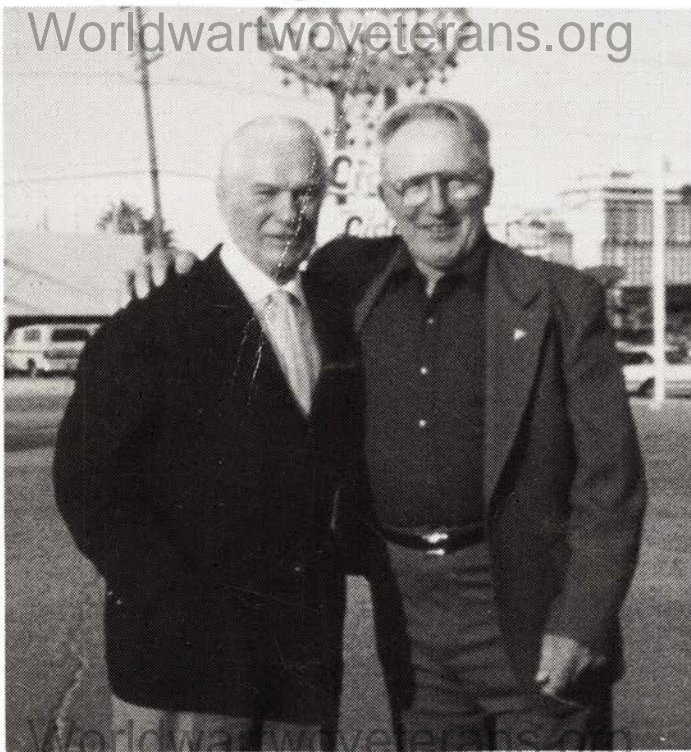


The Fighting 36th
HISTORICAL
Quarterly



Two Men, Both of Same Unit,
Winners of Distinguished Service Cross
Meet For First Time in 42 Years

Vol. VII, No. 3 - Fall 1987

Published by
36th DIVISION ASSOCIATION

Worldwartwoveterans.org

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The Fighting 36th



HISTORICAL

QUARTERLY

THIRTY-SIXTH
TEXAS
DIVISION ASSOCIATION



American infantrymen of the Fifth Army
They fought hard, gaped at Gurka knives

Vol. VII, No. 3 - Fall 1987

Published by
36th DIVISION ASSOCIATION



Service Record
of the



"Grizzled gladiators"
of 36th Division
in World War II

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

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

Tragedy, intrigue, heroism

The famed 36th (T-Patch) Division was mobilized into active federal service on Nov. 25, 1940. The division trained at Camp Bowie, (Brownwood) as a square division up until Pearl Harbor Day (Dec. 7, 1941.) Two units, the 144th Infantry and 2nd Battalion, 131st Field Artillery were quickly dispatched to defend the West Coast area in event of an invasion. The 2nd Battalion, 131st Field Artillery was sent on to the South Pacific and were later captured in Java. The men who survived spent over two years as POWs in Burma and Japan.

The remainder of the 36th Division departed for overseas in early 1943 landing in North Africa. The division was the first American unit to invade Hitler's European Fortress, by landing at Salerno, Italy

on Sept. 9, 1943. The division later captured Rome, Italy on June 5, 1944 and made the Southern France invasion on Aug. 15, 1944, and fought through France and Germany until the war's end on May 5, 1945.

The 36th Division suffered over 27,000 casualties, the third highest of any World War II division. The men earned 15 Congressional Medal of Honor, 80 D.S.C.'s, 2,354 Silver Stars, 5,407 Bronze Star Medals for Valor and 12 Presidential Unit Citations.

It is the only military unit known to have had fighting men in the Pacific and Europe at the same time during WW II, as military records were never changed to relieve the 2nd Bn, 131 F.A. from the rolls of the 36th Division.

THE FIGHTING 36th
Vol. VII, No. 3
- Fall 1987

 HISTORICAL
Quarterly



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.



THE FIGHTING 36th
HISTORICAL QUARTERLY

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1987

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THE FIGHTING 36th
HISTORICAL QUARTERLY



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Cover Story

Two Men, Both of Same Unit,
Winners of Distinguished Service Cross



Evan E. Voss and
Clarence Bradberry



Company C 142nd
Infantry Regiment



A most unusual story surfaced last spring when we heard from a new member of the 36th Association. Evan Voss told of how it felt to be welcomed to a combat unit as a green and raw replacement...his baptism in fire would be — **RAPIDO RIVER.**

He described in detail how life in a fox hole and all the agony, privation, fear and frustratrion that goes with the territory.

After 40 plus years, he goes on a one-man safari to track down — and visit with seven of the men he fought with. Not an easy task, but the rewards were great.

Evan Voss has our thanks for this one.

Transition of a Green Replacement Into a Combat Soldier



By Evan E. Voss
Company C 142nd Infantry
New London, Wisconsin

After spending a month in a Mine and Demolition School in North Africa, we finally sailed for Italy, arrived at Naples harbor on New Year's Day 1944.

Naples was beautiful, with those beautiful but wicked mountains in the background, it was hard to believe there were such tragic and horrible things going on in this beautiful country.

Being a soldier in a **Repodepot** can be a lonesome ordeal. Especially when you're only a 20 year old, homesick boy that had never been away from home.

After sleeping on the ground in the giant Mussolini Race Track for over a week finally some of us were trucked to Piedmonte and the 36th Division. This would be our 'home,' and how proud I was to be assigned to the Division that was first to land at Salerno four months earlier.

We were assigned to Company C 142nd Infantry, and were greeted by the 1st Sgt. He was sure different than I expected. This guy was the TOP EM in this combat unit, greeted us politely and graciously answered all the stupid questions we asked.

Other top kicks we had acted like bulls, and treated us as dirt

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under their feet. We were taken to 3rd Platoon, and everyone came over, introduced themselves and made us feel quite "at home."

We were aware that all these men were 'seasoned' combat troopers. They had just been relieved from battles at Mt. Lungo and had many tales to tell.

Naturally our most important question was — how many men had been wounded or killed. I was especially concerned about that when I was assigned to the 1st squad as 2nd scout.

The thing that made my new job more bearable was the 1st scout. He was a more mature type of guy, smoked a pipe and nothing seemed to bother him. He'd been in combat, so I figured if he could still be so calm, maybe the job wasn't so bad after all.

After a few days of 'river crossing' training, we headed for the front line. Everyone knew we were going to cross the Rapido River. We spent the first night amid the large 240mm artillerymen (corps units). They banged away all night, and sleep was impossible. Those 240s were ear-shattering. The next morning we walked to the front line.

During the afternoon we moved to a bivouac area near our supporting 105mm guns. Our platoon leader was called to company Hqs., so we knew something was up. He returned with this order: Wait here until dark, then head for the river. On the way we picked up rubber rafts, carried them to the river bank — and crossed it.

We reached the other side, and were to go through the 141st Regiment, who had established a bridge head . . . then break through the German Defense Line. In our attack there was to be NO firing of weapons (due to the extreme darkness we might have been firing at our own troops).

This attack was to be strictly grenade and bayonette work . . . the weapon was to be used ONLY if absolutely necessary. Grenades into the bunkers, and bayonettes to finish 'em off.

The Sgt. then asked if we had any questions. My God, did I ever have a question, but I was too petrified to talk. I wanted to run as far as I could, but the discipline and training we had been taught told me that was the wrong thing to do.

A detail was sent to company supply to get rations, more grenades and ammo, and I was part of that detail, so that helped to keep my mind off what was going to happen.

After we gathered all our stuff, we went for hot chow brought up from the kitchen somewhere in the rear. Hey, I sure wished I was a cook instead of a rifleman. I felt in my mind this could be my LAST meal.

Transition of a Green Replacement

Waiting for a mission like this seemed like a lifetime. After an hour or so, the platoon leader was again called to Hqs. I thought my prayers were being answered, as the attack would be 'called off.' Not so, when he returned — the news was even worse. The Germans had attacked while we were getting ready . . . they had wiped out the 141st and 143rd Regiments, and those who weren't captured or killed — were disorganized and wandering around on the other side of the river.

OUR ORDERS WERE THE SAME — move out immediately, cross the river and make a 'new' bridgehead. We moved out, but somehow, when we started, things didn't seem quite as bad.

I guess I realized that I was to be killed, it would be soon and there was no reason to worry about it. We picked up our boats and headed for the Rapido. It was very dark, but we were following a trail behind an Engineer Guide, so we were sure we would find the river. BUT, what happens when we get across.

We were almost there when my prayers were answered. A runner came up from the Rear — said, "General Clark has called off the attack."

We were to return, pick up bed rolls, dig our hole and go to sleep. As I lay myself down to sleep . . . My God, how wonderful it was to be alive!

Next day in the evening, our Third Platoon was to get ready to move. It was after dark, loaded into trucks with "cat-eyes" and ar-

EVAN E. VOSS, born in Manawa, Wisconsin, enlisted 11 Jan. 1943, basic training with 87th Division, Camp McCain Miss. Shipped to North Africa for Mine Warfare training. Joined Co C 142nd (of Ballinger TX) 3rd platoon at Piedmonte Italy, Jan. 10, 1944, entered combat at Rapido River.

Discharged August 1945 as S/Sgt. Re-enlisted during Korean War, graduated from OCS, Fort Benning, July 22, 1952 as 2nd Lt. Became paratrooper, assigned to 82nd Airborne Div., Fort Bragg NC Aug. 1952.

Shipped to Far East, joined 1st Cavalry Div. in North Japan. After Korean War, was assigned to 84th Div. Promoted to Lt. Col. 1973, retired from service 1976.

Managed Curtis Store Fixture plant, Wausaw WI for six years, managed Simmons Juvenile Furniture Plant at Lew London, 10 years. NOW owns and operates 300 cow Dairy at New London WI.

Life Member of Legion of Valor.



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rived at a spot we were told — overlooked the Rapido. Our mission was to relieve a platoon that was guarding a gap made in a mine field on the way to the river.

We were guided to the foxholes that were already dug, and because I was a "scout" — my hole was the foremost on the slope. Where my buddies were, I hadn't the slightest idea. We were advised that — "There's no one in front of you except the Krauts."

As I peered out into the pitch-black night, trying to figure out what was happening, machine gun fire was in-coming to my left . . . then as they fired a stream of tracers came from across the river into where the machine guns were firing. Then flares would go into the air and I could make out the river below the hill in front of us. I could see shadows of men to my left front, but I could not see who they were. They seemed to be carrying something. (Next day I found out they were carrying away the dead.)

Next few shells would land into the positions to my left and alot of artillery would burst into the area across the river. This type of firing continued through most of the night. Toward morning it started to rain, I pulled my raincoat over my head, and my God — I fell asleep.

It was daylight when I awakened, and how different everything looked. We were on the forward slope of a hill overlooking the Rapido, where it made a BIG U Shape far below us. Directly in front was a steep slope with a trail that led to the river. On this trail was a MINE FIELD. Beside the trail was parts of a rubber raft with 8 dead men, four on each side, some still gripping the handles.

At the top of the hill to my rear was a shattered, gutted brick house. Things were now quite, rain had stopped and except for a few shells in-coming, we got out of our holes and had our C-Rations.

We sat around trying to figure out what was happening on the other side . . . we could see men across the river, some would jump in and that was the last we saw of 'em. At noon, a German plane circled over our position and little did we know — the trouble we were in for.

Minutes after the plane disappeared — artillery shells almost hit the brick house on the hill. We headed for our holes . . . the next one hit in front of mine, and the third hit in the middle of the area of the platoon.

We now knew they had us . . . they started coming in 3 and 4 at a time. Each shell seemed to clear my hole by inches. They seemed so close, they'd take your breath away . . . and that's time to dig deeper, and keep on reading that Bible.

Transition of a Green Replacement



For two hours the shelling continued, and then in the usual Kraut manner — it stopped. We had had it. After a lull waiting period, we bravely ventured out of our holes. Lucky us — no one dead, but six were in such a state of shock they ended up at the Aid Station.

That night we were relieved and returned to our company area. We then started up the mountain near Mt. Cairo, walking single file up a winding trail. It was continuous rattlin' of machine gun fire ahead . . . as we passed a long line of wounded, some were walking and many were being carried. **It was a bloody trail.**

When we reached the mountain top, mortar and artillery fire came in so heavy, our squad leader lost contact with the 3rd platoon . . . we ended up in Hqs Co hauling rations for five days.

When we returned to our platoon, in a defensive position on top of Mt. Castleone, I get tears in my eyes when I think of that winter we spent on that mountain . . . we had nothing but one blanket, a rain-coat and a shelter half, and of course, that big overcoat.

We had ONE change of socks to go with our rough-leather combat boots . . . **that SOAKED water like a sponge.** It could get bitter cold at night and those boots would FREEZE like a block of ice.

Our two-man holes were slit-trenches and it was so rocky, the holes were so small, when we got a couple hours to sleep, we had to fold our bodies together to lie down. When we woke up for our WATCH, the only part of the body that wasn't frozen was the part that touched our buddy.

There's Nothing — Like Trench Foot!

Many of our men came off that mountain with feet that were BLACK with Trench Foot. Some were so bad, their feet busted their boots open. I for one, had no feeling in my toes for a year after that experience. **Even today — I have NO NAILS ON MY TOES.**

Every hour of the day we had mortar, artillery and machine gun

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fire . . . things got so rough, I spent days counseling my buddy (name withheld) not to shoot himself. We were watched so close by the Krauts, we had to keep our heads down at all times.

Even when nature called, we did it in our helmets and sat it outside the hole until dark. If the moon was bright, they took pot shots at us when we got out of the holes.

Only rations we had was type C Ration. You'd eat a can of that cold greasy hash — an hour later you'd have stomach pains that you thought — the food will get us before the Germans.

WATER, we had to carry up the mountain on our backs. Two men from the platoon would go down to a village daily and bring up a 5 gal. can full. It took nearly a full day to pack that can up the mountain while ducking mortar and artillery shells all the way.

After duckin' all the fire-power they had, and snow for a couple of weeks, then at 5 AM one morning we got a solid barrage of artillery — the mountain became a fire with exploding shells for hours. At daylight we could see steady streams of MG tracers coming over the entire mountain top.

Then the Germans started coming in — my buddy and I were on the right flank (now I knew it was kill-or-be-killed, and that is what we did).



The battle raged on, what seemed like hours, when our squad leader told us to go to the top of the mountain and help a machine gun nest, as the Krauts were about to break through. When we got there, we took over holes of the assistant gunners and ammo bearers. Outside the heavy machine gun hole we found 3 dead gunners with little blue-red holes in the middle of their foreheads.

Every time a gunner got hit, the next man in line would throw his

Transition of a Green Replacement

body out of the hole and the gun would continue to rat-a-tat. My God, those brave men on that gun saved a lot of our lives that day . . . I thought every man on that gun outta get a CMH, but can't recall anyone getting even a Bronze Star.

When the firefight finally ceased and the Jerries turned back, we could see nothing but rocks and bodies in front of us. Some were hollering with pain, some were crawling away, but most of them were still. The German Medics were going through the bodies trying to help those they could.

Later we learned that the Krauts had thrown a whole regiment against our two companies — A on the left and our company C on the right. Worldwartwoveterans.org



Four Hour Truce Not Long Enough For Picking Up Dead Bodies

I just could not imagine why a rocky mountain top would be SO important to them, to lose all those troops. They had so many dead, they asked for a **four hour TRUCE** to allow them to remove their dead.

It took 24 hours to get official approval, but during that time — the war was over for us, at least for four hours. But we had to stay in our holes and keep our heads down (a Truce is a tricky deal) . . . we did, however, sneak a peek at the goings on.

The Truce started with one of our officers meeting with a Nazi officer in **NO MAN'S LAND**, about 150 yards from our hole . . . they saluted each other, and we could hear the Kraut's heels click.

When the **FOUR HOURS** were up — they still had not picked up all the dead, and asked for an extension — which was granted. When it ended, we knew it would probably be "**killing would be legal again.**" Worldwartwoveterans.org

Reference: See Vol. 1, No. 3 Fall 1981 of The Fighting 36th Quarterly, page 7-13 "The Truce at Mt. Castellone, Feb. 14, 1944." Col. Hal Reese was in charge of the arrangements.

My buddy, whom I had counseled — forgot about shooting himself — and you guessed it . . . he turned out to be one of the finest combat soldiers in our platoon . . . fought in all the campaigns and was decorated for his valor. Made me feel good and happy for what I did.

The next couple of weeks was more of same, except for the "air show" we witnessed when our bombers from **Foggia** flew over, wave

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after wave — reducing the fine old Monastery to a rock pile. Really a sad experience in “mixed emotions.”

It wasn't long until we were told to get our packs together — **WE WERE BEING RELIEVED!** The cold winter on Mt. Castellone was over for us.

We stumbled down that mountain in the black of night, falling over rocks, following the back end of a mule . . . but we didn't care — we were gonna have a shower (hot or cold), a change of clothes, and a hot meal and be warm again.

Worldwartwoveterans.org

This covers my initiation to combat. I went on to fight again in all the campaigns yet to be fought, I later received the Distinguished Service Cross, Silver Star, Bronze Star and four (4) Purple Hearts . . . however, I will always salute and take my hat off for any man that fought the **BATTLE OF CASSINO** and the **RAPIDO RIVER**.

Those brave men of 141st and 143rd Infantry that crossed the bloody Rapido — certainly deserve a special place in our 36th Division history.

NOTE: Unlike the Krauts we fought later in France, the German soldiers in Italy were well-equipped, well-trained and very dedicated, and they mostly — they always seemed to be on higher ground than we were.

In closing — **“My God Bless every one of those brave men who fought or died during the wicked and horrible fighting which took place on the Bloody Rapido.”**

Evan E. Voss
Company C 142nd Infantry



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EDITOR'S NOTE: It was spring 1987 when we first heard from Evan E. Voss. He sent in his “story” and joined the Association. In his letter to LENWLK he indicated that he intended to **“search” for, and contact a lot of his old buddies of Co C 142nd.**

He works fast. He and his wife visited with CLARENCE BRADBERRY in Las Vegas for a “first time” meet in 42 years. (Both were awarded the D.S.C.). Photo of these two was published in the May 1987 Newsletter, on Page 8.

Again we asked Voss to give an update on his quest to

Transition of a Green Replacement

“locate” seven of his old war buddies. Here’s his reply:

VOSS TO JARY—Dear Editor:

You asked for results of my adventure to find my old comrades, and it was a very rewarding experience. After 40 plus years, it’s a pleasure to visit, write to, or communicate with long-lost fox-hole buddies: Here’s my resume:

Seek and Search For Old Buddies Is Truly A Journey of Joy . . .

I really didn’t know how long it would take, but I was determined to ‘try’ to locate my old friends. The first was **Johnnie Courvisier**, 10776 Livingston Drive, North Glenn, Colorado. My schedule was short but did spend a few hours with Johnnie at his home. I believe he was the only one in our platoon that fought in all battles, Salerno to War’s End.

Pfc John Courvisier

Memories galore: When I took over as squad leader, I made him my assistant leader. He was the CALMEST MAN in combat that I had ever seen. We all admired him for always being **STEADY AS A ROCK**.

I recall when Co’s C and A made an attack near Eloyes, France. The Krauts let our two lead platoons across an open field and when we entered a small patch of woods, they pulled up a tank on our left and right flank . . . they put cross-fire in that open field — so there was no-going-back, and our support platoon couldn’t move ahead. . . **THEY KILLED EVERYONE, including our Capt. Fugate.**

They laid down a barrage of ‘88s and mortar fire you just couldn’t believe, and they fired all afternoon into that patch of woods. It seemed like 5 to 10 rounds were landing at one time. They stopped when darkness came.

Out of the two platoons in the woods, there were only 15 of us left, able to carry the wounded out of the area. Only reason we survived, was a large bomb hole, and we piled into it.

I remember when Johnnie came running and jumped into the hole, his uniform was solid blood — he’d been hit in the neck or face, and blood was oozing out of the wound, but we remained cool as a cucumber. We pulled as many of the wounded into the crater as we could find. We had 3 Frenchmen Free Fighters with our platoon, one had both legs blown off, and we pulled ‘em in the crater and applied tourniquets, but he died before it got dark.

I still remember Lt. McAnn, who took charge after Capt. Fugate

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was killed, and he spent hours running back and forth ducking '88s and mortar fire to set up a defense with what was left of the company (he was later KIA by a sniper).

Thank God, when darkness came we carried our wounded back to the defensive line our Battalion had set up.

Lt. Clarence Bradberry (DSC) **Pfc Joseph Voelker**

After visiting with **Clarence Bradberry** (see elsewhere in this story), we left Las Vegas and drove to Irving, Texas to see **Joe Voelker**. We tried in vain, but could not locate him. (Later we found that he was in a hospital.) Joe was my BAR man and probably the best in the world as far as I'm concerned.

As many know, the BAR was famous for firing and then JAMMING. But not for Voelker. He kept the gun clean and oiled, and can't remember him ever having a jammed gun. Joe was awarded the Silver Star and Bronze, and was included in write-ups where Bradberry appears.

S/Sgt Ewel Bell

My next one — **Ewel Bell**, (a rifleman in my squad) and I had asked Joe Voelker to help me make contact, and shortly afterwards, my phone rang and Bell was on the line. . . he said, "**Joe drove all the way from Irving, Texas to my home in West Point, Mississippi**".

That was exciting news — this man, Bell, was always dear to my heart. When I got knocked down with a machine gun bullet he was trying to catch a tank. He saw me lying there with more machine gun fire trying to finish me off. Ewel dashed through the fire, pulled me into a shell hole and succeeded in stopping my bleeding in my neck and shoulder.

Then a shell landed in front of the hole and ripped the top of my nose open. Ewel stuck a wad of cotton on it, he then waited until more shelling came in, which smoked up the hill, then dragged me out of the hole and over a slope on the hill. When we got to the aid station, the Doc found another bullet in my wrist.

Ewel Bell was a fine rifleman, and it'd take a whole book to tell his story, but here's a few: It was near Lambert, France and the weather was cold. Early one morning, artillery and mortar fire was continuous. I alerted the whole squad and called Platoon CP, who reported that Company B was under attack in the woods outside of town. One platoon had been captured and the other two were surrounded.

Lt. Bradberry sent word to prepare squads for attack. I sent two

Transition of a Green Replacement

men to Platoon CP to draw ammo, while Sgt. Leadingham, Sgt. Jones and myself went to the top of the hill with Lt. Bradberry.

There we found **Capt. Dewey Mann** in the upper floor of the last house on the street. He advised Bradberry that he had been cut-off from the rest of the company and pointed out through the window about where the platoon was located. By this time, our platoon of two men were coming up the street. Lt. 'Brad' gave only one order: **"Sgt. Voss on left, Sgt. Leadingham, center and Sgt. Jones on right."**

I remember looking at Ewell and he was 'solid' ammo hanging all around him. We made it OK, but soon as we entered the woods, all hell broke loose — the Krauts were suited out in Polar Bear gear, crawling in the snow all over the place, in trees, had flame-throwers and the works.

When that platoon got fired on, it was almost automatic . . . every gun started blasting away, and those men started moving forward in a perfect line. Later, Co B told us they thought the rest of the battalion was coming in to get them out . . . all they could do was keep their heads down in the holes. When it was over, **there was 37 dead Germans and we captured 30.**

I looked at Ewell and it was unbelievable — he stood there with his M-1 and the front hand guard completely burned off, and the rest of his weapon was still 'smoking'. Each of us squad leaders received a Silver Star, but every man in the 22-man platoon deserved one also.

After the attack, we were kneeling behind the trees to see if they were going to counter-act. Lt. 'Brad' was on the tree to my right, and he yelled — **"Voss, duck"**, and fired over my head. He's spotted a **Kraut taking-a-bead-on-my head — and wham, he dropped over dead with a hole in HIS head.**

1st Sgt Gerald Devens

Pfc Franklin Miller

Gerald Devens of Plattsburgh, NY and **Franklin Miller** of Hickory, North Carolina both were in my squad as 1st and 2nd scout. Both joined us after we came off Mt. Castellone.

Devens and Miller were excellent scouts and no matter how rough it got, they were always well up front. How Gerald ever escaped a 'Purple' I shall never know. In one instance, he walked within 50 feet of a hidden Kraut machine gun, that opened fire on him and Miller and neither man was hit. Devens was the "eyes and ears" of our platoon and certainly deserved more than 2 Bronze Stars. Franklin Miller stayed with us through Italy, and after the Southern France invasion developed a bad case of battle shock and fatigue and was re-assigned.

S/Sgt Matthew Ruggerio (DSC)

Matt Ruggerio of North Bregan, NJ was hart to locate, but as he was also recipient of D.S.C., I located him when thumbing through the Roster of our Publication for members of Legion of Valor.

Ruggerio joined Company C 142nd about two months before I did. Matt had relatives in Italy and he would take a few of us with him when we were in the Salerno area, training for the invasion of the Riviera. To go with the D.S.C., Matt also has the Bronze Star (Valor) and the Purple Heart.



EDITOR'S NOTE:

This story by Evan Voss is one of the best we have received that describes the inner-feelings of a raw recruit and his baptism in a fierce battle.

His four Purple Hearts is not a record, but we felt compelled to ask for a few details about each of these hits. We asked for details, and here is his reply:

My first to take a wound was a bullet in the left chest. **Number 2** was a piece of shrapnel that ripped open my right shoulder, and the **3rd one** was shrapnel lit in my left leg. But, the worst was yet to come. **Old Number 4** and final was a machine gun bullet that went through my neck and left shoulder, plus a piece of shrapnel ripped my nose open.

(Just for the hell of it, I looked up the word SHARPNEL in the Websters, and was amazed to find that it was named for British artillery officer—General Henry Sharpnel, 1761-1842). Of course, you probably already knew that.

Voss continues: When I returned to my unit from the hospital, they weren't going to send me "back" to my company, because Regulations state—that anyone with THREE Purple Hearts would not be returned to a combat unit. Even though I had FOUR, I begged them to send me to my old unit. OK, after signing about ten copies of WAIVERS, and went back to my Company C 142nd.

This may sound strange, BUT all I knew was combat, and I couldn't see myself leaving these loyal buddies of mine after all we had been through. . .together.

After being hit four times, and many of my buddies had about the same record—we all knew that there were ONLY 3 ways to get-out-of-combat: **DEATH, Serious Wound** and the **End of the War.**

Transition of a Green Replacement

Company C has Unparalleled Record.

When 1st Lt. Richard Odiorne and 2d Lt. Shelby Speights left the regiment to go home, Company C's highly-decorated officer group was dwindled to two.

Probably never before in the history of the 142d, has one company had a group of officers simultaneously who have received the awards as these officers.

Back in France, Captain Nathaniel Kaplan was commanding the company and as a combat man had won for himself the Distinguished Service Cross and the Silver Star. When the war ended, he was taken from the company and transferred to Regimental Headquarters.

2d Lt Shelby Speights attracted considerable attention as a Staff Sergeant when he was platoon sergeant of the Third Platoon. In addition to getting a battlefield appointment, he received five Silver Stars and a cluster to a Bronze Star Medal at one ceremony, an action unprecedented in the Seventh Army. Now he is on his way back to Baxterville, Mississippi.

1st Lt Richard Odiorne as Weapons Platoon Leader distinguished himself in France to the extent that he was awarded the DSC. He, too, is on his way home.

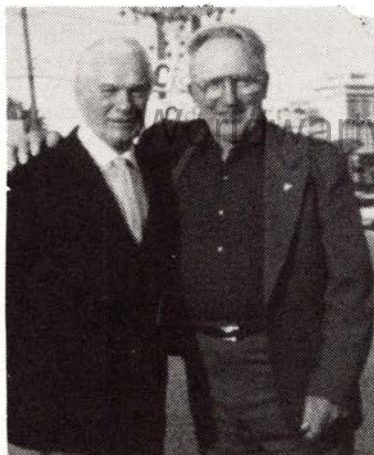


1st Lt. Bradberry

But two remain — 1st Lt. Clarence Bradberry and 2d Lt Anthony Mazur. Lt. Bradberry joined the regiment in France as an undecorated 2d Lieutenant. Now he holds a DSC, a Silver Star with cluster, and commands the company.

2d Lt Mazur joined Company C in France as a non-commissioned officer and went on to win himself a battlefield appointment and a Distinguished Service Cross.

Clarence Bradberry and Evan E. Voss



Clarence Bradberry (left) and Evan Voss have a mini-reunion and talk about old times with Company C 142nd, and what a happy occasion these meetings are.

After tracking down all seven of the men Voss was looking for, he recently sent LENWLK a check to cover dues for each of the men... a nice gesture of friendship for old buddies.

Such outings are highly recommended to our troops, and the rewards are many. Try it.

DSC, Service Plaque presented at colorful Ceremony

S/Sgt Evan E. Voss, a squad leader in C Company's fighting Third Platoon stood before Major General John E. Dahlquist to receive a Distinguished Service Cross, the Nation's second highest award, during an impressive ceremony at the 142d parade grounds on 21 June. Voss received the coveted award for his actions at unforgettable Oberhoffen.

His citation reads:

When two German tanks, supported by infantry elements, launched a counterattack to retake a row of houses, Sergeant Voss, acting Platoon Sergeant of the 3d Platoon, moved to an exposed position at a first floor window of the platoon command post and began relaying corrections to the friendly artillery observer. Although he was subjected to a heavy concentration of enemy automatic weapons fire, he remained in position and fired his rifle at the enemy attackers. His accurate fire killed four Germans, wounded four and forced the remainder to flee in disorder. After losing their infantry support, the tanks withdrew. By his magnificent courage and outstanding aggressiveness, Sergeant Voss was responsible for repelling a strong enemy counterattack.



Maj. Gen. Dahlquist

S/Sgt. Voss

AWARD of SILVER STAR

S-Sgt. Evan E. Voss, son of Mr. and Mrs. Max E. Voss of Manawa, has recently been awarded the Silver Star Medal for gallantry in action in France. He is a member of the 142nd Infantry of the 36th "Texas" Division of the Seventh Army.

The local soldier's division was the first to land on the mainland of Europe in World War 2. On the morning of September 9, 1943, the 36th Division stormed ashore at Salerno and in 13 days had established a firm foothold that was to lead to the bloody but successful battle of Italy.

Later they saw action at Migrano, St. Pitra, Mt. Maggore, Mt. Lungo, Mt. Trocchio, Cervia, St. Elia and Castellone Ridge, all forerunners to

the battle of Cassino.

The unit's most brilliant chapter was reached at Velletri, Italy. On a surprise maneuver they captured 5,000 prisoners with a minimum of casualties.

On the 15th of August 1944, the Division made its second amphibious assault when they were one of the first units ashore on the French Riviera under the command of Major General J. E. Dahlquist. They participated in the drive up the Rhone Valley and played an important part in the encirclement of the German Nineteenth Army with other units of Lt. General Alexander M. Patch's American Seventh Army.

Transition of a Green Replacement

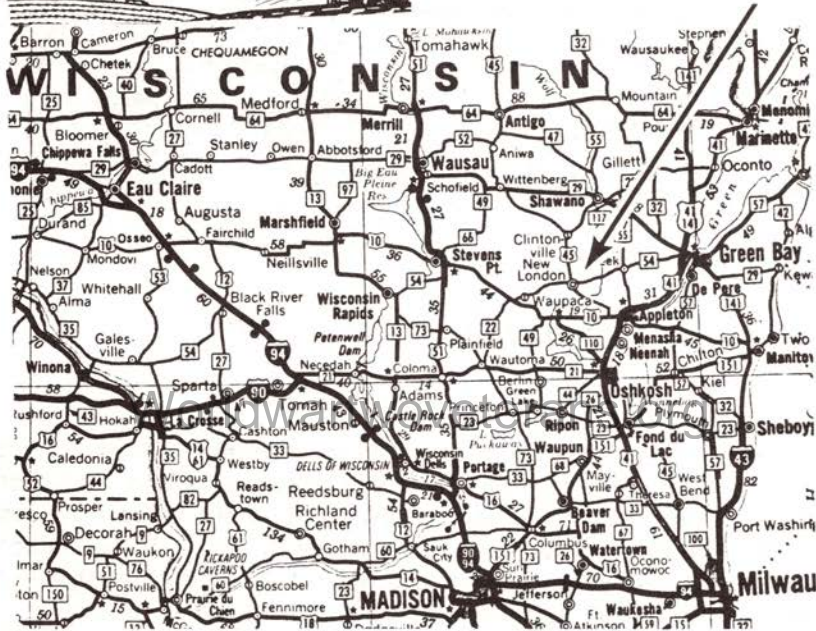
THE COUNTRY GENTLEMAN

Everybody knows that WISCONSIN, The Badger State is the Dairyland of the Nation, and you knew that Wisconsin gets its name from the Algonquin Indians...but "where the hell is NEW LONDON", where Voss lives and operates a dairy herd of 300 contented cows.

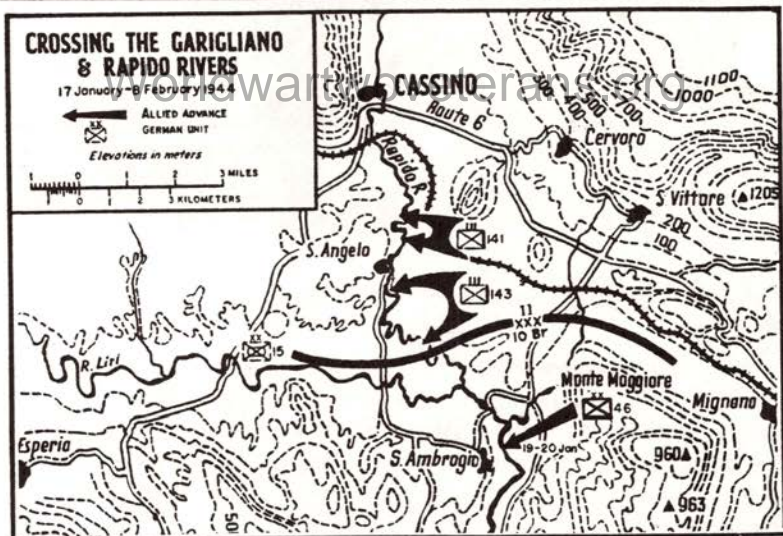
As shown below, New London is a few miles west of Green Bay, home of the famous Packers football team...and New London is a short hop from MANAWA, Voss' birthplace and hometown.



EVAN E. VOSS
600 E. BRUCE ST. PH. 982-4761
NEW LONDON, WI 54961



A "BLOODY AWFUL" PLACE



Map 2: The First Battle of Cassino showing 10 Corps attack and 36 Texas Divisions attack.

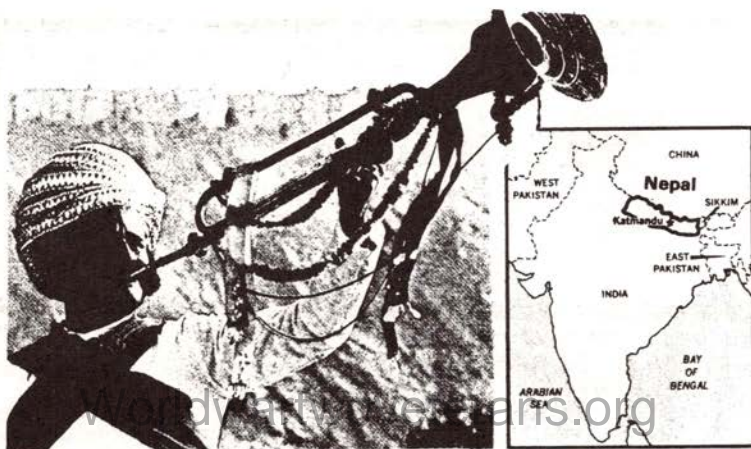
The Battles for Cassino

Dear Editor,

I am enclosing the story of the Irish Colonel. I'm sorry I have forgotten his name but that, for me, was two wars ago. As S-2 of the 141st Inf. I did not keep a diary at the front since that was against the rules. However, I did manage to keep a trunk-load of maps and overlays and notes and when I got back to rear areas would write out a journal for my personal record.

At war's end, I was on the Riviera with the group putting up the monument at Le Drammont where we landed. All of my papers and part of my journal were stolen (probably by a hotel bell-hop) the day I left for home. I had several footlockers by that time but

“A Bloody Awful Place”



Gur-kha (goor-ka) n. 1. A member of a Rajput ethnic group predominate in Nepal. 2. A soldier from Nepal serving in the British or Indian armies.

Ne-pal — A kingdom, 54,000 sq. miles in area, in the Himalayas between India and Tibet, population: 9,500,000, Capital, Katmandu.

managed to save only one. I'm sure the thief burned all my papers!

I only touched lightly on the gory side of Monte Cassino since I mainly wanted to focus on the Irish Colonel. The slopes in the area where our regiment was located were like a charnel house. The dead lay where they had fallen for the most part. Snow had built up on their bodies so that, finally, it was impossible to tell what army they had served.

It's my understanding that more men at Cassino than anywhere else actually disappeared, never to be identified, in the war zones.

Father Fenton, Chaplain of the 141st, went back to Monte Cassino time after time both during and after the war in an effort to identify one of our officers. The officer's body had never been found so far as could be ascertained. I had seen him at the CP on Monte Cassino just the day before the Gurkhas relieved us.

He had gone AWOL from a hospital in order to be with his troops. His wounds were not healed and several of us tried to persuade him to report back to the hospital. He said he'd think it over but in the night left the CP ostensibly to climb to the forward areas. No one ever saw him again. It's my own belief that the constant cannonading with 120 mm mortars contributed to the disappearances there.

R. K. Doughty

A "BLOODY AWFUL" PLACE



By R.K. Doughty
Mamaroneck, New York
Former S-2, 141st
and G-1, 36th Division



There was something about the way the Germans developed the defenses of Monte Cassino, the tangled terrain, with false crests and steep slopes, the snow heaped on the bodies of the dead — men of several nations and Italian mules — that couldn't be evacuated, and the nightly serenades of Nebelwerfers that molded that section of Italy into a corner of Hell, completely obliterating the centuries-old aura of a religious sanctuary symbolized by the monastery, so soon to become a derelict of war.

I climbed the back trail to Monte Cassino, alone, one winter's day starting from the small town of Cairo. It was my job to locate one of the regimental headquarters of the 34th Division (which one, I no longer recall) well up toward the crest of Monte Cassino. As I was to learn with increasing clarity as the day wore on, no one seemed to know where any Allied unit was located on that desolate ridge line extending from Mt. Cairo along Castellone Ridge to Monte Cassino.

The trail grew more precipitous with every mile until there were places where the Engineers had had to cut stairways into the path so that mule trains, the main source of supply to the forward areas, could make it up the steep grades. Ice and snow added to the danger of slipping off the traveled way where German mines and booby traps awaited the unlucky man or mule that fell over the edge. Large chunks of mule in the trees above several slopes attested to the power of the concealed explosives.

Near the bottom of the trail there was a lot of traffic, since several trails converged near a field where the Medics had set up a Battalion Aid Station. Occasional troops could be seen off to the flanks or in deep chasms serving mortars and gun emplacements part way to the top of the ridge.

At the crest of a lesser hill I found the rear CP of the regiment I was hunting but no one there knew exactly where the forward echelon was located. Nor was anyone willing to go forward with me even though the 141st Infantry was about to relieve, or, initially, to reinforce the 34th Division in one sector.

There were no telephone wires to follow and radios were not operating well in the mountains. At one juncture, as I was moving

"A Bloody Awful Place"

along Castellone Ridge, the Germans laid down a rolling mortar barrage that swept across the ridge and down its flank toward my position. Fortunately, for me at least, they rolled it back again before I had to do more than move lower on the ridge.

During the time that I was traveling from the rear CP of the regiment I was seeking until I found its forward CP, some four hours were to elapse during which time I saw but one man. I came up over a small rise and stopped in my tracks, for looming directly in front of me was the monastery. I was well south of where I should have been and from all that I could judge, beyond our lines. I dropped to the ground behind the rise and searched the monastery through my field glasses. There, looking at me through field glasses from a position near the monastery wall, was an enemy observer. I rolled out of sight and took off at high speed through some woods toward the crest of the ridge where it connects to Monte Cassino. A dozen or so mortar rounds exploded on the area I had just quit.

It was getting dark and I began to think I'd be spending the night in patrol country when I heard a muffled voice. I came up as quietly as I could through crusty snow and located a shelter-half stretched across the corner of a low-walled garden. It turned out to be the message center of the regiment I had been hunting for the better part of a day.

A GI wearing a telephone head-set and holding a .45 caliber pistol directed me to a small house, that I could just make out further along a well-defined trail. I reported in and found the CP crammed into a small, stone basement room located at ground level. When the 141st command group arrived, even though it had been drastically reduced in size, there was standing room only for most of them until the other regimental headquarters moved out several days later.

My reason for detailing something of the difficulty of the terrain leading to the top of Monte Cassino has to do with a most unforgettable character of the war I met while on the mountain and the way in which he mastered that terrain.

After the 141st Infantry, under Lt. Col. Aaron D. Wyatt, had been on the position for a short time and the regiment of the 34th Division had given way to the left to make room for our troops, I went to the top of the mountain to learn the situation on our front. Telephone wires were knocked out by enemy fire most of the time and very little communication between echelons was had except by courier.

We had been told by the C.O. whose place we took in the line that the Germans were "uphill and behind stone walls" from our troops.

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I went to an OP with a battalion commander when I reached the front lines and later could confirm that we were in positions "downhill" from the enemy, all right, but that the so-called stone walls looked more like casemates with firing embrasures. However, the most critical development was to learn that we had but 85 men on position and that they, for the most part, were manning machine guns. Casualties were enormous since no part of our MLR was secure from observation, aimed fire and hand-grenade attacks at night.

This news was about as bad as any we had had to date. By chance, a wire crew got a phone line working to our forward CP in time for me to report the precarious situation at once to Colonel Wyatt. While I did not observe what happened next, I later learned that he took off running down the trail to Cairo with his "striker" in order to call Division Hq. for replacements or relief. As luck would have it, he was ascending the stairs to the 141st Rear CP on the second floor of a house in Cairo a few hours later when shell-fire killed him and wounded Col. Andy Price, Regimental Exec.

Tree-Top Tall Irish Colonel and His Group of Gurkhas . . . a Most Unforgettable Experience

This brought about the relief of our troops but the first thing I learned on that score occurred when one of the tallest men I've seen, off a basketball court, came into the CP atop Monte Cassino. While I had notes at one time and could have named him, my notes were lost when my footlockers got misplaced during the war. My memory no longer serves me in this respect, a matter that I regret.

GREAT BRITAIN



CAP BADGES
The Brigade of Gurkhas



In any event, he was an Irish Colonel serving in the Indian Army commanding the famous Gurkhas. He stood at what I estimated to be 6'6" tall and on top of that he wore a turban. He looked to be in his middle thirties. When I first saw him he was very much fatigued from having traversed the same trail I had climbed earlier. Dressed in traditional British battle wools and wearing a large revolver on a lanyard he seemed to fill the room. By that time, I was the only of-

"A Bloody Awful Place"

ficer of the forward regimental staff fit for duty so I went over the situation with him.

When it came to locating a unit on the ridgeline he had run into the same lack of knowledge I had met, on the part of everyone encountered. Instead of bearing south, as I had done, however, he had gone to the crest of Cattellone Ridge and had been shot at by both sides. This had caused him to "hole up" as he said for part of the day and then he had finally stumbled onto our CP at about seven in the evening.

He had come across Italy from The British 8th Army and had been hurriedly briefed on our situation. As he ate some of our rations we talked. He despised the British, he said, and would not fight in the British Army. Of course, I pointed out to him that since India was part of the British Empire, fighting in its army was tantamount to fighting for the British. He smiled and said something to the effect, "You're free to make your interpretation; I'll make mine!"

"It's a Bloody Boneyard", He Said

He talked of the supply problems he had on normal terrain, stating that religious and dietary proscriptions made feeding his troops a nightmare at best. He didn't know how they'd get the necessary materials and equipment up the mountain to meet his needs. We also talked of the state of the battlefield, meaning the flanks of the whole range where the rough going, the shortage of mules and the need to supply at night had kept Allied and hostile armies from properly policing their dead. "It's a bloody boneyard," he said.

When I got to the point of telling him that we had but 85 men on position and most of them so cold they could hardly be considered in peak condition, he said, "Good God Man! Why didn't you say so!" I said, "I thought you already knew that fact. Besides, what can be done about it at this time of night? Your troops aren't anywhere near here and you certainly can't go down the mountain at night."

He jumped up, got into his gear which had been drying and said, "I'll build a bloody fire under somebody's arse before morning" and went out the door. All that night and the next day I fully expected to hear that he hadn't made it to Cairo. It was the only instance in the war I can recall when the leader of troops from another country showed any concern for the welfare of our troops, particularly under circumstances where relieving our forces meant subjecting his own to mortal danger on Monte Cassino.

One small refinement should be mentioned at this juncture: It was

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worth a DSC to venture out of the 141st's CP on Cassino to take care of one's natural needs. The Germans knew that there was only one house on that mountain side and all the time we were there they fired 120 mm. mortar rounds at it every three minutes or so of the day and night. The incessant shelling caused many casualties. A direct hit on the house, while I was with the forward troops, practically wiped out the headquarters group.

On the evening of the day following the departure of the Irish Colonel I reached a point where, willy-nilly, I was going to make a break to do what I had to do. There was no latrine, field manual instructions to the contrary notwithstanding, but there were some interesting walls and niches where one could operate without damage to sanitation.

I started out the door and I was about to shift to high gear to gain distance from the house, a shell struck at the opposite base of a stone wall some ten feet from me. Everything seemed to turn orange as my eyeballs flattened against the explosion and a rock as big as two footballs flew past me and, on striking the house, knocked a hole through its stone wall. I wasn't scratched, but the sudden shock almost made my trip abroad unnecessary!

I ran to a point about 200' away from the house. In the meantime, Nebelwerfers ("Necco Wafers" to the troops) were doing their banshee howling and shell bursts were lighting up the valley south of us. After I had relaxed into the correct position in the corner of a wall, I suddenly felt something cold on my Adam's Apple and a hand reaching inside my collar from behind. It pulled out my dog tags. The cold spot vanished and I began to wonder if I had been at war too long. I had heard nothing and seen nothing.

I became aware of some shadows moving along the trail silhouetted against the snow and distant shell bursts. I could make out turbans and unusual uniforms. **Back at the CP I once again met the Irish Colonel.** He was ghastly looking this time from having gone up and down and back up that brutal mountain trail, without rest, in a day and a half. Few men could have matched his vitality and guts.

It was one of his flank guards who had spotted me in the wall corner and had checked my dogtags while holding a knife to my throat. "You were lucky," the colonel said, when I told him what had happened.

He, himself, wasn't so lucky. He and his Gurkhas took the almost impregnable position held by the Germans on top of Monte Cassino

“A Bloody Awful Place”

but in doing so lost so many men that the immediate counter-attack was successful. **The colonel was killed.**

The Gurkha attack took place about a week after I came down from the mountain. I have remembered through the years something the tall Irish colonel said to me as we shook hands at the CP doorway. He leaned out to look around and said, **“This really is a bloody awful place, isn't it?”** It really was!

R.K. Doughty
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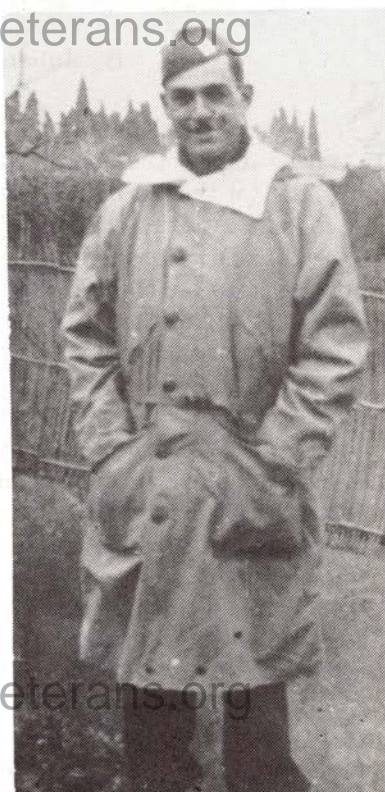
ED NOTE: Since most historians agree that the Rapido-Cassino battles were the bloodiest in WW II, we recommend that you read this one:

In this book, Brigadier E. D. Smith, who took part in the battles as a young officer in the Gurkhas, takes a fresh look at these questions and provides a detailed professional analysis of one of the bloodiest encounter in the war.

The Battles for Cassino

E. D. SMITH

A battle of the First World War fought with the weapons of the Second. Military experts have long agreed that it would hardly be possible to find a better example of an impregnable natural defensive barrier on the road to Rome than that provided by the city of Cassino. When this naturally strong position was defended by resolute and battle-hardened troops it is easy to see how and why the Germans held out repeatedly against the massive Allied assault despite its lavish air and artillery support. There were four separate and distinct 'battles' of Cassino each one being immensely costly in Allied lives. In their turn Americans, Indians, British, Gurkhas and Poles reached the summit of Monte Cassino but found it impossible to retain a hold for long. Ever since those battles were fought questions have been asked about the relevance of the Cassino operation when viewed against Anglo-American strategy as a whole. Why were these battles fought? Were they necessary? Could the Allies have avoided them by out-flanking the Monte Cassino defences? And repeatedly too, the controversy has raged over whether or not the destructive bombing of the historic monastery at Cassino was ever justified on military grounds.



Here's R.K. Doughty (as a Captain) at Regimental Hqs., at the Maddalonia area rest period which followed the "Bloody Awful Place" called Cassino.





“Runners Were Expendable”



Worldwartwoveterans.org

By Julian 'Duney' Philips

Soldiers in the European Theater had been waiting for 7 May 1945, the day Col. General Gustaf Jodl signed the unconditional surrender for the German Government at Reims, France. This signing ended hostilities in the ETO.

The 36th Division had registered 386 days of combat, since they waded ashore on the beaches of Paestum, Italy, the morning of Sept. 9, 1943, to lead the American Fifth Army against Adolph Hitler's Fortress Europe.

The events of the past twenty months had not been easy for the Texas Division. They had participated in seven European Campaigns and two Amphibious Assaults. **At times, fighting some of the best divisions in the German Army.**

The 36th Division had been 'in hell' many times, but with the help of replacements the Division was able to bounce back. As WWII came to an end, and records were checked **this Texas Division lost 27,343 men.** Of this number there were 3,974 killed, 19,052 wounded and 4,317 missing in action. Only the 3rd and 45th Divisions, who fought side by side with the 36th, had more casualties.

As the war in Europe came to a close, the Department of the Army, in Washington, started transferring newly arrived divisions to the Pacific Theater to help finish the war against Japan.

After the unconditional surrender at Reims, the men of the 36th Division waited for the formula from E.T.O. Headquarters, **to determine who would start home first.** The formula was based on months in the service, months overseas, dependents, Purple Hearts and other decorations.

I had been in and out of hospitals since 23 March, 1945, trying to find a way to get malaria out of my system. Chills and fever had taken their toll, but a Medical Doctor in Marseilles, France hit upon

Runners Are Expendable

a theory of burning it out of my body with Quinine. This treatment worked and when I was discharged from the hospital, I was told I had so many points that I would be in the first group to leave Europe.

After thirty days leave with my family in Houston, where I tried to forget the death and destruction I witnessed in Europe, I reported to Camp Joseph T. Robertson, outside of Little Rock, for my first stateside assignment.

Camp Robertson was an Infantry Training Center and still active, many combat officers were sent there as instructors. Each time one of the company officers tried to tell a class of recruits how combat really was, he would be scolded by a ranking officer, who had never been in combat. They would say things like, "Do you want to scare them? The war is over, they don't need to hear that."

I had seen more than my share of combat and here I was being scolded for trying to help a group of recruits, who someday might have to use my experiences to stay alive.

It would have been impossible for me to stay in the army under those conditions, so when an order came from Headquarters that men and officers were needed in Alaska, I put in my request, which was granted and I left the states in Jan., 1946 for Anchorage, Alaska.

My wife and daughter arrived at Ft. Richardson, Alaska in March, 1946. The war was behind us and we were trying to start a new life that had rules and laws to live by. For the past two and a half years, I had lived outside of the rules and laws. I was a soldier in combat, where it was kill or be killed. I had learned my trade well and was considered a good combat officer. I laid aside the Ten Commandments, while I lived by the sword.

Alaska was great for anyone who enjoyed hunting, fishing and outdoor sports. I hunted as hard as I had played the game of war and tried to put San Pietro, the Rapido River, Cassino, Rome, France and Germany behind me forever.

My wife and daughter helped me adjust to a whole new world.

In the fall of 1946 Ruby asked for a list of my friends from the service, so she could get our Christmas cards in the mail early. Without thinking I handed her my address book. It contained names of men who had served with me in Europe, along with dates and towns where some of the men had been killed. I must have forgot to mark the KIA's, for she sent a card to one of my runners who was killed at Velletri.

One day during the holidays, I walked into our apartment and found Ruby looking a bit down. When I asked what was troubling her she said, "I think I made a mistake in your Christmas card list

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

and the letter on top will explain." As I glanced at the letter I noticed the return address was Mission, South Dakota. Then it hit me, she had sent a card to **Raymond Chargin Elk** who had been with me on the Bloody Rapido River and Mt. Castellone. I opened the letter. It started, "Dec. 22, 1946. Dear Capt. Philips, thank you very much for remembering my son Raymond on this Christmas. I'm sure you are not aware that my son did not make it home from the war. Department of the Army said he was killed on 31 May, 1944, near Velletri, Italy."

That was all I could read, my eyes filled with tears as I handed the letter to Ruby to finish. The letter went on to say that Raymond had left his parents, wife and son on the Reservation when he joined the army because he wanted to do his part to help keep America free. I then asked Ruby to sit down, so I could tell her a story about some of my men, that I loved so much and had lost in combat.

We had been on the line since mid-November when the 2nd Bn. 143rd was pulled back south of the mountains for Christmas of 1943. This was the first Christmas away from our families and we had been through hell.

As Company G moved into its rest area, our strength was less than 25 men. The Germans had done another good job, but we were learning to fight a war.

The Germans we fought in Nov.-Dec., 1943 was the division that was up-against our 3rd Battalion at Altavilla. It was the **29th Panzer Grenadier Division, one of Hitler's best**. They had learned combat in Poland, Russia, France, Sicily and Italy.

Besides the Germans causing casualties, we had run across something new: **trench foot**. It was a form of fungus between the toes caused from wearing wet socks and boots.

On Dec. 17, 1943 we lost another good Company Commander, **Capt. James Wharton**. His wounds would take him home to be discharged.

The new Commanding Officer for Co. G was Capt. Earl Higginbotham from San Antonio, Texas. He was an excellent officer, a bit older, was always level headed and treated everyone fair.

It was 30 Dec., 1943, when our first replacements arrived. It had been raining and sleeting for weeks and the company area was ankle deep in Italian mud. 1st Sgt. Curtis Hail fell the replacements in somewhat of a company formation, so Capt. Higginbotham could welcome them. They were standing at ease as the drizzle continued, soaking them through and through. Capt. Higginbotham was sincere, speaking from his heart, as he told them they were in one of

Runners Are Expendable

the best rifle companies in the army. He added that he would expect them to do their duty to keep its good reputation. As he finished, he explained they would be placed in platoons in the next few minutes by the platoon leaders.

When the Capt. left the men, he walked into the kitchen fly where Sgt. Higgins handed him a hot cup of coffee. He looked at me and said, "**Duney, you have first choice, the 1st platoon will get twenty nine men plus two runners.**" I had asked for thirty five plus three runners, but knew we would get more replacements before we went back into the line.

The drizzle hadn't let up, so I left with T/Sgt. Mitchell Woods at my heels. He wanted his say as to who we picked for the 1st platoon. I started questioning the men as to where they came from, where they received basic training and were they married?

We had asked about a dozen men to step out of ranks, when I stopped in front of an exceptionally fine looking young man. He was soaking wet and looked half drowned, but answered my questions good naturedly. I asked him his name and he answered, "**Darold White, Sir.**" "**What state are you from soldier?**" The reply came loud and clear, "**Tennessee, Sir.**"

The questions went on and on until I glanced to the next man on my right, **who had to be an Indian.** He was dark skinned with high cheek bones and about the same age as White. I turned my head toward the Indian and asked his name. He hesitated, then it came loud and clear, "**Raymond Chargin Elk, from Mission, South Dakota, Sir.**" I asked him if he lived on a reservation, he answered, "**Yes, Sir.**" He also told me he was married and had a young son.

I spoke to White and Chargin Elk as one and said, "**Neither of you have a chance in hell to get back home or through this war. This company has been in combat three and a half months and we've had two complete turn overs and this war is a long way from being over. I'll pick three runners today and if you stay with me, I'll try to see that you get home someday. You two step out with the others.**"

As they moved out talking to one another, I glanced to the rear ranks and there stood my other runner. He was clean cut, freshly shaven, plus he was a little older than the rest. Looking into his eyes, I asked him his name, age and what state he was from. Without hesitating he answered, "**Sir, Ralph Spanner, 29 years of age and I'm from New York City.**" I asked him to fall out with the rest and as he started to break ranks, I asked, "**Soldier are you married?**" His answer was, "**Yes Sir, and we have two wonderful children.**" I acknowledged his answer with a turn of my head, as I said, "**You will be one of my runners.**"

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As we moved on down the line, Sgt. Woods poked me in the ribs and without saying a word he nodded toward a soldier in second rank. I looked at the man and asked his name. The soldier didn't hesitate and said, "**Patsi DeLeo, Sir.**" I could understand his name being Pat, but not Patsi. I asked, "**Did you say Patsi?**" He said, "**It's Patsi, Sir,**" I only had to say step over with the others and he was grinning from ear to ear.

When we reached the last man, I turned to Mitchell and asked how many we had. He said, "**Duney, we need eight more for our quota.**" I said, "**Let's go through again and get the eight.**" I walked to the first man in ranks as we continued to look for eight more good men. Sgt. Woods nudged me and said, "**That's the last.**"

I stepped to the center of the formation and said, "**My name is Duney Philips and I have the 1st platoon, I'm sorry I couldn't take all of you, but Lts. Harris and Yadrich will be here in a few minutes to pick for their platoons. I know you are wet, cold and tired, but you won't be here much longer.**"

I told Sgt. Woods to find a place for the men to pitch tents, then bring them up to the kitchen for some hot food and coffee.

The next two weeks were hell. We worked night and day stuffing every bit of information we had learned about the Germans into these new men. We had picked well. We had Pvts. and PFCs that could have been T/Sgts. in other companies in our regiment.

The three runners learned to do it all. I worked them long hours every night after the platoon hit the sack. They understood and accepted it with a smile.

One afternoon in mid-January, Sgt. Woods met me as I stepped out of a jeep. He informed me that Capt. Higginbotham was briefing the officers on our new orders. I stepped into the C.P. to find the other platoon officers crowded around a table with maps spread out from top to bottom.

Capt. Higginbotham was going over our orders and when he saw me move up to the table, he spoke, "**Duney, we are lucky, the 2nd Bn. will be in regimental reserve for this operation. The 1st and 3rd Bns. will cross a river called the Rapido and take the town on the west bank, named San Angelo.**" I glanced to the spot on the map and saw that it was southwest of Cassino.

I asked, "**What does the Battalion think of this operation?**" He answered by saying, "**They don't think it will be easy. We will cross this open ground to get to the Rapido River then cross the river. There will be more open area before we reach the high ground and turn north to take San Angelo.**"

When all questions were answered, I asked Capt. Higginbotham if

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it would be possible to send T/Sgt. Woods to a rest camp so he wouldn't have to make the initial attack on the river. The Capt. studied the question, then he asked why. I told him I wanted the Sgt. out of danger for a few days. The Capt. said he wasn't sure we could send him to a rest camp, but he would ask Battalion to approve my request.

As the division started the move toward the river, T/Sgt. Woods moved in the opposite direction to the rest camp at Caserta, where he would be safe for a few days.

Sgt. Woods had come through the Persona foul-up on Salerno, plus most of the fighting on Hill 1205 and San Pietro. **He had seen Co. G cut to pieces twice in three and a half months of combat.**

Our first move forward was into the destroyed railroad bed south of Cassino. This area was under German observation and we were within artillery range.

It didn't take but a few minutes to convince all the new men that the German artillery could hit what they were shooting at. The Germans started with phosphorous shells and drew casualties from burns. They switched to H.E. (High Explosives) and we lost a few more before we could get the men below ground.

We moved from this area to the south slopes of Mt. Lungo to spend another day and night, so we would be in position for the final move to the river.

While on the south slopes of Mt. Lungo, Darold White, Raymond Chargin Elk and myself climbed the mountain to get a better view of the overall valley where other divisions were fighting.

Mt. Cario stood majestically, dominating the north end of the valley, overlooking the Americans' positions throughout the area.

When we reached the top of the hill, I spread my maps on the ground. We started putting names to the mountains, hills and towns, which at that time were not familiar to us. In just a few short weeks, Mt. Cario, Monte Cassino, the Monastery, Cassino, San Victoria and off to the west we could make out San Angelo, with the pencil thin stream at its base, that we would know so well in the next few days.

In later years, Martin Blumenson's book titled, "Bloody River," helped the world know what happened in just a few short days. The Jan. 23, 1944 Stars and Stripes read, "The Rapido River, a small south Italian River, ran red with the blood of the men of the 36th Division."

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As White and myself tried to familiarize ourselves with the map and the surrounding area, Chargin Elk wandered around the hill, checking equipment left by the Germans who defended Mt. Lungo. Chargin Elk came back excited, saying, "Lt., you and White come over here, I want to show you something." As we moved to the west side of the crest among large boulders, some as large as rooms in a house, we came to a group of boulders and there lay the bodies of three Americans. They were men from our division who had been left as the unit pulled out and had not been found by Grave Registration.

As we looked at the dead Americans, White spoke, "Lt., it looks like one shell killed all three." Our eyes moved to the left about three feet and there was a fracture in the surface of the mountain where the shell had hit and snuffed out the lives of three young Americans.

We placed rocks to form arrows so Grave Registration would be able to find them this time and move them to the cemetery.

Our climb, which had started as a lark, took a turn of silent thought and sorrow. These were the first Americans dead that White and Chargin Elk had seen and it wasn't a pleasant sight. Not much was said on the way down the mountain. We were all deep in thought and each of us realized how close death was on Mt. Lungo.

My first job, on returning to the company area, was to phone Division Grave Registration to report our findings and give them the grid co-ordinates so they could locate the bodies.

Capt. Higginbotham walked up to where my platoon was dug in, sat down and said, "Sgt. Higgins will be here with chow around dusk. After the meal we will start our move to the river. Duney, I want you to lead with the first platoon. We will follow Co. F in a column of companies. I pray everything comes out alright for you and your men." We made small talk for a few minutes, but it meant nothing. My thoughts kept returning to the three dead Americans on the crest of Mt. Lungo and I wondered how many I would lose that night.

Ruby, the Rapido River is another story that I'll tell you at a later date. Right now, I need to tell you how I lost my runners and how Chargin Elk and Mitchell were killed.

Company G was to move from the river to Mt. Castellone, just north and east of Cassino, to relieve units of the 34th Division.

A few days before the 1 Feb. 1944, orders came for me to report to the Division Battle School as an instructor on combat patrols. This was more than I needed, so I began to put up a fuss about going to the school. I felt as long as the company stayed in combat, it was

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my belief that I was more important to my men than in the rear area instructing new officers. I believed in the school and if the division had been off the line and in training, I would have felt it an honor to be assigned as an instructor.

Word came down through channels that I would report to the school as soon as possible. I packed my gear and went through the platoon to tell my men that I'd be gone just two weeks. There were tears as I also told them I would be back sooner if I could figure out a way to be excused. **I said I would miss them and wanted them to know I wasn't deserting them for a safer assignment. I told Sgt. Woods and my three runners they would be alright until I got back.**

As we passed Division Headquarters just a short distance down the road, I noticed an Evacuation Hospital. I told the driver to turn in and pull up to the Admissions tent. I went in and was met by a Major, who was on duty receiving patients. I introduced myself and explained about the Division Battle School and how I had to leave my company on the line in the Cassino area.

I asked him for a favor, to let me report to the Battle School, where I would ask to see a doctor in reference to a slight fever I had plus strep throat that had been hanging on **since my swim in the Rapido River in January.** I explained that if he admitted me to the hospital, the division would assign a replacement in my place as an instructor. I said I only wanted to stay in the hospital overnight.

The Major went along with my scheme, so I told him I would see him in a few hours. The jeep driver left me at the Battle School where I reported to the Administration Tent and said my hellos. I knew most of the other instructors, so I asked if they had a doctor assigned to the school. The answer was no, but if I needed a doctor, there was one down the road at the Evacuation Hospital. I explained that I was running a fever and needed to see a doctor. The Captain who was welcoming everyone, listened to my problem, then called for a jeep to drive me to the hospital.

The Major I had spoken to earlier was still in the admitting office and as I entered, we shook hands. He said, **lets get down to business** and stuck a thermometer in my mouth as he turned to the Sgt. and said, **"Get all the information you need to enter this officer for a few days."** As he took the thermometer out of my mouth he checked it and said my fever was 103°. He called for a nurse to get a shot ready as he placed a tongue depressor in my mouth. When he finished his examination he said, **"Lt., you need to be in the hospital; nurse give him his shot and show him to the officers tent."**

The Major stopped to chat while making his rounds that evening. I reminded him that I expected to leave the next morning. He came right back with, **"I went along with your scheme, I phoned the Bat-**

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tle School and explained I was putting you in the hospital, but you are sick. Your tonsils need to come out plus you are running a pretty high fever. You will be here with us for a few days."

I explained that my men were on the line in the Cassino area. We had taken our share of casualties, but as yet I hadn't lost a key man and needed to get back to them as soon as possible. He said he would think about it and see me in the morning. (That night was the first time I had slept on clean sheets since arriving in Italy).

The next morning I had breakfast and went to find the Major. I couldn't wait for him to come around to check his patients. When I found him he explained that I should stay at least another day, to give the medicine another twenty-four hours to work. I explained that it was important for me to get back to my platoon. He said he didn't understand, but gave me a small box of sulfa drug and explained how I should take them.

He said if I would come in when I was off the line again he would remove my tonsils. He walked me to the Admission Tent where he asked a Sgt. to release me and to have one of the drivers run me up to my unit. We shook hands, I thanked him and then he said, "Lt. I hope you find your men all ok." I thanked him again, picked up my gear and left with the driver.

I had no idea just where my company was, so we headed north. When we arrived in San Pietro, I saw a couple of our regimental trucks, which I flagged down and asked where Co. G, 143rd. Infantry was located. The driver told me the company was on Mt. Castellone, north of Monte Cassino, but we could only go as far as San Victoria in the daylight, the rest of the trip would have to be at night.

I released the hospital jeep and crawled into the division truck and asked the driver to take me to San Victoria. As we pulled into San Victoria he turned into a court yard for cover. He told me where the kitchens were located and then told me to settle down, that we wouldn't be leaving until after dark. He invited me to ride with him on up to the small town of Cairo at the base of Mt. Castellone.

The trip across the valley was uneventful. Shells were exploding everywhere and then I heard one of our artillery pieces fire. I saw the missile burst, but couldn't see the artillery piece. They were completely dug in, tube and all, below the ground. It looked like infantry on the line with everyone dug in below ground.

As we pulled in the town of Cairo, the truck driver pointed out a building where Battalion Headquarters was set up. I thanked him for the ride and walked into Hqs. I asked a Sgt. where Co. G was located. He made a gesture skyward with his hands as he said, "What's left of it is on top of Mt. Castellone." He asked if I wanted

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to go up with the rations as they would be leaving soon. I told him I needed to get to Co. G as fast as possible.

The trail was narrow and steep and single file all the way. We made quite a few rest stops for the men who were carrying rations and water. From time to time an artillery shell would explode in the draw that we were using for protection.

After hours on the trail we reached Co. G's mortar section where we were told we were short of the company area. Climbing on, I was soon met by Capt. Earl Higginbotham. After shaking hands with some of the company personnel, the Capt. asked me if I would like a cup of coffee. I said, **"I need something after that climb."** While I was enjoying my coffee, Earl picked up the phone to the 1st platoon and asked Sgt. Mitchell Woods to come to the company C.P., without telling him I had returned.

I was just finishing my coffee when Mitchell walked into the C.P. tent and a grin spread from ear to ear. **We had known each other most of our lives and were as close as two brothers.** His first question was, **"Did they kick you out of the Battle School, or are you just playing hooky?"** I didn't answer, I picked up my gear and said, **"Earl, I think I'll get on up to the platoon. I know there will be some of the men wanting to see me before daylight."**

As we started to leave the C.P. tent, Earl said, **"Duney, I think I should tell you, while you were away."** Just then Sgt. Woods said, **"Capt., let me tell him."** As we walked out of the C.P. tent, Mitchell was asking me one question after another and I was trying to answer them as fast as I could. It was getting light as we walked to our C.P., I was home.

Something had bothered me since we left Capt. Higginbotham. We had passed too many German and American bodies laying all over the area where they had fallen during one hell of a fight and nothing had been said about them.

Our C.P. had been a German Observation Post, built from rocks and looked like a boulder from a distance. As I walked up to it there was one dead American soldier laying just outside on his back. I was just two steps from the body when I realized who it was.

I dropped to my knees as I looked the body over from head to toe. It was one of my runners, **Ralph Spanner, from New York City.** He was older than the rest of us and I had wanted him to get through the war, so he could return to his wife and children when it was all over. I rolled the body over, looking for a piece of torn uniform to indicate where the shell or shrapnel had entered, but his uniform was immaculate, as he always tried to keep it.

Nothing had been said about this and as I turned the body back

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over I looked up at Mitchell and asked, "How was he killed and where was he hit?" Mitchell dropped to his knees beside me and said, "Duney, it was a mortar barrage and a small piece of shrapnel caught Spanner just to the right of his nose, here." He pointed to a tiny bruise about three quarters of an inch to the right side of Ralph's nose. I looked closer and said, "That piece could not have been larger than one half of my little finger nail." Mitchell said, "Duney, Spanner didn't know what hit him. We were together when we heard it coming and were trying to get down. Spanner was dead when his body hit the ground. That small piece must have gone up into the brain and death was instant. White cleaned his face of blood and all the time saying how it was going to affect you."

As I brushed dirt from Spanner's uniform, Mitchell and myself stood up together and he said, "Duney, I'm sorry, but it couldn't have been helped and he didn't suffer."

As I turned around, Chargin Elk and White were both standing at the entrance to the C.P. There were no smiles, it was more like a memorial service, when White broke the silence with, "Glad to have you back, Lt." I composed myself and said, "Hasn't Sgt. Woods been treating you and my Indian right? I see by the dead Germans that you've been through a pretty good battle and it looks as though you came out on the winning side." That broke the ice. I turned to Mitchell and said, "Show me our positions, I want to talk to the rest of the men."

Sgt. Woods said, "Duney, its daylight, let's get into our C.P. before we start drawing fire. The Germans still hold Mt. Cairo, as he nodded toward the tall mountain to the north. Any movement during daylight hours brings in mortar or artillery. Everyone has been instructed to stay under cover during the day." He went on, "Tonight we will be able to see all of the men. We can stretch and move around after dark. To do it in the daylight would just be asking for trouble."

Around ten o'clock we made fresh coffee. I stood up to stretch and glanced south, across the valley toward San Pietro and San Victoria; nothing was moving in the valley. As I picked up my field glasses to get a better look at San Victoria, the town I had left the night before, an American truck came down the road to the north. I followed him through my glasses for awhile before I said, "Mitchell, you said no trucks left San Victoria in the daylight and here comes one now."

Mitchell, White and Chargin Elk all stood and picked up their glasses and soon spotted the truck. Chargin Elk spoke first, "Lt. do you see the bridge about a quarter mile this side of the truck?" I

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said, "I see it." Then he said, "When the truck hits the bridge, listen for the German gun to fire. Now do you see where the road turns 90° to the east, just this side of the bridge? The German shell will meet the truck at that turn." As we four watched the truck start over the bridge, we heard an artillery piece fire one round from behind Cassino.

Mitchell spoke as if the driver could hear him, "Hurry up, put more gas to that truck or you will meet that shell at the next turn." We kept our glasses on the truck, the driver turned the corner just as the shell hit the ground, west of the road. The truck was picking up speed as White spoke, "Lt. do you see the big house, just before the road turns north? The Krauts will fire on the truck when it passes in front of the house." I heard the artillery piece fire again and when the truck passed the house it slowed down.

By this time all four of us were pulling for the driver. The shell hit before the driver made his turn and as the shell exploded the driver picked-up-his-speed. I asked how many times the Germans would fire on a truck coming across the valley. All three chimed in as one, "five". Then Mitchell explained that the Germans had picked five target areas to fire on. If everything was just right, they would fire five times at every American truck or jeep as it tried to cross the valley. The driver was lucky, he made it across as the fifth shell exploded. A shout went up from the three.

This reminded me of a football game back home, where one side cheered a halfback trying to make a first down. But here in Italy, during the early part of Feb., 1944, a driver risked his life getting supplies or messages across that valley, south of Cassino. I never knew if the drivers that crossed the valley were doing it on their own or some officer was sending them across from San Victoria. They may not have known it then, but every American on Mt. Castellone who could see the road was pulling and praying for them to make the run safely.

There wasn't much to do on the mountain during the daylight hours, so we tried living like moles, digging our holes a little deeper. If anyone asked for help we used nitro starch to blow the holes deeper after dark. It was a must that every man stay below ground during that day or draw fire.

That night, as we moved freely over the mountain visiting the men, many asked how I had got out of Battle School. I told 'em I would much rather be on Mt. Castellone with my men than instructing new officers in the school. They told me I must be crazy, but

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that's how I felt and I meant every word.

As we moved around I asked Mitchell why Grave Registration hadn't been there to pick up the bodies. It had been my policy to move our dead out during the night because of the morale of the men seeing their friends laying dead day after day. He said the Quartermaster hadn't brought the mules and donkeys up across the valley and the mountain was too-steep for men to carry down the dead.

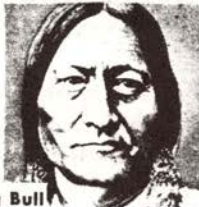
I asked him to get the men to bring all the dead Americans to the C.P., then to stack the German dead and get the place cleaned up. He answered me by saying, "Duney, let them lay where they fell, Grave Registration will get them later on." I said, "No, because while you were at rest camp, White, Chargin Elk and myself climbed Mt. Lungo and Chargin Elk found three men from the division who had been overlooked when the 142nd. left the mountain. I don't need it to happen again and especially with our men. I'll speak to Capt. Higginbotham to prod Grave Registration into getting the bodies down the mountain. Let's get the men started stacking the dead."

We stacked 'em like cord wood next to our temporary home. Around midnight it started snowing pretty hard, but the men kept bringing the dead soldiers and placing them on the stack.

As we moved through the area, it was apparent we would have four or five stacks of German dead, about head high. The Germans had really "taken-a-beating" trying to retake Mt. Castellone.

Next morning it was still snowing, covering the stacks of American and German dead, making them look like hills of snow. Everything seemed so peaceful.

We had breakfast and I asked Chargin Elk about his early life on the Reservation at Mission, S.D. For the rest of the morning we received a history lesson from a real American. We kidded him about being on the warpath with the Germans and told him he should have brought along some warpaint. Chargin Elk took the kidding good naturedly and could give out about as much as he took. It was during these sessions that we all seemed to grow closer to one another. A bond was formed between we four, closer than any we had experienced during the war.



Sitting Bull

SIoux, *soo*, is the name of an American Indian tribe which once roamed through the northern prairies. Their own name for themselves was *Dakota*, or *Lakota*. They had many divisions. Some of the Sioux, such as the Yankton and Santee Sioux, were farmers. The Sioux belonged to the Siouan language group, which included many other Indian tribes such as the Osage, Omaha, Missouri, and Catawba.

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One of the Outposts phoned the C.P. at 1:30 P.M. to report three Germans with a white flag approaching about one hundred yards in front of their position. They wanted to know what they should do. I told him if they wanted to surrender to send them up the trail, but not to leave their position. Just minutes later the phone rang again, the voice on the other end said they weren't armed, and they didn't want to surrender. They had been sent forward to get German dead soldiers and said something about a TRUCE. I said, "**Hold them there, I don't want them in our area. Let me ring Capt. Higginbotham to see if he has heard of such a treaty.**"

Higginbotham listened to my story and stated he had received no orders from Battalion along these lines. He warned me to keep the Germans out of our area because he didn't want them to know how few men we had, holding our position.

Minutes later the Capt. phoned that Battalion had received word there was to be a peace mission on the line someplace, but Battalion wasn't aware it would be in our area. He said we were to assist the Germans any way we could.

The Germans had treated me nice on the Rapido when the war was stopped for us to pick up our dead. I was on the west bank four hours with a German Lt. supervising the removal of our dead.

I told Capt. Higginbotham to stay undercover, that we had already stacked the German dead and we would take care of the situation.

I sent **Chargin Elk and White** to the north to see if they could find any more dead Germans, while Mitchell and myself covered the area toward the Monastery. We were just 75 yards from our C.P. when a M-34 (German Machine Gun) put a long burst over our heads. We both flinched but neither of us hit the ground. We walked toward the Monastery, another one hundred and fifty yards.

We were out of our area and the Germans were telling us not to come too close to their positions. I told Mitchell I thought we should work our way back because I didn't want that gunner to try and hit us, that I believed he could. As we walked through the area we located a sheer bluff with a 200 ft. drop. I turned to Mitchell and instructed him to get the men to start bringing the dead Germans to that spot. I'm going down to tell the Germans they can get the bodies at the bottom of the bluff.

I walked to the outpost where the three Germans were waiting and as I approached, they saluted. I returned their salute and asked if they spoke English. Two of the three spoke good English, so I explained that I had over one hundred of their dead stacked and ready

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for removal. I pointed to the cliff and said, "Get your stretchers to the bottom and I'll pitch the bodies over the bluff." The Germans hesitated for a second, then I added, "These men are dead, they can't be hurt any more, as far as I'm concerned. I don't intend for you to walk through my positions. Tell your officers that, and I will be delivering the bodies thirty minutes from now."

When I turned to leave, the three German soldiers saluted, I returned their salute and headed for the bluff at a fast pace. Mitchell was waiting for me with a question, "Duney, what did they look like?" I answered, "Damn fine looking soldiers. Two could speak better English than I can." I asked him to get us a few more men so we could get the job done as soon as possible.

When Sgt. Woods returned with eight more men, I explained that we would drop three bodies at a time. I did not want them rolled down the bluff. We located three spots where we could throw them straight down, without hitting outcropping from the sides. After I explained what we were to do I asked the men to pair up and pick up a body and bring it to the bluff.

I told my men that on the count of three, to let the bodies go. I checked my watch and it was time for the delivery. I glanced over the bluff and saw forty Germans standing at the bottom of the cliff. I started my count, one, two, three and there were three bodies on their way down. When they hit bottom I yelled to the Germans "retrieve the bodies."

They came forward, placed the three on stretchers and moved away from the bluff. The count continued until we had given the Germans 132 bodies. As the last three were picked up I stepped to the bluff and said, "That's all the bodies in this sector." One of the soldiers who spoke English stepped forward and said, "Thank you Lt." He saluted, I returned his salute and they moved back into the trees. I told my men to get back in their foxholes and keep their heads down.

There were no small arms or artillery firing, by either side, for the rest of the day. It was just turning dark when one of the outposts phoned to say there was a German in front of their position holding up a white flag. They asked what they should do with him. I told the outpost to wave him in without exposing their position and if he wanted to surrender to send him on up the trail, that we would pick him up.

I turned to Sgt. Woods and said, "Take Chargin Elk and pick up a German just this side of #3 outpost. He won't have a gun, so don't shoot him."

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It wasn't ten minutes until my men were back with the German. None of us could speak his language and he couldn't speak English, but we did understand that he wanted to be an American prisoner. We didn't really understand why he wanted to surrender until later. We searched him and called Capt. Higginbotham that we were sending a prisoner back to his C.P. The Capt. said, "Duney, have you taken a patrol out today?" I said, "Hell no, this man came to us and wanted to surrender." Earl said, "Well, ok, send him on back."

He Kept Repeating - "Allies Kaput"

The prisoner didn't have much money or anything of value, but he did have a letter from Germany that he kept handing to me. It was postmarked Germany, so after the second time he handed me the letter, I put it in my pocket. I didn't understand the situation but had seen and understood enough to know when he kept repeating "Allies Kaput", he meant he was 'fed-up' with the war and this was his way out.

We were off the line when I found someone to interpret the letter. It was from his wife and children. She was explaining to him how bad Germany was, there were shortages of everything. She told him she was under the impression there was no hope of winning the war, so the only thing for them to do was try to stay alive. She said she wanted him to give-up to an American unit because she felt he would be treated right, fed and clothed well. She told him the war couldn't last too much longer and was looking forward to them being together again as a family.

I've always hoped the young German soldier, who turned himself over to the 36th Division on Feb. 13, 1944, made it home after the war and found his family well.

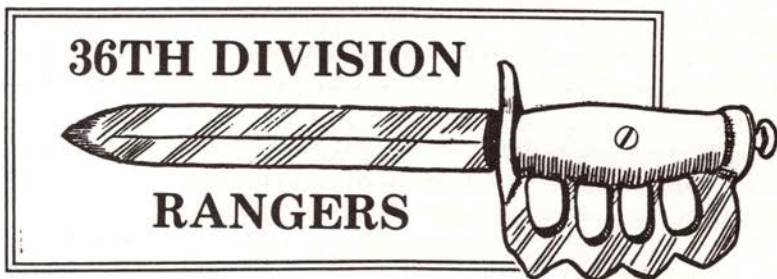
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COMMANDO TRAINING AT CAMP EDWARDS

By Robert E. Swart
Co A 142nd Infantry

A Ranger Company within the 36th Division??? You can bet your combat boots there was! After arriving in Camp Edwards, Mass. from the 1942 North Carolina maneuvers, the 36th Division Rangers were formed from the personnel of the 142nd regiment.

This Ranger unit was composed of 120 officers and enlisted personnel from each company of the 142nd regiment and these men were selected because of character and athletic ability. Company Commander was **Captain John F. Sprague** along with **Lieutenant Leonard W. Spence**, **James S. Minor**, **Frank C. Coker**, **Claude D. Roscoe**, **Judson A. Skiles** and **L.A. Kirksey**. To name a few N.C.O., there were 1st Sergeant **L.A. Crenshaw**, Sergeants **William D. Morgan**, **Vandell Taylor**, **Elder M. Thomas**, **Hiram F. Fenton**, **Alvin J. Richardson**, **William E. Pruitt**, **Clarence L. McKinney**, **George W. (Red) Rivers**, and myself, **Robert E. Swart**. The three cooks were from the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd battalions.



At left: Capt. John Sprague of Dallas was killed at Altavilla on D plus 3, has a VFW Post named in his honor in that city.

Right: James Minor would later take over 1st Battalion 142nd, and be the 'youngest' Lt. Col. in the ETO. Minor, one of the best-loved officers of the 142nd, is deceased.



36th Division Rangers

Our instructors were **Major Hedgecock** and two Sergeants who were British Commandos that survived the Dunkerque massacre in May 1940. We were bivouacked approximately five miles north of Woodshole and eight miles south of Falmouth on the beach of the Atlantic.

Reveille was at 0500 hours and after roll call we started our daily training with a six mile speed march along the beach and after returning we had our breakfast, then it was the obstacle course which was the roughest of any courses known to man, it was built by the 111th Engineers.

We were then taught the use of personal mines, booby traps, hand to hand combat, bayonet, and judo. At 1600 hours, we ran another six mile speed march.

The Army Amphibious Engineers who were trained in Florida and stationed at Woodshole Mass., brought their landing crafts to our location to familiarize us of the operations and procedures of the Higgins Landing Craft, which was used to make nightly raids across the channel to Martha's Vineyard.



These raids continued until mid-October, making landings at **West Chop, Vineyard Haven, and Tisbury**. When bad weather moved in, we returned to Camp Edwards to our units to begin training within our companies. **This continued until mid-February, 1942.**

Commando Training at Camp Edwards started with men of the 45th Division from July 15th 1942, was held on Washburn Island across Vineyard Sound to 'make' landings on Martha's Vineyard. When the Thunderbirds move out, the T-Patchers took over on August 24th, continued until full divisional exercise on Oct. 1—3rd.

Both Divisions went on to apply their amphibious skills in assault landing in Sicily, Salerno and Southern France: (From The Amphibious Training Center by Marshall O. Becker).

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Before leaving Edwards, the officers and men were assembled at Division Headquarters where we were greeted by General Fred L. Walker and congratulated for a job well done and he presented us with a certificate which read in part, --This is to certify that (soldiers name and rank) has successfully completed the training prescribed for Rangers in the 36th division and is authorized to wear the distinctive identification awarded therefore-this seventh day of January, 1943 at Camp Edwards, Massachusetts, signed Fred L. Walker - Major General U.S. Army Commanding---

After the division moved from Camp Edwards, the First Battalion 142nd was transported to Lowesville, Virginia. Upon arrival at this location, I was ordered by Captain Sprague to take thirty men from the 1st Battalion to Big Island, Virginia which was in the Blue Ridge Mountains west of Lynchburg, Virginia.

There I reported to Colonel Barrow who was Commander of the 179th Infantry Regiment-45th Division. They were bivouacked at the old CCC camp which was located on the James River. After reporting to the Colonel, he then assigned us to Service Company 179th for rations and quarters.



Our instructors were two civilians from New Hampshire, who were specialists in skiing, cliff and mountain climbing, and rappelling. After a week of cliff, mountain climbing, and rappelling, a messenger from the 179th told me to report to Colonel Barrow at once. Reporting back to Colonel Barrow as requested, I was told that the 36th Division had been alerted and I was to take my men back to the previous bivouac at Lowesville.

Upon arriving in Lowesville, we met with Lieutenant Knox of Company A. He told us that the 36th Division had been moved to Fort A.P. Hill. The next day we loaded what was left by the battalion and headed for A.P. Hill to join with our companies. We continued our training until we moved to Fort Dix, New Jersey.

And that's the way it was! North Africa and Italy is another story. Another day.

Robert E. Swart
Company A 142nd
304 Twin Diamond Road
Roswell NM 88201

36th Division Rangers



Ranger Units Were Colorful In Their Many Demonstrations In Boston and Other Near-by Cities



WARTIME TRAPEZE ACT. The youngsters thought a soldier's life must be a lot of fun when they saw this stunt during a demonstration yesterday at Roger Williams Park. It's called a "dead man's slide," as demonstrated by a member of the Rangers.

The "Dead Man's Slide" above — that's me with Sgt. Roy Gamble and Cpl. Ward DeHay also of Co A 142nd — this appeared in the Providence RI newspaper on Nov. 10 1942.

About to silence and disarm a "Nazi" sentry are Private 1st Class James N. Kelley and Sergeant Tom S. Whitney, members of Ranger troops in training at Camp Edwards. Mission of the two Rangers is to silence the sentry in such a manner that he will not be able to sound a warning. Private Kelley is about to grab the sentry's rifle while Sergeant Whitney clamps his gloved hand over the "enemy's" mouth. Corporal Lloyd D. Lamascus is the sentry.



10,000 IN HUB SEE RANGERS

Demonstration Watched
on Boston Common



RANGERS IN LEAD

Hard-bitten, surprisingly short and ominously toughened Rangers, the Commando troops of the American Army, gave the most realistic touch of modern warfare to the Boston parade. Chosen for their endurance and their ability to steal silently upon the enemy and help make raids successful by a twist of the ropes they wore round their shoulders or a thrust of their "brass

knuckle" knives, the Rangers marched near the head of the procession with the finality of a group of tanks advancing upon the foe. Their faces seemed grim, their drab olive uniforms hardly concealed their muscles and their whole demeanor, soon to be tested in some theater of far-away war, was one of intensive training. Before and after the parade, they demonstrated their art of killing.

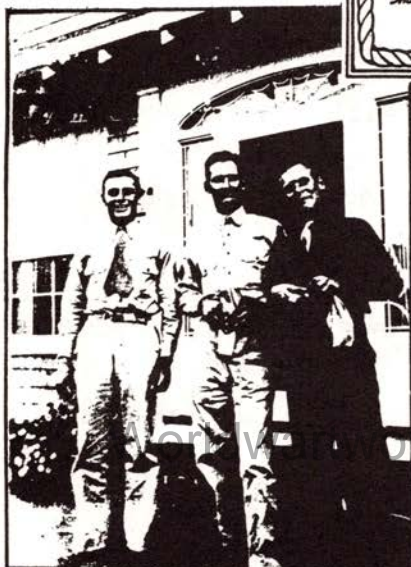
36th Division Rangers



**"An Elite Group"
the 36th
RANGERS**



NOW FOTO taken at Fort Worth Reunion holding the Certificate each man received for this assignment - **ROBERT E. SWART** proudly displays his copy.



36th Division Rangers trained at Centerville, Cape Cod, Mass. Sept. 1942 . . . here's old foto of three men: from left - Robt. E. Swart, Co A 142nd of Blanket TX; Clarence McKinney, Co L 142nd, Breckenridge; and Alvin J. Richardson, Co C 142nd Infantry.



Gen. **FRED L. WALKER** was proud of the great showing of these men of the 36th Division "Brass Knuckle Knives".



Part VII

”KRIEGIE”

The Road Back • Conclusion

By Alan “Chum” Williamson

Worldwartwoveterans.org

It was 18 May 1945, ten days after the war ended. The few American officer PWs still at Stalag IIIA, Luckenwalde, had been moved into one end of a barracks, with room to spare. Although the Russians had twice refused to permit American convoys to evacuate us, they made no effort to prevent us from leaving on our own initiative. And most had.

Our Senior American Officer was now a major. All the lieutenant colonels had walked out and hitchhiked to the Elbe, or had been evacuated by ambulance. Tempers were short among the few of us who had elected to remain until the Russians evacuated us.

At bedtime, a lieutenant moved a small table into the narrow aisle beside his bunk. **“Somebody’s going to get de-nutted on that table!”** a captain announced angrily. **“Whose is it?”**

Another Kriegie gave the offender’s name.

A six-footer with broad shoulders and trim waist, the captain was strikingly handsome. **“Where is he?”** he demanded truculently as he walked toward the offending table, looking in bunks.

Rising up on his elbows, the lieutenant said, **“Here I am!”**

“Is this your table?” the captain asked.

“Yes. Are you in charge of this bunk area?”

“Yes.” He had taken charge on his own initiative.

“Then I’ll move out of it, first thing in the morning.”

Instead of ordering the defiant lieutenant to move the table at once, the officious captain went to where the SAO was lying in the bottom of the tier of bunks nearest the door. He jerked the pudgy, middle-aged major out on the floor and pummeled him about the head. He said, **“You’re a sorry Goddamn excuse for a Senior American Officer!”**

The major offered no resistance. When his critic released him,

"Kriege" The Road Back

he muttered something unintelligible as he crawled back into his bunk.

I next saw Captain Midnight in 1948 at the Infantry School, Fort Benning. He was by then a major and also an instructor. One of his ribbons indicated he had been awarded the Medal of Honor.

It would have been interesting to see the result if he had tangled with the lieutenant who called his bluff. The latter was a former middleweight fighter.

I visited the American enlisted compound. Conditions there were appalling. Some 2,800 men were sleeping on the ground in circus tents. The excelsior-filled mattresses were jammed together so those not in the outside rows had to crawl over others. Their meager belongings were piled on the mattresses.

On 20 May 1945, twelve days after VE-Day, the Russians loaded the Americans still there into trucks and took us to the Elbe River. There, we dismounted and walked across a foot bridge to a waiting American convoy. Most were EM, who had outnumbered the officers by 4,000 to 500 when the Russians took over the Stalag.

Our first pit stop on the road back was RAMP Camp No. 1, at Rheims, France. (RAMP: Recovered Allied Military Personnel.) The camp staff included medical officers, nurses, and Red Cross "**Doughnut Dollies.**" The latter listened sympathetically to our horror stories.

One of the girls said, "**You're wearing a British jacket, a British overseas cap, and American first lieutenant's bars. What are you?**"

"**I'm an American first lieutenant,**" I grinned.

We were given hot baths and were 'deloused,' although it is unlikely that any of us had lice. Each consigned his Kriege garb to the incinerator and was issued new clothing from the skin out. We were given new ID cards and 'dog tags' and a partial pay. I had my first decent meal since leaving the USS Elizabeth Stanton. We were debriefed. I mentioned that I had never witnessed any physical mistreatment of PWs. Also, that I didn't appreciate our treatment by the Russians.

We were given thorough physical exams. I was in good condition except for frostbitten feet. For that they gave me a Purple Heart.

Our next stop was **Camp Lucky Strike**, a tent city staging area at the Port of Le Havre. After more processing, I was made commander of a 'packet' of 200 enlisted RAMP and five lieutenants of the U.S. Army Air Corps, for the voyage to the states.

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Posted on the bulletin board was a drill schedule that included calisthenics. A major assigned to the permanent party said, **"Don't pay any attention to that schedule. It's eye-wash. If I have RAMP drilling and doing calisthenics, they'll complain to their congressmen. Then pretty soon I'd be wearing captain's bars."**

He added, **"Any of you who want them can have three day passes to Paris. But if your ship sails, and it probably will, you go to the bottom of the list."**

Oflag 64 Kriegies received no mail of any kind after leaving there. However, I was in no hurry to go home. My marriage had reached a point of no return before Pearl Harbor. Ahead lay a messy divorce and child custody suit.

I took the three day pass, So did my five lieutenants. At the nearby airfield, an infantry major was in charge of space available transportation. He gave me, the only ground force applicant, the one available space. My five flyboys had to hitch rides to Paris, 134 miles away.

I applied for transient quarters at the Army's Paris billeting office. A sergeant was about to give me a room in a downtown hotel when a captain sitting at a nearby desk intervened.

"Are you a RAMP?" he asked.

"Yes," I admitted.

"Then we don't have anything for you. Our transient billets are for combat troops."

"That's what I thought I was." I was wearing my infantry crossed-rifle 'idiot sticks.'

"Lieutenant, why don't you rent a hotel room in the Moulin Rouge?" He made no effort to conceal his contempt.

"Captain," I protested. **"I'm not looking for a whorehouse. I just want to see Paris."**

"Then the best I can do for you is a bunk at the University of Paris, at the end of the subway."

After what seemed like an hour's ride, I was given a room in the Edifice Hellenique, the university's Greek Building.

I wondered if all RAMP visiting Paris were given such cavalier treatment. Not so. There was a RAMP Camp in Paris. RAMP sent there didn't need transient quarters. Most of those sent from Rheims to Camp Lucky Strike either didn't take the Paris pass or used some of their back pay to stay in downtown hotels.

The first night, I saw the famed Folies Bergere. The second, I went bar-hopping. Smarting from the treatment received from the armchair commando in the Paris billeting office, I returned to Camp Lucky Strike a day early. My ship had just sailed. I could see it out in the harbor.

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The nights were cold in late May and early June. RAMP slept on canvas cots, and the penetrating cold came up through the canvas. I lined my cot with newspapers, which helped a little.

I was given another packet, which included the five lieutenants. The mess officer gave each packet commander meal tickets for his men. Food was disappearing, and he thought hungry RAMP were going through the line twice.

Not so. Our stomachs had shrunk. Mess personnel were stealing food and taking it into Le Havre, where they traded it to French beauties for favors.

Lieut. Gen. Hugh Drum arrived with a party from the states, and went through the chow line. **“Are you getting enough to eat?”** he asked a gaunt RAMP.

“No, Sir.”

Drum took the serving spoon from a startled KP and piled the man's plate high. **“How's that?”** he asked.

“That's better, Sir.”

Another RAMP said, **“General, I hear you flew over in your own plane. Can I go back with you?”**

The man's gall took Drum by surprise. **“Yes,”** he agreed.

All of the manual labor at Camp Lucky Strike, as at RAMP Camp No. 1, was done by German PWs, supervised by black American soldiers. The Germans couldn't have cared less. They were happy to be prisoners of the Americans rather than the Russians.

A sign over the entrance to the headquarters read, **“THROUGH THESE DOORS PASS THE WORLD'S FINEST SOLDIERS, THE U.S. ARMY.”** A smaller sign read, **“No Germans may go through these doors.”**

Signs in the mess hall and in the headquarters cautioned, **“Despite any resentment you may feel toward them, don't mistreat the German POWs. No victorious army will ever come to liberate them.”**

A few Ex-Kriegies left Germany hating their captors. Most respected them. One of every three — 34 percent — of American prisoners of the Japanese died in captivity. Many were murdered in cold blood. Air Corps personnel shot down during the Doolittle raid on Tokyo were beheaded.

Only a fraction over one percent of Americans captured by the Germans died in captivity. Only two at Oflag 64, both of natural causes. One was Captain Richard H. Torrence, a T-Patcher of Waco, Texas. Dick died of a congenital heart defect. The other was an officer who was evacuated to a civilian hospital, where he

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died of stomach ulcers. His condition was aggravated by the German diet.

Captain Phillip "Pop" Foster, a 45th Division forward artillery observer when captured in Sicily, said of atrocities committed by German military personnel, **"They didn't do anything we didn't do."**

"In Sicily," Foster continued, **"45th Division soldiers were killing prisoners. They shot them, then claimed they were trying to escape. The G2 was going crazy. He couldn't get any information.**

"When the Germans withdrew across the Strait of Messina, they freed some American prisoners. I think they did it to shame us."

No way. The Germans freed PWs they were unable to evacuate when withdrawing, as a matter of policy. They were also strong believers in retaliation. Whatever you did to theirs, they did to yours. During the Dieppe Raid, Canadian commandos handcuffed captured Germans. For a long time afterward, the Germans handcuffed Canadian PWs.

The situation in Sicily was worse than Foster realized. In his book, **"A General's Life,"** General of the Army Omar N. Bradley states that General George S. Patton, Jr., admonished 45th Division soldiers in a pep talk just before the invasion of Sicily, **"Be very careful when the Germans or Italians raise their arms like they want to surrender. Sometimes they do this to throw you off guard. Then they shoot you or throw grenades at you. Watch out for this. Kill the sons of bitches unless you're sure they're surrendering."**

Shortly after the 45th Division hit the beach at Scoglitti, Sicily, a captain and a sergeant, in two separate incidents, lined up a total of seventy-nine German PWs and murdered them in cold blood.

Bradley brought general-court-martial proceedings. During the trial, which lasted many months, the two men pleaded that they were following Patton's instructions. The proceedings were kept secret. If made public, the consequences could have been fatal to every American captured by the Germans.

Masons tell the story of an American captured by the Afrika Korps. When he refused to give any information, German intelligence personnel began roughing him up.

He flashed the Masonic distress signal. No less a personage than Field Marshal Erwin Rommel himself intervened.

Most German atrocities were committed by civilian authorities against their own people. Most, if not all those committed by the military against U.S. military personnel were isolated instances,

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by individuals, not sanctioned by higher command.

On 17 December 1944, during the Battle of the Bulge, Battery B, 285th FA Observation Battalion, was captured in its entirety near Malmedy, Belgium, a city whose name has become synonymous with massacre. The 125 Americans, their hands in the air, were herded into a field in the nearby town of Baugnez.

A Belgian civilian watched from the doorway of a cafe as the men, their hands still in the air, chatted with unconcern. A German soldier in a half-track fired a pistol into the group. One fell.

“Stand fast!” an American officer shouted.

An armored car skidded to a stop. There was a second pistol shot, followed by the chatter of a machine gun. The Belgian watched in horror as all 125 men were gunned down. Some still alive, moaning, were killed by pistol shots.

About twenty of the victims, feigning death, whispered with each other a plan to make a break for a nearby woods. Only three made it to the safety of the forest.

RAMP at Camp Lucky Strike who missed the boat found the waiting period much longer the second time around. Instead of two or three days, it became two or three weeks. Many grew impatient. A hand-lettered sign on a tattered pyramidal tent announced **“QUARTERS FOR RENT. CHEAP. WELL VENTILATED.”**

On another, a sign read, **“THIS PACKET: FOUND, FREED, FED, FOOLED, F----D, FORGOTTEN.”**

At two spots along the camp's main thoroughfare were upright stakes with a towel nailed over a sign that read, **“CRYING POST. USE FREELY.”** The major in charge of administration said, **“Those crying posts are not a joke. They serve a purpose.”**

After waiting about two weeks, my packet and I boarded a Liberty ship, the slowest means of transportation home. My five flyboys and I shared a cabin. All five expressed hope that Herman Goering would not be dealt with too harshly.

Said one, **“Goering was chief of the Luftwaffe. They operated the camps for Air Force Kriegies. Treatment was better in the Luft camps than in the ground force camps run by the Wehrmacht.”**

The amenities and the food were better at the Luft camps. But several atrocities were committed at Stalag Luft III, in addition to the fifty British escapees executed by the Gestapo; none at Oflag 64.

The senior of the five lieutenants, in his mid-twenties, looked like his face had been worked over with a blowtorch. Here is his

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story:

"I was pilot of a B-17 Flying Fortress when we were hit by flak. One of the engines caught fire. I ordered the crew to bail out. Everybody did except the tail-gunner. He was wounded and couldn't jump.

"I rode the plane down. I succeeded in crash-landing it, but my face was badly burned by flames in the cockpit. The Germans offered to give me plastic surgery, but I decided to wait until I got back to the states.

"At a PW camp, I was given a sweater through the American Red Cross. A slip of paper in a pocket gave the name and address of the woman who knitted it. I used one of my three-per-month letter forms to write and thank her.

"I got an answer. She wrote, 'I am glad you are enjoying the sweater. But I knitted it for a combat soldier, not for a coward in a prisoner-of-war camp.'"

I might have thought the story apocryphal, except for the experience of **"Bob,"** as told by Senior Texas District Judge Clarence M. Ferguson in his book, **"KRIEGSGEFANGENER (Prisoner of War)."**

When **Bob** volunteered for military service, he owned a prosperous communications business and was engaged to marry the girl of his dreams. He was Communications NCO of the 2nd Battalion, 143rd Infantry, when the battalion was destroyed by German armor at Persano, Italy, on 13 September 1943. He lost his left eye and took quite a bit of shrapnel in his face and the left side of his body. When his command post was overrun, Lieut. Col. Charles H. Jones, the battalion commander, surrendered the members of his staff present, including Bob. When he reached a Stalag where letter-writing was permitted, Bob wrote his fiancée that he had been captured.

He received a reply that read in part, **"I could never marry a man who was cowardly enough to surrender. Please do not try to get in touch with me. I am now married."**

Twice Bob tried to climb the fence in broad daylight, hoping the guards would shoot him. Both times they took him down alive.

Many active duty personnel don't understand that most captured soldiers didn't surrender. They were taken in large numbers, as the result of a blunder by higher authority or a surprise attack. Examples are Kasserine Pass, the Belgian Bulge, and Corregidor.

On a happier note, one of my lieutenants said, **"You know we've missed a lot of Americana. I wonder if Little Orphan Annie**

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has got her tit caught in the wringer again."

We arrived at New York harbor in late June. A barge, its deck loaded with pretty girls, dancing, waving and cheering, sailed alongside. It was a poignant moment. Somebody cared.

We were billeted at Fort Hamilton, serving the New York port of embarkation and a post bus ride from Times Square. Next, a train ride to Fort Sam Houston, for more processing.

It was during the period when graffiti in every men's room proclaimed **"KILROY WAS HERE."** A large sign over the entrance to the Fort Sam dispensary included crossed hypodermic needles. The inscription underneath read, **"KILROY FAINTED."**

We filed claims for money, watches, and other valuables taken by the Germans. We were also awarded the sum of \$1.00 for each day of captivity and another \$1.00 for each day our captors didn't abide by the terms of the Geneva Convention. Due to the starvation diet, this was every day.

I filed a claim for 616 days. However, the 29 days I spent in the custody of the Russians was disallowed.

We had our back pay sent to our banks. Although I wasn't promoted while in the bag, I had been in the captain's pay bracket for some time, under the pay regs in effect at the time. When promoted to captain during the summer of 1945, I went into the major's pay bracket.

Next, a bus ride to the home of my parents. RAMP were given 90 days at home not chargeable to leave, followed by seven days R&R at Miami Beach. If one was leaving the service, this was followed by four months terminal leave.

A neighbor woman said, **"My husband was in more danger than any soldier in combat. He worked at the shipyard. He had to take ships out into the Gulf of Mexico on test runs. The Gulf was swarming with submarines. He could have been torpedoed at any time. But he didn't get any medals."**

I refrained from saying, **"My piles bleed for him."**

I visited my former employer. The chap who took my job wasn't too glad to see me. He had held it nearly five years. The foreman said, **"Welcome back! We've got a job for you, but I don't know yet what it will be."**

The company had been good to me. I told him in a nice way what he could do with the job. With an upcoming divorce — I would lose the child custody suit — it was a time to start over.

I visited Camp Bowie for the first time since the 36th Division left there in 1942. I had dinner at the Officers Club. Although the

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dining room was nearly full, I didn't know anybody except my date, a Brownwood beauty I met there in 1941. But the only person I could relate to was our waiter, a German POW.

I introduced myself as a former prisoner of the Germans. He asked, "**How did they treat you?**"

"**All right,**" I replied. "**How about you?**"

"**They treat me very well. Did they starve you?**" He slapped his cheeks with both hands, in the universal sign language that indicates hunger.

"**No,**" I lied. "**We got Red Cross parcels most of the time. They didn't have too much for themselves.**"

"**Did they beat you? Did they torture you?**"

"**No,**" I replied truthfully.

"**Gott!**" he exclaimed. "**Politics! They told me you were starved! Beaten! Tortured!**"

Remembering the value of cigarettes in Germany, I gave him a pack in addition to the tip. We each made the other's day.

POWs go through an adjustment period after capture and again after liberation: During the first month or so in the bag, I was in dreams still free. Then, even in sleep, I was a prisoner. After liberation, the process was reversed. There are psychological effects that take years to overcome. PWs endure a unique experience which cannot be shared or even understood by anyone who wasn't there.

Oflag 64 Kriegies held a reunion in Newark, New Jersey, in 1947, a second in New York in 1948, and a third at Toots Schor's Restaurant, New York, in 1950. It was by far the biggest of the three, thanks to Amon G. Carter, Jr., heir to his father's publishing empire. Former PW Carter chartered a plane for Texas Kriegies.

Until recently, reunions were held in October of even numbered years. Now they are held in October of every year.

Ex-Kriegie John Slack, of Gladwyne, Pennsylvania, publishes a bulletin, "**The Post Oflag 64 Item,**" using the format of the original Oflag Item, published monthly at Oflag 64 from November 1943 until January 1945.

An impromptu Oflag 64 reunion was held during the seven days R&R at Miami Beach in September 1945. Nobody minded when a hurricane stretched it to ten days.

Billeted in hotels normally affordable only to the rich, Oflag 64 alumni partied. And partied. And partied. Kriegies who disliked each other in the bag greeted each other as long-lost brothers.

Doyle Rapherd Yardley, of Lingleville, Texas, was everybody's

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choice of the man most likely to succeed. A graduate of Texas A&M, class of '37, he was only 30 years old when captured, and already a lieutenant colonel.

By 1 December 1944, with a population of 980, Oflag 64 was becoming crowded. The Germans opened an annex, Oflag XXIA, at Schokken, Poland. They asked for volunteers, officers and enlisted orderlies, to go there and assist the new captives in organizing it. The volunteers, including Yardley, were given a two hour ride aboard a passenger train to the new camp.

Oflag XXIA was evacuated in January 1945, at the same time as Oflag 64. Yardley escaped during the first few days of the march and made contact with the Russians. He thus arrived home before the war ended.

During the festivities at Miami Beach, a fellow RAMP asked, **"Did you hear about Colonel Yardley?"**

"No. What happened?"

"He killed himself."

"Oh my God! Why?"

"He had a beautiful young wife," he replied. **"He kept a photo of her on his table in Barracks 3-A. He had most of his pay allotted to her. He made a lot of plans about what they were going to do together after the war."**

"When he got home, he found that most of the money was gone, with nothing to show for it but a Cadillac that had been wrecked. And according to a friend, she was having an affair."

"Yardley took the traditional military way out. He blew his brains out with a Colt .45."

Conclusion of the Series

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The Story of
Glen F. Davis

PRISONER
OF WAR

Worldwarveterans.org



as told to
DEWEY W. MANN
Former Commanding Officer
Company B 142nd



Glen Davis of Co B 142nd Inf. 36th Division was taken prisoner by the Germans 1 Jan. 1945 at Lemberg France. The enemy attacked at dawn in deep snow wearing white camouflage suits. Flame throwers were used. The attack was from the front and rear. After capture he and other prisoners were marched all day and put in an underground ammunition depot for the night. The quarters were so cramped that it was not possible to lay down or extend legs. They were kept here for two nights. German trucks would come in for ammo.

Upon leaving here they marches for seven or eight days except at one time they were put on a train and rode for three or four hours. Sometimes they slept in barns but mostly slept outside in the snow. They arrived at Bad Orb and stayed there for about a week and were questioned.

The questioning was done by two German officers. Glen ws strapped in a chair placed on a stage. It appeared an electric chair. He faced two machine guns set up in opposite corners of the room and were manned by two German soldiers. They asked him when he entered the army. He gave a false answer.

They wanted to know what mode of transportation he used coming overseas. He told he came by plane which was not true. They

The Story of Glen F. Davis

asked him how many was in his family. They wanted to know his unit and names of the officers. He was asked what he mostly feared about the German Army. He answered, "**nothing.**" Glen then asked the Germans what they mostly feared about the American Army. They said the planes.

The Germans accused him of lying. They told him that they knew he had come over on the Queen Mary and landed in Scotland, that he was from Co B 142nd and that it was commanded by Capt. Dewey Mann. They told where he had gone to school and the name of the Camp where he had taken his basic training. They told him that his mother was very religious.

Subsequently, the Germans took part of his clothes including his shoes but not his socks. **They also took his money, watch and rings.**

Sgt. Glen and all the non-coms were separated from the other men. Again they set out on another march for seven or eight days. **He had to march in the deep snow without shoes.** They slept in the snow huddled together in an attempt to keep warm. Their destination was Stalag 9 A at Ziegenheim. When they got there Glen was given back his shoes.

About six weeks after his capture, Glen and another man attempted an escape. They started at 2:00 AM. To break out it was necessary to dig under five rows of barbed wire that were placed at different intervals. They made it through three and were digging on the fourth when daylight approached. The guards in the tower about one hundred yards away spotted them. They immediately rushed toward them yelling. Glen's buddy became frightened and began to run. **He was shot in the back and killed.** Glen put his hands up but one of the Germans began beating him with his rifle knocking him down. He continued striking him on his back and other parts of his body. He was badly beaten but remained conscious.

The two Germans then carried the slain soldier outside the fence area on a stretcher. **Glen was forced to dig the grave.** The American boy was wrapped in a blanket and buried.

For breakfast Glen was given a cup of coffee with soup made of barley, potato peelings and hot water.

Lunch consisted of rutabaga and potato peelings left over from the German's meals.

Supper was one loaf of bread for ten men. Glen was in charge of slicing the bread. To keep down the gripes as to who got the biggest slice he had each man take turns slicing.

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

Food and cigarettes sent to them by the American Red Cross was confiscated by the Germans. This was discovered when the men were liberated.

Glen's normal weight was 180 lbs. **He lost 75 lbs.** His feet were frozen. He was allowed to write one post card every week or so. **Two hundred men died from starvation at the prison.** Many tried to commit suicide. He saw men lay prone staring straight at the ceiling and die.

When liberated Glen was taken with others to Kassel, Germany and shown the holocaust ovens where the Jews and sick prisoners were burned to death. He never understood why they were shown this awful place.

During the trip home on the hospital ship, he said that seven ex-POW's were buried at sea. **They simply ate so much that they gorged themselves to death.**

Glen said that it was necessary to have his teeth and gums treated and that the government did this for awhile. **Then it was ruled that it was not service-connected.** Later, all his teeth were pulled and the dentist told him that the diseased gums were due to malnutrition.

Glen was a POW for four months. During this time he never shaved, nor had a bath, suffered from lice, starvation, malnutrition, was frozen, badly beaten and deprived of his precious American freedom.



DEWEY MANN added that this story was submitted to Glen Davis' hometown newspaper, the *Savannah Courier*, Savannah, Tenn., and we asked him to obtain a NOW foto of Davis, which arrived in time for printing, and it's quite a graphic presentation of his army career.

AT LEFT: We chose this old photo, of Dewey Mann in a group photo taken 1974 at Ocilla, Georgia, hosted by Col. David Sisco and wife Vesta.

Why this one? Please note the two gentlemen behind Dewey are a couple of beloved leaders — the late George Lynch, 142nd Commander, and the late James Minor who was CO of 1st Battalion (or the men that told Dewey where and when to go).

The Story of Glen F. Davis



“Glen Davis was a fine combat soldier and highly decorated” . . . Dewey Mann.

1. Silver Star (3rd highest). 2. Bronze Star. 3. Purple Heart. 4. Combat Infantryman Badge. 5. Good Conduct. 6. European, African and Middle Eastern Campaign Medal. 8. WWII Victory Medal and 9. Distinguished Unit Citation.

There's a story behind each item shown above, so maybe we can ask Glen what that "spoon" represents. Also, get a copy of the **POWs Are Honored** and the key chain. Please note that Glen had to have a special frame made to hold all his items.

GLEN and MILDRED DAVIS reside at:
2424 Central St., Savannah, Tennessee
38372.

DEWEY MANN gets mail at: 2105 21st
Street, Nitro, West Virginia 25143.



Heroes aren't always recognized

By SAMMY WRIGHT

Contributing Columnist

This is an exact reprint from the
Choctaw Country News and Record. . .Sept. 23, 1987.

Along with other Allied forces, the 36th Infantry Division of the U.S. Army hit Anzio Beach near Naples, Italy in early 1944. After establishing a beachhead there, the forces moved through Italy and recaptured Rome on June 6. This monumental event was not front page news, for the eyes of the world were riveted that day on the beaches of Normandy where the long-awaited Allied assault on the continent of Europe was taking place.

On the following day, some American soldiers in Rome were reading a newspaper. One soldier wondered aloud where the story of the city's capture could be found. "Where's our headline?" he asked.

"Over on page five," Jesse responded.

Further actions of these soldiers will be amplified momentarily. But first, let's consider ourselves. In some ways, Americans are

somewhat strange. We idolize movie stars and musicians and place preachers and politicians on pedestals. Certainly some of these people deserve our accolades, but we tend to forget that ordinary people built and still sustain this country. It somehow seems crass and uneven to pay tribute to those around us. We often give our most respectful words at funerals.

In a reversal of this order, this column will frequently deal with people we know, while they are still here. This article is about a person I have known and respected for many years, and getting his story to you has not been easy, for he is somewhat modest in his achievements. His experiences are interesting and valuable, and we can learn from them. I talked to him Saturday morning shortly after he finished planting six pounds of turnip seeds. Keep that number in mind.

Heroes Aren't Always Recognized

Jesse W. Kelley



Company A 143rd

Jesse Willard Kelley was born in Cyril and raised in Needham. He grew up during the Great Depression, and nothing was easy during that period. When barely over that struggle, he was drafted into the army, and after a few weeks of training was sent to Italy where he helped in retaking Rome. The picture that accompanies this article was taken in Rome on June 29, 1944. Study the picture carefully, for you are looking at a boy barely out of his teens and already at war for several months.



Kelley

The picture was taken during a liberty period, but this was of short duration, for on Aug. 15, the division joined the Seventh Army and invaded France. The army moved North into central France.

While in this region, Jesse's unit engaged in battle on the banks of a river. They fought to the edge of the water, then crossed the river on a pontoon bridge. In looking back, they saw a fellow soldier who had fallen in battle but was still alive. Jesse and three other soldiers recrossed the river and brought the wounded man back under enemy fire. For this heroic action, Jesse was awarded the Bronze Star.

The army penetrated into the heart of France. It fought one of its fiercest battles in the region of the Moselle River. Very early one morning, Jesse caught the full force from a blast of shrapnel. He was taken to the rear of the lines and spent the rest of that day in pain and agony, for there was no way to move him out because of enemy fire. That night, he was moved across the river to an army field hospital where he remained for 40 days. He was awarded the Purple Heart while there.

Unable to return to the lines after leaving the hospital, Jesse spent the remainder of his time in France training other soldiers. He returned

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

to this country on Christmas Eve day, 1945. He stressed that standing on the deck of the aircraft carrier Enterprises as it entered New York Harbor and seeing the Statue of Liberty was the proudest moment of his life.

Jesse ate Christmas dinner the next day at Fort Meade, Maryland. He then went to Fort. McPherson, Georgia, and was discharged on Dec. 30. He had spent twenty-eight months in the army, and twenty-two of those months were spent overseas. At the time of his discharge, he was still under 21 years of age.

This is not Jesse's story alone, for there are hundreds more in this county, thousands more in this state, and millions more in this nation who served as he did. One often hears stories of the problems of adjustment that returning soldiers face. We will trace Jesse's life since the time of his discharge to see how he dealt with this problem. In so doing, we will gain an insight into how combat veterans resume living.

Jesse returned to Needham, and certainly not to immediate luxury. In fact, he spent his 21st birthday in the logging woods pulling one end of a "simon," a cross-cut saw. He did this type of work and some farming for quite a few years. The past two decades have been somewhat easier, for he has worked at James River for 21 years.

As an aside, Jesse is often asked by his fellow employees if he ever ran during a battle. His response is always the same: "No, I never ran, but I did pass a couple of guys who were running."

Jesse married Donna Broadhead, and this union has lasted 41 years.

They are the parents of four children. They still do a little farming, and that brings us back to the turnip seeds. That's enough turnips to feed Coxey's Army and Coxey's wife. (Unless his wife is on a diet, in which case it wouldn't even feed her) What will they do with those turnips? They'll give them away, like they do everything else, for they are given people.

Matthew Arnold, the Victorian poet, speaks of war in his classic poem "Dover Beach." He tells of looking across the English Channel at night toward France and seeing flashes of light from exploding instruments of war, and he concludes with the line "Where endless armies clash by night." This line has a double meaning which transcends both space and time. Those armies clash not just on the coasts of France, they often clash during the night in the minds of combat veterans. There are still many nights when Jesse returns to France.

Jesse is a very talented harmonica player, and he seldom goes anywhere without his instrument. With just a little prodding, out will come the harp and the air will be filled with melodious strains.

We are glad that Jesse returned to Needham, for in seeing him and those like him, we are reminded of the transitional stability that is forever American. That stability has been our anchor in the past, and it is our hope in the future.

Incidentally, Jesse, I don't eat turnips. Give mine to Coxey's wife.

Heroes Aren't Always Recognized



THEN & NOW—Here's Jesse Kelley talking with one of the natives of Compiegne, France—Marchal Cheyer at his home where he stayed.

November 17, 1987, Jesse visits the friendly folks at *Choctaw News Record*, Butler, Alabama and had his photo made for this issue of the Quarterly.

Dear Editor:

In answer to your letter—here's some additional information you requested. . . I **was in the mortar section of Company A, 1st Bn. 143rd**. I got hit in my right leg after we crossed the Moselle River in France. Me and a few others stayed behind the lines all day before we managed to break free, and make it back to a hospital. After a lengthy stay, I was reclassified to duty in the rear.

I was assigned to the 89th Division, joined Co K, stationed at Compiegne, France, and here we trained replacements for front-line duty. The 89th was a Midwestern outfit called "The Rolling W". Came home on the BIG E Aircraft Carrier—"The Enterpriser".

About life now. . . I've been married 41 years, have four children, 2 boys, 2 girls and 6 grandkids. I work for James River Corp., which is a paper mill here in Choctaw County (employs about 2,000). I'm almost ready to retire soon, and hope to make a 36th Reunion before too long.

Thanks for your interest in my story.

Jesse W. Kelley
Route 1, Box 9
Needham, AL 36915



KERRIGAN'S

KORNER



Fractured
Foxhole Fables

By George
(Wrong Way) Kerrigan



ANOTHER NIGHT SHOT TO HELL

At the beginning of September, 1944, while in the area of Remiremont, France, the 36th was involved in "Fire Fights", all over the place; it was the start of the tough "Voges" campaign. We were soon to suffer many casualties.

This day we moved too fast and too far, and at dusk Lt. Head, "A" 142, called me to say that we seemed to be all alone, and we would stay until dawn, in the large trench where we were.

But off, a few hundred yards to our front, there was a fight going on. So I told Lt. Head I would go over there alone, and try to make contact with friendly forces. He said, "O.K. be careful, we will stay here."

So I took off, and after an hour or so, I heard GI's talking in the dark ahead. I yelled to them not to fire, as I was coming in to their Outpost.

The Sgt. in charge (three men) told me the story of how they were in a two Story Barn the day before and the Jerries attacked with tanks, and his company was driven off with heavy casualties.

He took me to his Captain in the same barn they were driven out of the day before. I recall a 57 M.M. Anti-Tank Gun, knocked out at the site. The one thing I recall is the Company "A", either 141st or 143rd Rgt.

The Captain was glad to hear that help was close by (us). I said I was going back to "A" Co. 142 and would bring Lt. Head and our

Fractured Foxhole Fables

platoon to join them. He said "Fine", my Sergeant and his men will go back with you.

As we got back to their Outpost, the Sgt. said to me, "Are you really going back to look for your outfit, at this time of the night?" I said, "I sure am." He said, "You are nuts."

So I took off alone in the dark, and after awhile, found the large natural trench, where I had left my platoon, but could not see or hear a soul.

After ten minutes or so, I heard some movement ahead in the trench, so I climbed to the top, and called out "Who's there?" While I laid down and aimed my rifle in the direction of the noise, someone yelled what I thought sounded like "A" so I yelled back, "This is Kerrigan, I am back." But as I was looking for my Gang in the dark, what do I see, but three German uniforms. I yelled HALT! and they did just that, surprised to see me up on top, pointing a rifle at them.

Lo and behold! they were not Germans, but "Siberians" with large cheek bones, and seemed happy I was an American. One spoke a little English and said they were given Flare Pistols, and told to get behind the Americans and fire the Flares. I was furious because I thought at first, I had three Lugers, or P.38s for Souvenirs.

So I did the next best thing and headed back to where the other outfit was, with my three Siberians. As I neared the Outpost where I left the other Sgt. I called out loud and clear, "Hello Outpost, this is Sgt. Kerrigan 142, do you hear me?" The Sgt. said, "Yes, come on in." I yelled back, "I have three prisoners, don't shoot." When I reached the outpost the Sgt. said to me "You are nuts."

When I reported back to the Captain and turned over the prisoners, he told me to get some sleep and join his Company, but by that time dawn was breaking, so I shook hands with the Captain, wished him luck and eventually located Company A 142. And some wise Guy said they don't call him "Wrong Way" Kerrigan for nothing.

GO FOR BROKE "I'll Face You" Style

About the middle of December 1943, "Co. A-142" was up in the mountains near Cairo, Italy. We were in the rainy season, so combined with the fighting, life was Hell and morale was rock bottom, and to top it off, I had "French Feet" which made walking a torture.

I was told to take 10 men down and locate a Ration Dump, then bring back 11 boxes of "C Rations."

We got down to a road, followed it for awhile, until we saw an ar-

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

row and "Rations" pointing down at an angle, down a trail knee deep in mud — what a job pulling our feet out after each step. Then after one hour, we started to climb up the other side. A bridge had been blown up. I had eleven years in the Infantry, but this was the toughest walk of all.

The up climb took two more hours of torture, then we reached the Ration Dump, and we were each given a box of "C Rations" to carry back over the same torturous route, only this time we had a box weighing fifty or sixty pounds.

Back in the distance I saw trucks, driving back and forth, so I told my men to lay down while I looked the situation over.

Then I got the picture — about a half mile down the road, was the blown out bridge, so they had the engineers set up a system to haul supplies, ammunition, gas, etc. across the open space and reload on other trucks or mules or whatever.

So I got thinking about how I could save a trip of at least three hours, through knee deep mud, carrying 50 or 60 pounds.

I found the one in charge (a 1st Looie) and explained about our trip through the mud, etc. Would he have our 11 boxes pulled over to the other side, where we would pick them up later? He said, "**OK, bring the boxes over near the edge.**" So I went back and told my men to carry their boxes where I told them, and I'd save them a load. They were happy and put them where I told them. I said go back down, as I was going to hook the case up.

Then I grabbed a 3/8" "**Cable Choker**" and got set up waiting for the Lieutenant to get around to me. When he did, I said "**Sir, I'm an old construction man, this is my line.**" He said, "**O.K., but don't go near the edge.**"

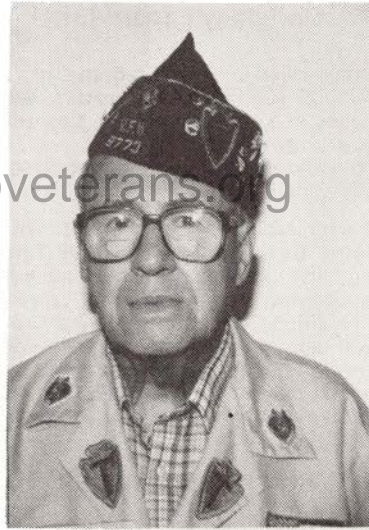
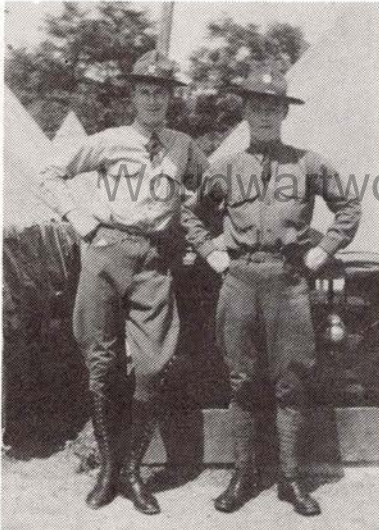
When I got hooked up, he said, "**Let go**", but I said, "**That line is not secure. I'll lose the whole load. Give the signal, I know what I'm doing.**"

So he gave the signal, and the truck on the other side started. He said "**Let go**", but as it got to the edge, I jumped on and straddled the 11 boxes of "C" Rations, when we got off the ledge, I went down and down, the cable looked and felt like a shoe lace, but Thank God it held. Then when I reached the other side, another Lieutenant grabbed me and yelled like Hell. I said, "**Lt. after what I've been through, and have ahead of me, you don't phase me one bit, now you can Court Martial me or get out of my way.**"

He just walked away. But about three hours later, my Gang came along, and they wanted to know how I got up there ahead of them. I said, "**Ask the nice Lieutenant over there, he'll tell you,**" which he did. But his language was terrible.

Fractured Foxhole Fables

Kerrigan Is The 'King Kong' of Komedý . . . Kool and Krazy In Keeping With Komrades Kendall and Kibbey



**He always made 'light' of a dark
situation in combat . . . cause a good
bellylaff when things are grim, is
something the Krauts did not have . . .**

THEN AND NOW . . . and how! Old foto was made in 1933 when George Kerrigan was 'fighting' with the 14th Infantry Regiment (New York) . . . that's him on left, his buddy was _____, he couldn't remember.

This great Division of ours, the Fighting 36th has its own K.K.K. No, they don't wear bedsheets and dunce caps, but there are 3-Ks that do their KLOWNing on paper.

We have KERRIGAN, KENDALL and KIBBEY. All three of the men have their own style of Army Humor. Of the 3 Ks, Del Kendall has filed about 20 stories on the funny-side of the War, Kerrigan and Kibbey both has submitted more than a dozen each.

To test the humor, we have been known to go back to previous issues and 'read 'em again' — just for laffs.



Muster Day Highlighted By Induction Ceremony

**Long Military Career
Began in 1932 with
Company I 143rd Inf.**

Sunny, clear skies greeted the more than 1,000 spectators and visitors who crowded into Camp Mabry, Oct. 3 for the 13th Annual Muster Day, commemorating the National Guard's mobilization for World War II.

Early morning arrivals gathered to witness the dedication of an F-4 aircraft which had logged more than 2.2 million miles of flying time in its 22-year career. The ceremony was followed by a fire-power demonstration of "weapons of yesteryear," featuring cannon fire; and by a concert by the 49th Armored Division Band on the Camp Mabry parade field.

MARION PARKS BOWDEN

Brevet Colonel Marion Parks Bowden was born 6 October 1915, in Belton, Texas. He graduated from Belton High School in 1933 and the University of Texas in 1938. He earned his Master's Degree in Education from Texas A & M University in 1950.

His distinguished military career began upon enlistment in Company I, 143d Infantry 8 November 1932. He was commissioned a Second Lieutenant after mobilization of the 46th Infantry Division and served with the Division throughout World War II. He commanded Company I, 143d Infantry Regiment and, in 1945, commanded the 2d Battalion of the same Regiment. After the war, he served as an instructor at the Command and General Staff College and as Assistant Commandant at Texas A & M College. Returning to the Texas National Guard in 1951, he served as Department Adjutant and Director, Operations and Training for



Marion Parks Bowden

the Adjutant General's Department with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. In 1961, he went to work for the Texas Department of Public Safety and retired from that department 1 July 1979, as the State Coordinator and Chief of the Governor's Division of Disaster Emergency Services.

Greatly respected and revered by the T-Patchers he led in combat, he was awarded this nation's second highest decoration, the Distinguished Service Cross. He passed away 17 August 1980, but will always be remembered by his comrades-in-arms in the Texas Military Forces as a true citizen-soldier.

One of the more crowd-pleasing events scheduled was the World War II battle re-enactment of the Texas 36th Infantry Division march through Europe. More than 100 members of the 36th's Ceremonial and Demonstration Auxiliary participated, wearing authentic U.S., British, German, French and Belgian uniforms and using weapons from that period. The battle was re-enacted in the morning and afternoon.

Reprint from *NGAT News*, official publication of National Guard Association of Texas, Nov.-Dec. 1987 issue. Sent in by Erwin Teggeman, Taylor TX.



Our Elder Statesman Writes . . .

“Our Chapter in History”

COL. ORAN C. STOVALL

As I carefully watch the Taps section, look back upon the gallant operation of the 36th Infantry Division and uncertain glances into the future, it is easy to see that our chapter in history is rapidly being closed.

The 36th Division Association has been the link that has joined a group of old soldiers — very youthful old soldiers — who wanted to keep alive the comradeship of our years in battle.

The organization was never intended to meddle in political affairs and has left politics to the individual ex-soldier.

The association has devoted its time to remembering the war, the great fellowship it had offered and the feeling that made our thousands of young men serve a cause greater than themselves.

Year after year as our ranks thin — we move toward a goal of fulfillment and reunion in which no one else can fully share.

These men live in memory, yet in a way, we live in the future as well. After our few remaining years here on earth we look forward to a reunion over on the other side.

That seems proper because these old soldiers of W.W. II lived through conditions that few men can ever know; they reached the peak of human experiences before many of them were old enough to vote. Few combat soldiers, after becoming civilians, have again reached the height they experienced as soldiers.

The men of the T-PATCH division who stormed the beaches of Salerno, fought at the Rapido and broke-out of Anzio became a tradition known only to themselves.

Of course, the soldiers who wore the T-Patch are aware that the army had many good divisions and we honor them; but in our books and in our memory the 36th will always stand at the top. We did not win the war individually; perhaps, we won it for each other.

Now, the 36th Division is no more and remains only as the 36th Division Association.

What was gained or lost by the waving of flags, the boredom of comfortless bivouacs and the bravery and terror of battle?

The loss and gain of war can never be fully computed as the loss of lives, equipment and supplies is without end. Neither do we know loss or value as they may apply to future generations.

We feel sure, however, that in spite of the lives lost and the billions spent; it is cheaper to win a war than it is to lose one.



World War II Mural Revealed

By Barbara Kingsbery

SANTA ANNA: Patrons at the recently-opened Wagonwheel Restaurant in Santa Anna have an opportunity to see some World War II memorabilia - an unexpected experience in this small community.

Remodeling work at the old building at the corner of North Seventh Street and Wallis Avenue revealed a life-sized mural of American soldiers in a Pacific battle. The only notation on the painting is "Cpl. Edgar R. Aberman, August 1943".

Located on the busy main street through Santa Anna, the structure was originally purchased by Mrs. Erin Day in 1948 and moved from Camp Bowie. According to Mrs. Day's son, Clint, now owner and operator of the local Western Auto Store, the building was said to have been a portion of the NCO Club at Camp Bowie.

The structure was remodeled for a grocery store, with sheetrock installed on the interior. Shelves for the grocery stock were added.

Several years later the business was changed to the Clover Grill Restaurant, and although the shelving was removed, the sheetrock remained to cover the painting.

A great deal of interest was created several years ago by murals at the Camp Bowie Senior Citizens Center at Brownwood, but that artist was of another name and was said to be a German prisoner of war. That building was used as the officers dining room and recreation center while troops were stationed there. Some local army veterans who were stationed at Camp Bowie during World War II have mentioned murals in other buildings at the camp.

Thought you might be interested in the inclosed clipping, from Coleman - Chronicle & Democrat Voice, of 1 Jul 86.

Best from Co B.

WJB
W. J. BAXTER

Box 961, Coleman TX 76834

They believed it was a necessary gamble

Reviewed by
SPENCER TUCKER

On July 20, 1944, an attempt was made to assassinate Hitler at the Wolf's Lair, his headquarters in East Prussia. The key figure in the plot was Col. Klaus von Stauffenberg, but behind him were many others. Most of those involved in the attempt were officers in the German army, including a marshal and a number of generals.

Not only did the bomb planted by Stauffenberg fail to kill Hitler (he escaped unscathed save for superficial injuries), but the plot was also previously mismanaged in Berlin. Planning was slipshod at best, and three critical hours were allowed to slip away while Stauffenberg made his way back to the capital.

The bomb plot failed and hundreds of Germans paid for their complicity — imagined or real — with their lives. The odds of the attempt succeeding were in any case long; one of the conspirators put it this way the day before the attempt: "There is only once chance in ten that we will succeed." Still, the plotters felt they had to try.

French author Pierre Galante has produced an excellent short summary of the bomb plot and a superb synthesis of the development of attitudes of the professional officers toward Hitler and the reasons why they were unable to act earlier to remove him from power. Galante's account is centered on Adolf Heusinger, operations chief of the German army from 1940 to 1944 and subsequently a key figure in the postwar army of the Federal Republic of Germany.

During the years he was in the Wehrmacht, Heusinger held numerous meetings with Hitler, observing at first hand his mismanagement of the war. Heusinger came to be the special emissary of the army dissidents within the Hitler circle. He was arrested by the SS after the bomb attempt. The fact that he had been badly wounded in the blast was a key factor in saving him from execution.

OPERATION VALKYRIE: The German Generals'

Plot Against Hitler

By Pierre Galante

Harper and Row; \$13.50

It is through Heusinger that Galante has traced the growing disaffection of the generals toward Hitler. We see them pleading with the British as early as 1938 to stand up to Hitler over Czechoslovakia, and appalled by Hitler's decision to invade the Soviet Union. There was strong antagonism throughout the war between Hitler, the ex-corporal of World War I, and the professional officers. Opposition among senior commanders in the military was due not just to Hitler's later mismanagement of the war but also to moral grounds.

But opposition was difficult to organize. Hitler had enjoyed an amazing string of successes, officers had profited from rapid advancement, and all of the military had sworn an oath of personal loyalty to Hitler.

There was another consideration as well. When Gen. Dwight Eisenhower asked Heusinger after the war why the German generals had not gotten rid of Hitler, Heusinger replied: "He came to power quite legally. If I asked you to get rid of Truman, would you do it?"

This book is built on Heusinger's earlier account of 1947, which is, however, not available in English. Galante also had access to previously classified materials which have been incorporated into this account.

Operation Valkyrie may well be the best short summary of both the German generals' opposition to Hitler and the plot of July 20, 1944. It will, therefore, have appeal to all those interested in the history of the World War II.

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

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Julian M. Quarles, Attorney
Co F 143rd Infantry
South Miami, Florida

‘Thanks’



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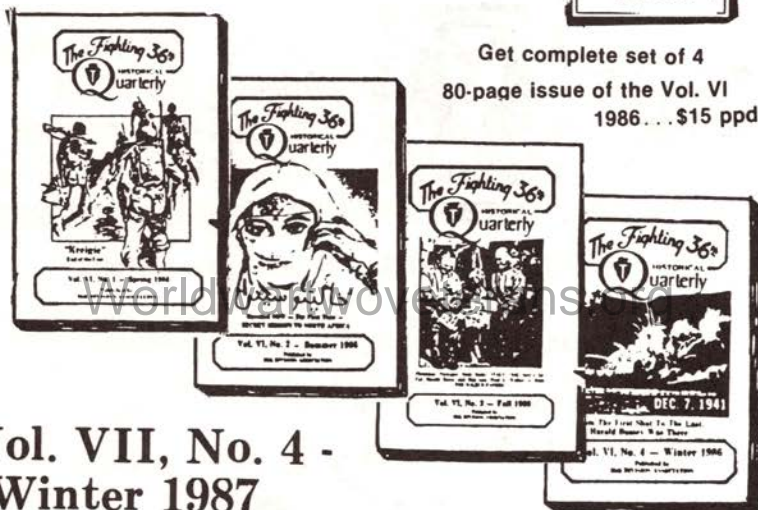
We still need a
few more, and hope
you'll pass the
good word to all
your old buddies
and friends...

Worldwaryveterans.org
WE BEG of all men of the 36th — who wish to tell a particular
time and incident that stands out in his memory...tragic, fun-
ny or what ever...it needs to be recorded and captured now
— for the history books — and historians who will continue to
write about WWII for the next 100 years.

ALSO, of late we are getting many from — the **WIVES**, the
SONS and the **DAUGHTERS**, and even a few **GRAND**
CHILDREN, who took it upon themselves to “tell” the story for
the **T-Patchers**, whom may have been reluctant (or shy) to tell
about his exploits in Italy, France or Germany.

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Vol. VII, No. 4 - Winter 1987

This fourth and final issue of this Vol. VII is under way...as most stories are in, but we can use a few shorties...

Publication date is set for late January 1988...when it'll be time for your RENEWAL for Vol. VIII 1988.

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Chapel Keeps Memories Alive



Twenty-nine years ago, the employees of a small Italian stained-glass shop in Vicenza were hired to add color and brightness to the new post chapel at Caserma Ederle.

Today, the 12 multi-colored stained glass windows they created for the U.S. Army's Southern European Task Force and 5th Support Command serve as daily reminders of the contributions of a dozen Army units during World War II.

A special tribute to the three National Guard divisions, the 34th, 36th and 45th, was paid during a ceremony commemorating the 350th birthday of the Guard at the Vicenza chapel last December. Rescued from the process of natural deterioration during the summer of 1986, the refurbished windows were rededicated during the ceremony.