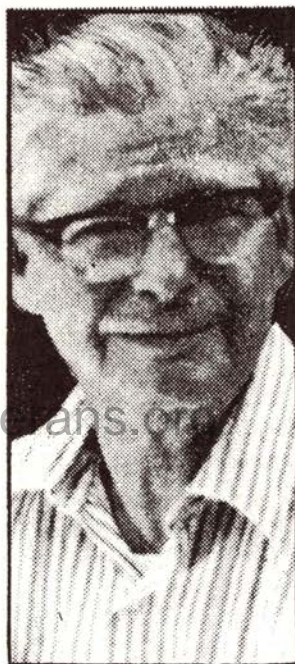
The road of the truck engines never ceased as they sped on to Camp Bowie.

(To be continued)

Freedom's just a bowl of cherries



City Public Service electrician Henry Ridge doesn't care a thing about chocolate-covered cherries anymore.



HENRY RIDGE
... World War II POW

But there was a time when a simple thing like candy meant everything to him.

During his 14 months in German prison camps in the latter stages of World War II, he was forced to live without the niceties of life.

When he was liberated, he vowed he would never be without chocolate-covered cherries again.

"The dictionary has a long list of definitions of freedom," said Ridge, who works in the Transformer Shop at CPS' Jones Avenue Service Center

Choice

"To me, it means you can make your own choices. You can decide what you want and don't want. When I was in prison, I didn't have any choices" said Ridge.

Ridge came to work for CPS on the day he separated from the Army on Oct. 18, 1945. He will retire Sept. 1 with almost 31 years service.

Ridge was a member of the famed 141st Infantry Regiment which traced its heritage back to the alamo.

Three months after the Allied invasion at Salerno, Italy, he was wounded by shrapnel at San Pietro.

Recovered from his wounds, Ridge continued on with Co.H, 141st and crossed the Rapido River in an assault on strong German positions. His

“Freedom’s Just A Bowl of Cherries”

outfit suffered heavy casualties and he was hit by machine gun fire. “I woke up in an open field, and a German soldier spotted me.” Ridge recalled.

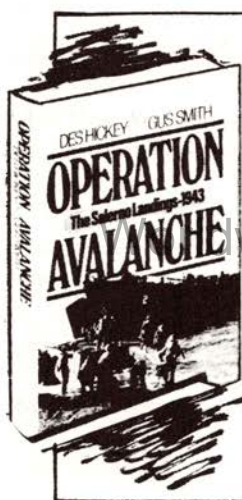
“He put his machine pistol right in my face. I just knew he was going to pull the trigger. Instead, he took me to a dugout where the Germans has some of their artillery pieces.” he said.

Ridge spent the rest of the war in several prison camps until he was liberated on May 5, 1945 by American forces.

His prison ordeal included a bout with yellow jaundice and the ever-present scourge of lice. When released from captivity, he was skin and bones.

“But the hardest part about being fenced in was that you had no say so about anything,” he said. “I certainly wouldn’t want to relive those months I spent in prison, but that experience taught me just how sweet freedom is.”

Henry L. Ridge (Co H. 141st)
2343 Waverly Avenue
San Antonio TX 78228



Operation Avalanche by Des Hickey & Gus Smith

When the Allied forces landed at Salerno before dawn on September 9, 1943, it was the largest amphibious invasion ever launched – and almost became the Allies’ costliest blunder. Code-named “Avalanche” and led by U.S. General Mark Clark, the invasion involved 165,000 American and British troops. Clark predicted the capture of Naples in three days; instead, “Avalanche” turned into a bloody, desperate 21-day battle. What went wrong? Re-creating those 21 days, this book provides some brutal answers. (McG) \$17.95

SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL

ALL THE WAY — FROM ROCKINGHAM, NORTH CAROLINA TO BUZZARD'S BAY, and CAMP EDWARDS

WorldWarTwoVeterans.org
"The Chattanooga Choo-Choo
This Was Not . . ."

AUGUST 14, 1942 (Friday)
ROCKINGHAM, NORTH CAROLINA (50 mi. E. Charlotte)

Six-thirty AM, and we're up for a busy day of loading an odd amount of vehicle on to some 40 flat cars that are waiting for us in that RR yards in this sleepy Carolina town. After a quick breakfast of two sick fried eggs, GI bread, and coffee, we begin to load everything in our trucks so we can move to the freight yards. By noon we are at the rail yards, and as there are too many men around, no one knows just what the hell is going on. I for one, become bored, the slip off up town for a bite to eat, and take in a move. The loading plan includes that we board the tourist sleepers as soon as they arrive, and get our places.

Something went haywire, and after hanging around the broken-down station for hours, we find we are not going to have our pullmans till 7 in the morning. **This is a fine kettle of fish . . .** after we stored our bedding in the trucks, and they are all blocked and wired to the flat cars. After a picnic handout from the mess which is located in rear of baggage car, we set out again to stroll up town.

N. C. MANEUVERS ENDED YESTERDAY

Since the maneuvers ended yesterday Rockingham is a bedlam of dusty clad khaki kids, a stew-pot of tank and truck convoys, and the drug stores and cafes are knocking-themselves-out trying to serve this swollen avalanche of soldiers. Stolling back to the RR station, we find that **the peoples' \$9 million donation to the USO is going to "pay dividends" - right now.**

They have set up their port able movie, and are grinding out "**Son of Fury**" - I along with some of my good companions, grab a piece of

SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL

cardboard, and sit our boxes down on the gravel for 7 reels of Gene Tierney, and is that bad? Right in the middle of one of the scenes where Tyrone has that Farmer gal in a clinch, up whips a train blowing off more steam than this sound track can counteract . . . then the inevitable happens - we change reels - then the show starts, but no sound, but we keep on watching, thinking with nostalgia, days of Bill Hart in silent westerns, and after about 15 minutes of fumbling, the operator declares he will have to send after some new parts, and show the reel over when it comes.

The Major in charge of these 300 men of 36th Div Hqs Company, announces that since we have no place to sleep, that we are welcome to curl up just almost anywhere - on the ground - on top of a truck - or just damn near anywhere we want to (he's going to town and get a hotel room). But I hope he does, we had already combed the hotels, and no available. Tourist camps are not like they are between Fort Worth and Dallas or the famous Jacksboro Highway in these parts.

Finally we get Gene and Tyrone on the last reel and run them over - this time with sound, and you'd be surprised what a difference a few chords make. Yawning at the end, when he goes back to that south sea isle to live with Tierney, I can't help but envy, one Tyrone, when I think of what is in store for us. But, surprise - we are to have another show. It's after 12:30, but what the hell, the men have no place to stay if the operator is willing, why not sit up all nite and see curvaceous Paulette Goddard twix it for Ray Milland?

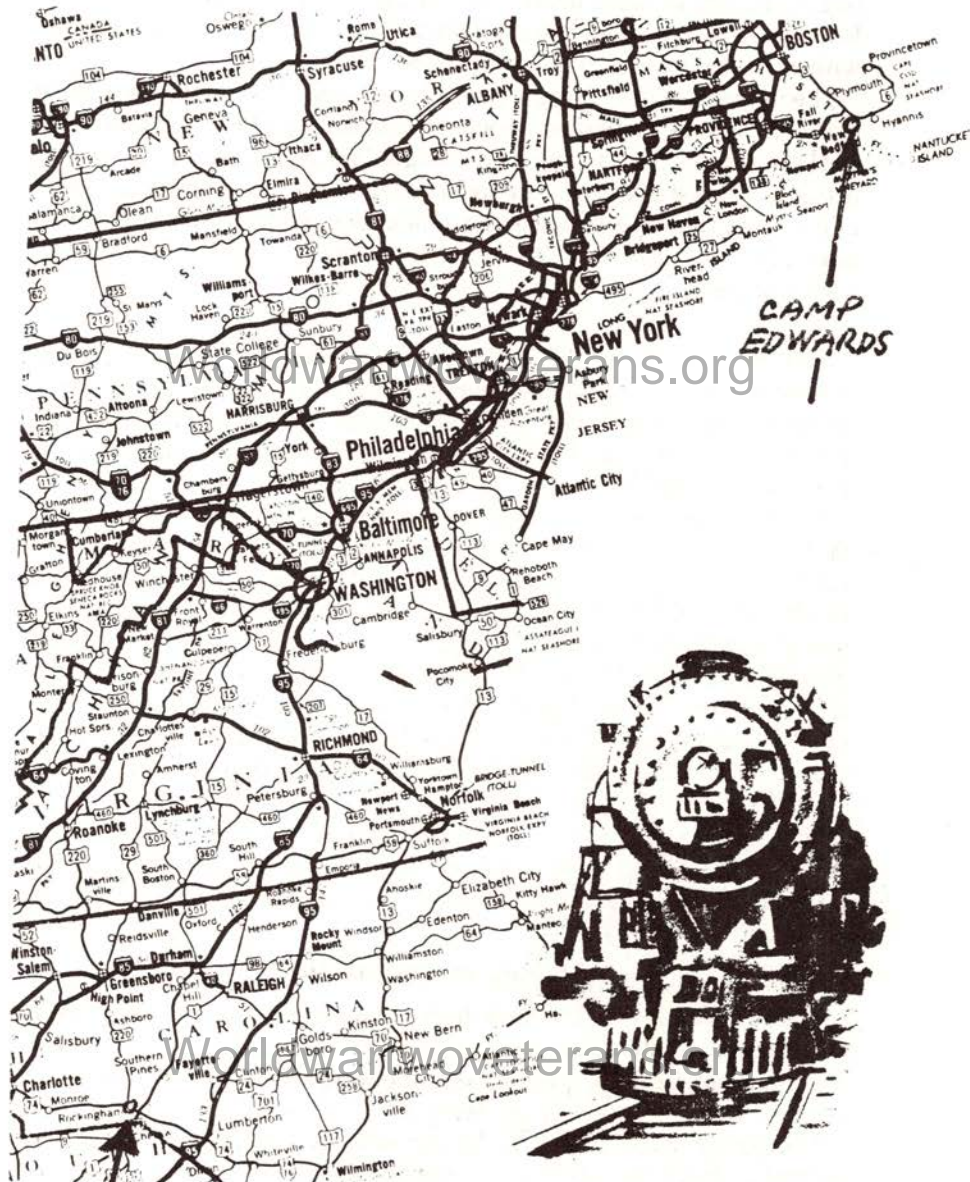
After seeing Paulette get in a tub, I decide I could sleep anywhere, and after scanning the near by dump, I find a large piece of cardboard and go join my stumble-bum comrades who have already curled up around this antique RR station. Thru my sleepy eyes, I can still visualize a Chinese flop house, so I pull over a hard canteen cover for a pillow, and notice it's now 3:15 AM, and much to my surprise am soon lost in dreams of civilian life.

AUGUST 15, 1942 - ROCKINGHAM, NORTH CAROLINA

Six flat, and we're up and it's pretty cool . . . my teeth are chattering, so I dash for the mess car and get some coffee. An hour later we are policing the area (this is one thing the Army NEVER forgets). Here we find countless candy wrappers, a few Old Mr. Boston bottles, magazines, and some trash that has been around that cob webbed station for that past two years . . . but the Army comes clean.

At 8 AM we are divided into sections such as: AG, G-2, G-3, etc . . . we are assigned to car 4, immediately hop in wobbling under the burden of full field equipment; rifle, helmet, belt and canteen and ditty

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly



CAMP
EDWARDS
|

"Rocky"
|



Be reminded - This was the 36th's first Troop Train Trip...moving from Camp Bowie Brownwood in March 1942 was by truck (we took everything with us) but that was not the case from North Carolina to Camp Edwards, thus the Troop Train was all-new to the Tired Texans, following the Maneuvers in North Carolina.

SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL

bag. Contrary to usual procedure, we are off shortly after we get on. Usually we hurry-up-and-wait an hour . . . but we're off, and that's OK with me. I've had enough of Carolina.

The usual "gum-beating" prevails for the first hour, and most everyone is very loquacious to start off with, but like a Big Ben, most of them run out of participles-to-dangle. We're beginning to wonder if this is a troop train, or a turtle? It's noon, and we've gone about 25 miles . . . at this rate we would be in Massachusetts about three weeks later. However, right now, we get some bad news - but is it just a rumor - we wonder.

Outside of Hamlet, N.C., a town we just went thru, there was found a very mangled body of a soldier believed to be one of our men. This seems logical, as we have guards on flat cars who are to watch the trucks and the equipment en route. But we dismiss this grim news, hoping it is - just a rumor.

For lunch, we were served at our seats, after being given paper plates and cups . . . says I, - this is a fary cry from the 5 weeks of that mess kit washing over a black tub of smokey GI tubs . . . this is going to be alright . . . and It was. By now, there has been numerous poker games going, and the boys are shooting craps in the wash-room, banking the dice against the privy door. This is typical of soldier consideration. If a trooper wants to use this modern convenience, he's either to crawl over a dozen stumble-bums who are down on their knees, or walk into the next car, and take a chance on the men in that car being "non-gamblers."

Most of the mal-adroit ones, who complain of no sleep the nite before, have taken off their shoes, and loused up the cars, and have spraddled into nine different positions, some that would make wrestling champions quit their jobs.

GI's are so neat, so tidy

We've had to police the area (here we go again) twice already today . . . these guys just ain't neat, says I. As it is getting dark we're in Virginia, but I didn't much give a damn where we were. I suddenly realized that I was about as sleepy as I had been in months.

The porter came around to fix our beds . . . letting down the compartment that folds into the top, and sliding the two seats together for the lower. We have 3 men to a compartment, one up and two down. I wanted the upper, but as luck would have it, one of the fellows with had contracted 5 different kinds of skin rashes and looked, when dobbed with calomel and some purple stuff, like some one who had the beriberi, the syphilis and the Chinese Rot . . . This I could not go, so I would take a lower, and my chances, with the other fellow - and the lower.

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

AUGUST 16th, 1942 — WASHINGTON, D.C. (ENROUTE) THRU THE WINDOW.

I am wakened by one dark porter who is determined to get these tired field soldiers up so he can fix the beds. I go back to sleep. I raise up to look out the window, the train is stopped, and I gawk right into a wall of a red box-car, with practically no light at this early hour. I see the usual hieroglyphics that are always found on RR cars, and big letters reading B & O. (Our Yankee brothers told the Texans it meant Baltimore & Ohio).

I glance over the other side, and to my amazement I find the same. What could this be a trap? With tooth brush, soap and towel, I like many others head for the wash room, only to find it crowded as only one could expect - what else. By 8 o'clock, the KP's are down the aisles with pots of eggs, jam, very greasy ham, coffee, which is dispensed with such grace, that they never fail to get most of it on the floor, part of it in your plate or cup, the rest on the seat or your khakis . . . but, what the hell, they are already getting pretty dirty from all the soot . . . so think nothing of it (I keep telling myself).

By now, we are in Washington, in fact we've been in Washington all the time, or at least near by on a side track. We find that 7 other troops trains left our maneuver area at the same time we did but from different points, hence we have a lot of delay while letting some pass, and too we stop for certain passenger trains. As we roll in to Washington, we can see the Jefferson monument. In the distance across the lagoon, the Lincoln Memorial and Washington Monument pointing to the sky.

CAMP EDWARD *News*



This bunch of nonsense was written shortly after the 36th finally got to Camp Edwards in late August. Your tired old reporter ran across this yellowed manuscript (by accident) and what happened from Washington DC to Edwards is unknown. Probably best left untold. Looking back 42 years, I don't think it was quite as bad as it seemed at that time to a civilian-tenderfoot who was experiencing army-life in the raw. Our life-style at Edward beat the hell outta those days at Camp Bowie.

CAMP EDWARDS NEWS



PVT. TEX SAYS: Our first sergeant was calling roll. He sneezed and three Brooklyn boys answered, "Here!"

★ ★ ★

DOGFACE DEMENSIONS: Probably the largest top kick in this division is 310-lb. 1st Sgt. Richard Pass of Company D, 141st Infantry. His boys call him "Tiny" . . . One outstanding "foot" man, who is not an infantry man, is 6-foot 6¼-inch Corp. Tech. Henry E. Behr of Company A, 636th Tank Destroyers who wears shoes size 14½ AA. Behr kicked his big G.I.'s about as a member of the "Tanks To You" ballet chorus . . . Man with a little foot is Corp. Lorn D. Sisk of Battery C, 131st Field Artillery. Size: 4C.

★ ★ ★

WHAT'S IN A NAME? When Corp. Tech. Andre P. Laguerre, division finance clerk, was born in the Grande Duché de Luxembourg in 1916, his mother was so near the World War I battle front she could hear cannons roar. "La Guerre", of course, is French for "the war."

Doing the "Heil! (Blurt!) Heil! (Blurt!) Right in der Fuehrer's Face" in fine Nut-si manner is a real Heilmann, Corp. Erwin Hellmann of 36th Recon Troops. A basso profundo soloist-star of the division show, "The Khaki Parade," he goose-steps out on the stage wearing a chestful of large cardboard medals, a swastika brassard on his arm.

★ ★ ★

ARMY YOKE: Our cook spent the early morning hours cracking eggs for breakfst chow. He then sat down and wrote his girl a letter, "Shells have been bursting around me all morning!"

★ ★ ★

MESS HALL HASH: It took Corp. George D. Bell of 143rd Infantry 61 days to receive a letter from a soldier friend in the Pacific . . . Pfc. Julius Stephenson of Battery A, 132nd Field Artillery, is a real Texan who likes to wear his high-heeled cowboy boots. During off-duty hours you'll find this Paris (Texas) farmer enjoying the comfort of his 10½, floral decorated Westerns. . . . The Carl Anderson named as author of the 636th "Tank Destroyers March" is a resident of Chatham, Mass., and not the author of the cartoon strip, "Henry" . . . M.P. Gilbert Shopp has 17 relatives who are in police work . . . One of our infantry first sergeants was checking off a list of gas masks by matching their markings with the serial numbers of his men. The owner of one mask could not be determined. Later he discovered that it was his own mask and serial number.

J.E.F.

This little jewel of early-day army humor was cranked out by JAMES E. FARMER (newspaper man from Indy) who was a part of the Hqs, 36rh Div. G-2 Section. He went back to Indianapolis News post-war and carved out a successful career. Now retired, still live in Indy.

The Off-Again, On-Again



World War Veterans.org

“T-Patch” Patch

Alan “Chum” Williamson

When the 36th Division, Texas National Guard, was mobilized on November 25, 1940, Major General Claude V. Birkhead had been the division commander for a number of years under state control. As such, he reported direct to the governor of the State of Texas. The staff of Regular Army instructors worked for the most part in an advisory capacity, concerning themselves with training and property accountability. Birkhead was therefore pretty much his own boss.

When the division arrived at Camp Bowie, the general seemed to have trouble remembering that it was now under federal control and that his immediate superior was the corps commander. He issued orders without clearing them with “**Krueger Hill.**” As a result, many were reversed, much to the chagrin of the embattled citizen soldiers charged with carrying them out.

One of Birkhead’s first orders required that all officers wear name tags, affixed to the left breast of the outer garment. The tags were of the makeshift, safety pin type issued at conventions and reunions. Since each officer was issued only one, this meant pinning it to the over-

“Off-Again, On-Again T-Patch Patch”

coat upon leaving one's quarters, then switching it to the shirt or blouse upon arrival at the mess hall or place of duty. Although the chances of encountering Birkhead were virtually nonexistent, there were the inevitable, officious staff officers, eager to make points by enforcing any order to ridiculous extremes.

General Birkhead was actually ahead of his time. Name tags and tapes have now been required items for all military personnel for many years. But not in 1941. When news of the order reached Krueger Hill, it was promptly countermanded. Name tags were not an authorized article of the uniform.

Birkhead ordered that the division shoulder insignia be sewn on all outer garments except the raincoat. That amounted to about six garments per man. No sooner was the last T-Patch in place than Corps ordered them off. Not authorized by the Department of the Army.

Birkhead appealed to the Texas congressional delegation. By the time the stitches holding the last patch had been cut with a razor blade, DA approval was received.

Department of the Army approval did have advantages. The shoulder insignia was now an item of issue. Before, they were purchased at the individual's expense from Louie Lauterstein, a concessionaire who followed the division to Bowie from Camp Hulen. However, it was not long after they were all sewn on again that Corps ordered them off, for the Louisiana maneuvers. **“You wouldn't wear shoulder insignia in combat.”**

As every T-Patcher knows, they were on when the division launched Operation Avalanche. But the off-again, on-again game wasn't quite over.

North of Rome, the division was pulled out of the line and ordered to return to the Salerno beaches, where preparations would be made for the invasion of Southern France. General Mark Clark agreed that the men could have three days R & R in Rome, with the proviso that shoulder insignia not be worn while there.

This proved to be as futile as removing the patches for the Louisiana maneuvers. During their first night in the Eternal City, Axis Sally announced in a radio broadcast:

“You boys of the 36th Division aren't fooling anybody by taking your T-Patches off. We know who you are.”

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

“There are three 36th Divisions. One is in the POW camps. They are the lucky ones. Another 36th Division is in the graveyards. You boys in Rome for fun and games are the third one. And you will soon join the other two.”

T-Patchers who remained in the service after the war removed the beloved, aggravating T-Patch one last time. They transferred it to the right shoulder, where it signified the wearer's war time unit. There, it was a conversation piece and the most prized article of the uniform. But there had been times when they wished it had been issued with a zipper.

The End

Worldwar2veterans.org



REUNION REGISTRATION — dateline Sept. 8, 1946 — Hotel Texas Fort Worth. This rare photo was made by and appeared in the Dallas Times Herald, with this cutline:

Jean Muntz and Ruth Thompson pin reunion badges on Col. Carl Phinney, Dallas, new chief of staff of the 36th Division TNG; Gen. John E. Dahlquist, former 36th Division commander, now on duty with the War Department in Washington; and Maj. Gen. Claude Birkhead, San Antonio, former commander of the 36th Division at Camp Bowie, Brownwood.



SPEAKING EDITORIALY

THIS FUNNY LIFE

www.dwartwoveterans.org

Over that past 3 years of grinding out material for our Historical Quarterly, it has been our desire to insert a certain amount of HUMOR. This was a vital part of our existence in WAR and civilian life.

Everybody loves an occasional bellylaff. It is the secret ingredient of living a good life, and we believe it is the one thing the AMERICAN SOLDIER had that our enemy did NOT.

The Germans were possibly the most "regimented" soldiers in the world. The Japanese with devout feeling for their divine leader, lead finally to the ultimate Kami-Kaze. Little humor if any.

The American GI had liberty to bitch (to a certain degree) which was a blessing for letting off steam, and also to 'make jest' of an unusual stupid order based on the questionable judgment of the officer in charge.

In grim and hazardous situation, it was always good to hear some trooper way in the back make a "funny" remark, that in most cases brought on a roar of laffs and the tension was broken . . . the kind of instant therapy that served a real purpose . . . or how about this line . . . **"just wait until this war is over, I'm gonna kill old baggy-pants."** Of course, he may have been serious at the time, but we recall no post-war murders that would validate the threat. So let's roll with the punches — and more "funny" stuff the better. All those who agree, say "Aye."



Dec. 1944 — reprint from the Overseas
T-PATCH TABLOID, published at Lecom-
tois Printers, Besancon.

EASTERN



FRANCE

Ramblin' ON THE RUE...

OR - INSIDE FRANCE WITH T-BONE

We know it must be CHRISTMAS for only yesterday our foxhole was located under a MISTLETOE TREE — and two GOPHERS ran over and kissed us.

Hung up our SOCKS last night for SANTA CLAUS — and all we could find this morning was one lizard, three spiders and two crawfish. We are very happy that it NEVER rains in France.

If you feel like a celebration for CHRISTMAS — drink a full bottle of this stuff called « CALVADOS » and you'll be on TEMPORARY DUTY for, at least two days (or make re-classified).

Took a cute mademoiselle out for a ride the other night, and naturally we stopped and parked. After a few minutes she said : « But there are alot of couples who do NOT pet in parked Jeeps. » What else could you say but, « Yes, I know, the woods are full of them. »

This ALSATIAN SCHNAPPS won't make you VERY tight — but I did run across one JOE in his cups, who swore he had just shot a BENGAL TIGER down the Rue.

These long loaves of FRENCH BREAD are very useful things to have around. If you havn't finished eating it in a weeks time, you can always give it to an MP to use as a NIGHT STICK.

You'll surely agree — there should be some sort of special clause in all Army INSURANCE policies for troops in FRANCE giving DOUBLE INDEMNITY for GI's who attempt to pass a Frenchman in a vehicle.

Our friend BUD tells us he probably won't return to the states after the war — he's been offered a job as official TESTER in a big WINERY.

Some enterprising GI could make a fortune selling PROGRAMS to the French natives — so they can distinguish a GI from a French SOLDAT — « Programs, Programs, 25 francs — you can't tell a Spook from a Poilus without a Program... »
Joyeux Noël... bonsoir.

If the poultry of Alsace knew how much their eggs were worth on the « Marche noir » they'd go on strike for higher feed-rations... but afterall you can get a pound of butter for only 500 francs.

It's a re-assuring sight to sit in a restaurant, and have a couple come in and sit down beside you, reach in a large handbag, pull out a pound of butter, a loaf of bread, and mabe a cooked rabbit. That's really a damn good idea to take back to the states - - can't you see yourself seated at a ring-side table at the STORK CLUB fumbling for a loaf of bread in your date's over-night bag....



RAMBLIN' ON THE RUE

BY T-BONE

Ah, la France — — Sunny France — — where else in the world can you sit on a curbstone and have a front-seat to a 4.40 LEG SHOW... the bicycle is a great invention.

Ever notice how the French officers automatically knock out a salute upon entering a Cafe or Restaurant... wonder who started that craze?

Had a date with a very beautiful blonde mademoiselle last night, but we couldn't go out. Some one had misplaced her wig.

Outside of a home-made scooter, the CITROEN is the only vehicle that we know of that you sit in and « look-up » to a JEEP. After a dozen or more kilometers in one of those French crates, one gets the feeling that their rear exterior is slightly dragging the ground. However, it has one good feature — you can make it to the next BAR with a table-spoon of benzine.

Probably the worst crime the Germans have committed so far in this war, hasn't been recorded for the post war peace tables... and that is — those dirty — — took all the good Napoleon COGNAC when they partir-ed from France ».

Cigarettes may be scarce back in the states, but a Frenchman was telling me he was able to pick up a few, but unfortunately someone had stepped on his finger three times that day.

The French drink an ersatz concoction called « Cafe Internationale » which, after one cup of the black stuff, we are convinced that it is fabricated from Buffalo chips, broom-weeds and lamp-black. No wonder there's a black market.

But the French do have a flare for tricky names — for example the other day we walked right into a large sign displaying four huge letters — « FLOP », a delightful beverage. I would say

that juice is going to be unpopular, with GI's.

The natives tell us that it really doesn't rain very often in France, but I wonder why the GI's are having so much trouble getting wool socks over their web-feet.

A farmer saw us approach and we heard him tell his fille : « Come in the house, daughter, and bring the cow with you, here comes a couple of soldiers from the Thirty-sixth ».

Was out the other night with a tres-bell mademoiselle, and after some parlez I put my arms around her. She started yellin' « DEFENDU » — and how in the hell was I to know that meant « OFF LIMITS » in French.

Our friend BUD of the 141st needed his watch fixed, so as he was rambin' down the Rue the other day he spied a shop with a display of clock and watches in the window, sought out the proprietor and asked him if he repaired watches. — No, Monsieur, he didn't repair watches. What then did he sell? — « Monsieur, » replied the Frenchman patiently, « I don't sell anything. » « Well, » said Bud, « if you don't sell anything, what is your business? What do you do? » « Monsieur, » he said simply, « I Castrate cats. » « Then why in the hell, » argued BUD, « do you have clocks and watches in your window? » With a sigh of resignation, the shop-keeper reversed his field and plaintively asked, « Monsieur, what would YOU suggest I put in the window? »

If you have a good French friend and want to make him happy for Christmas — give him a KLAXTON — and he'll really knock'em self out.

Wonderful climate here in France — yesterday we saw a farmer herding all his livestock down the road. He stopped us and wanted to know where the QM waterproofing area was.

Del Knecht's Story of Von Rundstedt Brings Back Memories For Ronketto



JOHN RONKETTO

Dear Editor:

I attend the Mid-West Chapter Reunion with my old Buddy, DELMAR (Big Foot) KNECHT LAST June, and I was glad to see Hank Gomez there, as he was 'working' on Del to "tell his story about the Capture of Von Rundsteadt."

Then when I received my August 1984 T-Patcher, I saw Del's photo, and noted that 'his' story would be published in the Vol. IV, No. 1 issue of the Fighting 36th Quarters.

We've had a long-time friendship . . .

Del and I have been friends since before going into service. We worked in the same dept. at Caterpillar Tractor Co. in East Peoria, IL when Del left for service. A short time later I answered the call ((GREATINGS OLE-FRIEND)) and as luck or chance would have it we met at the induction center and were together for the remainder of our service ending up as a BAR team in Co A, 141st Inf. in the goold old "36".

Here's Delmar (Big Foot) Knecht at right with buddy — Aloysius J. Manske of Milwaukee, WI in a photo made in 1942, both of Co A 141st Infantry. Photo from John Ronketto.



Ronketto Recalls His Buddy, Big Foot Knecht

May I relate an experience we had together shortly before the war ended. Here goes:

“This Is The Tooth, and the Whole Tooth . . .”

. . . at the time this event took place, it wasn't funny, but lllkin' back it takes anotehr perspective. I had developed a toothache in one of my jaw teeth, and as a result with this second molar throbin'; with every heartbeat, I wasn't a pleasant person to be around.

It was hurtin' so bad that I was getting desparate, and to the guys in my platoon — my request was — that they keep an eye-open for a DENTIST. So I wasn't surprised when one of the fellows ran up and informed me that he had seen a sign that looked like, it might be a dental office.

Bear in mind, we had just taken the small village and established a perimeter guard. lAll this took place during the later part of April 1945 (the situation was not as hectic as it had been).

Ole pal, Delmar (big Foot) Knecht and I took off and found the small upstaris office with a waiting room half -full and the Doc working on a patient. I need not mention the 'sight' of two unshaven American GIs shook'em up a bit. Speaking a better-grade of German than I could, Delmar told the Doc to finish with his patient — BUT WE WERE NEXT!

Though I was in great pain, I recall the ingenuity of this dentist, using a drill, powered by his right foot on a bicycle pedal (modified for turning a high-speed drill).

When my turn came, the Doc carefully examined, drilled and fill-ed my molar (which is still in use today). He was outta novacaine, but with my BAR leaning against the wall, and ole Del sitting there with his M-1 across his lap, after warning him NOT to hurt me, I didn't feel a thing.

The Doc didn't ask for any pay, (probally a safety measure for him), but we asked what the cost was for a regular patient, and I gave him 3 Marks plus a tip for the service received.



JOHN RONKETTO, Co A 141st, 1st Platoon
643 East Walnut, Canton IL 61520

Dear T-Patchers:-

The Fighting 36th

HISTORICAL



QUARTERLY



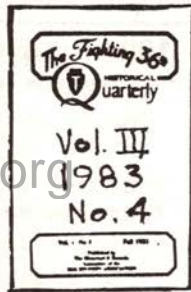
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RENEW 1984

Vol. IV



Worldwartwovete

Some of our members of the 36th, still do not seem to understand that the Historical QUARTERLY is all about. It is 80 pages of ALL HISTORY of the exploits of the 36th Division, most of all written by the men who lived it, in their own words. YOU CAN JOIN IN, your story will be welcome.

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