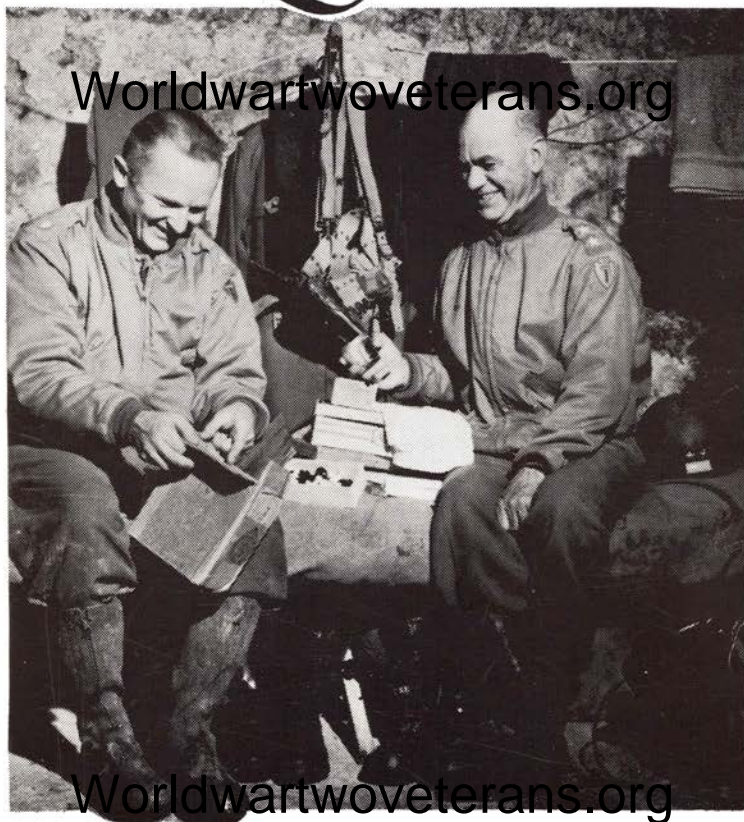


The Fighting 36th

HISTORICAL
Quarterly



Christmas Packages from home, ITALY 1943, here's Lt. Col. Harold Reese and Maj Gen. Fred L. Walker — from
THE WILBUR PAPERS

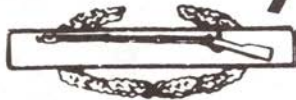
Vol. VI, No. 3 — Fall 1986

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The Fighting 36th



HISTORICAL

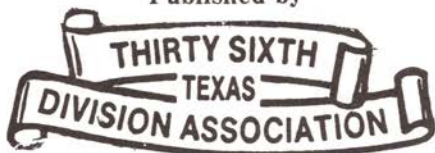
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Vol. VI, No. 3 — Fall 1986



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Service Record
in World War II

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

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



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

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

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

Vol. VI, No. 3
– Fall 1986



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See
Page
80

The Fighting 36th
HISTORICAL
Quarterly

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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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THE FIGHTING 36th
HISTORICAL QUARTERLY

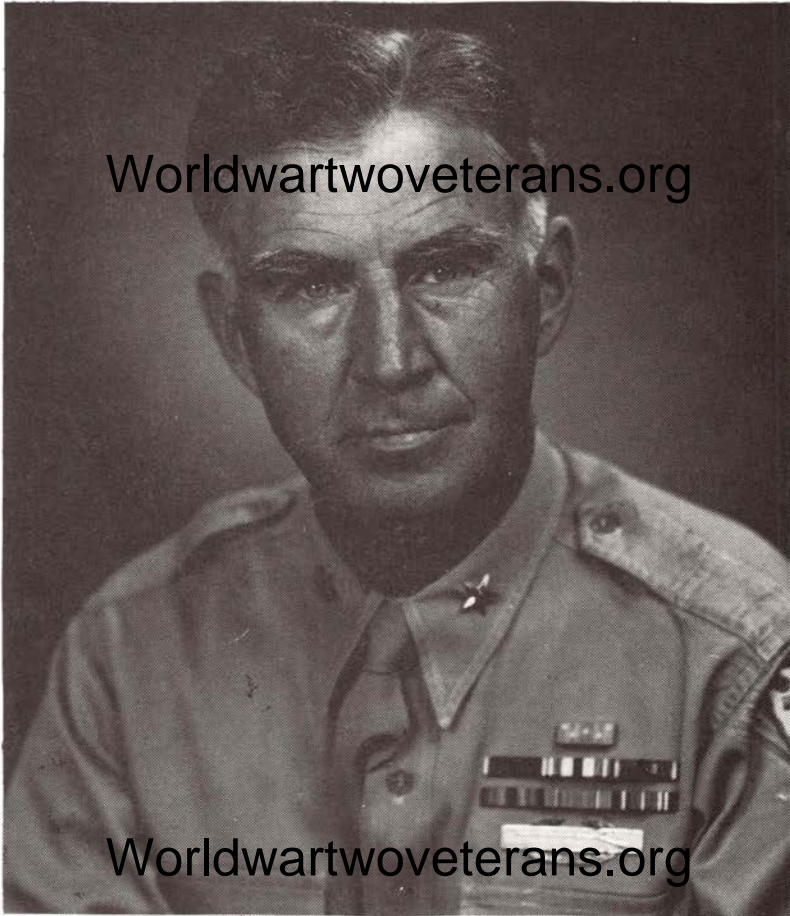


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Cover Story



General William Hale Wilbur

1886-1979

**Soldier, Patriot, History Writer
and a Man Whose Long Military Career**

**was guided by three words —
DUTY — HONOR — COUNTRY**

W
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Worldwartwoveterans.org

Over the past six years as editor of this publication, it has been rewarding to receive from our troops, some very great stories about experiences in service to America as a member of the 36th Texas Infantry Division.

Recently it was to be a 'celebration' with Colonel Oran C. Stovall of Bowie Texas passed on to us for its value to our division's history... **THE WILBUR PAPERS.**

Weighing in at 18 lbs., we were amazed to find many personal letters — Stovall to Wilbur, and then Wilbur to Stovall. At first we thought these were just the General's papers, yes — but should now be known as the **WILBUR-STOVALL FILES.**

It will take weeks to study, classify and make new files for all this paper. It seemed to be best to tell — all about this man who served only with the 36th — **FIVE MONTHS.** For openers, we offer a reprint of the speech that Gen. Wilbur gave at the 1966 Reunion of the 36th at Austin. It covers mostly about his famous Battle School in North Africa, prior to our storming the beaches at Salerno. The news story on pages 13-17 will fill-in many of his accomplishments. Read on...

FRONT COVER: This rare photo of General Walker and Col. Harold Reese was one of many in the files of General Wilbur's collection. Caption on back of the 8 x 10 glossy did not 'give' exact location during the Italian Campaign. A package from home was brightest part of the war in those tragic days of battle.

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

AUSTIN 1966

Twenty-Second — Post-WWII Reunion Sept. 2-4

COMMADORE PERRY HOTEL — our headquarters
for the 4th reunion in Austin. The cradle of Texas

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Robert W. WilburSociety Cross



Oran C. Stovall

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1966 Reunion committees — Earl C. Wilkes, chmn. Registrations — Kelly R. McAdams. Welcome Party — Frank H. McFarland. Publicity — Glen Castleberry. Resolutions — William H. Martin. Nominations — James L. Minor. Conference Hall — Harry B. Kelton. Dinner-Dance — Rusty Murphy. Memorial Service — Thomas G. Jones. Reunion Chaplain — Rev. Christian Lahne. Ladies Auxiliary — Billie Reid.

General Assembly was 9:30 AM — with guest speakers: Gen. Fred L. Walker and Gen. William H. Wilbur. At 2:00 PM another assembly was held with a presentation of a portrait of Gen. John E. Dahlquist. Memorial Service was held at 10:00 AM on the Capitol grounds, Sunday.

During the term of 1965-66 as president of the 36th Division Association, Stovall would assemble a group of our leaders to speak at the Reunion. Since Wilbur and Stovall had a very close relationship, we offer here now — excerpts from Wilbur's speech to the general assembly at Commodore Perry Hotel in Austin. This was our 4th outing in Austin (post WWII) and unfortunately the last time we gathered there.

Please read carefully the names of the men who put this reunion together. This is exactly as published in the 1966 Reunion Program.

GENERAL WILLIAM L. WILBUR'S ADDRESS TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY September 3, 1966—Austin, Texas

Colonel Stovall, General Walker, Members and Friends of
the 36th Division:

It is a real honor to be invited to speak to you—a signal honor because you are all patriots,—stalwarts who have proved by your deeds, that you are worthy to be called patriots.

Almost twenty-five years have passed since we went ashore at Salerno. Those years have left their mark on some of us, especially on those, like myself, who can be classed as the older generation. It has therefore been particularly flattering to have you greet me, as many of you have done, by saying, "You're looking fine."

Your greeting has made me realize the correctness of a statement I saw recently. It went like this:

"There are three ages of man:

- (1) Youth,
- (2) Middle Age, and
- (3) 'You're Looking Fine'."

THE WILBUR PAPERS

My first contact with members of the 36th Division was at the Battle School in North Africa. A large contingent from the Division came to the school to take the regular course of battle indoctrination.

You remember that I demanded much of you,—and of all the other students as well. In fact, I frequently demanded the impossible. The miracle was that over and over again you responded, and gave the impossible.

Let no one ever forget that the 36th Division did the impossible the fifth day at Salerno! Bleary-eyed from lack of sleep, yellow with fatigue, spiritually drained because of the death or wounding of many comrades, you hung on with courage and tenacity. As a consequence, the Germans failed to push us back from the beach.

Perhaps when you went to the Battle School you didn't appreciate that we were giving you much more than mere physical hardihood. You did realize that you were being given the training necessary to become better qualified soldiers and better leaders. I am not sure that all of you appreciated that we were trying to prepare you to face the baptism of fire and bone-weary fatigue that you would encounter at Salerno.

So I attempted to make the Battle School as close to actual battle as possible. There was danger—real dangers—lots of it!

Battle demands physical stamina day after day. It requires alertness and keenness of response, perceptive powers and intelligence. If the infantry soldier does not have these qualities, he soon becomes a load on our hands as a casualty. I wish we could drive home this lesson, not only to this group but to some of the big shots in Washington.

If there is any place in the world where a dumb-bunny with slow mental reactions should not be, it's up there in that part of the battlefield where the infantry soldier lives.

This is why at the Battle School we stressed courage, alertness, stamina and intelligence.

While you were at the Battle School you remember that there were some who failed to appreciate the need for the training which you received. It was some time before they came to understand the value of their experience. It came to them with some abruptness the first time they found themselves under heavy enemy fire.

It was interesting and gratifying after we reached Italy, to have a really large number of officers and non-coms of the Division seek me out to tell me of their change of heart. Most of them frankly admitted that they had cursed me out every day while at Battle School. They seriously questioned the value and wisdom of the exposure to fire.

But the minute that heavy enemy fire hit them they became loyal converts.

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

The training did do exactly what I had intended that it should. Over and over they told me that despite hostile fire, they were calm and went ahead to do their job, while all around them men who had not gone to the School were temporarily not capable of carrying on.

Of course, you remember Battle Drill. It was exacting, it was demanding; it fitted you to win battles.

Yes, Battle School was tough, probably the toughest school the United States ever conducted. And the 36th Division contingent responded wonderfully. I was proud of you!

When your president, Colonel Stovall, graciously invited me here, he suggested that I talk about my experiences with the Division. Since I have been here and renewed contact, the memories are not all sad. Yes, there are some sad memories, it is true, but they are all memories of greatness, they are memories of events of which you can be very proud.

I went ashore with the assault echelon at Salerno, but not as a member of the 36th Division. I had made the trip from Bizerte in command of all kinds of support elements, so numerous that they filled twenty-two ships.

Of course, the instant I hit the beach I was engulfed in the battle. Two days later I was attached to the Division and assigned to command a large section of the front line elements.

You remember that the situation was extremely precarious; units were seriously intermingled, all reserves had been employed, the situation was not good.

General Walker assigned Andy Price to be my executive officer. Captain Sumner, my aide, and Captain Young filled all the other staff jobs in my little headquarters.

I may say at this point that the only thing which has marred the perfection of this reunion has been the absence of Colonel Price. I got to know him very well. He was intelligent, courageous, absolutely honest, a pillar of strength at the toughest of times. He is not here because he has achieved a position of leadership in another group—a group that apparently loves him and respects him as much as we do.

You remember that we weathered those tough days at Salerno. Never in history has any Division been subjected to such a terrific initial test. Never in history has any Division measured up better to its sudden and almost overwhelming responsibilities.

Following Salerno I was with the 36th Division for five eventful, action-crammed months.

I believe that during my period with the Division I contacted practically every infantry soldier in the Division, the great bulk of them while they were in close contact with the enemy. During that time I continued to demand much. I feel certain that many men remember me as "that dog-gone General" who was constantly after them to dig a new fighting hole or to relocate their hole so that they would have better observation via a better field of fire.

THE WILBUR PAPERS

You remember how hard the ground was at Salerno, baked into near-concrete by a hot summer sun. I remember very clearly the look of sad resignation on the faces of the dead-tired men whom I told to dig new or better holes.

Many times I would come back a few hours later and find that nothing had been done. When that happened I made no comment, just asked the man for his shovel, then went to the spot where his new hole was to be and hacked out a small beginning for his new location.

Then I said, "All right son. Go ahead and dig. I'll be back in two or three hours. I know you're tired, but don't forget that we came over here to win."

The story was much the same with the 81mm. mortar crews. They would dig a hole two or three feet deep and quit digging from bone weary fatigue. One day I remember I happened on a crew that had done just that; their hole was about half as deep as it should have been.

My friends, it has been good to be with you. The memories have come surging back as I talked with you last night and this morning. I thank you for inviting me. The 36th Division Association is a great repository of courage, a well stocked store house of leadership. I hope you will continue to function and to expand your activities, for we must pass on to our children and our grandchildren the great vital virtues of courage, integrity, stamina and patriotism.

This is a highly worthwhile task because our great country today stands very much in need of all these qualities.

I wish you the best of luck. May the 36th Division Association continue to prosper and go on forever!

Thanks a million!



AN INTERVIEW WITH COL. STOVALL:

After reading Wilbur's speech again after many years, we were curious to find if Col. Stovall attended the Battle School that was described by a few who attended, "man, it was worse than some of the action we would have experienced in the Italian Campaign!"

Col. Stovall did indeed attend this (Roughhouse school), and added that also from his Engineers were Lts. Joe Kail and Lee Behler, plus a dozen or so EMs.

"Tell me more, Colonel," I said. He replied, "it was double in spades on anything we had in the states. Lasted 6 weeks, and we even 'lost' a couple of men."

"What do you mean, lost?" Stovall replied, "well that machine gun that was wired down, so it would not 'hit' the men crawling on their bellies, but it did happen. Sad but true."

"OK, now gimme a summary, Colonel." He said, "takes only three words to say it, just say — it made us LEAN AND MEAN!"

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly



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• Duty • Honor • Country

Class of 1912 — West Point
Graduates With Honors



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This giant equestrian statue of George Washington dominates the campus area at West Point. Wilbur, shown here at right — his second year as cadet in 1909, was obsessed with his admiration of the Father of His Country, that he spent twelve years, upon retirement to research and study WASHINGTON. He wrote many articles about this great man.

THE WILBUR PAPERS

Fort Myers, Florida
NEWS-PRESS

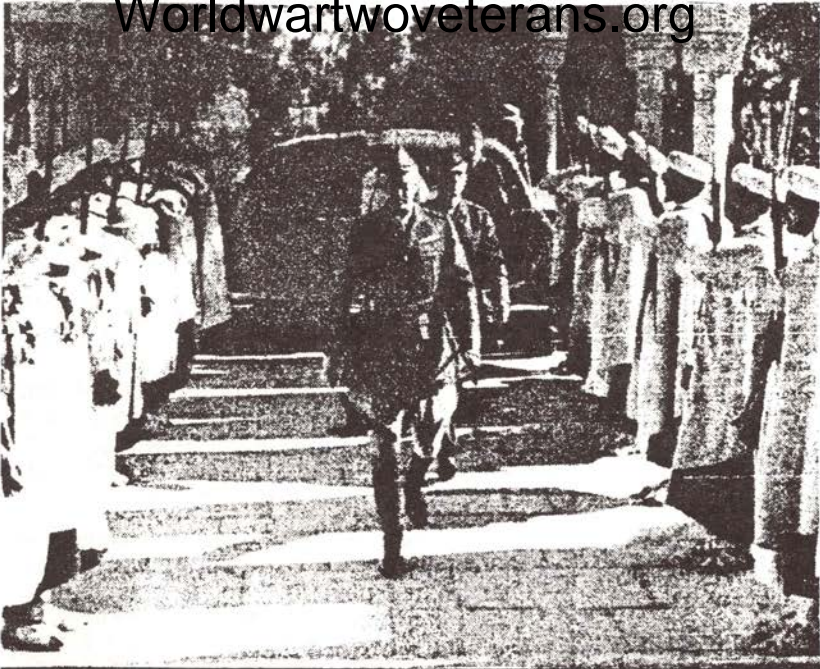


People

Tuesday, January 15, 1980

Old soldier's words don't fade away

Worldwartwoveterans.org



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GENERAL PHILIP DAVIDSON DESCENDING STEPS
... between a Moroccan honor guard

By MILLER DAVIS
Special To The News-Press

Two nights before his death, an old soldier turned over to his closest friend his recorded reflections on some of the towering figures of his time. The words appear on 64 neatly typed pages:

- Franklin D. Roosevelt missed true greatness because of his overwhelming esteem for Franklin D. Roosevelt.
- Winston Churchill was the greatest man of World War II, and the greatest writer of the century, despite the fact he flunked 8th grade English.

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

- Douglas MacArthur was a great general but a poor soldier, because he disobeyed an order.
- George Washington was our greatest president, even though he not only cut down his father's cherry tree but also uprooted flowers in his mother's garden.
- Gen. George S. Patton was the greatest field commander of World War II, but his blazing temper often flawed his good judgment.

Wilbur's Bound Diary Reveals His Devotion to George Washington

The 64-page, two-volume diary belonged to a man who more than casually knew the history makers of the 20th century. In addition, he was a foremost authority on the life and times of Washington, decrying contemporary attempts to tarnish the image of America's founding father.

The author of these two bound volumes was Brig. Gen. (Ret.) William Hale Wilbur, who lived the last eight of his 91 years at Shell Point Village in Lee County.

One of his frequent visitors there was Bill Hoyerman, a winter visitor to Sanibel who met the general in Deerfield, Ill., in 1963.

It was Hoyerman who spent last Christmas Day with Wilbur, and who heard Wilbur's premonition of death.

"Bill," he quoted Wilbur as saying, "I'm going to die soon. "I want you to be the guardian of my diary."

Two days later, Dec. 27, William Hale Wilbur died in his wheelchair.

Wilbur, named in 1967 as one of the 27 most distinguished 20th Century graduates of the United States Military Academy, was Patton's chief of staff. He was the first American soldier to step ashore at Fedala, near Casablanca, Morocco, in what would be the first U.S. military action in the Afro-European theater of operations.

Wilbur, by himself, walked through 14 miles of enemy territory in the dark, under fire, to deliver letters to the French command advising that U.S. troops already were landing on the beaches, that they were friendly to France, and wanted to avoid bloodshed. There had been the possibility of a military confrontation between American and French forces because of a divisive political situation in that part of French-held North Africa.

After delivering his letters, Wilbur returned to the beach and took command of a U.S. infantry battalion and several tanks. This force captured a French coastal battery that was firing on U.S. landing craft.

For his exploits, Wilbur was promoted from colonel to brigadier general on Dec. 1, 1942.

Congressional Medal of Honor

And on Jan. 8, 1943, President Roosevelt pinned the Congressional Medal of Honor on the chest of the new general. The ceremony took place on the lawn of Roosevelt's villa at Casablanca.

THE WILBUR PAPERS



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In a special ceremony in 1967, Gen. Wilbur was one of the 27 most distinguished 20th Century Graduates of the United States Military Academy is shown above with a fellow West Pointer, Ike Eisenhower, Class of 1915, whereas Wilbur graduated with Class of 1912.

Later, at Salerno, as assistant commander of the U.S. 36th Division, Wilbur again landed under fire. He remained in combat for an extended period before succumbing to battle fatigue. He was sent home an invalid.

In addition to the Medal of Honor, the nation's highest military award, Wilbur also held the Silver Star, Legion of Merit with Oak Leaf Cluster, Bronze Star and medals from the king of Italy and the sultan of Morocco.

After the landing operation, Patton was named governor general of Morocco by Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, commander of U.S. forces in the Afro-European theater of operations and later to become supreme allied commander.

At this juncture, Wilbur, who still was active in the African campaign, began to exhibit some of the qualities that marked him as a man of forceful personality, outspoken candor, unquestioned courage — and, by his own words and actions, a man more comfortable among the high and the mighty than among the common and the feeble.

Worldwartwoveterans.org

His personal assessments of the great leaders with whom he intimately was associated show an insight that was incredibly accurate for the most part.

Three words sprinkle his memoirs like salt and pepper on corn-on-the-cob. They are "great," its superlative, "greatest," and the personal pronoun, "I."

Wilbur wrote in his two-volume diary of the courtesy and diplomacy with which Patton carried out his role as Morocco's governor general.

And then, on the same page, he cited an incident when Patton angrily refused medical supplies to a French doctor who desperately was trying to care for wounded and diseased civilians behind the lines.

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

Wilbur wrote that he stepped into the stand-off between the doctor and Patton and said, "General, this request of the French is our first opportunity to do anything in that most important sphere. We must do everything possible to bring France in on our side. You know, general, we must not fail. We must not miss this opportunity."

Wilbur wrote that Patton replied, "You think I'm wrong, do you?" Then, Wilbur wrote, "the steel faded from his (Patton's) eyes." And Patton "put his hand on my shoulder, saying, 'You are right. We'll fix it up.'"

A few lines further on, Wilbur wrote, "It was a striking example of the fact that sometimes General Patton's anger, which we saw elsewhere, was so great that his judgment was not as good as it should have been."

On two occasions in the diary, Wilbur says he berated Patton several times during the course of their service together for his frequent use of profanity and obscenities. This was an indication of Wilbur's guts — he was merely a colonel, Patton a major general.

Wilbur assessed Winston Churchill, Gen. Charles de Gaulle and Roosevelt in several typewritten paragraphs. Here he says it flat out, and though Wilbur comes on a little like the Sermon on the Mount, his appraisal of these three giants rings with an authority since supported almost unanimously by world opinion.

"I had a great deal of contact with Mr. Churchill, and similarly spent some important time with General de Gaulle. At the same time I had a great deal of contact with Mr. Roosevelt.

"I believe it would be appropriate to say I considered that Mr. Churchill, Gen. de Gaulle, and some others, lived up to the requirements of true greatness in that they were honest, courageous, and were working for their country rather than for themselves. That was especially true of Mr. Churchill and General deGaulle.

"I did not consider that Mr. Roosevelt measured up to the standard of true greatness because everything he did was done to forward the interest of Franklin D. Roosevelt."

"Many individuals have criticized President Truman because he officially reprimanded General MacArthur, and as President, took action against him. General MacArthur, as a general under the command of the President of the United States, should have followed the directions and orders of the president implicitly."

Wilbur at this point turns his attention again to the cherub-faced Churchill, who in sonorous voice told the world, "We will fight them on the beaches . . ." and told the British House of Commons, "I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears, and sweat."

Wilbur says with finality "Without question Winston Churchill was the great man of the war."

At the Casablanca Conference, Wilbur sat only a few feet from Churchill, Roosevelt and de Gaulle.

Possibly the most pleasant reading in Wilbur's diary is his almost total recall of a conversation he had with the British prime minister.

"Mr. Churchill, as we all know, loved to talk. "His knowledge of the English language was superb. He told us one day, as a boy in grammar school, he was interested in everything a normal boy would be interested in. He said that one day he was very much disturbed when the headmaster of the school sent for him and told him he regretted that he, Churchill, would be required to repeat the Eighth Form English course next year. His work had not been satisfactory, and he had not given as much attention to the course in English as he should have."

THE WILBUR PAPERS



**PRESIDENT JOHN KENNEDY IN ROSE GARDEN
... greets Gen. Wilbur, who died last month at 91**

Wilbur wrote that Churchill liked "... to use words like VAST and expensive words, and if I may say so, we enjoyed him immensely."

Wilbur's death did not go unnoticed in the military community. An Army honor guard from Camp Stewart, Ga., attended the funeral services in the Shell Point Village Church. Wilbur was buried at the U.S. Military Academy, West Point, N.Y. The interment was con-

ducted at the graveside of Wilbur's son, a West Point graduate who was killed in the Korean War.

Bill Hoyerman says he never will forget the last words Wilbur spoke to him on Christmas Day:

"Bill, what's going to happen to this country?"

Looking back on the noble career of Gen. William Wilbur, Hoyerman observes, "He did what he could — for his country."

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CREDIT LINES:

Material for this Part I story of the Wilbur Papers is from two T-Patchers. First, the files on loan to us from Col. Stovall is a real treasure. Future items will be taken from these old letters and printed copies of the many stories that were published by Gen. Wilbur.

The two page news story in the FORT MYERS NEWS PRESS, Jan. 15, 1980 by Miller Davis is an excellent brief coverage of the history-makers that Gen. Wilbur knew... was sent in by James H. Stokes, Jr., of Co H 142nd, 1971 Longfellow Drive, North Fort Myers FL 33903. Our Thanks to both.



The Night

I Almost Killed One of My Best Friends

By Payne V. Rucker,
Cannon Company 143rd Infantry

In my senior year of high school I was forced to go to Hamlin, Texas to attend school and play football in exchange for my room and board in order to continue my education and graduate.

My hometown was Temple, Texas, and I had gotten my previous education there and in my birthplace, Bruceville, Texas. After returning to Temple, my boyhood friend, June Lee Holcomb, better known as "Stumpy," and I got back to being running-buddies. One night we were hanging around Dotty McLerran's watermelon stand, who was one of our boyhood friends, when Stumpy started urging me to join the National Guard with him.

I told him that it was utmost in my priorities to get a job and earn a living for myself and help my mother. After about a couple of days I finally relented and agreed. The one dollar (\$1.00) that I would receive when attending the meetings seemed like a lot of money and I needed the funds.

Dotty and I had purchased a "Model T" Ford for the sum of \$15.00. My income from the meetings would pay my part of the payments. Stumpy and I became a part of Company D, 143rd Infantry. This was the beginning of many friendships that have lasted since that time. I have been proud to be associated with Bob Passons, Sam Rea, Bill Fuller, John Nobles, and Gene Jameson, to name a few.

Gene Jameson had been a member of the National Guard since 1936 and had some stripes and he and other non-coms including the first class privates wanted we yardbirds to know that when they hollered we were to jump. I later received a job at the Santa Fe Hospital and on the night shift. I went to work at 7:00 p.m. each day and worked twelve hours seven days a week.

I spoke with Captain Jones and explained the need of my working and that it was hard for me to make the drill sessions. He told me not to worry about this situation and that I would not have to make anymore meetings.

The Night I Almost Killed . . .

I forgot about this until on November 25, 1940, I received a post card stating that I was to report to active duty. Words could not express the shock that I got. I contacted my older and wiser educated brother for advice. After sessions with Jones we were told that there were 5 other brothers in my family that could look after our sick and aged mother.

I remained with Company "D" until the Carolina maneuvers (Summer 1942). When I was promoted to the rank of Corporal, I transferred to a new company known as "Cannon Company." This company was organized for the purpose of giving close-in support. Captain Wiley Stern was the commander of the unit.

Worldwoveterans.org Never Forgot My Buddies of Co. D

I always found a way to visit my former buddies of "The Company D." Jameson always seemed to have a big black cigar and always offered me one. I sometimes would feel a bit dizzy from them, but finally mastered the art of smoking.

Finally I was promoted to the rank of Sergeant and made a section leader. My duty was to direct a crew that manned a half-track tank armed with a 75 Howitzer and a 50 caliber machine gun. After losing so many of these tracks in Italy, Captain Stern finally replaced them with M-8 tanks with the same armament and in addition a 30 caliber machine gun was mounted on the side for me to operate.

Our unit was used for indirect fire most of the time but we also used these tanks for direct fire on many occasions. It seemed as if I spent most of my time on an observation post than I did with my tank. I would cringe when Sgt. Passons would say "It's your time on the O.P. again." He would give the base points and a radio man and away I would go to carry out the orders.

I spent so much time climbing mountains and in wet foxholes as some riflemen did. Sometimes an O.P. was set out front and away from all the troops. We finally made our way to the Vosges Mountains in France. I was assigned to a Major who was directing his troops through a pass into the Colmar Pocket.

He told me that he wanted me close in case he found a target he wanted me to fire our guns on. I travelled through this pass with a rifle squad at night. A German artillery piece fired on this pass as we moved forward and one of the riflemen I had known since I was a kid was killed near me.

His name was Aschraft. Near daybreak and almost at the end of the pass, the Major set up a command post in a house overlooking

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the valley. He told me to take it easy and he would let me know when I was needed. I always tried to nap when possible so my radio man and I found a room and lay down for this needed nap and rest.

“Where The Hell is Rucker?”

I knew that I was safe with that Major watching over me. But guess what!! About the time we went to sleep I heard Captain Stem enter the house saying “Where in the hell is Rucker?” You can bet I immediately jumped up and grabbed my rifle, pack, and steel helmet and got them halfway on and kicked Fischer to awaken him.

I rushed into the room where Stem had entered and said, “Here sir.” He then told me that the German mortar position that has been firing up the pass has been located and a mortar squad has been trying to knock it out but could not reach it.” He added, “Go up to their O.P. and see if you can knock it out with our guns.” Being about half asleep I said “Yes sir” and Fischer and I started off walking. Stem said, “Hell, take my jeep.”

The jeep driver drove us to the base of the mountain where the O.P. was located and let us out. We passed the mortar position on the way and they had been taking some artillery fire.

On arriving at the O.P., I told the Lieutenant why I was there and to give me the map coordinates on the German gun and I could then save some time since he had been trying to fire on it. We could see the gun clearly as they loaded and fired it. I called back and asked for a round of smoke, and not intending to brag in any way, I was lucky that the smoke shell fell almost on the gun position.

Of course, I called back and requested that all guns fire for effect. The German gun was wiped out and I felt good because I knew that it was the gun that killed Aschraft that night. I stayed on the O.P. until the Germans finally left the town below us, by the name of Ribeauville.

I then was ordered to report to the mortar position “German hell” while I was there. After the Germans evacuated the town I was told to report back to my company in Ribeauville. The Cannon Company was hardly ever together as a company, due to the fact that we were attached to sections in other units.

We assembled in a warehouse in Ribeauville to wait for our next assignment. I said to myself, “Now I can get some rest and shave.” This did not happen, as that night a group of young German officer cadets were sent on a mission behind our lines to cut off the pass that we had traveled through. One of our officers approached me and said, “Rucker, go back and run those Germans off or what ever.”

The Night I Almost Killed...



They had attacked an anti-aircraft and artillery position and were giving them pure hell. Dispatching these Germans was no problem for there was one other tank also sent back. These tanks did not have a chance. This was one of my easier assignments. After this was over with the place looked like it had been hit with everything the Americans owned.

“Had My Mind on Madamoiselles”

It was a pitch dark night and fires of ammunition exploding made an eerie scene. The guns were setting in the middle of the fires idle with no crews. They had disappeared and I don't blame them. They are usually far enough back that they are defenseless and I would have been on my way to Paris with “Madamoiselle” on my mind.

Even though the situation was secure I wasn't satisfied that there could not be another attack. I set my tank up into a defensive position. With my gun crew on the alert I stood outside the tank peering into the dark looking for any movement.

I had my raincoat on as it was a cold dreary night. As a section leader I was supposed to be armed with an M-1 rifle with a grenade launcher. But since we were fighting in many towns, I acquired for myself a Tommy Gun which Captain Stem told me to rid myself of later. But here I was looking into the dark, with fires everywhere and with a gunner that I did not trust on my gun when something hit me in the back. I could have used a latrine at that moment.

With this type of situation and wondering just when the enemy might appear, my first reaction was to immediately turn and blast away with the Tommy Gun. The person at the end of my Tommy Gun was 'none other' than one of my best friends, Gene Jameson.

I am sure that he felt that he was about to “sprout wings.” His first words were, “Rucker would you like a good American cigar.” He had hit me in the back with the cigar not expecting this reaction. If I had been one second faster with my reactions I am sure that he would not be here today.

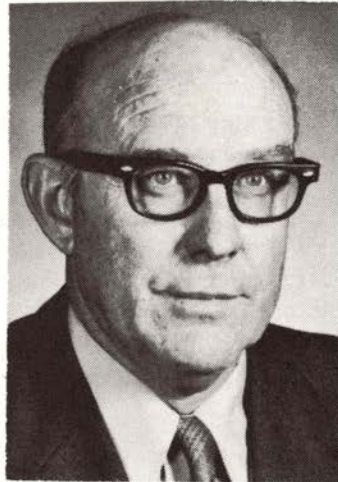
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I would never have been able to have dealt with this incident, and we would not be enjoying the fellowship that we now have as we both reside in Dallas, both are retired from our positions, and he is helping me with a small business that I have.

We enjoy talking about the good and bad times during our service and do get many laughs now about the things that happened in Europe. He told me that he had been sent up to that position to help out with "D" Company's machine guns, and saw a figure in the dark that resembled me. (He knew that I would like a good cigar.)

Luckily, I was able to see whom was at my backside, and that one-second hesitation was able to live the long life that he has enjoyed — and we both can talk about it, and get a few laughs, now.

Payne Rucker & Gene Jameson Old Buddies for Over 45 Years



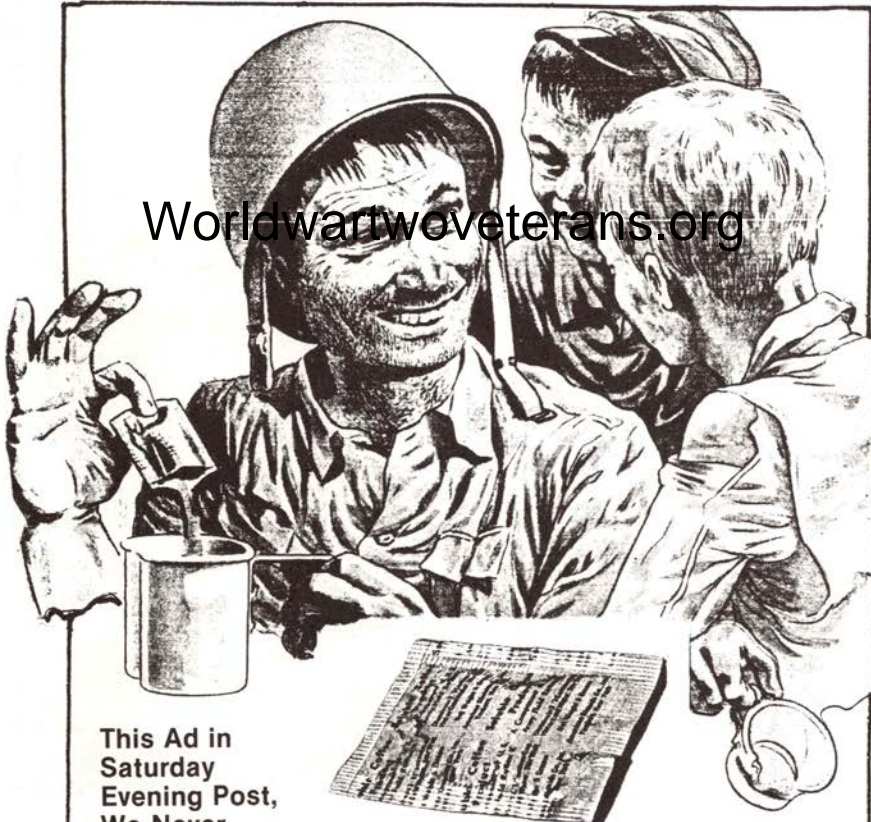
Payne V. Rucker
Cannon Company 143rd Inf.
6337 Tulip Lane
Dallas, TX 75216



Gene E. Jameson
2828 Costa Mesa Dr.
Dallas TX 75228
(Co. D 143rd)

Gadzooks!

“Look Troops — It’s Old Black Magic”



Worldwar2veterans.org

This Ad in
Saturday
Evening Post,
We Never
Saw, until
After The War

LUMARITH*

Worldwar2veterans.org

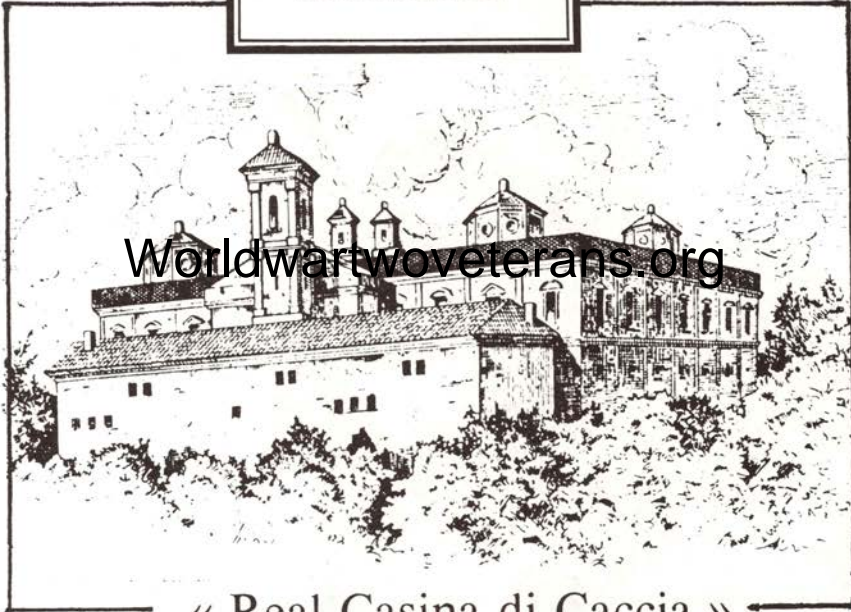
Strictly for the Homefolks, this ad by Celanese Corporation of America — were proudly showing a new invention in plastics. And yes it was (like cellophane invented in 1936) . . .

But in spite of this great invention, it left a lot of the troopers cussin'. Guess it was that powdered coffee inside. Yuck, it did not taste like brewed java.

However, in looking back 40 plus years, and you are miles from the Kitchen tent, we soon learned that a cup of water in our canteen cup placed on the manifold of a Jeef would do it. So don't complain, we won the war, cause the Nazis didn't have LUMARITH.

Persano

Revisited



« Real Casina di Caccia »

JULIAN M. QUARLES

South of the port city of Salerno, Italy and north of a series of mountains that go down to the sea, is an ancient Greek settlement known as Paestum, with its old ruins among which are the remains of temples with tremendous columns of stone. North of Paestum is a rolling plain extending east and through which flows two rivers, the Sele on the north and the Calore on the south in the shape of a Y, that converge and form one river that empties into the Mediterranean. Between the juncture of these rivers was the ancient Wood of Persano, which can be traced back to the early Romans, who by 273 BC had established the colony of Cosa, north of the Calore River and the colony of Paestum to the south.

Thought by many 36 Division veterans to be an Italian village, Persano is instead a longtime Italian Army post with an interesting history. Now, intertwined with its history, are the 11th, 12th and 13th days of September, 1943 when the 179th Infantry Regiment of the 45th Division, and then the 2nd Battalion of the 143rd Regiment of our Division were overrun and defeated.

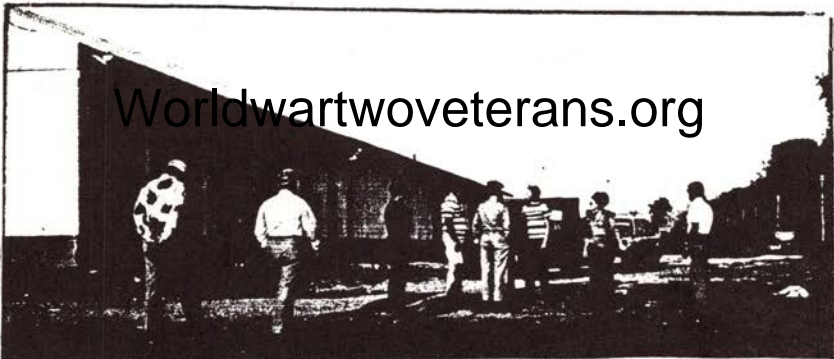
Persano Revisited

Those battles have been written about previously in this Quarterly. Suffice it to say that those of us in the 2nd Battalion who faced the Germans for the first time at Persano had a rude and sudden introduction to combat in a face to face encounter with an experienced and able foe.

Each man who was there, has his own story. Beside me, close enough to touch, was Tabby Brittain, the company mail orderly, barber and extraordinary story teller. Fifteen feet away, across a narrow dirt road was John Espenshade, an aspiring school teacher. Both died within a few minutes of each other. My back side was peppered with fragments and bullets. Mr. Swanson who stepped between me and an angry German with a US 45 in his hand, I would be dead too, but that is another story.

I would not see Swanson again for 42 years when after a long search, Chum Williamson found his name and address for me in a list of POW's who attended a reunion at Las Vegas.

After the Roman Empire collapsed in the third Century, southern Italy was divided into several kingdoms. During the dominion of the Lombards, prior to 800 AD, Persano was under the Duke of Benevento and then under the authority of Salerno. By 1152 AD, Persano was under the control of Altavilla, which overlooked it from the southeast and finally in 1418, it was possessed by the Countess of Caiazza and following her the Bourbon Kingdom of Naples.



In 1860 - The Italian Army Post would become a Cavalry Post...shown here is one of the many store barns - with water trough shown at far right...T-Patchers visit with stable crew.



What a greeting for us - when we arrived at the main entrance of the fabled "Hunting Lodge" with the Italian Army Brass Section of the 67th BTG Bersaoliers putting on a real show

In 1752, King Carlos III, of the latter kingdom, commenced the construction of a hunting lodge at Persano, but which is not what we Americans would consider as a hunting lodge. It is a well constructed two and three story building with cupolas atop and a large courtyard in the middle, nicely furnished banquet room and all the amenities of a castle that you would find in other parts of Europe.

By 1763, King Carlos III, had initiated a program to improve the breed of horses already at Persano, to be used for the King's private army. This program continued until Italy was unified in 1860, when Persano became a part of the Kingdom of Italy.

Until the Second World War, Persano's stables furnished the horses, a cross between English and Arab horses, for the Italian infantry and artillery units as well as the army's equestrian activities. In fact, many of Persano's horses have won awards in domestic as well as international contests. The most famous of Persano's horses, named Pagoro won awards in the 1952 Olympics in Helsinki.

Those of us in the 2nd Battalion will remember these horses who went through the trauma of combat with us, being struck by shell fragments and galloping madly through the fields.

Persano Revisited



Brig. General Luciano Roverselli (at right) greets Erwin Teggegan and Julian Quarles on their visit to Persano Italian Army Post, Oct. 1984

Italian army posts are not as open as our American military posts and are closely guarded. In 1970, I attempted to enter the grounds but was turned away, practically at gunpoint. The post had three entrances all located some distance from the buildings and traffic through those gates appears to be non-existent as far as civilians are concerned.

The battleground of the 2nd Battalion and the 179th Infantry, lays east of the buildings proper. For some years Persano has been the home of the 67th "Fagare" Infantry Battalion, better known as the "Bersaglieri," the 11th Artillery Unit, named Peramo and a training school for armoured troops.

In 1970 five members of our association and three wives visited Persano, but only after three months of letter writing commencing with the Italian Embassy in Washington. We were given royal treatment and found a unit going through an exercise over the very position of the 2nd Battalion in the fall of 1943.

In 1984, four T-Patchers visited Persano again, after much effort to obtain permission and were met by the General commanding this area of Italy, who had come all the way from his headquarters on the Adriatic Sea to greet us. As far as I know, Bob Nowell, Erwin Teggegan and myself are the only members of the 2nd Battalion who have visited the battlefield since 1943.

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We meet again for first time after 42 years, William R. Swanson of Balbo CA (at right) and Julian Quarles have a special visitation at the Houston 1985 Reunion...and memories of Persano.

Interestingly enough, it looks much like it did then, the hedge rows are thicker and the dirt road which ran through the Company "F" position has a thin layer of asphalt but it's still the same narrow width. A large stone barn with a stone horse trough outside looks the same.

Some of the enlisted men of the 2nd Battalion who were captured on that site were kept in the barn the first night and the officers were kept outside beside the horse trough. I well remember that "F" Company had a lookout high up in the barn who warned of the German approach.

The history of Persano in this article was contained in a booklet distributed to those of us who visited this military post in 1984, at a reception held on 10/1/84.

The pamphlet recounted those fateful days of September, 1943. In retrospect it is hard to understand why this natural corridor between the American and British positions was so thinly manned.

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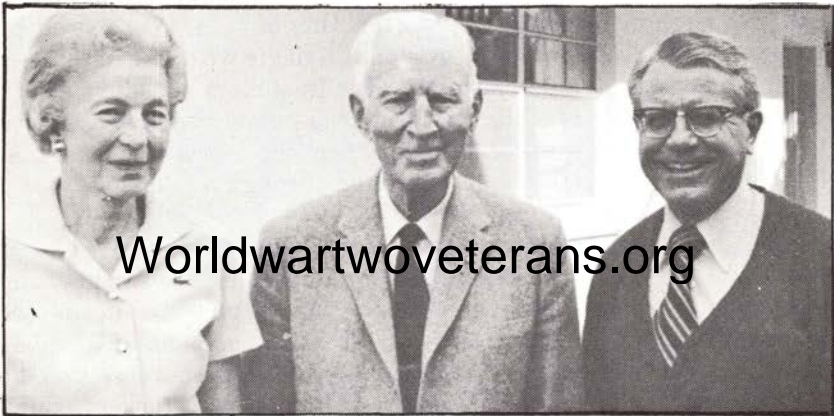
Additional reading: See Cover Story in the Vol. III No. 1 Spring 1983 issue of the 36th Quarterly, "The Battle of Persano" by Chum Williamson of San Antonio.

Persano Revisited



CORK FOREST near RABAT, Morocco - officers of Company F 143rd Infantry, August 1943: from left: Lt. Tony Hauck (KIA at Salerno on D Day 9/Sept/43; Capt. Carl Bayne (KIA 20/Jan/44; Lt. Buck Boyd (KIA 13/Sept/43 -Lt. Julian Quarles and Lt. Bill Swanson.

Quarles Visits Gen. & Mrs. Wilbur in Fort Myers



T-PATCHER AUGUST 1974 Page 6

Julian M. Quarles, attorney and former 143rd T-Patcher journeyed to Fort Myers last fall for a visit with General and Mrs. William H. Wilbur. Photo above made at the Wilbur residence. Look close and you'll find a T-Patcher emblem in the General's lapel.

Part III

'KRIEGIE'

Prisoner Of War In Germany

Oflag 64

After Normandy

Worldwartwoveterans.org

By Alan "Chum" Williamson

Oflag 64 was converted from a British camp to a camp for American Ground Force officers on 6 June 1943. The large number of American officers captured at Kasserine Pass and elsewhere in North Africa made such a camp necessary. Well before the first anniversary, Colonel Thomas D. Drake, our Senior American Officer, requested permission to conduct a celebration. Oberst Fritz Schneider, the camp commandant, readily granted permission.

A lot of work and planning went into the event, which consisted of a combination track meet and county fair. Ingenious, entertaining exhibits were prepared for the latter. One of several prepared by Captain Tom Rush of the 45th Division, a Kriegie with a keen sense of humor, consisted of a box marked, "The Real Story of Sidi bou Zid." That was the name of a place where large numbers of 1st Armored Division personnel were captured when the Germans blitzed at Kasserine Pass. Inside the box, viewed through a peephole, was a white handkerchief.

The track meet included nearly all track and field events except pole vaulting. It was verboten, although not even the world champion could have vaulted over both the inner and outer perimeter fences. Oflag artists had a field day drawing cartoons of Kriegies vaulting over the fence. There was a three-legged race, won by T-Patcher Roger Cannon and Jim "Red" Banker in a flawless exhibition of synchronization.

Lieut. John Shirk, of 36th Division Artillery, an All-American football player, was one of the strongest Kriegies. Like Frank Merriwether, a fictional hero of the Horatio Alger age, Big John could pick up a 16-pound shot or a discus and throw it to hell and gone.

“KRIEGE” Oflag 64 After Normandy

By a strange coincidence, 6 June 1944 also happened to be D-Day for the Normandy invasion. We learned of it that morning by means of the clandestine radio. Oberst Schneider was convinced that Colonel Drake knew in advance, and that was what we were really celebrating.

It is doubtful that Drake had learned one of the most closely guarded secrets of the war. However, we now had a reason to rejoice. The ersatz beer from the canteen flowed freely.

That night we heard the broadcast of William Joyce, “Lord Haw Haw,” over the camp public address system. He began, “The long awaited cross-channel invasion has finally begun.” His voice reflected his pessimism, his realization that it was the beginning of the end.

Following Operation Overlord, treatment of PW’s by the Germans worsened. After the attempt to kill Hitler, it got still worse. But later on, when it became obvious even to the Germans that their defeat was inevitable, treatment at most camps became more lenient.

The wording of the parole we signed to attend the Schubert theater and to go on parole walks was changed to add that in addition to agreeing not to escape, we would do nothing prejudicial to the German Reich.

The SAO and his staff considered the new wording so vague as to be unacceptable. Too many things could be considered prejudicial to the German Reich. No more movies and no more parole walks.

Apparently, not too many T-Patchers were captured during the ill-fated, suicidal attempts to cross the bloody Rapido. Most of the casualties were killed and wounded.

One T-Patcher arriving at Oflag 64 from the Rapido was Captain Eben Bergman, of Clifton, Texas. He said, “Chum, after you and Jim Bond got captured, I replaced Bond as CO of Co. E (143rd Infantry), I inherited your bedroll. You had a bottle of whiskey in it, unopened. I didn’t have time to open it before.”

As Major General Fred L. Walker pointed out, the frontal attack on a fortified position across an unfordable stream was a tactical no-no. In addition, according to Bergman, Murphy’s Law came into operation with a vengeance. Everything that could go wrong, did.

He said, “The objective of the first company to cross the river was a line 800 yards in from the far bank. The CO radioed that he had reached his objective. When the second company crossed, they found that the lead company was only a hundred yards in. There wasn’t room for the second company. Both units were slaughtered.

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"The Engineers were supposed to furnish boats for some of the men to cross. The boats never showed up. A foot bridge across the river broke. The men on it fell in, were swept downstream and were drowned. I've never seen anything so screwed up in my life."

A German staff officer arrived and inspected the Oflag. He giggered Oberst Schneider because there was almost nothing in the canteen except the ersatz beer few Kriegies would drink. He praised Colonel Drake for the orderliness of the barracks. As a reward, he said that instead of lights out at 10:00 p.m., we could keep them on until 11:00.

The reward was declined, by majority vote of the Kriegies. Most agreed with the philosophy of Lieut. Col. Hal Jones. "Every hour that I'm asleep is that much less time I was POW." Grips of the "night people," a minority, "We'll have plenty of time to sleep when we are dead," went unheeded.

Americans captured in Normandy began to arrive in large numbers. Later on, Glenn Slaughter, a veteran platoon sergeant of Co. C, 143rd Infantry, before mobilization, walked in wearing captain's bars. But not the T-Patch. A company commander, Glenn was captured during fighting within the Siegfried Line.

Some of the FNGs (frigging new guys!) were something else. A West Point Major had been overseas only 37 days when captured. He had so many ideas about how to revolutionize camp life, all vetoed by the SAO, that the enlisted orderlies nicknamed him "Whirlaway," after a racehorse that had won the triple crown.

I never saw PW's come to blows, although tempers often flared. A Kriegie taken in North Africa had for many weeks set snares in a grassy patch near the assembly area, hoping to catch one of the Oflag rabbits.

One night at long last his efforts were crowned with success. However, one of the FNG's happened to get up bright and early and spotted the furry creature. "Trapper John" didn't learn until that afternoon that his snare had been robbed.

Confronted, the culprit admitted that he did indeed take the rabbit and had already cooked and eaten it. He swore he had no idea anyone had set a snare. Said it appeared to him that the rabbit had simply become entangled in a length of string.

Officer Kriegies did no work except clean up their own cubicles, plus a few camp details such as working in the parcel hatch and the Oflag mess. Fatigue details were performed by enlisted PW's called orderlies. (Enlisted PW's other than NCO's were required to work. NCO's could choose between working, which would provide better rations, and staying in a Stalag for NCO's).

“KRIEGE” Oflag 64 After Normandy

A few PW's believed they were no longer subject to U.S. military law. A U.S. Army private refused an assignment with a detail ordered to remove accumulated fecal matter from one of the Oflag outdoor privies, of the type used in the U.S. before flush toilets, waterborne sewage, and septic tanks came into general use.

Colonel Drake appealed to Oberst Schneider, who gave the hapless fellow ten days in solitary confinement on bread and water.

A large apple tree grew along the walkway near the assembly area. Colonel Drake ruled that the apples were not for private consumption but would be used by the mess for all personnel.

A newly arrived captain decided to help himself. When advised of Drake's order, he replied, "Drake is just another POW, like me. It's what the Germans say that counts."

Again Drake appealed to Oberst Schneider. The misinformed Captain was given ten days in solitary. Drake could also have preferred charges against him after the war, but probably didn't.

On 27 July 1944, Col. Drake, two T-Patchers, and Associated Press correspondent Larry Allen left the Oflag for repatriation. The two T-Patchers were 2nd Lieut. Austin E. Webb, Co. I, 143rd Infantry, and a medical officer (captain) of the 143rd Infantry whose name I have forgotten. Drake and Webb had stomach ulcers. The doctor had a brain tumor. On 27 September 1944 they arrived at Jersey City aboard the SS Gripsholm, a Swedish luxury liner.

Colonel George V. Millett succeeded Drake as Senior American Officer. A graduate of the U.S. Military Academy, class of 1929, he was with the 82nd Airborne Division when captured in 1943. Billeted in "the White House," like all Kriegies above the grade of Major who were not barracks commanders, he had kept a low profile. Few of us knew he was around until he became SAO.

Millett was an eyewash man and a strong supporter of the military pecking order. During the first Saturday morning inspection he conducted, he pounced upon a Kriegie in Barracks 2-B who didn't have a crease in his trousers. His lame excuse, "Sir, I don't have an iron."

"Of course you don't" Millett appeared on the verge of apoplexy. "Why didn't you keep your trousers under your mattress overnight, like everybody else?"

He seemed reluctant to let the hapless fellow off without some form of punishment, to make an example of him. After a lengthy harangue, during which the victim lost both cheeks, he moved on.

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The Kriegie began sleeping with his trousers under his mattress, although he had barely enough slats to keep it from falling to the floor. It did give them enough crease to keep Millett off his back. But he took quite a ribbing from fellow Kriegies.

The British had been at war two years, and were losing when the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor brought the U.S. into it. Some United Kingdom PW's had been in the bag since Dunkirk, and before. It was therefore the policy of UK PW's to contribute to the war effort by confronting their captors at every opportunity.

The most trivial incidents, some of them provoked, were protested and reported by the Swiss government to our Protecting Power under the terms of the Geneva Convention. Of course the Swiss could do nothing about the alleged violations. But as a British Kriegie expressed it, "The Swiss write the Germans requesting an explanation. The Germans have to reply. That takes time and effort, contributes to the war effort."

Col. Drake's stated policy as our SAO was to "cooperate with the Germans when it is to our advantage to do so." He protested only those incidents that were violations or were in the gray areas.

In March 1944, 76 British PW's at Stalag Luft III, a camp for British and American Air Force personnel, escaped through a tunnel. According to some reports, only one made good his escape. Others say as many as three made it to freedom. Fifty were recaptured by the Gestapo and were executed. The others, some 23 to 25, were recaptured by guards and returned to the Stalag.

Later, British aircraft dropped pamphlets over German occupied territories, urging the people to rise up, use Guerrilla tactics, and kill German soldiers.

The Germans then distributed posters headed, "TO ALL PRISONERS OF WAR! The escape from prison camps is no longer a sport." It was a copy of the book, "THE HARBOR BOOK OF MODERN IRREGULAR WARFARE," and warned that no escaping Allied PW's would be recaptured alive.

On 22 September 1944, two German NCO's brought copies of the anti-escape poster to Oflag 64. They were about to affix one to the wall just outside the entrance to the administration building when Lieut. James R. Schmitz, the assistant adjutant, asked that they wait until he had informed the Senior American Officer. Unable to find Col. Millett, Schmitz returned with Lieut. Col. William R. Schaefer.

“KRIEGE” Oflag 64 After Normandy

Schaefer strongly objected to the poster, since it accused the U.S. Government of “resorting to gangster warfare.” When the two soldiers insisted that they were going to post it anyway, Schaefer shoved Schmitz into the open space selected for it.

When one of the soldiers approached and touched Schmitz, he immediately moved out of the way. Schaefer said, “All right, you’ve used force!” He then had Schmitz type a letter to the Protecting Power protesting the incident.

Both men were charged with interfering with a soldier of the German Reich in the performance of his duty. However, they were not tried until some three months later.

On 16 October 1944, a POW arrived in the camp with a group of PW’s from the western front. “Are there any general officers here?” he inquired.

Assured that there were none, he said, “Then I’m the Senior American Officer. I’m the senior Colonel in the U.S. Army.”

“Pop” Goode, a graduate of West Point, was the officer in charge of building the Alcan Highway. The 1,523 mile road, connecting Dawson Creek, British Columbia, with Fairbanks, Alaska, was constructed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers during the period March to November 1942.

Goode was commander of the 175th Infantry, 29th Division, a National Guard unit in Normandy when the division commander directed him to send a rifle company on a reconnaissance mission.

Goode said, “General, a company won’t be enough. It will take a battalion.”

“I can’t spare a battalion,” the CG replied. “A company will have to do.”

“Then I’ll command it myself,” Goode protested. “I wouldn’t ask any of my company commanders to do it.”

Goode was right. The company was mauled, and Goode was captured.

On 10 October 1944, six days before Goode’s arrival, our supply of Red Cross parcels ran out. The cross-channel invasion had cut the supply line. The parcels meant the difference between complete misery and a tolerable existence.

The “goon” ration consisted of hot water for breakfast, used with ersatz coffee or tea; dehydrated cabbage soup for lunch; and three small, worm-eaten boiled potatoes with a slice of black bread for supper. The bread was fortified with sawdust.

After seven weeks of starvation, we received a shipment of parcels on 3 December 1944. Colonel Goode ruled that the allowance be cut to one parcel per man every two weeks, rather than one per

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week, to make them last longer. This turned out to be an unfortunate mistake. When the Oflag was evacuated in January 1945, a large number of parcels was left behind.

More and more Americans arrived from the western front. During the Battle of the Bulge, a hundred officers arrived in one group. Most were of the 101st Airborne Division, used as Infantry.

A few of the sky cavalrymen considered themselves to be a cut above the groundpounders. One in particular let it be known that paratroopers were superior, and to prove it, they got jump pay.

We had one paratrooper Kriegie who jumped twice and was captured both times. First, he jumped during the invasion of North Africa in 1942. He was captured by the French, who let him go after three days. Next, he was captured by the Germans. They didn't let him go.

He blamed the debacles on the Air Force. In North Africa, he was dropped 25 miles from the objective. At Avellino, the 509th Parachute Infantry was scattered over an area of 100 square miles.

On 28 December 1944, Lieut. Col. William H. Schaefer and Lieut. James R. Schmitz were taken to Gneisen, where they were tried in a Nazi People's Court for the escape poster incident three months earlier. Their symbolic protest of the posting of the escape poster was the gist of the offense. Captains Clarence M. Ferguson and Lumund Wilcox defended them. In civilian life, Wilcox was a practicing attorney from Des Moines, Iowa.

Both men were sentenced to death. Schaefer was transferred to Oflag IV-C, Colditz, a maximum security camp for troublemakers. Schmitz was returned to Oflag 64, where he was put in solitary confinement to await execution.

It appeared that the German high command wanted as many Allied PW's as possible under death sentence, perhaps to use as bargaining chips for German PW's of the Allies under death sentence. Three Kriegies who had earlier been acquitted of a charge of refusing to walk in the street were retried in January 1945 and sentenced to death.

The Geneva Convention required a waiting period of 90 days between a death sentence and the execution of a prisoner of war. All five of the Oflag 64 Kriegies under sentence were liberated before they could be hanged.

Escaping is the Greatest Sport.

Coming — Next Issue:

Vol. VI, No. 4 Winter 1986



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STARTS
HOLLYWOOD THURS!



WAC WITH BAR is Nancy Olson who loves a 36th Divn. lieutenant, William Holden, in "Force of Arms." The film, spotlighting the Texas "army," opened on the Hollywood screen today.

The day will come when you will serve his country — served in the Air Corps 1943-45, and was selected to star in this one — **FORCE OF ARMS** in 1951 for Warner Bros. This was just one of many war films for Holden.

No, this film was not the biggest but it did spread the word, like: "SLUGGIN' 36th FROM TEXAS" in headlines in movie theatres everywhere. He would, in 1953 get the Oscar for his role as 'Best Actor' in "Stalag 17." But, then you knew that, and you saw — The Bridge on the River Kwai of 1957. He made more war movies than "Duke Wayne."



The Oscar winner, 1953

Champion Letter Writer Scores A Homerun With Story About ‘Two’ Lost Battalions”

Judson Bentley,

4th Beach Bn.
U.S. Navy Is

Our Biggest Booster

The Fighting 36th




E. Judson Bentley
1940 graduation foto
Michigan College of Mines

For many years, your editor had hoped that someday we could get in contact with some of the Navy men who “put us ashore” at the Salerno Beachhead. Years went by, and not one knew of, or heard of — any seaman who shared that Epic day, September 9, 1943. . . with the 36th.

Finally, in 1982, our Artillery buddy, Bob Massago had contact with Navy Lt., named E. Judson Bentley of Hancock, Michigan, and signed him up for membership as “Associate Member,” which includes any attached unit that served with us in WWII.

Bentley soon became a ‘fan’ of the T-Patchers, wrote gobs of letters to our clan, and in 1984, he was selected as the first in command of the 4th Beach Battalion — with a mission of transporting 15,000 men from sea to shore — from 0300 on D-Day until all were ashore.

His contribution to this Quarterly was most helpful when we printed the cover story “40 Years Since Salerno 1943” in Vol. III, No 2 Summer 1943 issue with the Navy Version of Landing, and more.

Bentley attended the 1983 Reunion at Dallas Dunfey, and also San Antonio 1984 El Tropicana Reunion.

In many sessions with Judson, he advised us that he greatly admired the TRUE GRIT of the 36th, and the Infantryman. His Beach

Richard Oguro Tells of Two Lost Battalions

Battalion was a (bastard) outfit as far as Navy protocol was concerned, and they got all the undesirable tasks to perform. His men were trained on combat infantry tactics... they served in North Africa and Sicily, were veterans when they landed us. His 4th Beach outfit also brought in the 45th Division, shortly after our landing.

Bentley had contributed greatly to all our projects, birddogs, helped save the Quarterly during a trying-period and donated many war books for the 36th library, likewise to the 45th Museum Library at Oklahoma City.

But his is not a story about **JUD BENTLEY**

~~Worldwartwoveterans.org~~

Bentley Sends Letter From Oguro

of 100th Battalion "Go For Brokers"

Dear Editor:

I enclose a letter which I have just received from **RICHARD OGURO** of Honolulu (you are probably familiar with him) and feel it may be of interest to your readers of the Historical Quarterly.

I met Richard in San Antonio 1984 Reunion, and hardly expected him to remember me, but he did answer my letters, and I think his 'story' is a classic.

Dick Oguro was with the 'original' 100th Battalion (Go For Brokers) from Hawaii, and they spent part of winter 1942-43 in Wisconsin where it gets real cold. While the 100th was there, quite a few were sent to Minnesota for training in the M.I.S. (Military Intelligence School), then sent to the Pacific as translators against the Japs.

I've been in contact for sometime, and his letters have been enlightening about Americanism. Richard is maybe more of an American than I am.

He sent me a copy of "Yankee Samurai" and also the 100th Battalion. Remember, the 100th was from Hawaii, and the 442nd was mostly San Francisco and in the states. There was rivalry, so when the 100th was ordered to join the 442nd, down south, they still retained their 'identity' as the 100th Battalion (Go For Broke).

The 100th Bn. always led off and went to Africa. The other two battalions came behind. They formed the 2nd Regiment of the 34th Division in Algiers which had been shattered in Tunisia. If you use his letter, don't leave anything out, it's dynamite.

Best wishes, Jud.

EDITOR'S REPLY TO BENTLEY:

Jary to Bentley. Dear Jud:

I agree with you. Oguro's is one of the best that I've seen in years. . . that's not because I am a member of the "AJA PINEAPPLE HAWAII CHAPTER" of the 36th Division Association.

Yes, I felt that there was rivalry between the men of 100th and 442nd, when these valient NEISE troops met with us T-Patchers in 1980 at the Amfac Hotel D/FW. Seems that most all press releases about our LOST BATTALION in France was about the 442nd RCT. In the movie with Van Johnson, "Go For Broke" (1951 release), I can't recall mention of 100th. But that seems only normal 'American' approach. . . Worldwar2veterans.org — 141st, 142nd and 143rd.

The letter to you by Richard Oguro, which follows, is printed exactly as he wrote it — no changes or corrections, so we can wait and see what happens. Thanks for sending this narrative to me, so we can all enjoy.

Thanks, Ol' T-Patcher

RICHARD OGURO TRAVELS FAR
AND WIDE — TO VISIT TROOPERS

Oguro to Bentley,
Dear Judson:

I left home on August 13, a few days after receipt of your August 3rd letter and my subsequent note to you to meet me at the 45th Div Reunion (Oklahoma City Aug. 21-22) or at the 36th Div Reunion, Dallas, Aug. 27-31 thereabouts! You gave me all kinds of excuses and never showed; when you drove over 700 miles prior to that? You louse! Old at 72? Why, you're only 5 years my senior, senior.

Went to meet a Frank Fujita Jr. out of Abilene, TX at his unit's Reunion, Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza in Dallas, Aug. 15 through the 17th. This is an exclusive reunion only members, their spouses, children and invited guests of members could attend. The assn. calls themselves the USS Houston and the Lost Battalion Survivors Association! I was able to attend as Fujita's guest!

This Lost Bn was lost in the Pacific Theater of Operation, in Java, in the early days of WW II, March of 1942, when the Japs captured the Phillipines, Singapore and Java. The USS Houston was sunk by the Japs in Java, in sight of the harbor of Soerabaja, Java after it

Richard Oguro Tells of Two Lost Battalions

had successfully run the Gauntlet in the Battle of the Java Straits to freedom, which was short lived however.

The 2nd Bn of the 131st Fd Arty Regt of the 36th Inf Div had been selected for overseas duty in Operation Plum (presumably the Phillipines) to establish a new Fd Arty unit for the Phillipine Army, in November 1941. Our "hero" Frank Fujita who had been with the HQ & HQ Bty of the 131st Bn managed to transfer himself into this 2nd Bn as an Instrument Sgt, the only vacancy left. He wanted adventure! The Unit had been selected after staging at the Louisiana Manuevers and coming out numba #1!

Frank Fujita, Jr. Hero

Worldwartwoveterans.org

Fujita was a half-and-half NISEI. Frank's father was Japanese from Saga Prefecture, Japan. He had emigrated to the United States in 1941, Port of Entry — San Francisco. And he started moving eastward working on the railroad projects. Around 1916 or 1917 he married a girl of English, Scot, Irish and American Indian blood in Oklahoma. Frank's mother is still living today and is 82 years of age and still drives her own car. Frank was born in Lawton, Oklahoma.

The Unit, with other units onboard stopped in Hawaii, and was 7 days out of Pearl Harbor when December 7, 1941 occurred. Immediately the troopship had to change course and destination. Luckily it arrived in Australia (Brisbane) and the troops enjoyed a lovely Christmas in Australia.

In January 1942 the troops were boarded aboard a dutch troopship bound for the Defense of Java, commanded by a Dutch.

In March 1942, all hell broke loose for all the allied defenders of Java. Singapore fell to the Japs and Java was sure to fall. The Dutch capitulated to the Japs to save lives. All captured became POW's for 42 months thereabouts. The survivors of the USS Houston too became POW's for 42 months too!!

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The US never found the identity nor the whereabouts of the captured nor their units until over a year later. The 131st had been split into two sections in the defense of Java. Btys C & D in the west-end of Java and Bty E in the east-end of Java. Men of Frank's E Bty eventually were landed in Japan and taken to POW camps in Tokyo and in Fukuoka. The others were shunted from camp to camp and ended up in Burma-Thailand put to work building a railroad for the Japs over the Burma Hump. (The River Kwai) This portion is well documented by Dunn's *Bamboo Express*.

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Fujita was not recognized as being Japanese for nearly a year after the unit's arrival in Fukuoka Prison Camp #2, near the port of Nagasaki, the very port from which Frank's father had departed for the USA in 1914!

The POW's were liberated in 1945 and some went home by way of the Phillipines. One such POW was questioned about his unit there. When he replied that he was from the 36th Inf Div, the guy said in disbelief, "No such unit here in the Pacific. That unit fought in Europe!"

Fujita is an artist, paints, sculptures, does sign painting, etc. etc. He has been working on his Japanese Roots for about 40 years now as well, has a book on it, [Worldwartwoveterans.org](http://www.worldwartwoveterans.org)

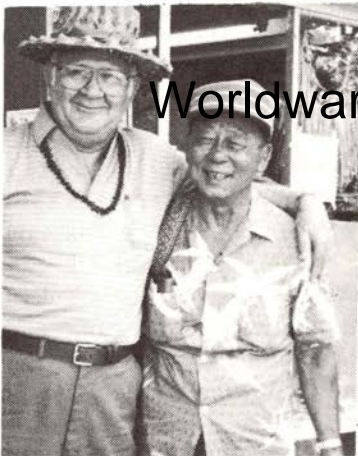
So, you see, the 36th Inf. Div. suffered two Lost Bn's in WW II. One in the Pacific and one in France.

Fate Is A Funny Thing . . .

A strange quirk of fate perhaps, Frank's older brother, Herbert Lee Fujita who had also enlisted in the 1940's and joined up at Sheppard Air Force Base, was sent to Camp Shelby as a cadre and the 1st Sgt of Co. L of the 442nd RCT in February of 1942.!

A few month's later, he requested a name change to his mother's maiden name, Elliot as well as got busted one grade and asked for a transfer to an Arty unit. But none was available. He was finally transferred to Cannon Company of the 442nd RCT and served with that unit in Italy and France.

He probably was there at the time of the rescue of the Lost Bn! Herbert re-upped after VE Day, served in Korea and Viet Nam also, I believe. He retired a few years ago as a Lt. Col. from the Texas National Guard!



Oguro Visits The Czar of Malakoff —

[Worldwartwoveterans.org](http://www.worldwartwoveterans.org)
On April 18, 2008, Charles Gonard Wilkerson with his pal, RICHARD OGURO when a group of T-Patchers paid a visit to the Go For Brokers at Maui.

Dick Oguro is ram rod for the newly formed Hawaii Pineapple Chapter of the 36th Division. Oguro has made 3 T-Patch reunions, and also visited with Wilkerson at Malakoff (as stated in his story).

Membership welcome, contact RICHARD OGURO, 1450 Ala Mahamoe, Honolulu HI 96819.

Richard Oguro Tells of Two Lost Battalions

A few reunions back, I was reading Dunn's Bamboo Express at the home of Len Wilkerson of the 36th when I came across one paragraph on the final fighting at Soerabaja, Java mentioning the gallant, single-handed action by one, Frank Fujita. He never got any Silver Star et cetera. He only got a bloody Bronze Star!

I believe that Frank Fujita is the
first Nisei to see action in WW II.

The following weekend, Frank dropped me off at the 45th Div Reunion Hq Hotel — the Marriott, on his way to Edmond, Okla. He and his wife Ruby were hep in researching their American Roots. Ruby is a descendant of Sam Houston.

I went to see the 45th Div. Museum twice, and I'll tell you it is the BEST Military Museum I have been priviledged to go through. A Dr. something was selling copies of his book — Liberation of Dachau in the lobby area of the hotel. He claims that he was the first medical officer to enter Dachau, and that the 45th were the liberators of Dachau. The General of the 42nd Inf Div claims that the 42nd was the liberators. The 552 Artillery, 442nd RCT claim then to be numba 1. Could it be possible that there were more than one entrance into Dachau???

At reunion's end, Frank picked me up once more and we were back in Abilene once more to mark time before heading for the 36th Div Reunion. And the rains came and fell and fell and we had to abort plans to see Nimitz' Pacific War Memorial Museum in Fredericksburg, TX. On the Thursday of the start of the 36th Div. Reunion, we left Abilene at 6:00 a.m. to shoot down to Fredericksburg to see the museum. We arrived at the AmFac hotel in the early afternoon. There were about 1500 registered for this Reunion. The 45th had about a 1,000 and Frank's Reunion had about 300.

Frank left for Abilene on Friday afternoon and I survived the rest of the reunion alone. From there I headed for the 34th Div Reunion in Omaha, Neb., before deciding to call it quits.

I sure would like to go see your neck of the woods before I go, maybe next year Sept.-Oct. when I plan to be in D.C. for the dedication of Smithsonian Institute's Minorities Bldg which will house exhibits of the 100/442nd RCT, the Isseis, Internment, MIS, etc. etc. Care to join me then?

Best wishes,

Richard.

Frank's address:

FRANK FUJITA, JR. (Foo)
Btry E 131st F.A.
433 Elm. St., Abilene TX 79602
(915) 677-3497

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

Richard Orguro, Graduate of University of Hawaii Edits Book About AJAs Who Attended Army Language School at Camp Savage, Minn.

PHILIPPINES—NEW GUINEA
AN AJA GOES TO WAR!

By Richard S. Oguro

Little did I dream that when UNCLE SAM invited me involuntarily to join the Army through the 4th Draft Call in October 1941, just before my 22nd birthday, 28 years ago, that I would be involved in a world conflict and be engaged in mortal combat elsewhere from the land of my birth—Hawaii, a territorial possession of the United States at that time, but now its 50th ALOHA STATE. The Hawaiian Islands in the Central Pacific, Pearl Harbor, was devastated by the infamous, now historic, sneak attack by Imperial Japan on December 7, 1941, plunging the United States headlong into World War II!

I had gone back to the U of H in September of 1941 refreshed after a year's absence working in Hawaii's labor market as truck driver, clerk, and the like and was registered as a junior-senior in the College of Arts & Sciences having transferred from Teachers College with its unbearable frustrations and pressures, and bent on becoming an eccentric anthropologist to roam the world over, when Uncle Sam's invite was received. So I had to drop out once again, for another four years' lapse. All told it took me ten years to complete my formal college education (1937-1947).

The pre-induction Physical conducted at the Honolulu Armory (now the site of our new Capitol) was passed with flying colors. Then followed rounds of farewell parties both public and private a few days prior to reporting to Schofield Barracks.

That was the custom of our Japanese Community, still pretty much dominated by the Issei emigrant parents who had established customs and mores of the land they had come from, and had stuck pretty much to themselves, although they had come a long ways from the contract-laborer days on sugar plantations—their original mode of entry into the US possession.

"Little Tokyo (Ginza) was a section of the city of Honolulu "south of the border" from the big five Haole giants of Hawaii—Castle & Cooke, C Brewer & Co., Theo H Davis, American Factors, and Alexander & Baldwin, and lined down on River St bounded by Queen St on one end and Pineyard St on the other end, and Nuuanu St running parallel to River St. Then there was the Aala Market and the Aala Park and the adjacent Aala Triangle—the slum areas of Honolulu.

Buddhist churches of all sects were established and Japanese schools galore flourished. And to Japanese school we had to go daily after our English school hours as well as half days on Saturdays plus Sunday School or else, receive the wrath and corporal punishment of our stern Issei fathers. Japanese schools also offered Judo, Kendo, and Sumo, and island-wide tournaments were established annual affairs. And of course, our parents extolled the virtues of the Samurai spirit embodied in the modern conception of Bushido or Yamato-damashi, "for love of country." Meaning of dual to Japan their motherland! Many of us were still dual citizens, Americans by birth but also citizens of Japan at the request of our alien parents.



SEN PAI GUMI

STORY OF FIRST GROUP
OF AJAs FROM HAWAII
AND AMERICAN
CONCENTRATION CAMPS
TO ATTEND ARMY
LANGUAGE SCHOOL
AT CAMP
SAVAGE, MINNESOTA

Richard Oguro Tells of Two Lost Battalions

POWs never



Worldwarveterans.org
forget war

The tragic story of the men of 2nd Battalion, 131st Field Artillery - is probably the most unusual kind of LOST BATTALIONS. They were lost by the War Dept., who admitted they did not know 'where' they were - after the Dutch Government surrendered to the Japs.

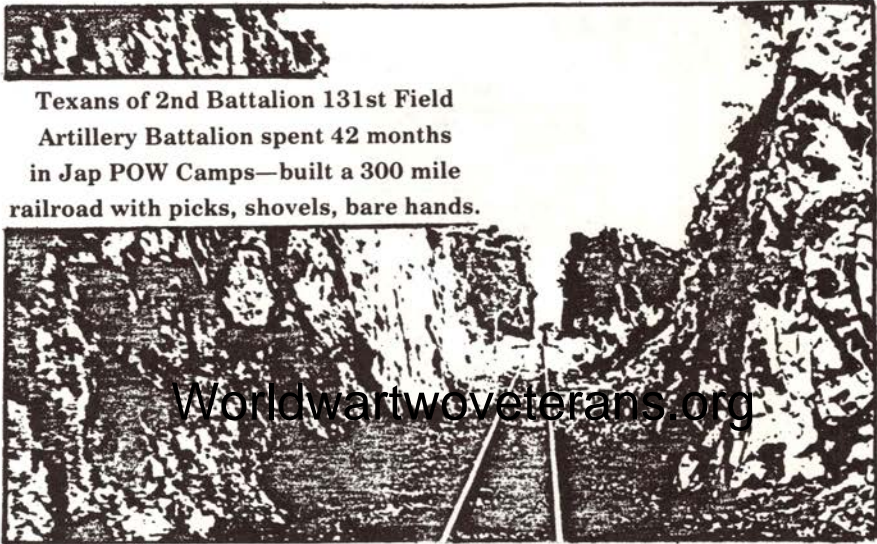
Refer to Vol. II, No. 2 Summer 1982 edition of the 36th Quarterly, pages 42-49 - with the title as shown above: POWs NEVER FORGET WAR.

We add this recently aquired information as presented in their 1985 Membership Roster, given to us by MARVIN ROBINSON, 3005 Conejos, Fort Worth Texas, who served with the navymen on USS Houston. They had men of 131st aboard when it was sunk by the Japanese. These two groups are now joined together, and share their memories of this horrible experience. Read on:



BRIDGE OVER THE RIVER KWAE IN KANCHANABURI, THAILAND.

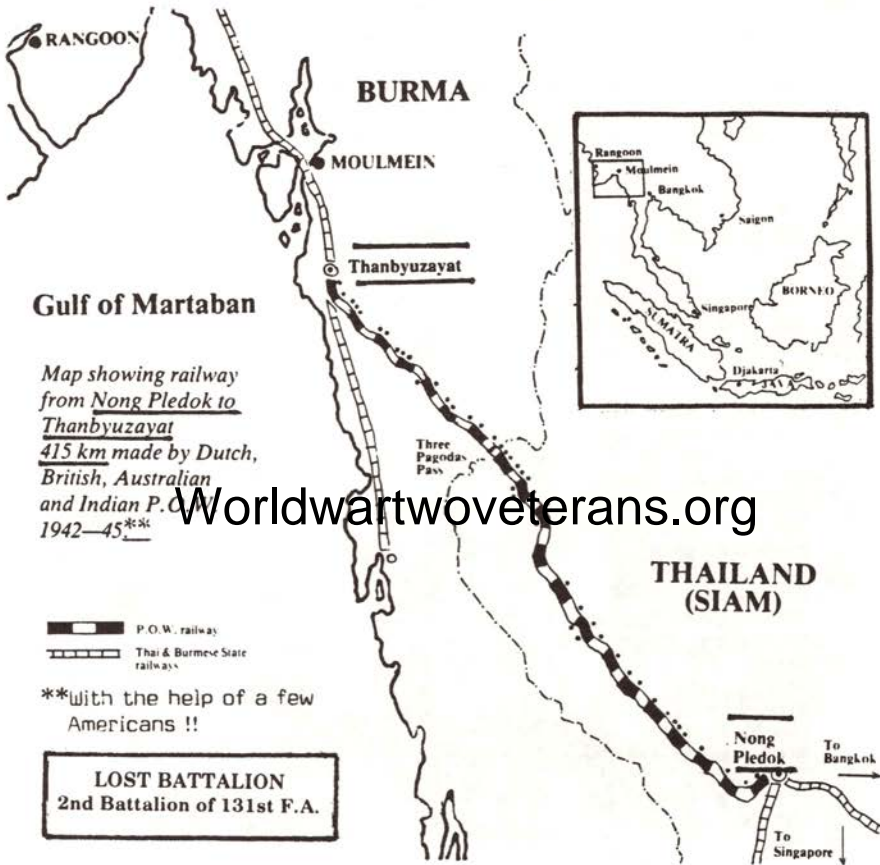
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Texans of 2nd Battalion 131st Field Artillery Battalion spent 42 months in Jap POW Camps—built a 300 mile railroad with picks, shovels, bare hands.

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Death Railway-Kanchanaburi, Thailand



Worldwartwoveterans.org

The "LOST" Lost Battalion in Pacific



24 CAMPS IN WHICH 166 AMERICAN POWs DIED

Place	Navy & Marine	Army	Total
100 Kilo Camp, Burma	26	26	52
80 Kilo Camp, Burma	26	21	47
Aboard Japanese Ships	3	16	19
Kanchanburi, Thailand	3	6	9
114 Kilo Camp, Burma	2	3	5
Tamarkan, Thailand	1	3	4
105 Kilo Camp, Burma	3	1	4
In Japan	2	2	4
Batavia, Java Bicycle Camp	2	1	3
39 Kilo Camp, Burma	1	1	2
Malang, Java (B-17 Shot Down)	0	2	2
Thanbuzayat, Burma	1	1	2
103 Kilo Camp, Burma	0	1	1
133 Kilo Camp, Burma	0	1	1
Bandoeng, Java	0	1	1
Camp Nikki, Burma	0	1	1
Borneo, N.E.I.	1	0	1
Nakom-Patom, Thailand	1	1	2
Pandeglang, Java	1	0	1
Saigon, F.I.C.	1	0	1
Serang, Java	1	0	1
Singapore	1	0	1
Soerbaja, Java	0	1	1
Tarsoa, Thailand	1	0	1
TOTALS	77	89	166



'Lost Battalion'
survivors recall
days as POWs

'Lost Battalion' survivors join Worldwartwoveterans.org memorial ceremonies



JACKSBORO (AP) — Tears in their eyes mingled with the pouring rain as they gathered, many holding tight to one another, in front of the makeshift platform that commemorated both joy and memories of horror.

But the slow rain Saturday could not deter a large crowd from witnessing the dedication of a marker at Fort Richardson State Park in honor of the men of Battery F, 131st Field Artillery.

Those men became known as the "Lost Battalion" as prisoners of the Japanese during World War II.

A crucible, or trial by fire, is an apt symbol for the men of the Lost Battalion, retired Court of Civil Appeals Judge W.A. Hughes Jr. said.

"They were placed in a crucible in a place far away across the Pacific Ocean and had to endure all the deprivations and hardships that go with being prisoners of war," Hughes said.

"They have turned out to be some of the finest men in Wise, Jack and Parker counties which I have served as judge," he said.

Originally a North Texas National Guard unit, Battery F was mobilized at Fort Richardson in November 1940. They were joined later by inductees at Camp Bowie in Brownwood and sent to the Philippines.

When they were only a few miles out of Hawaii, the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. The men were rerouted to Australia, then Indonesia, where they were captured by the Japanese on March 8, 1942.

They remained POWs until liberated by American forces in October 1945. At various times, individual men of the battery were held captive in Singapore, Burma, Thailand, Japan and Indochina.

The largest contingent, joined by survivors and captives from the sunken USS Houston, built the infamous "Death Railway," a 263-mile line running south from Moulmein, Burma, to Kanshanaburi, Thailand.

Some of the events were portrayed in the book and movie, "Bridge on the River Kwai."

Luther Prunty, president of the Lost Battalion Association who served as master of ceremonies at the dedication, recog-

The "LOST" Lost Battalion in Pacific



Luther Prunty, president of the Lost Battalion Association, at Ford Richardson State Park memorial

nized many present who were in Battery F, along with their wives, children, mothers and the widows of those who never return.

Among the haunting memories Prunty has is monsoon time at 100 Kilo Camp, Burma, during the building of the Death Railway.

The POWs were held in a leper colony for a week before being taken to the camp, where the commandant made clear the

railroad would be built "even if it's over the bodies of every one of us," he said.

"The railroad using only picks and shovels and rice sacks to carry dirt for the railroad bed, he said. The biblical flood lasting 40 days and nights was "just a sprinkle" compared to the monsoon season at the camp, Prunty said.

"I saw it rain literally 54 days and nights without stopping," he said.



A PROMISE I FAILED TO KEEP

By Julian H. Philips

This is a story of a promise I made to T/Sgt. Chester A. Peterson of Omaha, Nebraska in the fall of 1944 while stationed in France.

The commanding officer of the 1st. Battalion, 143rd. Infantry, during the Italian campaign, had been instructed to form a Special Platoon from the companies of the Battalion. It's mission would be to lead major attacks, carry out most of the Battalion Patrols and to be added guards for Battalion Headquarters.

This platoon was commanded by 1st. Lt. David M. Walker from Andover, N.J. He was an excellent combat officer and was respected by his men. The Platoon had a fine record in Italy and was admired by all the men and officers of the 143rd. Infantry.

As the Platoon was taking it's objectives on the beaches of Southern France, Lt. Walker was wounded and was later shipped stateside.

Orders came down for me to report to Battalion Hdqs. and assume command of the Special Platoon. When I arrive at Bn. Hqs. I was told the Bn. Commander, Lt. Col. David M. Frazier of Houston, Texas, whom I had known most of my life, wanted to see me.

When I reported to Col. Frazier, who had a copy of my orders in his hands, he began by telling me how Lt. Walker had been hit. He continued on by saying the Platoon had a good record in Italy and the men had been promoted with me. He said he was considered the best Platoon in the Regiment. He said it was rumored the men were not disciplined and were bad about looting and were hard to handle. He said he expected me to go down and straighten them out.

All of the time Col. Frazier was talking I was smiling because I though he was going over my records instead of the Special Platoon. I knew I wasn't disciplined and my reputation on looting was known throughout the Regiment and I was hard to handle. That's why I was in the 1st. Bn., I wouldn't cow down nor Sir the new 2nd Battalion C O at the end of the Rome drive.

A Promise I Failed to Keep

When Col. Frazier finished talking we stood and shook hands. I promised him I would take the Platoon and do him a good job and I ended by saying, "Maybe I will straighten myself out too."

I was told that T/Sgt. Chester A. Pererson, of Omaha Nebraska was the Platoon Sgt. and S/Sgt. George B. Rainer of Beaumont, Texas was the Platoon guide. They had about six houses on the edge of town for quarters.

As I introduced myself to the two Sgts. and explained that I was going to be their new Platoon leader, I'm sure both wondered how the men would accept me. This didn't bother me for I had joined the 143rd. Inf. in the spring of 1938 and I had confidence in myself.

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These men were special. They had left their life and families just a couple of years before. All had received Basic Training before being assigned to the 36th Div. Sgt. Rainer was an exception for he had mobilized with Co. C. 143rd. Inf. on 25 Nov. 1940. he trained at Camp Bowie, Camp Blanding, and Camp Edwards. He had also been to the Louisiana and North Carolina Maneuvers with the Division.

As I spoke to the men, I went over in detail what Col. Frazier had said. I told them what to expect from me and what I would expect from them. I explained that I would change nothing. If they enjoyed looting, to continue but to always remember our main job in Europe was to kill Germans, get the war over with so we could all go home. I finished by saying we would move out the next morning on tanks and scout cars in front of the Regiment. Our objective was Draguignan, France.

In just a short time a bond was formed between the Platoon and myself that only a few officers were ever fortunate enough to experience. I can only explain it as a family tie. They were mine and I was theirs and the tie was so close they could have asked for anything and I would have given it to them.

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On the 21 August 1944, we left Draguignan leading the Division as part of the Butler Task Force. We saw combat in its finest. We rode in lead Scout Cars and tanks nearly everyday. When the regiment stopped to rest the Sepcial Platoon was always pushed out front to contact the Germans to see where they were and to pick up any prisoners we saw. As our combat accomplishments mounted we became a fine team. We had our share of losses in all the fighting we had been through and the replacements always worked in well.

They arrived among the finest and they never let the Platoon down.

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

The Butler Task Force was unbelievable. We won battle after battle and was freeing French real-estate faster than we had ever experienced before. (The drive from Rome, north for two hundred miles in June had given the Division the experience it needed in supplying troops on the move). No officer could have asked for a better unit to lead in combat.

The bond between Sgt's Peterson, Rainer and myself had grown stronger each day. I truly believe I could have lead these men into any part of combat and no one would have asked to be left behind. We had seen teh good and the bad in just a few short weeks and we all knew our accomplishments were unbelievable.

I recall one morning after we had broken through four German road blocks, where we encountered a fire fight each time. The next morning Col. Frazier reported our position to Regimental Hqs. and Hqs. told him it was impossible for our Battalion to be that far north. He asked me the name of the town we were occupying and when I told him he said, "Regimental Hqs. said it was impossible for us to have traveled so far in one night." He asked me to bring in a Frenchman. . . I stepped outside and the first Frenchman I saw I took him by the arm and pulled him inside. . . I asked him in front of Col. Frazier what town we were in. When he called the name of the town the Col. Regimental Hqs. our location again and this time they told us to stop moving north until the other units caught up.

From time to time while we were assigned to the Butler Task Force, the Special Platoon would be given the job of helping out a company in 1st. Battalion who had gotten into a fire fight with the Germans. Their commander wouldn't try to help his men if it put him in any danger.

One particular instant happened at Port Sur Saone, France. The 1st. Bn., 143rd. Inf. commanded by Lt. Col. David M. Frazier and taken a town on the Saone River. It was a high-stakes operation with many Germans and nine hundred Russians being captured. There was just one slight problem, we were behind the German Lines.

We had taken the town and Col. Frazier wasn't planning on giving it up without a good fight. We set up our defensive positions on every road coming into town and they were checked and rechecked.

Our 57MM Anti Tank guns were having a field day. They knocked out the Volkswagens and Mercedes time and time again. The Germans kept coming down every road, not knowing we had taken the town that morning.

A Promise I Failed to Keep

Late in the day I was checking my men as they cleaned their weapons when Col. Frazier strolled by. He had been out to the west part of town looking over our positions. I fell in stride and we talked for awhile about how well the Task Force had moved. His face became stern and he spoke in a low voice. Have you heard the rumors? I said, "Hell yes, every prisoner we take it's always the same, the Germans are to hit us with an all out attack and have orders to retake Port Sur Saone." The Col. asked me if the Krauts took the town that night, what would happen to me and my men. I said, "I haven't come this far to wind up in a stockade. I don't intend to be taken prisoner nor do my men."

Worldwartwoveterans.org

Just about that time we started across the bridge over the Saone River. I looked Col. Frazier square in the eyes and said, "We took this town and I don't relish the idea of giving it back to the Germans. I know, and my men know the position we are in. I've been over the situation with them and they aren't afraid of a fight. They have been told we will fight, but if the Battalion is over run they are to assemble here on the bridge."

I pointed to a flat bottom boat tied to the west bank under the bridge and told him we had used the boat to clear the explosives from the bridge when we took the town. We also realized our position, so the boat is our way out or back behind our lines. This river is flowing south, there is no moon out this time of the month and the boat is large enough for all my men, plus you, if you care to go.

I will not run and you know my men will give it their best. If the Battalion is overrun I say again, "I won't leave until I have your word that I can take out to safety what is left of my men." None of us want to sit out the war in a stockade. If we lose this town and are overrun and you want a way out be on the bridge when I load the boat."

The Germans kept probing trying to see just how strong we were and we kept our mouths shut.

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The next morning there was still no major attack, so Col. Frazier sent Co. C, commanded by Capt. Peter Larson, to move south to see if he could contact anyone from the division. Capt. Larson moved Co. C south about two miles when his scouts ran into the Germans. They were outposting a cemetery just outside of a small French town. There was a fire fight and three men of Co. C had been wounded. The Capt. radioed Battalion that the fire fight was so severe it was impossible for him to push farther south. He had asked permission to withdraw his company to his original position.

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Orders came for me to report to Battalion Hqs. and when I arrived Col. Frazier explained the situation (as he knew it). He told me how Capt. Larson had messed up and asked me to go pull Co. C back. This wasn't the first time we had been sent out to help a Co. while the Capt. stood around wringing his hands.

I returned to my Platoon where Sgt. Peterson had the men ready to move out. I briefed them on the situation that faced us and there was no doubt left in their minds that we could do the job. The only nagging question was, what would we loose getting the job done?

As I ended my report, before any questions, Sgt. Peterson stood up. He turned to me and explained that besides himself and Sgt. Rainer, several more of our men were from Co. C and had served under Capt. Larson. He went on to say, "Capt. Larson was a yellow SOB," and had lost many men unnecessarily on different occasions. Sgt. Peterson went on to say, Capt. Larson couldn't be considered a good officer because he was a yellow SOB.

We moved south on the road Capt. Larson had taken. We traveled at a fast gate trying to get to the situation as fast as possible so we could save lives. We were one and a half miles out of town when we hit the rear of Co. C and to my surprise Capt. Larson was there. I asked what had happened and what he was doing at the rear of the company?

He said he had been told by his 1st. Platoon Leader that the scouts had been fired on just in front of the cemetery. He went on to explain that he believed two more men had been hit trying to rescue the scouts. I asked just how many men were wounded and he said he thought only four from the 1st. Platoon. He then said he had not seen the fire fight nor had he been up to look the situation over. I knew then that he hadn't seen the action and wasn't planning on doing anything to help save his men.

I knew we had to get to the 1st. Platoon and talk to the Lt. to find out what had happened that morning.

As we moved towards the head of the column all Sgt. Peterson would say was "I told you he was a yellow SOB., Capt. Larson shouldn't have been a Capt. of Infantry in combat, it just wasn't his cup of tea." We had seen other officers of this caliber, and it was always the men we felt sorry for because they were always the losers.

When we got the the 1st Platoon the Lt. explained the situation

A Promise I Failed to Keep

that had taken place that morning. He said his men had been hit just as they started into town. When the Germans opened fire both his scouts had been hit, the other men tried to rescue their friends and were wounded also. He said, Capt. Larson had not been up to look over the situation but had told him the Battalion was sending help.

Here was an Infantry Capt., commanding a company in combat with one hundred fifty men under his command who wouldn't do anything to help the situation. He let the Special Platoon of only thirty men pull his men out.

As we moved forward the Platoon Sgt. went with us until we could see his men and find out where the fire was coming from.

We moved into two, two story houses just about thirty yards from the wounded men. Sgt. Peterson and myself moved to the second floor of one of the houses as our men took their places at all the windows facing south and the town.

I asked the wounded men how badly they were hit. All were glad to be alive and said they were afraid to move because the Germans kept firing each time they saw someone move.

My next question was, where is the fire coming from? They explained they had been hit from men behind the brick wall around the cemetery about fifty feet in front of where they lay. As I looked at the wall, there was a German soldier laying on top with a tree limb pulled down to conceal his position. Then I saw another German looking over the wall from the corner of the cemetery nearest the road. As we looked the situation over, there were five Americans who needed help and needed it badly if they were to live.

As we talked to the wounded we counted ten Germans in different positions as they exposed themselves to see where the voices were coming from.

When I got back upstairs, Sgt. Peterson had added two more German positions to the ten we already knew about, so we had at least twelve to take care of.

I told them I would take care of the one laying on the stone wall first and the others as they exposed themselves. I assigned two men to take care of each of the other positions.

We would be firing at about 85 yards... all good shots with no need to miss. I checked my men to see if everyone was ready. They replied that they were all in position and ready to fire.

There was no way I could miss the German on the wall, so I squeezed off my first round. He rolled forward, off the wall, dead

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and as the others gave their positions away my men cut them down with ease.

The five men assigned to pick up the wounded, started when I opened fire. There wasn't one German who got off a round. I heard a tank down in town when he started his motor but none of my men said a word about it coming towards us.

The German soldiers kept trying to get into position, so they could return fire. They wanted to get to the wall and we kept cutting them down. I started pulling my men back one or two at a time and still no one mentioned the tank.

When there were only three men and myself left, T/Sgt. Peterson looked at me and said "Duney do you hear that tank?" I told him to send the other two men back and then follow them to the rear. I covered the three but still couldn't see the tank. I knew it had to be just on the other side of the cemetery, so I took off. I got out the door and behind the house when it put a round into the south side of the house.

We hadn't lost a man, had picked up five wounded men of Co. C and when we caught up with Capt. Larson he was leading the company back to the Battalion area in Port Sur Saone.

A few weeks later I receive my orders to return to the States for Christmas of 1944. Before I was to leave, my orders stated the Special Platoon would be disbanded.

The men would be returned to their original units. It was like breaking up a family, there were tears shed because the men had to leave one another and return to their respective units.

I went back to our Service Company to wait until time to leave for the States. I was there only three days when I received word that Capt. Larson had messed up again and T/Sgt. Peterson had been wounded.

The next day I received word that Sgt. Peterson was in an evacuation hospital and was asking for me. When I got to the hospital he was in bad shape. He told me that Capt. Larson had gotten the company into trouble and he had been hit in the leg. He said he lay on the battlefield for about eight hours . . . gangrene had set in and the doctors would have to remove his leg. He blamed Capt. Larson for the whole mess and said the Capt. was a yellow SOB.

I stayed with him for a few hours and as I started to leave he took my hand and asked if I would do him a favor. I said, "Pete you know I will; what can I do for you?" He looked me in the eyes while he still

A Promise I Failed to Keep

held my hand and said; "Would you kill an American for me?" I asked him to tell me who it was and I would take care of him. In the back of my mind I knew who it would be. He said, "Capt. Larson is a yellow SOB and was responsible for my leg. He let me lay just as he did the men at Port Sur Saone." I explained that in just a few days I would leave for the States and if Capt. Larson was in the Division when I returned he was a dead man. I left the hospital and returned to Regimental Rear to wait for the call to catch a train for Marseille and be on my way home for Christmas.

As I arrived in the Service Company Area a messenger told me Lt. Col. Frazier wanted to see me right away. I went to Bn. Hqs. within the hour and the Col. was waiting for me. I couldn't imagine what he wanted, since we had already said our goodbyes a few days before (and I had promised to visit Mrs. Frazier and his two children). We were alone, but he closed the door, turned to me and said, "before you go home I need you to lead on last attack." I couldn't believe what I was hearing, but came right back and said; "Are you crazy or do you want me dead?" He told me the Battalion had been given the mission to take the ridge line to our front and he expected me to lead the attack. I told him I had already turned in my gear... I didn't even have a rifle. He said, "go draw the gear you need because you are going to lead this attack." I came right back with "I won't lead a company commanded by a Captain and all your rifle companies have Captains. I will NOT lead the attack."

Lt. Col. Frazier opened the door and asked an officer to step inside. His face was firm as he turned to me and stated in front of a witness, "I'm ordering you to lead the attack." I knew I had lost this argument. Col. Frazier could have had me Court-Martialed many times since we landed on the beaches of Southern France the 15 Aug. 1944, but our friendship had always protected me in the past. I looked him in the eye and said "I can't lead the attack, but what company do I lead and may I draw up the attack order?" (In the back of my mind I was hoping it would be Capt. Larson's company.)

The Col. said, "It's your show, artillery and all and it's Co. A... get it ready." I sent for my gear because it had been lucky for me in the past and I was going to ask it to be with me one more time.

Col. Frazier sent for the officers of Co. A and the Artillery Observer while he and I went to look at the objective. By the time we got back I had the plan straight in my mind as to how we could take the ridge line. I told the Artillery Observer how I wanted the barrage to be laid down and then moved up the hill. I explained to

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the Commanding Officer how we would go in behind the barrage and follow it up the hill. When we hit the line we would turn and sweep down to take the Ridge Line.

I thought I had covered every detail, so I asked if there were any questions. The Capt. being the senior officer, "ask Lt. Philips, how close will we be able to walk behind the barrage?" I ignored his question the first time, but he just kept asking. "Just how close will I be able to get to the barrage?" Finally I snapped back . . . until your guts give out, then drop to one knee and wait for the barrage so you can move forward.

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He asked the same question again and I began to realize the new officers we were receiving had not been to the Battle School set up by Brig. Gen. Wilber because it had been discontinued when he left Italy.

Some of the officers reporting to the Division as replacements didn't know what to expect and some would never learn. Under this type officer we lost good men.

As the attack started I told the Capt. to stay with me. The artillery had never done better, the Artillery Officer kept the barrage moving as the company moved with it. We were on the Ridge Line before we knew it and when we broke the German Lines we turned right and left to sweep them up.

When we had collected all the Germans that were still alive, I placed the Company in a defensive position. I then turned to the Capt. and said, "Capt. take over your Company," and at that time I headed back to Battalion Hqs.

When I arrive at Bn. Hqs., Col Frazier was all smiles. He had seen a perfect attack. It was more like a classroom problem . . . like the books say it is supposed to happen.

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We were both happy. I for not being hit, and he for satisfying Regiment with another successful attack.

Col. Frazier walked with me to the front of the building. It was like old times . . . a smile back on his face and as we shook hands I had nothing but admiration and respect for him. He had been through lots since 9 Sept. 1943 and was one hell of a Battalion Commander.

I took my M-1 by the barrel, swung it around my head a couple of times and threw it as far as I could. It landed with the barrel stuck in the mud. I turned to the Col. and said, "I won't need that M-1 until

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I get back;" and with that I was on my way to Texas.

When I returned to the Division on 13 March 1945, Capt. Larson was no place to be found.

It wasn't until years later while I was stationed at 3rd Army Hqs. at Fort McPhearson, Georgia as their Sports Officer that I received a call to come to the Hq. Co. mess hall for a cup of coffee. It took only fifteen minutes to get to the Mess Hall and who meets me but Capt. Larson. He wore his decorations well, had the 36th Div. Patch on his right shoulder and was proud of his war experiences.

The Mess Sgt. poured me a cup of coffee and went back into the kitchen. Capt. Larson wanted to go to the Division Records...bragging on how it felt to be a hero.

I looked him in the eyes and said, "You are one of the luckiest men alive." He said, "Some of us had to make it." I said, "I don't think you understand what I'm saying." "In October 1944 when you got T/Sgt. Peterson hit, I gave him my word that if you were still with the Division when I returned from Christmas leave I would kill you." I told him that I wasn't the least bit happy to see him because I considered him a yellow SOB in the worst way. That he was never to tell anyone that we were in the 36th Division together during 1943-1944 or that he knew me. If he ever spoke to me again he could expect to get his butt kicked.

Capt. Larson is dead now. I understand he died someplace in Nebraska with cancer. We never spoke to each other again.

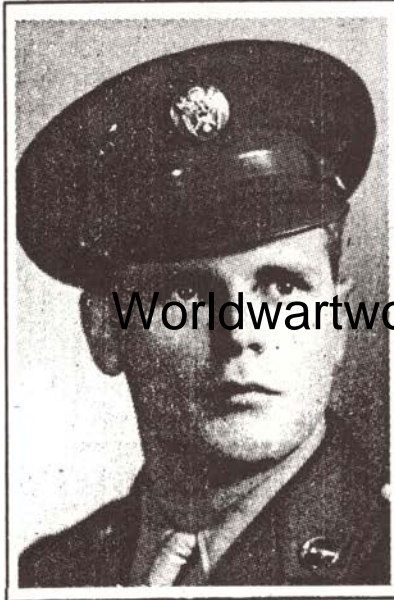
T/Sgt. Chester Peterson is also dead...
he was my friend and I would have done
anything for him...even killed a yellow SOB.



"Duney" Philips



'I thought he was dead'



William Esliger
... South Venice resident



Ben Bell
... of Roanoke, Virginia

POWs reunite here in Venice after 43 years

By **CHARLES BRENNAN**
Staff Writer

"There were dead bodies all around us. We were the only two alive," Esliger said.

"Ben looked at me and said 'I think this is it,'" South Venice resident William Esliger vividly remembers.

Amidst the death and disarray, Esliger began reading his prayer book. Suddenly a German soldier appeared beside the two survivors.

"The guy came up and said 'OK comrade, this is it.' I still think the only reason we're alive today is because I was

reading the prayer book," Esliger said.

Nearly 2,900 soldiers lost their lives in the area of Cassino, Italy on Jan. 20 and 21, 1944. Esliger and Bell were two of only a handful to survive a two-day attempt by the 141st and 143rd Infantry Regimental Combat Teams to cross the Rapido River.

The two were taken captive and began the journey by truck to Stalag 2B in Hamerstein, Germany. Two of three trucks traveling to that stalag were destroyed and passengers killed when American planes strafed the area they were in.

Then they and others were herded into a small box car and taken by train to Stalag 2B. During the seven-day train ride, the prisoners were al-

"I Thought He Was Dead"

**Both Were
Captured at Rapido
River Crossing
Jan. 21, 1944**

lowed one nominal bowl of "watered down" potato-barley soup. The next day each was allowed a small amount of water.

From Stalag 2B, the two were split up. Esliger was taken to a farm in Gerbean, Germany, south west of Danzig, where he was imprisoned and worked as a blacksmith.

Bell was taken to a stalag in the area of Bonsack, northeast of Danzig near the Baltic Sea — in the region that now is Poland. There he worked as a farmer.

Fifteen months passed before they returned to freedom. Nearly 43 years passed before they discovered each other was alive.

Every month, for years, Bell would read Ex-POW Magazine looking for familiar names of American comrades. Among the names he was hoping to find was Esliger's.

In February 1987, Bell's wife was scanning the magazine when she noticed the name William Esliger. Initially, Bell questioned whether it was the right person because the Esliger he knew was from Connecticut, not Florida as this one was.

"Then I said to myself 'they're couldn't be another one. This must be him,'" Bell said.

He then called Esliger, who



Esliger (left) and Bell
...together after 40 years

picked up the telephone and advised Bell that, in fact, he was the Bill Esliger who had been taken prisoner Jan 21, 1944.

Bell, however, didn't tell Esliger who he was.

"I made him guess. I said, 'Bill, who was on your left the morning you were captured?'"

Esliger dropped a few names but none were right.

"I didn't guess it was Ben because I thought he was dead," Esliger said. But, to the delight of both, neither had died during their 15 months of imprisonment, but since regaining their freedom.

Together this week in Esliger's south Venice home, the two, their wives and friends looked back on their time as prisoners of war. They also relaxed and appreciated the good life both now enjoy.

In 1983 Esliger retired from United Technologies in East Hartford, Conn., where he had

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served for 33 years. He then moved to Venice.

Bell is in the plumbing and heating business in Roanoke, Va., and hopes to retire this year.

Years Roll By . . .

Years have passed but memories of the widely scrutinized Rapido Battle — as well as the following year and a half of imprisonment — linger.

36th Division Adopt a Resolution for Congressional Investigation of Rapido Fiasco Brownwood, 1946

In January of 1946 the 36th Division met in Brownwood, Texas and overwhelmingly voted to adopt a resolution for a congressional investigation into the Rapido Battle.

A 1945 Hartford, Conn., newspaper headline said the battle was a diversion to aid the Anzio landing.

"The entire area was zeroed in on by the Germans," Esliger recalled. The first attempt to cross the river was by boat. The Germans sank the first. The second night soldiers used pontoon bridges to cross the river but came under the heavy fire, ending the two-day fight with nearly 2,900 casualties.

During the time Esliger and Bell were held captive, each endured mental anguish and physical pain.

"If you did what you were told it was OK. But if you didn't

it could be rough as rough could be," Bell said. They, like other POWs, worked from sunrise to sunset. Illness was not an acceptable excuse to be freed from work.

Both did find themselves in need of medical attention.

Esliger sliced his thumb while working as a blacksmith, and Bell needed an operation. Both afflictions were taken care of, but neither man was given anesthesia during the procedures.

Acquiring food was more of a problem for Esliger than Bell, as Bell worked on a farm and had easier access to milk, potatoes, barley and bread.

Esliger recalls eating bread with sawdust in it. Neither were served meat.

"DEATH WALK" Started Jan. 20, 1945 — took 2½ months . . .

As the war wound down, white flags were being hung by Germans. American troops closed in on Germany's western side and Russian troops closed in from the east. Groups of POWs began their march to the American line, but they were not to go along the way.

Although they left the stalags, the soldiers had a long, cold, treacherous walk ahead of them.

Bell said for him the "death walk" began Jan. 20, 1945 and took 2½ months, during which time he contemplated giving up. However, a Mexican-Spanish soldier kept Bell's morale high and kept him going.

"I Thought He Was Dead"

Esliger walked from Jan. 20 until April 18. For the trip, he and two others were supplied with one Red Cross package, intended to last one man one week.

Both Esliger and Bell, and the other POWs, had serious problems with lice and suffered brutalized feet.

"I never had my shoes off the whole time. Your socks become a part of you," Bell said.

Esliger had no socks. He used an undershirt to wrap his feet.

Both survived the trip. Many, however, did not.

Once they made it to the American line they were taken to Camp Luckystrike in Lehar, France where they were hospitalized enough to return to the United States where they finished their military duty.

Now, scrap books with poetry, drawings and newspaper clippings serve as a reminder of the war. Each has a Purple Heart. Esliger still has his POW tags, as well as other memorabilia. They both have memories.

The news story published in the South Venice, Florida was sent to Col. C. DON WILSON from his old buddy — MANUEL G. TOUNDAS who served with 133rd FA and later with 636th Tank Destroyer Battalion.



Col. C. DON WILSON of San Antonio has been a loyal contributor to our publications, and he forwarded this story of ESLIGER & BELL on to your editor. These two POW's served with 141st and 143rd, and they have a great story, which we hope you will agree. (Sorry, we do not have addresses of these two men.)

Wilson remained in the service after WWII, and retired from Air Force as Colonel.

SAD ENDING - At Press Time: Col. Wilson died at age 65 on Dec. 21, 1986 after a bout with cancer. Interment with Full Military Honors in Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery.

Oh,
Those **USO** Shows

We couldn't Go Home,
So the Movie Stars Came
to entertain us...
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PART TWO

of the many amenities provided by the
36th Division Special Services Section,
headed by Major Ben F. Wilson



attle weary troopers of the 36th, came out of the line on the Winter Front Line in Italy, in late spring 1944, with scars of many major skirmishes with the Nazi from Salerno, St. Pietro, Million Dollar Mountain, Cassino and the Rapido River epic disaster.

What they needed, had to be a lot of R & R. In the early stages of our visit to Sunny Italy, no time or organization was provided for this task. Special Service Section was formed in Nov. 1943 to handle PX operations when out of the line. This was a major break through, as in past, the troops had to resort to Base PX's and their facilities. The new Special Services group — brought all the goodies right to the unit's area. Cigarettes, candy and rare items unavailable elsewhere. Even a local bar, and later a beer station. (30,000 cans of beer) was distributed — two per man, etc.

Fifth Army Brings In a Biggie...

Bookings for the top Movie Stars was handled out of the New York Hqs. for USO... the FIGHTING 36th got the Super Star and her troupe... MARLENE DIETRICH!!! She would be the FIRST of many famous celebrities that would entertain.

On May 12th (1944) — MARLENE DIETRICH and her show performed at 1:00 PM (undisclosed area a few miles east of Naples). Col. Stovall's Engineers had quickly built a stage from rough lumber,

Oh, Those USO Shows



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and two trucks on each side of the stage offered exits and entrances.

Captain TED NYKIEL, of Chicago was in charge of this special event, followed all instructions sent down from Fifth Army Hqs, like "Since Miss Dietrich is a European she will consider a bucket of sand in her own tent, to be appropriate." This was done.



Marlene Dietrich

During the 1930s, Marlene was a top star and the cover of TIME, Nov. 1936 for a film starring Gary Cooper — "Morocco."

AT RIGHT: a close-up of the fabulous German beauty, who was then age 43, poses with Lee Silbey, Dallas of the Special Service Section. Lee said, "I'm her overseas agent." We replied, "Bully for you, now empty the sand bucket."



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Screen Actor **MARLENE** drew a few thousand T-Patchers when she appeared in her form-fitting gown, and graciously played a few numbers on her SAW. The lead-in performer was a struggling comedian of nite club fame did his routine with flare — he would later become very famous — **DANNY THOMAS** and his popular TV shows.

Her musician was **MILTON DeLUGE**, played the accordian and later featured on the original (Tonight) TV show, then known as Jerry Lester's **BROADWAY** in 1950's.



Following her show, **MARLENE** went on to the 141st Infantry Regiment area and put on her show for some 4,000 men in that area. Then, true to her manner — visited the men in their pits that circled Naples — like 534th AAA Bn, and men of 443rd AAA Bn.

Oh, Those USO Shows



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A USO show, is Brig. Gen. Robert Stack, and our leader, Maj. Gen. Fred L. Walker among the crowd of about 4,000 happy T-Patchers.

Tom Sullivan, Dedham, MA of 36th Signal took these 2 fotos. Thanks!



This was only the beginning of an array of Stars that would entertain for the T-Patchers.

Nykiel later reported to General Walker that Marlene and her fellow trooper said they had mostly played at rear echelon areas, but preferred being with COMBAT soldiers — meaning the 36th.

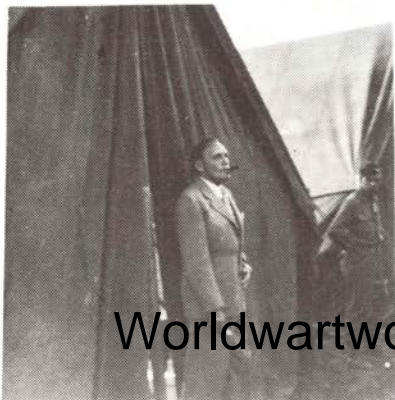


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Ref: See page 364 and 365, "FROM TEXAS TO ROME" and read what General Walker has to say about the great event, just prior to The Breakthrough at Velletri. His praise of Miss Dietrich is most heart warming.

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Jack Benny & Ingrid Bergman



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Benny was a hot property with his radio shows, Bergman was on-her-way to super-star, after the success of "Casablanca," entertain at ULM, Germany in the early days after War's end.

The 442nd Regimental Band provided the music, plus a showing of their (all-male) Hula dancers.



Autographs are always that EXTRA bonus to see and get up-close to a real live movie star.

Ingrid Bergman musta signed a jillion of 'em.

These 3 photos were sent in by Del Kendall, A/T 143rd Inf., who has a fine snapshot album.

The photo below, unfortunately was not identified, except it was taken in Germany.



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Oh, Those USO Shows

“Mighty” Mickey Rooney Entertains

“The Mighty Mick” paid us a visit in the early spring of 1945 — when out of the line briefly, and Rooney got a great hand, until — during the show, the German’s artillery went to work... no injuries were reported, but “our Special Service Sound Truck got shot up,” says Ben Wilson, who sent in these photos.

If your memory is good, you recall the popular “ANDY HARDY” series in late 1930s. His first film, *Andy Hardy*, was named for Ben Wilson in 1939... and that was mega-bucks in those days.

His popularity is best shown here giving out autographs to the troopers. He ain’t no kid, he was born in New York, 1922 as Joe Yule, Jr. — about the same age as many of our men... and he’s still going!



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Our regrets that this is one of the many stars who appeared on our 36th (Engineer-built) Stage as part of the USO Touring Group . . . that we cannot identify. Can you? Regardless of who gets the credits — the USO Shows were truly an effort to ease the pain and agony that goes with combat — a long ways from home.

NOW let's take another look at Marlene, as our polls show — she was the all-time favorite. She was first, and she was the most-cooperative.

Take a look at Marlene in the German-made film, "BLUE ANGEL" of 1931 that launched her career and moved to Hollywood.

NOW foto — from TIME 1984 issue, she's looking great for a lady who has chalked up 84 birthdays on her calendar. Cheers!



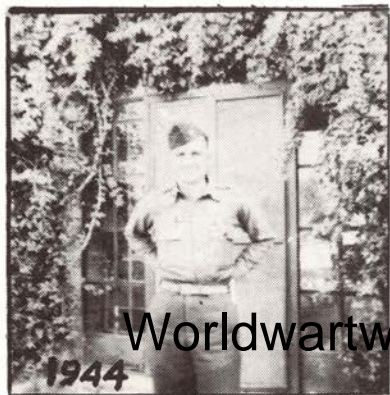
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IN GERMANY — here's what's left of the 36th Special Service Section headed by Major Ben F. Wilson, at center. His staff members: Robert Rocchio, then of the Bronx, Ben Jones, of Washington DC, and Sam Snyder, New Jersey, deceased. Rocchio now lives in retirement in Florida, whereabouts of Jones is unknown.

Ancient Temple of Neptune at Paestum Still Standing, says Ben Wilson



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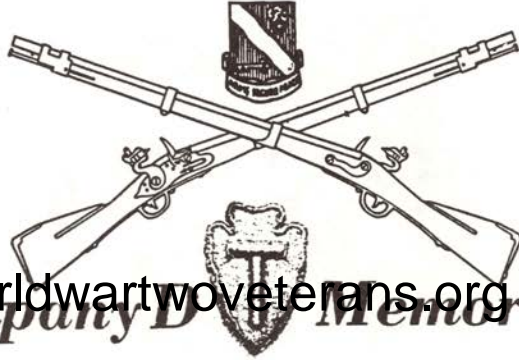
We would call this a 'dream trip' . . . to be able to visit again after 37 years the fabulous Temple of Neptune, near the Salerno beachhead where T-Patchers caught some hell. Ben F. Wilson, Jr., who was Special Service Officer, says this one held some special memories. The Temple was used as an Evac. Hospital then, and later, when we loaded up for the Southern France Invasion (Aug. '44), a Restorante near the Temple was used as EM Club, says Wilson, (above left) and 1979 it hasn't changed. Spec/Serv. operated the EM Club during that short period prior to S/France. Our thanks to Ben for these great pix.

Gets mail at: 231 E. Kleberg St., Kingsville TX 78363.



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From Central Avenue



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Company D Memorial

**Citizen's of Temple Texas,
Members of Company D 143rd Infantry —
and ROY D. GOAD
Labored Long and Hard For a Memorial
to Men Who Mobilized Nov. 25, 1940**

This project was sparked by the Texas Sesquicentennial Military Committee that asked for units such as this to "get a marker." The Citizens of Temple and Bell County got-with-it early in 1986, and their (Texas) Granite Memorial is one of the best.

Roy D. Goad rounded up a committee of Patchers in that area, and this dream became a reality on MOBILIZATION DAY, November 25, 1986.



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Bob Scott of Waco (at left) served with 143rd, and was asked to do the dedication speech, which is worthy of reprints. Scott is secretary of Waco Scottish Rite Bodies and active in all phases of Masonry in Texas.

Dignitaries of the area and a few hundred members of the 36th were in attendance. Leroy Houston shot the whole ceremony with his mini-cam, and will be shown at reunions, etc.

To Europe's Battlefields



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ABOVE: The Company D Marker, front panel with their "Crossed Rifles" of yesteryear — at special site in the Railroad Museum Park, 31st Street and Avenue H, Temple. Depot in background gives story of the old days of the SANTA FE Railroad,

BELOW — Rear panel of Marker — lists every man of Comapny D 143rd at Mobilization, Nov. 25 1940. Photos made by, and sent in by Roy D. Goad. (Please note that his middle initial is "D") yes, for Company D, that is.



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Herald Photo

MEMORIAL DEDICATION PLANNED — Veterans of Company D, 143rd Infantry Regiment, 36th Infantry Division, Texas Army National Guard, will formally dedicate this memorial in Temple to the men who went to war with the company. The dedication ceremony will take place 2 p.m. Tuesday at the corner of 31st and Avenue H in Temple.

NEWS COVERAGE of this Marker Dedication received stories and photos in many Central Texas newspapers. (Hey, this was a really big show) . . . the view above from Killeen News (Fort Hood) — that's the biggest Armored Training Base in ole USA.

Company D 143rd Monument

Company D, 143d Regt, 36th Division Memorial Committee and other members of the company expresses their gratitude and sincere appreciation to the following businesses and individuals of the community for their contributions to our Memorial Fund.



Mrs. Rose Boss
 Mr. and Mrs. Bennet Morris
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 Mr. and Mrs. Glen Rucker and Family
 Harper Talasek Funeral Home
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City of Temple is proud of their T-Patchers.

PRIDE in Their Fighting 36thers, Men of Company D 143rd has alot of clout in this City of Temple. This list shown above of contributors to the \$25,000 for this 9 x 6' monument was possible because of their financial support. Roy Goad and his fellow helpers did an outstanding job,

A LOOK AT WAR BOOKS

Pershing: He needed a week

Second volume
in Smythe study
of WWI leader

**PERSHING OF THE
Armies**

By Donald Smythe (Indiana University
Press, \$27.50)

By Calvin Christman

Rarely has one man so dominated an army and a nation's military participation in war as General John J. Pershing dominated the American Expeditionary Forces in the First World War. To a very large degree, Pershing was the AEF, and the AEF was Pershing.

Donald Smythe, a professor at John Carroll University, explores and explains the general in his excellent biography, *Pershing: General of the Armies*. A sequel to his earlier *Guerrilla Warrior* (1973), which covered Pershing's pre-World War I career, Smythe's concluding volume follows the general from his appointment as AEF commander in May 1917 to his death in July 1948, with four-fifths of the book concentrating on Pershing's World War I experience.

Smythe's research is prodigious. Nearly one hundred pages of notes attest to the author's use of archives, correspondence, interviews, and secondary sources. Yet this is no dry reference book. The author's prose, in a style befitting a military historian, is

clear, direct, and strong. He wastes few words, is fair in his statements, persuasive in his judgments, and never loses sight of his subject. The result is biog-

Although Smythe clearly has a deep regard for Pershing — it would be hard to spend over twenty-five years studying a man if one did not — he is not shy to criticize the American commander when he was wrong, as in Pershing's chronic failure to understand the problems of the War Department at home or in his continual inability to work harmoniously with Army Chief of Staff Peyton C. March.

Clearly, however, Smythe sees Pershing's strengths more than balancing his weaknesses. Handsome, strong, and fit, he looked every inch a general. As one observer noted, the American commander was "lean, clean, keen."

More importantly, Pershing had the rare ability to heed valid criticism without taking personal offense. One day certain refused to be brushed aside by Pershing and instead heatedly and in detail told the general why the AEF commander was wrong. In horror, other officers watched, expecting Pershing to dismiss the young man on the spot. Instead Pershing listened, accepted the criticism, and later picked the outspoken officer for his staff. The captain was George C. Marshall Jr.



General of the Armies John J. Pershing.

Above all else, Pershing had immense energy, drive, and determination. He combined these traits with a direct manner, common sense, and unswerving confidence in himself, his army, and his nation. He organized, shaped, and led the AEF to battle and victory — and Pershing refused to allow either the enemy or the allies to stand in his way.

Pershing won his victory, but when it came, it came too early. The Germans, drained by the bloodletting of four years of war and battered by the simultaneous blows of the American, British, and French armies, asked for an

armistice before their army collapsed and disintegrated entirely. Thus, despite having lost the war, both the German army and the German nation remained intact.

Pershing, with considerable prescience, feared the result of the November 1918 armistice; "We shouldn't have done it. If they had given us another ten days we would have rounded up the entire German army, captured it, humiliated it . . . The German troops today are marching back into Germany announcing that they have never been defeated . . .

A second world war had to teach that lesson.

THE FIGHTING 36th HISTORICAL QUARTERLY



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You Are My Buddy”**

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War is the most stupid and tragic of all human ventures.

Few problems are ever solved and often new ones are presented; the cost in lives, treasures and suffering is never matched by the fruits of victory.

Our War, WORLD WAR II, was not vain, or was it stupid on our part because we did NOT start it” though the loss of lives, property sears the minds of the nation.

The satisfaction of a job well done, the memories precious beyond price, reward those of us who survived.

There is no greater compensation than that of saying...I WAS THERE AND YOU ARE MY BUDDY.

Oran Stovall

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Washington's

Farewell

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*"Of all the dispositions and habits
which lead to a political prosperity,
religion and morality are*

*the first and most essential. In vain
would that man claim the tribute
of Patriotism, who should
labour to subvert these great
pillars of human happiness . . ."*

George Washington
Farewell Address
September 19, 1796