

The Fighting 36th
HISTORICAL
Quarterly



**Charles H. Coolidge, CMH Winner
Joins Legions of Tennessee Heroes,
Like Davey Crockett /Gen. Forrest**

Vol. VII, No. 1 - Spring 1987

Published by
36th DIVISION ASSOCIATION

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The Fighting 36th



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Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly



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.





Vol. VII, No. 1

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The Fighting 36th
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.

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THE FIGHTING 36th HISTORICAL QUARTERLY



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ABOVE AND BEYOND



In World War II

**16,353,659 Served
405,399 Died**

Worldwarwoveterans.org
American Soldiers on land, sea & air

**who, "by gallantry and intrepidity
at the risk of life acted above and beyond
the call of duty!"**

**A Total of 433 won the
Congressional Medal of Honor**

Charles Coolidge

of Signal Mountain,
8 miles from Chattanooga -
Company M 141st Infantry

One of 15 T-Patchers who won
the Congressional Medal of Honor



Holds Off Nazis In 4-Day Battle, Sergeant Is Awarded Honor Medal

WASHINGTON.—T/Sgt. Charles H. Coolidge, of Signal Mountain, Tenn., who with a handful of reinforcements entering action for the first time directed a four-day battle against a superior German force last October near Belmont sur Buttant, France, has been awarded the Medal of Honor, the War Department announced Tuesday.

During the action, the 24-year-old doughboy tried a bluff that failed: duelled two tanks with his light carbine; advanced alone to blast a German attack with two cases of hand grenades, and frustrated a determined Nazi attempt to turn the flank of his battalion.

Sergeant Coolidge, a machine-gun section leader and veteran of the 36th Infantry Division fighting in Italy and the Western Front, will be presented the medal in the European Theater.

While advancing to set up flank protection, Sergeant Coolidge's section, supported by a platoon of riflemen came upon a force of advancing Germans. Attempting to bluff the Germans by a show of assurance and boldness, Coolidge called upon them to surrender, whereupon the enemy opened fire.

Then followed four days of terrific battling, with repeated attacks repulsed through Coolidge's able leadership. When it became appar-



ent that the enemy in greatly superior force, supported by tanks, would overrun the position, the Sergeant, displaying great coolness and courage, directed and conducted an orderly withdrawal, being himself the last to leave the position.

Sergeant Coolidge, native of Signal Mountain, Tenn., entered the Army in April, 1942. In Italy his daring use of a machine gun to break up a German attack won him the Silver Star.

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON



Harry S. Truman

The President of the United States takes pleasure in awarding the MEDAL of HONOR to

TECHNICAL SERGEANT CHARLES H. COOLIDGE,
CO. M, 141st INFANTRY, UNITED STATES ARMY

for service as set forth in the following
CITATION:

"Leading a section of heavy machine guns supported by one platoon of Company K, Sergeant Coolidge took position near Hill 623 east of Belmont sur Buttant, France, on 24 October 1944, with the mission of covering the right flank of the Third Battalion and supporting its action. Sergeant Coolidge went forward with a sergeant of Company K to reconnoiter positions for coordinating the fires of the light and heavy machine guns. They ran into an enemy force in the woods estimated to be an infantry company. Sergeant Coolidge, attempting to bluff the Germans by a show of assurance and boldness, called upon them to surrender, whereupon the enemy opened fire. With his carbine Sergeant Coolidge wounded two of them.

There being no officer present with the force, Sergeant Coolidge at once assumed command. Many of the men were replacements recently arrived; this was their first experience under fire. Sergeant Coolidge, unmindful of the enemy fire delivered from close range, walked along the position, calming and encouraging his men and directing their fire. The attack was thrown back. Throughout 25 and 26 October the enemy launched repeated attacks against the position of this combat group but each was repulsed due to Sergeant Coolidge's able leadership. On 27 October, German infantry supported by two tanks made a

Charles H. Coolidge, Co M 141st

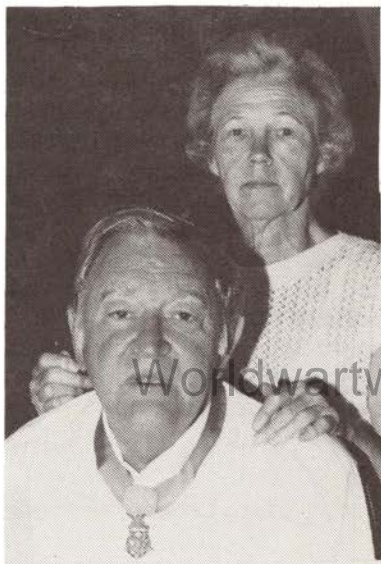
determined attack on the position. The area was swept by enemy small arms, machine gun and tank fire. Sergeant Coolidge armed himself with a bazooka and advanced to within twenty-five yards of the tank. His bazooka failed to function and he threw it aside. Securing all the hand grenades he could carry, he crawled forward and inflicted heavy casualties on the advancing enemy. Finally it became apparent that the enemy in greatly superior force, supported by tanks, would overrun the position. Sergeant Coolidge, displaying great coolness and courage, directed and conducted an orderly withdrawal, being himself the last to leave the position.

As a result of Sergeant Coolidge's heroic conduct and superior leadership, the mission of this combat group was accomplished throughout four days of continuous fighting against numerically superior enemy troops in rain and cold amid dense woods."

Harry Truman



WASHINGTON, D.C. — Sunday January 20, 1957, Vice-President Richard M. Nixon congratulates Charles H. Coolidge of Chattanooga Tenn., at a buffet supper given by General Schwengel — in honor of the Medal of Honor recipients. At left: R. G. Geddie Herring, a recipient from Roseboro, N.C., Frances Coolidge.



Charles and Frances
Coolidge at home,
June 6, 1987

Frances Coolidge Tells Her Story

of the busy and
exciting events
awarded to all our
C.M.H. Winners

Worldwartwoveterans.org

“The Girl He Left Behind”

When Charles returned from WWII in July, 1945, the City of Chattanooga honored him with a special day . . . **August 8, 1945**, with a big luncheon sponsored by the Kiwanis and Rotary Clubs, gave him a special engraved watch and a new suit of expensive clothes, then had a big parade in the City of Chattanooga, and at 2 p.m. the Memorial Auditorium was filled to capacity — no less than 5,000 were present.

Col. Charles Owens and General Walker came for this special event. Two parks were named in Charles' honor . . . one on Signal Mountain (8 miles from Chattanooga) and the other on the river bank of the Tennessee in Chattanooga. Most of the businesses closed for this occasion. We were not married at the time but I was at his side for — **I had been the girl he left behind when he went off to war.**

We married October, 1945, and our first son was born a year later, then 2 more followed, spaced 4 years apart. Son, Charles, Jr., is a Col. in the Air Force, having graduated from the U.S. Air Force Academy in 1968, and is stationed presently at the Pentagon. He has had 3 brief tours to Geneva at the U.S. Mission where he has been in conference with the Russians.

Charles H. Coolidge, Co M 141st

Following his tour last July, we met him in Frankfurt and went to many of the places Charles fought in WWII . . . all the way to Paestum, Salerno, Italy, and back up thru France — to the beaches where Charles made 2 invasions — Paestum and Cannes . . found the actual spot in the Vosges Mtns. at Belmont sur Buttant, France, where Charles' deeds awarded him the Medal . . . the fox-holes were a bit full of leaves and debris, of course, but a marker was there with 141st on it.

Charles has a fantastic memory and took us to the spot and quite by coincidence a fellow was down this path (at a house) . . our son went over to talk with him . . . he could not speak English but fortunately, our son spoke French well enough that the young man understood and volunteered that he knew where the foxholes were . . . took us there and that's when we found the marker. We also enjoyed several days in Interlaken, Switzerland, but our son's leave ran out before we could get into Ulm where the Medal was presented to Charles, nor did we get into Austria. Maybe this will be another tour someday.

Our other two sons are in the family business . . . Chatanooga Printing . . . which was begun by Charles' father in 1910 . . . and I don't see Charles retiring anytime soon tho' he promised "when he got to be 65" . . well, that was last year in Geneva, Switzerland. It is probably better he not retire for having Multiple Sclerosis and not being able to walk, I am afraid he would sit too much.

Charles has a 'Rascal' which he rides all over his business and home too — hardly finds anyplace he cannot go. The Rascal won't climb steps tho' so I usually help him up the steps and then someone carries the Rascal up and away he goes again. No doubt, Charles has had MS since the end of WWII and maybe even before, but his most noticable affliction has only been in about the last 7 or 8 years and he has been unable to walk only for 3, so he is having to adjust to a new lifestyle. We, however, know he has been very fortunate in not having a more progressive type of MS.

November, 1985, it was decided to name the local VA Clinic in honor of Charles so the Mayor of Chattanooga proclaimed November 11, 1985, as "Charles H. Coolidge Day" (so even tho' Charles told them this had been done in 1945) they had another lun-

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

cheon in his honor (no parade this time) and placed a bronze plaque on the VA clinic in his honor.

We are both very active in anything patriotic, as you may well know. Chattanooga is now making plans for the 38th consecutive annual celebration of Armed Forces Week. We have been active in this for many years. The local schools make patriotic and historical floats, marching bands and other units participate, usually as many as 90 to 100 units. At the beginning of the week, last year the Thunderbirds performed on Sunday where we had not less than 150,000 spectators . . . also the Golden Knights did their bit and the baton they passed in mid-air was presented to Charles.

Our biggest day is always on Friday with a luncheon at which we always have a VIP as speaker — David Abshire will come this year — have usually 500 or more present at luncheon, then the parade follows. Numerous Freedoms Foundation awards have we received for this event and this year we will be given the George Washington Honor Medal in April at the local chapter's awards banquet. I was president of this chapter in 1977-79. Headquarters, as you may know, are in Valley Forge, PA.

Charles has been an elder in the Signal Mountain Presbyterian Church where we were members for 15 or so years, then we left and went to the First Presbyterian Church in Chattanooga where he is now a deacon. At both, he taught Sunday School for many years until his health was not so good.

We have had many, many wonderful trips. Each 4 years, the Medal of Honor recipients have been invited to the Presidential Inaugurals with all our expenses paid by the local veterans groups in the Washington area. The airlines usually fly us free but each time we have to "sweat it out" until we receive approval from the CAB. They have done this since Eisenhower's

Too, when we attend the biennial meetings of the Medal of Honor Society, the airlines fly us free to these. Again, we have no assurance, but, you may be sure, we are always grateful when we get approval. In 1981, this trip was to Hawaii.

"Lt." Charles Ainlay and wife, Dorothy, honored us with a visit the week before last. Ainlay and Charles had a great time recalling many of their experiences of sleeping in the foxholes and whatever.

Charles H. Coolidge, Co M 141st

The Chattanooga Times, Tuesday, November 12, 1985



— Lisa Waddell/The Chattanooga Times

Veterans Day honors

The Chattanooga-Hamilton County Veterans Committee presented several annual awards Monday as part of its Veterans Day celebrations. Charles Coolidge, center, was presented with awards from Gov. Lamar Alexander and state legislators. A bronze plaque honoring Coolidge, a Medal of Honor winner, was unveiled at the Veterans Administration Clinic. William Fry, district III commander of Disabled American Veterans, left, was awarded the Committee's Veteran of the Year award.

The stories my Charles told, you could tell, really did recall memories that Ainlay had forgotten until Charles related them over to him . . . even recalling names . . . Charles is full of stories just like it happened only an hour ago and do hope we will get them recorded before he goes blank . . . if ever that happens.

As we grow older, we realize that material things are not so important. We have a great wealth in having 3 sons, all married to precious girls we love like our own, and 7½ grandchildren — 4 boys, 3 girls and ? — we wouldn't take a million dollars for even one . . . they are beautiful and smart kids, of course.

Then and now: Charles weighed 144 lbs. with his O D's and boots included when he returned in 1945 (but was 180 lbs. before WWII) and now weighs in at 215 but cannot be active so has to watch his diet somewhat. Of course, he ENJOYS food.

Sincerely,

Frances Coolidge
1054 Balmoral Drive
Signal Mountain, TN 37377

CHATTANOOGA NEWS-FREE PRESS
—Sunday, November 10, 1985

Charles H. Coolidge Day Will Honor Medal Winner

Charles H. Coolidge Day will be observed here tomorrow in honor of this city's only Medal of Honor recipient.

The event, under the auspices of the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Veterans Committee and the Chattanooga Chapter of the Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge, is under the overall celebration of Veterans Day in Chattanooga and will be held in several parts, the first beginning at 11 a.m. in the National Cemetery.

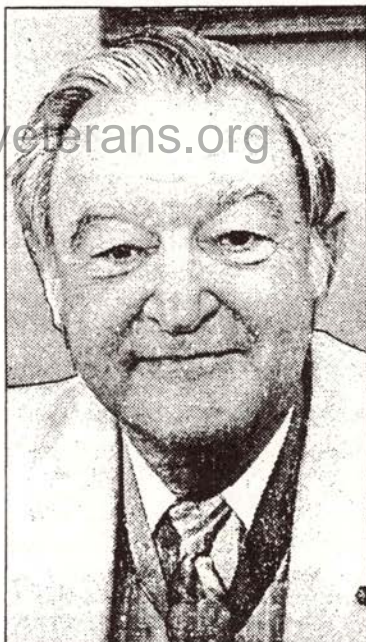
According to Tennessee Department of Veterans Affairs representative Bryant L. Cook, event spokesman, 25 veterans groups will participate in the morning ceremony at the cemetery. American Legion Post 14 will conduct a separate ceremony at Miller Park at noon.

Mr. Coolidge, president of Chattanooga Printing and Engraving Co., was awarded the Medal of Honor for valor against German forces in World War II. In the Vosges Mountains in France in 1944, he single-handedly faced a number of the enemy, and is credited with killing 26 with hand grenades and wounding as many as 66 more.

Mr. Coolidge, a graduate of Chattanooga High School, is a member of First Presbyterian Church.

The 82nd Airborne Division Association's Alvin C. York Chapter, whose leaders include Chairman Jack Draper and publicity chairman Ed Adams, will provide escort service for Mr. Coolidge and his wife Frances. The local chapter will also provide a firing squad for the cemetery ceremony.

Members of the 1985 Charles H.



CHARLES H. COOLIDGE

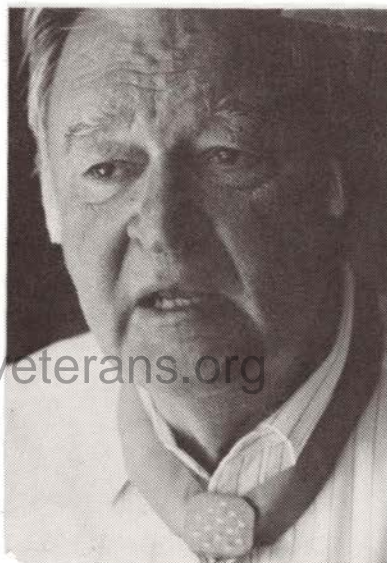
Coolidge Committee are Bryant Cook, coordinator; Edith Adkins; Lee Anderson; Bob Brandshaw; Dorothy Brammer; Earl Freudenberg; and William Pugh.

The area's other Medal of Honor recipient is Desmond Doss, a former Army medic who was critically wounded in the Pacific Theater in World War II. He is a resident of Lookout Mountain, Ga.

The third and final phase of the Coolidge Day celebration will feature the unveiling of a plaque in Mr. Coolidge's honor at the VA Outpatient Clinic at Eastgate. That ceremony will begin at 2:30 p.m.

Charles H. Coolidge, Co M 141st

**“Growing up on
Signal Mountain
gave me the
knowledge and the
advantage that was
helpful in my
action at
Belmont sur Buttant”**

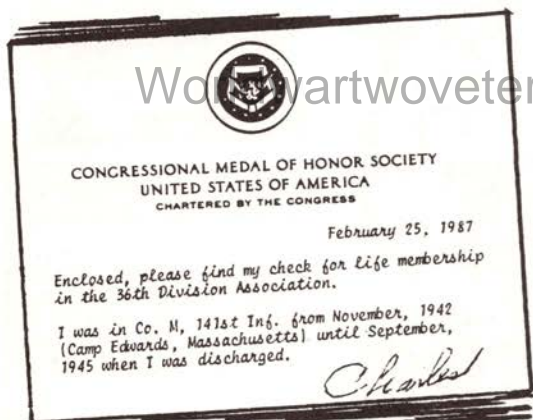


VINCE MASSEY, free-lance photographer of Dallas, whom we have used for many fotos in the Newsletter had an assignment at Charlotte, NC for a taping of TV documentary of 442nd & the Lost Battalion — at home of Robert Buck Glover, Concord.

We asked if he would also visit Chattanooga, TN for fotos and taping with Charles Coolidge. It was arranged, and Vince spent 6 hours with France and Charles Coolidge on June 6, 1987.

The quote above is from 32 pages of typed interview that Massey took on his tape recorder, for future use, and photos of both his wife Frances and him are in abundance. Their Old South hospitality overwhelmed our Dallas photographer, he had a wonderful day at Chattanooga, Lookout Mountain and their home on Signal Mountain.

OUR thanks to Vince, and his wife Chris who wrote a story on the 442nd action Nov. 1944 in the Vosges Mountains . . . 141st Lost Battalion.



Charles Coolidge had joined the 36th Association in 1986; but on Feb. 25, 1987, he sent in \$100 for a Life Membership.

The Coolidges have expressed a desire to attend our 62nd Annual Reunion, Sept. 3-6th in Fort Worth. They'll get a real TEXAS welcome, that's for sure!

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CHATTANOOGA'S NO. 1 SOLDIER—T/Sgt. Charles H. Coolidge, first Chattanooga to be awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor in World War II, is pictured being congratulated by Lt.-Gen. Wade H. Haislip, commanding general of the Seventh Army, after receiving the nation's highest military decoration, at Dornsndt, Germany.

Charles H. Coolidge and Dick Talley Meet at Chattanooga Dedication



Richard E. Talley, formerly of Hixson, TN of K/143rd met with Coolidge at a ceremony on Dec. 7, 1986 and sent in foto (at left) and did a good job to renew contact with our CMH winner, (whom we had neglected) — so credit for this story belongs to Dick Talley, now at: 1743 Cedar Ridge Dr., Orlando, FL 32826.

Charles H. Coolidge, Co M 141st



After the foto session and tape interview, the gracious Coolidges gave our roving photographer, Vince Massey a look-see tour of Lookout Mountain.

Above is Frances Coolidge at the spot where everyone goes to get the BIG picture — with the city of Chattanooga below, and their home on Signal Mountain — and a view that the Men in Gray kept the Men in Blue in limbo for many months.

Nearby is LOVER'S LEAP, which looms 1,700 feet above the Tennessee River and Chattanooga. All this started over 50 years ago when this area was made into a national tourist attraction.

Over 400,000 visit this national Treasure — Lookout Mountain and surrounding area.

Shown at right — Vince Massey gave his camera to Frances Coolidge for a foto of himself — to 'prove' that he really did get to Chattanooga. Bully!

Lookout Mountain

CHATTANOOGA, TENNESSEE

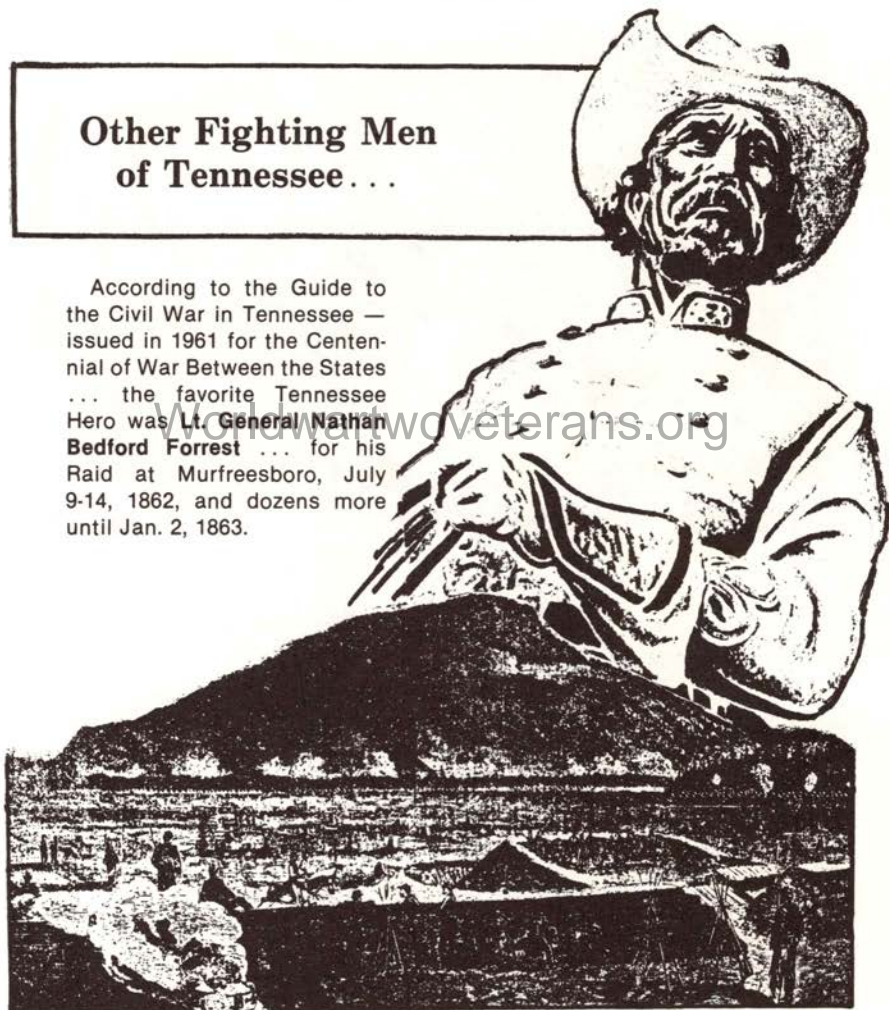
Lookout Mountain, with its great view of seven states, and Civil War background — along with Rock City, Ruby Falls and the famous Incline Railway that takes you to top of Lookout is visited by thousands of tourists — world wide, year round.

A local resident says, "There's not a prettier spot in the world." He knows what he's talking about.



**Other Fighting Men
of Tennessee...**

According to the Guide to the Civil War in Tennessee — issued in 1961 for the Centennial of War Between the States ... the favorite Tennessee Hero was **Lt. General Nathan Bedford Forrest** ... for his Raid at Murfreesboro, July 9-14, 1862, and dozens more until Jan. 2, 1863.



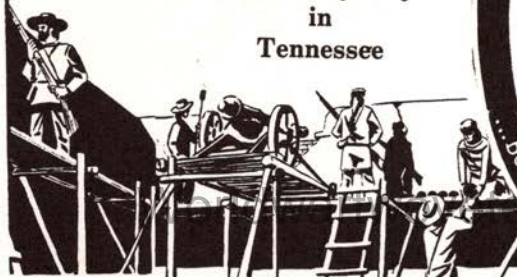
**CHICKAMUGA,
CHATTANOOGA,
Lookout Mountain,
Orchard Ridge
and Missionary
Ridge**

Scoreboard for
Chickamauga, Sept. 19-20, 1863 —
UNION — killed, missing and
wounded total — 15,851
CONFEDERATE — killed, wounded
and missing total — 8,694

Chattanooga, November 23-25, 1863 —
Orchard Ridge, Lookout Mountain,
Missionary Ridge:
UNION — killed, wounded
and missing total — 5,616
CONFEDERATE — killed, wounded
and missing total — 8,684

Davey Crockett

The Hero of
All Texans
and Everybody
in
Tennessee



THE BATTLE OF THE ALAMO ... March 1836

is one of the most famous war stories in the history books — here in America and worldwide.

Most Texans are aware that the men who fought at the ALAMO — were mostly new settlers from North Carolina, Kentucky and Tennessee ... and a few native born.

Sam Houston was from Tennessee, a good buddy of Andrew Jackson, so maybe he was why we had men like **DAVEY CROCKETT**, the back woodsman who would become the most famous of them all.

A list of those men who died at the Alamo, show that 60% were from TENNESSEE. Since we all admire or worship our heroes ... Davey Crockett would be Number One.

TEXAS and TENNESSEE have much in common for this reason — and men of the 36th are proud to have men like CHARLES COOLIDGE carry on this tradition.



When Knighthood Was In Flower...



Congressional Medal of Honor

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

GENERAL WILLIAM H. WILBUR

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

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

**I Remember
General
William H. Wilbur**
1886-1979

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



William H. Wilbur

Dear Editor,

The March 1980 issue of the T-Patcher brought me news of the passing of an old friend whom I had not seen for many years, having only recently learned of his whereabouts in the T-Patcher. I refer to **General William H. Wilbur, former Assistant Division Commander of the 36th Division** and my Professor of Science and Tactics at Boston University from 1928 to 1930. I am adding my voice to the thousands of others who knew and appreciated his great talents. **I never knew a more martial figure.**

And yet, in addition to being a strong man, filled with a steely resolve to do everything possible for our country, he was a man of deep convictions and compassion. Among my first memories of him are those stemming from his superior physique. He wrote one book on calisthenics for West Point and, later, at B.U. adapted much of what he'd written to building our bodies.

At that time, you could have gotten a bet that he was intent on destroying them! **Among other things, he would stand atop a platform in front of the 500 strong R.O.T.C. group and put us all to shame with push ups.** We, invariably, would be left gasping while he, with steady count, kept the cadence going for 50 or more body hoists. **At that time he was a Major, at the age of 42 years.**

I not only knew him as a military instructor but also as a coach, for I fenced under him on one B.U. team. **He only sought perfection in each of us,** and as part of our training he had us wrestling with wrestlers, doing acrobatics with gymnasts and lunging at dummies for months before we crossed blades with another team.

Quite often when we went into a deep lunge he would place his

The letter from R.K. Doughty was written on March 17, 1980 after our obit on General Wilbur had been published. We put in our HOLD files for use, if and when we would have our Historical Quarterly.

In spring 1981, our project was started, and we continued to bring this forward for future use. Then when we received the WILBUR PAPERS, this was planned to be used for this issue. So we hope this will explain the delay in being published. ED.

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

knee against our already strained legs and force us lower into the move. We'd come away from such sessions with a real understanding of how a spavined* horse must feel.

At twice the age of team members, his quickness of mind and wrist made it practically impossible for any of us to score points against him when we held practice sessions with him.

When General Wilbur left B.U. on another assignment he was kind enough to offer to be my surrogate father, since my own father had passed away just before I entered college. At that time I had no idea, of course, that I would serve under his command, later, in Italy (with the 36th Inf. Div.).

I next met the General after he had won the nation's highest military honor in N. Africa on January 8, 1943. It was only after I arrived at his now famous School for Officers** that I realized he was in charge of that training, and instinctively I knew we were in for a rough time.

At the first briefing session, he told us that since we were all in fine physical condition, we were to be mentally conditioned for warfare. Those of us who "survived" the course didn't realize it at the time, but after months of combat, I finally looked back on the experience at the school of "**Torture and Dirty Tricks**", as we called the place, as the best possible preparation for combat.

I doubt that the General planned one portion of the exercises at the school when, having followed artillery fire closely to a target area, we found our bodies burning and discovered that we had been throwing ourselves, headlong, into a field of stinging nettles. The only satisfaction that members of my group felt on that occasion arose from the fact that General Mark Clark had run the course with us and was, for once, undergoing the same hardships that we were.

Typical of his indifference to danger, General Wilbur went through the artillery course with us, trotting along in front of us and never once butting the ground, a practice he followed when we were in combat in Italy. Pieces of shell fragment struck well to the rear of General Wilbur's position and could certainly have done him a lot of damage had they struck him.

When the 3rd Battalion of the 141st Inf., reinforced by part of the regimental staff was sent up over Mt. Sammucro, just before Christmas in 1943, to attack San Vittore from the rear, General Wilbur came to our C.P. in San Pietro to stay while that operation was carried out. He decided that I would call him on the telephone during the 10-minute break each hour to report our position on the mountain. This would have been fine except that heavy wire was

I Remember General Wilbur

carried by the signal crew and, in only a short time, it had fallen far to the rear. I spent the entire night stumbling over sleeping men to make that rendezvous at the break and then double timing back to the command group to transmit the general's news.

The night was made unforgettable by a late start, awaiting supplies, a heavy rainstorm, and the sputtering of the German radios signalling our progress to the hostile command. Fallen trees, dropped by the Germans across our trail, didn't help our speed, and the fact that the maps we were using did not reflect the true height of the mountain found us still climbing at daybreak.

In reporting to General Wilbur, I had to lie on the ground under a tarpaulin and read, by flashlight, the map coordinates of our position. Toward morning, I sensed that he doubted my ability to read a map, even though I had learned that art under his tutelage. **At about that time, I reported to him that we had run out of wire and that there would be no more reports to him.**

Lt. Col. Aaron W. Wyatt, as Acting Regimental C.O. (142nd) was with the battle group and Major Bob Mehaffy was Bn. C.O. At about 0430 hours, they had gone forward to try to learn whether the German defenses at the top of Mt. Sammucro had been reduced by the 1st Bn. 141, as had been planned. Flares and machine gun fire answered their inquiry. The Germans were there in strength.

Here again, I was impressed with General Wilbur's sense of realism. Instead of booting us along as some higher brass were wont to do, he had sent his aide, long before my last phone call to him, to order us back to base. The aide caught up with me and since daylight was at hand, I gave the word to company commanders to retire in the quickest and shortest way possible.

We had lost any element of surprise to begin with and the laborious climb up the mountain had taken twice as long as planned.

Our return was hampered, to put it mildly, by a German Artillery box-barrage which was worked up and down the trail in an effort to trap all of us. I escaped it by moving directly south with a column of men, after Wyatt and Mehaffy returned to where we were waiting.

By running and diving to the rocky surface as shells came in, we managed to break into the clear and to make our way back through heavily mined terraces to the C.P. **Every man there deserved a Purple Heart for the massive bruises received in the rough and tumble of evading the shelling.**

My last service with General Wilbur occurred at the **Rapido River**. I recall his strenuous opposition to that operation particularly when Maj. Gen. Geoffrey Keyes, II Corps Commander, came to the 141st C.P. behind Mt. Trocchio and ordered a second crossing in daylight.

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I had just returned to the C.P. with General Wilbur from the railroad station at Lu Pieta, the small hill to the west of Trocchio. We had seen the engineer supplies, dumped at the station by a Corps Engineer, with the names of Nero, completely demolished by well aimed German artillery. General Wilbur suggested to Gen. Keyes that they both go to the station to view the damaged bridging material, **but Keyes, for whatever reason, took off for the rear.**

I've often wondered if the cancellation of the daylight crossing had anything to do with General Wilbur's return to the States. In any event, he gave me the job of organizing a defense of the bridges along the Rapido River for fear the Germans would use them against us.

A Lt. Duke came running into the railroad station, followed shortly by Capt. William H. Kaupert, both of them drenched from having swum in the river. One of them said he'd dived into the river after German soldiers had surrounded our troops on the far bank, and had seen a German soldier take aim at him and then with a swing of his arm wave him on his way, as though doubting anyone could survive the crossing in any event.



R. K. Doughty
Former S-2, 141 and
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Ross Doughty attended the services for General Wilbur at West Point, above fotos from Pointer View, official publication of USMA, sent in by Doughty. The flag-draped casket stood beneath a ceiling plaque that read, "Righteousness Exalteth a Nation, But Sin is a Reproach to any people." At right: USMA Provost Marshall Div. presents Mrs. Wilbur with the flag from her husband's casket. Several members of Medal of Honor Society were in attendance. May 1980.

I Remember General Wilbur

Officer Says 36th Has Displayed Highest Heroism

Washington, March 25 (Special). "To rise to the height of the infantry soldier" is the greatest heroism an American fighting man can accomplish, Brig. Gen. William H. Wilbur, assistant commander of the 36th "Texas" Infantry Division, told newsmen today.

The general, who is just back from front-line duty with the fighting 36th at Cassino, said "he is the real hero of this war, the soul of our military effort. His job requires more stamina, more individual initiative than is expected of any other individual of the armed forces."

The 36th's bitter, bloody battle of Cassino is only typical of the infantryman's everyday job, General Wilbur reported. The Texas division, which has been fighting for three months without rest, has to batter its way through many more Cassino's before its job will be done.



This Polaroid is a bit dark, but it's worthy of being added to this fine story from Ross Doughty. This was also made same time at the one with Puck ... San Antonio Reunion of 1981 - it was a FIRST for Ross. Surely - everybody knows that the man on the left is Col. Oran Stovall, the Bowie Baron.



ROSS DOUGHTY, LEFT, ARMIN PUCK

REMEMBER WHEN

The 1st and 36th divisions trained together in Florida, and Puck and Doughty remember that first payday. "There were 200 men injured in the brawl that day," Doughty says. "It came down to who stood up for 'the Eyes of Texas' and who didn't."

The 36th captured Goering, the "No. 2 Nazi" called "Fatty" by American GIs, and Puck and Doughty remember "the fried chicken episode."

"A woman reported wrote we gave Goering a chicken dinner and it was blown way out of proportion. He had the same thing we all did," says Doughty.

"People were outraged at the way the story appeared. It was chicken - frozen chicken that came in cartons. It was all we had at the time," adds Puck.

By the time "Fatty" Goering was eating his frozen chicken dinner, Nazi Germany has already been ruptured. Thanks in part, the "Fighting Texas 36th Division."

They remember liberating a "hospital" where the Germans "had been conducting experiments."

"We found people alive but without a mind or anything," says Puck.

Both Puck and Doughty left the Army at the end of the war with the rank of Lieutenant colonel. Doughty was intelligence officer and Puck was provost marshal for the 36th. Puck continued with the reserves and retired as a brigadier general.



Part V

'KRIEGIE'

Prisoner Of War In Germany

Oflag 64

Forced March Out Of Poland

By Alan "Chum" Williamson

On the morning of 21 January 1945, Oberst Fritz Schneider, the camp commandant, announced through an interpreter that Oflag 64 would be evacuated immediately. "All able-bodied men will fall out to begin the march. I hope to have your cooperation. But I will evacuate you, whether you cooperate or not."

The Russians had taken Warsaw, crossed the Vistula River, and begun their advance westward. Oflag 64, situated at Schubin, Poland, was 175 miles northwest of Warsaw. German forces were in full retreat. Their plan was withdrawal to the Oder River, the first natural barrier where they might make a stand.

Our destination was Oflag XIIIB, Hammelburg, 345 miles away. It was established as a camp for transient officer PWs during the Battle of the Bulge. Since we had been informed the day before, we were ready -- as ready as we could get.

Those who had them converted their extra pair of trousers into a duffel bag. In them, we packed everything we expected to own for the rest of the war. Most carried the load on their backs. Some of us fashioned crude sleds. The roads were covered with snow.

The Oflag population was 1,557 American PWs at the time, including 136 enlisted orderlies. The German doctor agreed with the American medical officers to leave behind 86 men considered unable to march. Frank Aten, one of our premier escape artists, took advantage of the confusion to finally gain his freedom. On the pretext of filling his canteen, he hid in the Infirmary.

Bill E. Fabian, Hervey Robinson, William Cory, and Hill Murphy hid in the tunnel and were left behind. They were the principal dig-

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gers. The plan was for them to escape by surfacing the tunnel. They were given four days rations for that purpose. However, some of the Kriegies left behind as unable to march were told they were there. When the coast was clear, they removed the cover to the tunnel entrance, liberating the four.

It was 11:00 A.M. before the main body of some 1,465 Kriegies cleared the Oflag. We delayed departure as long as we could, hoping the Russians would overtake us. The first 50 men out the gate were given a loaf of bread, in addition to the Red Cross parcel given each of us.

The road was choked with refugees fleeing the Communist juggernaut. From Poland and East Prussia, they were traveling in wagons, carts, every form of horse, mule, or ox-drawn contraption. Their caravans kept to the right side of the road, while our mile-long column kept to the left. There was no traffic going the other direction.

Oberst Schneider was riding in a surrey drawn by two mules. The very few motor vehicles were being used by combat troops. Each that would run was towing several others, because of the shortage of fuel.

I suffered a minor tragedy before the end of the first day's march. A Lieut. Col. Leslie accosted me during a rest break. He said, **"I found a can of corned beef lying in the road. I didn't know whose it was, so I ate it. Now I'm pretty sure it fell out of your sled. Check and see if you're missing a can of corned beef."**

I was. One leg of my trouser duffel bag had been dragging on the road and had a hole worn in it.

Leslie said, **"I would replace it, but I don't have a can of corned beef."**

The temperature was about 15 to 20 degrees below zero fahrenheit. Bottles of water carried in our pockets froze solid. We ate snow to quench our thirst.

We marched 24 kilometers the first day, passing through the town of Exin and stopping at Wegheim. There we were quartered in barns in which manure was covered with hay.

On the following morning, **some 186 Kriegies were left behind.** Oberst Schneider agreed to leave about 25 considered unable to go. The rest hid from the guards. These included Roy J. Chappell, Jr., another one of our escape artists, former Senior American Officer George Van Millett, and Major Jerry Sage. Chappell and a number of others remained at Wegheim to await the Russians. Some returned to Oflag 64, which became a collecting point for those escaping

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along the route of the march.

According to Chappell, Oberst Schneider left behind several guards to round up escapees. But fearful of being overtaken by the Russians, they fled empty-handed.

Next morning, 23 January, another group escaped by hiding until the column departed. These included **Capt. James B. Bond of Waco, commander of Co. E, 143rd Infantry, when captured.**

Most Kriegies are in agreement on events that occurred during the forced march. But there is wide disagreement over the chronological order. Although at odds with at least two Kriegies who kept diaries, I shall use the dates as I remember them, and which coincide with those used by **Senior Texas District Judge Clarence M. Ferguson in his excellent book, KRIEGSGEFANGENER (Prisoner of War).**

I was stricken by a high fever. I lightened my load by throwing away all my non-essentials except a book on chess. After the noon break I waited for the end of the column before resuming the march. Unable to keep up, I hitched my sled to a horse-drawn cart of a refugee family. The woman driver made me unhitch.

A wagon loaded with our guard detachment's equipment, pulled by one horse, brought up the rear of the column. A German soldier, holding the reins, walked behind, another alongside. My cheeks flaming with fever, I asked if I could attach my sled to the wagon. The soldier with the reins nodded assent.

After more than an hour of blessed relief, the horse began to stumble going up an icy hill. The two soldiers threw some of the cargo in the ditch, but left my sled intact. Going up the next hill, the horse again began to falter. More cargo was jettisoned. The soldier motioned that I must unhitch. However, the respite enabled me to continue. **By nightfall my fever broke.**

The horse pulling the guards' wagon wasn't the only animal unequal to his task. The ditches were cluttered with household goods thrown away by refugees. **We passed a dead horse lying beside the road. Passers-by had begun to butcher him.** Both hind-quarters and a forequarter were gone.

One morning would-be escapees were given a rude surprise. After the column formed to resume the march, guards set up machine guns in the doorways of the barns and began firing. Kriegies hiding in the hay began shouting. The firing stopped and they came out with their hands up. Nobody was hit.

Next morning the exercise was repeated. Most of those who came out of the hay were the same ones who tried it the day before.

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up the rear on foot, came upon us. They said nothing, but simply waited patiently until we were ready to move on.

There were several columns of PWs being marched out of Poland by three different routes. Stragglers in some of the other columns were not so lucky. **An American NCO who fell behind in another group was shot and killed. A guard fired into the ground to frighten him and the bullet ricocheted.**

Late one evening on an isolated road we saw something in the right lane which had the bundle-of-clothes look that might be a body. A protruding bare hand indicated that it was. Neither guards nor Kriegies bothered to investigate.

A number of Kriegies contracted diarrhea. Despite the sub-zero cold and worse wind-chill factor, with snow falling in a fine mist, we were forced to drop our trousers at every opportunity. The condition eventually cured itself, perhaps from lack of food.

My nostrils began dripping steady, twin streams of mucus. My sled partner remarked on several occasions, **"Your nose is dripping like the sap from a fresh maple tree."**

The guards were giving us very little food. However, we were permitted to trade cigarettes and other items with villagers in the towns. In some, the guards would go into the kitchens and drink coffee while we bartered with the householders. **"Cigaretten fer brot (bread)? Cigaretten fer kase (cheese)?"**

In one house, a woman led a Kriegie to a bedroom. She began showing him pictures of naked women. **"No, no!"** he protested. **"Cigaretten fer brot!"**

One day we were within the sound of small arms fire. We had been hearing artillery fire every day. Speaking through an interpreter during a rest break, Oberst Schneider announced, **"The United States and Great Britain have signed a peace treaty with Germany that does not include Russia. American warships are now evacuating German troops from the eastern front.**

"It is possible that the Russians may overtake us. If that happens, we will fight! Any American who takes up a gun and fights with us is a free man!"

Needless to say, there were no takers. And nobody believed the yarn about U.S. warships and a separate peace.

That night, we were quartered in haylofts in a Polish town on the west bank of an ice-covered river. Most of the lofts had only one small entrance-exit—firetraps. After eating what we had for supper, we began climbing the ladders into our assigned barns.

Oberst Schneider began making the rounds of the barns, cautioning us in German, **"Nicht rauchen!"** No smoking. We repeated the words, indicating that we understood. Schneider was like a stern

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parent. He was concerned for our welfare, but would punish us if we were naughty.

Next morning we awoke to find that we were free. The guards had fled during the night, leaving behind Hauptmann Menner, the interpreter. Strongly pro-American, Menner spoke fluent English. He said we were surrounded by the Russians. Schneider had left him behind so we would not be abandoned.

Menner was highly regarded by the Americans. Colonel Goode offered him the protection of an American uniform. He declined. He said, **"I will go down in the uniform of my country."**

As the news spread through the town, Polish girls came with food, mostly candies and desserts. We sat around campfires with the girls, singing American and Polish songs, as we awaited the arrival of the Russians.

At about 2:00 P.M., a detachment of **"Freiwillingler"** (Volunteer) SS troops interrupted the festivities. They were Latvians, who didn't like the Russians and had joined the German army early in the war, to be on the winning side. Most spoke no German.

Their leader announced through an interpreter something to the effect, **"Sorry about that, but we've broken out of the pocket and we're taking you with us. Form a column on the road at four o'clock, ready to march."**

The Latvians posted no guards, and it was obvious that they didn't care if we escaped or not. They were angry because the German troops were riding out and they were being forced to walk.

There were hurried conferences. Kriegies by the score headed east across the frozen river. Colonel Goode made the rounds of the barns, urging us not to escape. **"I may be saving your life!"**

Goode remembered the warning of Swiss representative Franz, some six months earlier, **"The Germans will kill any prisoners who try to escape."** But this was a brand new ball game. Faced with certain defeat, the morale of the German armed forces was broken. They would have liked to surrender to us.

Goode's concern was not well received in some quarters. Some said, **"Pop Goode is more afraid of the Russians than he is of the Germans."** Others complained of his decision to cut our ration of Red Cross parcels in half, **"so they will last longer."**

Now, every refugee family on the road had at least one of our precious parcels. Kriegies left behind at Oflag 64 reported finding a warehouse stacked to the ceiling with them.

Goode's fear of the Russians was well founded. They killed in cold blood German soldiers trying to surrender. They killed refugees, including women and children, crushing them, their wagons and their horses with tanks. A number of escaped American PWs were killed

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before they could identify themselves.

Some months before, Americans at Oflag 64 at the time were given American flags to be fastened around the upper arms for identification, and tiny compasses, no bigger than a pea. These items were smuggled into the camp. I had mine sewn inside the lining of my jacket. I never saw either item used except as souvenirs after the war.

Frank Aten and other Kriegies who met the Russians on the road identified themselves by shouting "**Ameri-can! Studebaker! Chevrolet!**"

Author John Toland (**THE LAST 100 DAYS, Random House, 1965-66**) states that when Lieut. Col. Doyle Yardley and two other Kriegies met the Russians, the detachment commander embraced Yardley and shouted, "**Americansky, Roosevelt, Churchill, Stalin, Studebaker, Chevrolet, very good!**" Then he gave them rifles and ordered them to join his detachment and fight, "**like good allies.**"

Col. Goode couldn't order anybody not to escape. But he did ask that no field grade officers go. "**I will need you to maintain order.**" However, with the exception of a few titans like Lieut. Colonels Max Gooler, John Knight Waters and James D. Alger, the field officer was just another Kriegie.

Since Leslie was sharing my sled, I let him make the decision. We decided that staying with the main body offered the best chance of survival. Moreover, there was still a good chance that we would be overtaken by the Russians. We were among those who formed a column on the road at four o'clock.

Not all the escapees made it. Two awaited the Russians in a root cellar in "**Freedom Village.**" Two German soldiers, looting, happened upon them. They took all the hapless PWs' food and cigarettes, then marched them at twice the speed of our column until they caught up.

On the night following our brief liberation, we were rejoined by our Oflag 64 guards. The next night, we were quartered in barns on a large estate.

There, we saw a Russian PW who was being used as a farm laborer. Excited about the approach of Soviet troops and his possible liberation, he kept pointing to himself and proudly proclaiming, "**Me Russky!**"

He plainly showed the effects of prolonged undernourishment. He was emaciated, little more than skin and bones. He was also poorly dressed for the bitter cold. Nothing but a jacket, trousers, and rags wrapped around his feet in lieu of shoes.

At daybreak next morning we saw his body lying on a compost

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heap in an area designated as a latrine, his sightless gray eyes wide open in death. As we answered calls to nature, many thought with disgust that the Germans had thrown him there.

A widely circulated story had it that he was alive when the guards left him there to freeze to death. According to another, a guard shot and killed him, then threw his body into the area of human and animal feces. Here is the true story.

The night before, the man set out across the frozen fields to meet his countrymen. But he was too weak from malnutrition, like we American Kriegies, only much worse. He was also too thinly clad for a wind-chill factor well below zero.

A German patrol found him at the perimeter fence, exhausted, suffering from severe hypothermia. They brought him to the hayloft next to the latrine area, where Americans were quartered. They asked the Kriegies to do what they could for him.

Efforts to save the man's life failed. He died during the night. Since the loft was overcrowded, Americans put his body on the compost heap. Shortly after daybreak, German soldiers came with a wagon and took him away.

We were allowed to remain at the estate for a much needed day of rest. I traded a carton of my precious cigarettes to the owner for a sled. It was a child's sled, but it had runners. The man's small son saw me with it and tried to repossess it. His dad came to my rescue. Leslie and I found it much easier to pull than the rig it replaced.

As the march progressed, my body adjusted to the cold and the unaccustomed exertion. Those of us still marching learned survival techniques.

Where the guards permitted, we built roaring fires, to get warm, dry our clothing, and heat water for soluble coffee or the ersatz variety provided by the guards. "Goon coffee." We slept in our wet socks, so body heat would dry them. We slept with our shoes inside our makeshift sleeping bags, so they would be dry and unfrozen the next morning.

As we neared the Oder River, we found German families to be as friendly as the Poles. One night we were quartered on an estate where the German farmer had a large pressure cooker. He cooked for us all the boiled potatoes we could eat. He said his son was a POW in the United States and had written that he was being treated well.

I offered a little girl a stick of Spearmint from my Red Cross parcel. She refused, but her mother accepted. "Chewing gum!" she exclaimed. "She has never seen it!"

There was a change in the weather. The temperature rose above freezing and the snow melted. Leslie and I had difficulty pulling the

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sled on bare concrete. One of the runners broke and we had to transfer our belongings to our backs.

More than 1,400 Kriegies had left Oflag 64 on 21 January. By nightfall on 5 February we had walked 132 miles in 16 days. But not 1,400. More than half our numbers had escaped, been left behind at points along the route as unfit to continue, or been put aboard boxcars for Stalag IIIA, Luckenwalde. These included nearly all my friends and fellow T-Patchers.

Lieut. Col. Max Gooler announced that three boxcars were available to take 150 men to Luckenwalde. T-Patchers Hal Jones, Clarence Ferguson, and Randolph Robinson, along with Phillip "Pop" Foster of the 45th Division, had taken that route more than a week earlier. Robinson, of Corsicana, Texas was a 36th Division Artillery officer. **All four were very sick men, who had made it that far on raw courage.**

Since I was fully capable of continuing, I didn't apply. However, two of my few remaining friends, Capt. Hal Craft, former CO of Co. K, 143rd Infantry, and Leslie, my erstwhile sled partner, were among the "sick, lame and lazy," as army topkicks referred to men on sick call.

I developed a horrendous case of heartburn, with nothing that spelled 'relief.' I appealed to Col. Gooler. Although the quota was filled, he agreed to squeeze me in.

Misery doesn't necessarily love company. **"We don't want 51 men in a boxcar!"** a Kriegie grumbled. Another said, **"No wonder he's got indigestion. He ate a whole half a loaf of bread!"** It was only a third of a loaf and it cost me two packs of cigarettes.

According to Lieut. Col. Clarence R. Meltesen's diary, 178 men were loaded into the three boxcars. There was barely room to sit, let alone lie down. At night, when we were locked in the cars, the five day journey was sheer torture.

I was about the only Kriegie in the group who still had enough cigarettes to barter. The rains ran mostly at night. During the day, when the cars were on a siding, I moved about at will, seeking trades. The guard assigned to my boxcar allowed me complete freedom.

In North Africa we joked about Italian PWs being evacuated by motor convoy. After a rest stop, some could be seen running to catch trucks leaving without them. I was now often in the same position: running to catch my boxcar as it was being switched from one siding to another.

On one occasion, a troop train stopped on a parallel track. I immediately accosted a German soldier sitting next to an open win-

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dow. "Cigaretten fer brot?" Then I saw that the men were all eating soup. I felt ashamed when the soldier offered to share his 'soupa' with me for nothing.

A German lieutenant, not as friendly as the soldiers aboard the train, approached. "What are you doing here?" he demanded.

"I'm a prisoner of war," I replied.

"I know that! But why is a great big country like the United States fighting a little country like Germany?"

I said, "You declared war on us after Pearl Harbor."

"No we didn't! We had nothing to do with Pearl Harbor! You declared war on us!"

A fellow Kriegie came and took over the argument. I beat a hasty retreat.

On the next to last day of the journey I entered a railroad station, deserted except for the station agent. I offered to trade cigarettes for bread or cheese.

Alarmed, he began to shout, "Postern! Postern!" (Guard). It was the only time I aroused apprehension in anyone during the entire time I was 'in the bag.'

The guard assigned to my boxcar appeared almost immediately. He spoke a few words in German to the stationmaster. Then he said in English, no doubt so I could understand, "The war is nearly over. Everybody who wants to escape has already escaped."

We arrived at Luckenwalde after dark on 10 February 1945. Our guards had trouble finding Stalag IIIA and it seemed we walked all over town. Several Kriegies who were there when Hauptmann Williams ran an interrogation center surged to the front, hoping to get better accommodations by being among the first arrivals. Those already in front complained.

"We know where the place is!" the interlopers fibbed.

The guards found the Stalag despite Kriegie help. It looked grim, foreboding. We would find it to be worse than it looked.

NEXT: Part VI, Luckenwalde.



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KERRIGAN'S KORNER

A Few Fractured Foxhole Fables

Worldwartwoveterans.org

By George (Wrong Way) Kerrigan

THE DAY WE SLEPT

One lovely warm day in Sunny Italy, North of Rome "1944", Co. "A" 142 Inf. Regt. was driven in trucks to an area in the woods, and told by our officers to dig in and keep on the alert as Jerry was supposed to be all over the place.

Now my motto in combat was to give my men all the rest I could, "**when things were quiet**", and when things got rough they were in great shape to fight like hell, which they did.

As we were brought up in large trucks, I was sure that Jerry wasn't within miles of us, so I gave the orders to relax, until we got the order to move out. Then I made myself comfortable and laid at the foot of a large tree, and went right to sleep, to dream of my "**Coney Island Baby**" back in Brooklyn, "**The Garden Spot of the World**" where we even had a tree. (They made a movie about it.)

An hour or so later, about 100 Germans, on bikes with "**Anti Vehicle Mines**" mounted on the frames, came pedaling merrily down a lane toward my outfit. They were singing and whistling as they rode, and like us, thought there were no enemies around for miles.

Thank God my Flank Man, Julius Aiken, was awake, and heard them from a distance. He called softly, then threw stones to waken the men nearest him, to no avail; Sgt. Wrong Way Kerrigan told them to relax, and relax they did.

So after about 60 Jerries passed in front of him, he opened up with

Kerrigan's Korner

his Tommie Gun; what an ending to a beautiful dream. **All Hell broke loose**, Jerry yelling and screaming; I was hit with a falling bike, as a Jerry jumped over me. There was no more shooting, as we didn't want to hit our own people, and the Tommie Gun had taken the fight out of them. So we rounded up the survivors and questioned them, regarding the mines. They were going to various areas to set up road blocks.

I felt great, until I heard a guy in an "Irish Whisper" yell, "They don't call him 'Wrong Way' for nothing."

Worldwartwoveterans.org POP LAIRD

Every outfit has a man that is a specialist. Well, "Pop" Laird, from Utica, New York, was the best "Fox Hole Digger" in all Europe and he was 38 years old to boot.

We were alerted one night to get ready for an attack by General Kesselring's troops, as he was headed right for us. (North of Rome in Italy.)

Pop had a beautiful hole already dug, when his Sgt. moved his squad to a new area, and as I only had less than one foot dug, I jumped into his hole, and five minutes later, his squad was moved back. I got ready to vacate the hole, but he just looked at the hole and said, "Some S.O.B. is in my hole," then moved over and dug another one in only a few minutes.

A week later, "Sam Katzman" conned Pop into teaming up with him. Sam said, "Instead of two holes, Pop, let's dig one big hole, large at the bottom, so the second man can sleep there and we can rotate standing watch." Pop agreed and of course dug the hole.

Pop's eyes were bad, so he had to depend on Sam to tell the time at night. Pop stood the first two hours, and as soon as he hit the bottom of the hole, he started to snore, due to fighting and digging all day. Five minutes later, Sam kicked him to wake up, and told him that he let him sleep an hour longer because Pop had dug the hole. This went on all night long and when dawn came, Pop saw me in the next hole 10 feet away, and said, "That was the longest night I ever put in, in my whole life." I got hold of Pop's Sgt. and had that Combo broken up.

A few days later Pop was hit; the bullet went right through the fleshy part of his arm. I gave him first aid and he was sobbing like hell, and when I told him it was a clean wound, in one side and out

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the other, he sobbed louder. So I said, "Take it easy Pop, it's a minor wound, and when they see that you are over 38, you will not be sent back to combat." He said, "I was only shot once but I got two holes, that's why I'm crying."

Pop only had one month in combat, but he sure left his mark, and did a job, Gob Bless him!

DON'T EVER VOLUNTEER

On December 15, 1943, Co. A 142 was engaged in a rough fire fight for Mt. Lungo, in the heart of the Mignano Gap, on the road to Cassino in Southern Italy.

Our weapons platoon was running low on 60 MM mortar shells; luckily our casualties were low at the moment, so our Medic, in a daring mood, volunteered to go down to the Ammo dump and get some.

Now, Doc was 5 ft. 8 inches tall, and 220 lbs, and with his medical pouches around his waist, looked like a Taxi Cab with both doors open.

During a lull in the shooting, we re-loaded and checked our weapons while getting our second wind. Just then, I saw Doc coming over a rise in the distance, his arms loaded with the mortar shells in their containers. He was about fifty yards from us, when about twenty-five Jerries came over a rise on his left; they first spotted the red crosses on his helmet, then the red crosses on his arms, then the arm load of mortar shells.

By this time Doc was at the top of a small rise, and when he saw the Jerries looking at him confused, threw the Ammo up in the air and yelled before he took off for our lines.

As I was watching Doc all the time, I was ready and started firing at the Jerries, then they opened up at Doc, while ducking for cover at the same time.

Halfway home Doc stopped, and bent over to pick up his Medical Pouches; as we covered him with our fire power, he came into our lines white as a ghost.

After the scrap I said, "How come you dropped your pouches, Doc?" He replied, "I didn't drop them, they shot them off my shoulders - look." Sure enough, both straps were cut at the shoulder, as with a knife.

I said, "You were damn lucky. Next time you go for ammunition, take a rifle or Tommy gun." Doc replied, "Take it from me, there will be no next time." (End of quote.)

Kerrigan's Korner

A First For Both Of Us

On January 4, 1944, after being hospitalized with Frozen Feet, commonly called **French Feet**, due to constant exposure to freezing rain, in the Mountains of Italy near Mt. Lungo and the four-foot deep snows atop Mt. Summocro, or Hill 1205.

I was taking my first plane ride, a D.C.3 Hospital plane. We were to fly from Naples to an Airport in Bizerti, North Africa, where the warm climate was supposed to have a healing effect on my feet.

Next to me was a veteran paratrooper from the 82nd Airborne Division. Naturally I was nervous and more so, as they gave me an inflatable life belt, instead of a parachute.

He was so damn casual sitting there, before "**take-off**," I said, "**I guess this is old stuff to you buddy?**" And he surprised me by saying "**No, I am looking forward to this trip.**" I said, "**You sure as hell have been up before,**" and he replied "**Yes, I have been up seventeen times before, but I have always jumped, now I am looking forward to landing in a plane, for the first time.**"

A No Hitter

On September 29th, 1944, I was wounded and taken to an evacuation hospital in Alsace Lorraine, France, and (God Bless them), **they treated every one like a King.** And the food was tops, my only regret is that I forgot the number of the hospital.

Well, a Nisei from the 442nd combat regiment was put in the next bed to me, and he had his "**Family Jewels**" taken off by Shrapnel, but like all his buddies, was in good spirits.

After pancakes were served for breakfast, (all we could eat), in came a most beautiful nurse, that made most models look sick.

She started at Bed one, looked at the name on the chart, then asked the fellow where he was hit, when she was told, would say, "**You will be fine**" and when she smiled, they did feel fine. (What a Doll!)

After she left me on Cloud Nine, she said, "**Well look here, we have a handsome Hawaiian boy, and where were you hit?**"

He replied, "**Lady if you were hit where I was hit, you wouldn't have been hit at all.**"

Needless to say Miss America took off "**red as a beet.**"

Then & Now . . .

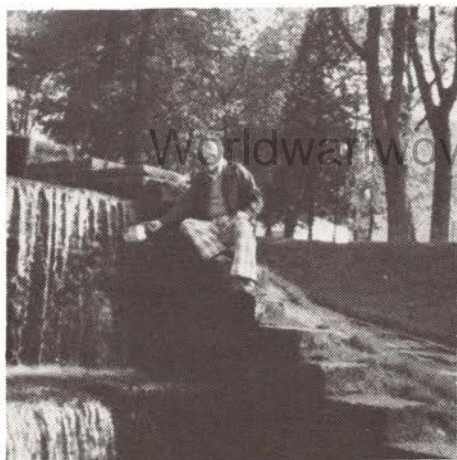
The Baths
of LUXEUIL
Still Flowing,
Reports
Kerrigan



Dear Editor:

Here's a rare **THEN & NOW** . . . taken at the **BATHS of LUXEUIL, France** . . . above is Mike DeLeo of Averel, NJ, at a nearby waterfall, and I'm holding the helmet. Only a few troopers were allowed in the baths (10 minutes) but a photographer for UP and INS asked us to pose this one. Later, they sent copies to papers back home, and I still have mine (7"x9"). Tragedy would strike an hour later, and my buddy DeLeo was killed.

The now was taken in May 1987 when I went on the TOUR of Vosges Mountains and Alsace, hosted by Carl Strom of TM Travel Associates who really knows how to do it all . . . and a beautiful trip it was. Glad to know the old waterfall at Luxeuil is still in business after 42 years.



George Kerrigan A/142nd
8300 So. Springfield
Chicago, IL 60652



Men From 60 Towns In Texas Played Part In Battle of Salerno

Big men and little men, the kind of humans that grow in Texas from the eastern piney woods out past the cap rock to the wind-swept western plains, were the Texans who took the Salerno beachheads.

A roster of the division not long before it was shipped over from Camp Edwards, Miss., showed units from nearly sixty towns in the state, from the coast to the northern boundary and from the Sabine River to El Paso.

At that time the division included three infantry regiments, the 141st, 142d and 143d. The 141st included units from San Antonio, Gonzales, El Paso, Lockhart, Robstown, Luling, Waelder and San Benito.

The 142d had units from Amarillo, Brownwood, Santa Anna, Coleman, Ballinger, Stephenville, Sweetwater, Canyon, Snyder, Stamford, Ranger, Abilene, Breckenridge, Wichita Falls and Electra.

The 143d included units from Waco, Clifton, Mexia, Huntsville, Galveston, Belton, Beaumont, Temple, West Hillsboro, Caldwell, Houston and Itasca.

Dallas Infantry Detached.

The old 144th Infantry of Dallas was not in the group, having been detached with some artillery battalions when the division was triangulized. The 144th still is on

duty in this country.

The 131st Field Artillery, a sister battalion to the one which was detached from the 36th Division and subsequently lost in Java, included units from Wichita Falls, Jacksboro, Amarillo, Abilene and Decatur.

The 132d and 133d Field Artillery Battalions are East Texas organizations that originally comprised the old 132d Regiment and include units from Corsicana, Weatherford, Bonham, Paris, Cleburne, Italy, Kerens and Marshall.

The 155th Field Artillery presumably was there, too. It formerly was a battalion of the old 133d and includes men from Dallas, Fort Worth and New Braunfels.

The division's engineering outfit, the 111th Battalion, include units from Port Arthur, Fort Worth, Bowie, Greenville, Victoria, Houston and Gonzales.

Represent Entire State.

The 636th Tank Destroyer Battalion and the 36th Cavalry Reconnaissance Troops both represent the state as a whole, for they were organized after the division was mobilized from cadres drawn from other units.

The medical unit, 11th Medical Battalion, came from Fort Worth, Texarkana and De Kalb.

The 36th Signal Company's home was Denison and the 36th Quartermaster Company came from Austin. The Division Headquarters Company and the 736th Ordnance came from San Antonio.

JAMES SKINNER, 2411 S. Queen St., Arlington VA 22202 of Hqs. 132nd has a wife that put together one heck of a Scrapbook of Jim's army career. The above is just one of dozens of great clips from Dallas newspapers (his old hometown) and you'll be seeing more of these little jewels in the future issues. This Clip is one that we have never seen before. It'll tell you a lot about the formation of the 36th at Mobilization date, Nov. 1940.

A Cook Without A Kitchen

Worldwartv



“Gets Bazooka Training”

Or - “Ain’t This a
Helluva MESS”...

By Fla Hall
Company F 143rd

September 9th, 1943, we stood on the deck of a troop ship off the coast of Italy. Mess Sgt. Bob Nowell and his cooks were next in line to be called upon to climb down the rope ladder to a “Duck,” (Small Landing Craft). It would take us to the Salerno Beach invasion area. We were then told that five men were needed to complete the load on a “Duck,” carrying a 57 MM anti-tank gun and its crew. Bob said to me, “Hall take these four men and climb aboard.” (One of those men was Vester “Get in Step” Johnson from Mount Airy, North Carolina).

Worldwartwoveterans.org

Bob told me that we would probably meet on the beach. “If we don’t,” he said, “here is what you are to do.” He then walked me over to a hatch on deck. Bob took his finger and wrote in the dew the direction I was to go. As he wrote, he told me to go 300 yards off the beach and turn right, go to the woods, turn left and follow the edge of the woods to a railroad. From there go left to a red train-station and dig in behind it.

As our “Duck” neared the beach in a hail of 88’s and other artillery fire, we disembarked on-the-double in water knee deep. About 150 yards inland, there was a dry canal (wide ditch) parallel with the

A Cook Without A Kitchen

beach. There we encountered our first casualties caused by artillery and heavy enemy aircraft strafing the beach area.

We moved further inland and met a 2nd Lieutenant who told us we couldn't get through. He told us to dig-in and hold up there until the Germans were cleared out. An hour later we moved up with the troops, about 200 yards, and ran into heavy machine gun fire. I then decided to try and leave the beach to my left flank. After moving in about 300 yards across an open field, we could see tanks in action coming towards the beach. They turned out to be German Mark IV's.

Further to my left there were two artillery observers. They were on the radio talking to the Naval gun boats off shore and giving them information needed for some direct hits. **Thanks to the Navy, the other tanks turned back and our day was saved.** The assembly point for us, the railroad station, was never reached that day.

September 10th — The next day we continued on across the field. We passed those K. O. tanks and came to an intersection. By now the men were complaining to me about my leadership. Johnson had told them that I would get them all killed if they kept on following me. We had been strafed, and we had some close artillery hits that morning. I told the men to stay under a tree near the crossroads while I scouted around and tried to locate Sgt. Nowell and Co. F 143.

I walked down a road and located the 143rd Service Co. near the slopes of Mount Soprano. I reported my situation to the company commander. He told me that the Service Co. was where we should be. He told me to get the other men, so I went back and told them that I had found the place to go. Johnson told me that he wasn't following me another damn step. So we left him under the tree. **(The next time I saw Johnson, I was testifying at his court martial.)**

When we returned to the 143rd Service Co., we were met by a 1st Lieutenant (I don't remember his name). He told us that we were just in time to help load three 2½ ton trucks with supplies to be delivered to the front that night. I remember the truck I went on that first night carried heavy rolls of telephone wire. When we reached the front, we were joined by a Signal Co. officer who directed us down a narrow woods road. He picked four or five different locations to unload the wire. We spent all night getting rid of it. The sound of the truck motor drew in heavy mortar fire.

Our deliveries went almost routine until we carried up supplies **the night of September 13th.** We were told the 2nd Battalion 143rd

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had been hit-hard in the Persano area. and that they were going to pull back. We were told that K. Co. was surrounded in Altavilla, and that they needed ammunition.

While we were loading some ammo on a jeep for K. Co., the troops began to pull back passing by our trucks. We were then told to move the supplies back to the railroad. This area along the La-Cosa Creek was where the 2nd Battalion 143rd set up their line of defense that night.

The next morning we were told that every available man was needed and that they were expecting a tank attack from the South. My Lieutenant asked me if I had ever had any Bazooka training. My answer was "No Sir." "Well, Sgt. Hall," he said, "**you are going to get some today.**" The Lieutenant selected an area he thought would be the best position for a Bazooka sight. He told my buddy and me to **dig a two man upright fox hole about shoulder deep.** When we finished he told us to stand in the hole while he gave us our final instructions on how to fire it. He told me to aim at the tank tracks. We camouflaged the Bazooka sight. Flushed with excitement and fear, we were then ready for the "**Big Bang.**"

Later that day the 82nd Airborne dropped troops in the area. This eased the tension and made us all feel more secure. That night I asked the Lieutenant about the status of the German tank assault. He jokingly told me that the Germans had probably found out about our Bazooka and had changed their plan. Then I asked him about the 82nd. He said that they were doing a fine job too.

A few days later the Lieutenant told us that the 2nd Battalion 143rd had pulled back to regroup and draw replacements. He told us to get our gear secured because we would be going to our units.

When we reached the 2nd Battalion area, we were unloaded near the Bn. Aid Station, and Major Reemstma was there. He told me that what was left of Company F was just down the road.

When I reached the Co. area, I was told that our **Commander, Capt. Carl Bayne** and the executive officer, **First Lieutenant Julian Quarles**, had been captured along with many Co. F troops, and **First Lieutenant William Buster** had come to us from the 143 Service Co., as our new C.O., a few days early.

As I was approaching the kitchen, Sgt. Bob Nowell yelled, "**Hall, where in the hell have you been?**" "**Well Bob,**" I replied, "**that's a long story, but one place that I haven't been is the Red Train station that you told me to find and dig in behind.**" Later that day Sgt.

A Cook Without A Kitchen

Frank B. Jackson told me that First Sgt. Marvin "Genie" Jones had reported me missing in action to the War Department in Washington, D. C. Jokingly, he said to me, "If you think that this news will upset your folks, you should write them."

From there our kitchen was moved to a thicket of fruit trees (persimmon that were as large as oranges). We refer to this area as the "apple orchard" North of Naples.

There we drew the first rations and cooked hot chow for Company F troops after the Salerno invasion. From there our kitchen was moved to an olive grove near Mt. Rotunda. Here we spent the winter of 1943-44.

After a period of 44 years without any intension of recording this story, I am sorry that I do not remember more of the details. I especially regret not remembering the name of the S-4 First Lieutenant with whom I served my first 17 days in Italy.

Flavius B. Hall
521 National Court Drive
New Bern, N.C. 28560



Co F 143rd Had First Kitchen at Salerno, Says Hall

This tidbit is the fourth one from 'Fla' Hall, but lookout, he may come up with a new Cook Book on 3001 Ways to Cook Spam-Supreme, for wives who want to bring back a lot of memories for their husbands.



Beachhead Burial A Bizarre Business

From A Navy Lieutenant
Who Put the 36th Ashore at
Salerno Landing...

It was in the latter part of July 1944 that our 4th Beach Battalion was ordered to move from Salerno to an area south of Battipaglia where we were attached to the 40th Engineers and 45th Infantry Division to train for, what turned out to be, Southern France.

During one practice landing my platoon was with the 1st Bn., 157 Rgt. and we happened to land on the original Red Beach where the 2nd Bn., 142nd Rgt., 36th Div. had landed in assault on D Day, Sept. 9, 1943. Most of the 143rd Rgt., which had been in reserve, also landed on this Red Beach early in the morning of D Day. During the afternoon of D +1 the 179th Rgt., 45th Div., which had been in floating reserve, came in over Red Beach and, still later that afternoon, two battalions of the 157th Rgt., 45th came in direct from Sicily. Both moved inland to join the 36th Div. on the Sele River and the Corridor. A crossing of the Sele would be attempted that night by the 157th and units of the 36th Div. to attack Battipaglia and the Tobacco Factory. THE SITUATION WAS STILL VERY FLUID.

Red Beach had sustained two counter-attacks from German armor (the 16th Pz. and 29th Pz. Grenadiers) one of which came right onto the beach. A similar attack was staged against the 141st Rgt. on Yellow and Blue Beaches. However, they could not maneuver due to the areas being saturated with their own mines and were finally driven off by naval gun fire.

The beaches were prime targets for German artillery fire and air attack and this continued until D Day +8. NO ONE WAS SAFE ON OR NEAR THE BEACHES.



JUD BENTLEY

Navy Lt
4th Beach
Battalion

Hancock,
Michigan

Beachhead Burial Bizarre Business



That's me (the tall-lanky one) on D plus 1 at Salerno Beachhead, and it's for sure, the Germans had ample ammunition to expend on us — day and night — while we try to keep up with the casualties to be shipped back to North Africa.

During the initial assault the casualties were terrible and the beaches and areas just beyond were littered with dead and dying and new casualties were added as fresh troops came ashore and continued for several days. Losses among our medics who were tending the wounded ran high and the work was very exhausting.

The areas on the beaches set aside as collection stations were soon filled to overflowing and more coming in. 36th Div. medics and stretcher bearers would bring men to the beach, load the stretchers with ammo, gas, water, etc. and head back. We were almost barefoot for help at that early stage.

The heat at that time of the year was terrific and bodies would bloat and start to decompose in a matter of hours. Early attempts at evacuating wounded in small boats during daylight was disastrous and many hit by shell fire. It was equally suicidal to attempt to dispose of the dead there during daylight and we had to wait until nightfall. During that first night casualties were loaded on L. C. T's with 80 to 125 on each and this seemed to go on for most of the night.

Burial parties went out and buried the dead where they lay and they were wrapped in slickers, blankets or whatever could be found in the packs lying everywhere. Many graves were simply marked with a pack, helmet, rifle, bayonet or whatever. The graves were shallow in the beach sand and hard to identify later on. There was no sign of Grave's Registration and the action was heavy just a short distance inland. That beach was beginning to smell pretty ripe.

This was the scene we remembered when we revisited Red Beach

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with the 157th Reg. ten months later. The exit road was still much in evidence and the drainage ditch, II Fiumarella, just north which had been our only protection from German attack from the north. It still stank just as bad.

My boys routinely set up radio contact and the rest started to dig in a scattered pattern. All at once this activity ceased and much talking. It seems that they had partly uncovered three corpses in rotting O.D. blankets and also ran into several corroded Teller mines. I told them to quit right there. We brought in the 1st Bn. 157th and called it a day.

We hiked back to our camp north of the Sele River and I told our Bn. C.O. what we had run into and told him he should inform Army G.R. about it. I told him I refused to have my men exposed to any more of that. It bothered all of us for a long time. They could have been our own or (?) I got to thinking. If that was what we ran into in just a very small area, what was the situation along the five miles of beach between there and Agropoli to the south.

For days at Salerno we sent out patrols along the beaches to pick up what had washed ashore and pretty gruesome. Bodies, which were pretty much intact, bloated and were carried off by currents. What we got were pieces. We had an area where they were buried (down wind) and some wag put up a sign "SPARE PARTS." These were continuing reminders of those awful first hours and afterwards. Identification was impossible and fingers, toes, ears, lips, etc., had been chewed off by fish — could not even tell whether "it" was Army or Navy.

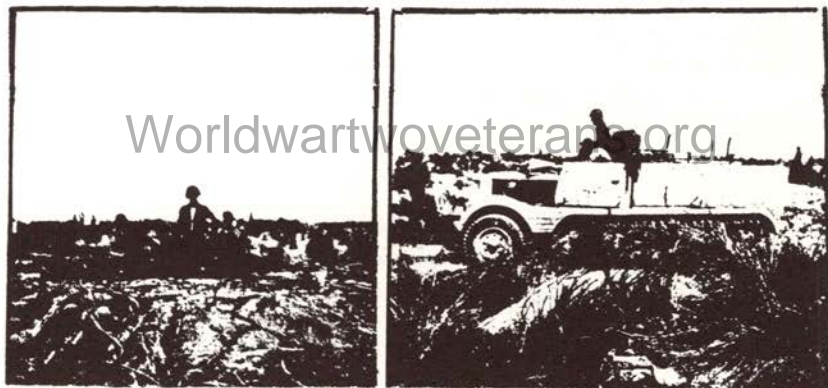


Foto at left: 40 mm Ack-ack outfit on the beachhead at Salerno. At right: captured Nazi Wolks Vagon, with winter tires good in the sandy beach. Our 4th Bn boys used it for transportation after ours was knockout, says Bentley.

Beachhead Burial Bizarre Business



Offshore ship (Washington) was hit and blew up about 3:00 AM, nearly knocked us off the beach. At right: this Bulldozer of 540th Engineers was shattered by a Nazi '88' and incinerated the driver. My men of 4th Beach Bn check it over.

Somewhere in the statistics on the 36th Div. I noted that, of the 27,000 odd casualties sustained, some 4,000 were listed as being M.I.A. I have wondered just how many of these still lie where they had fallen on those beaches, probably never to be recovered or identified?

I know that how this was handled seems irreverent, but when you have your back against the wall and no elbow room you do just the bare essentials and go on to other things. The beaches had been plastered with so much shrapnel, so many Teller and S Mines, butterfly bombs and what not that it would be by pure chance to locate any of these graves with a mine or metal detector. Perhaps it is just as well. No need to refresh heartache.

I Can't Forget GLENN ADAMS

In thinking back about those incidents it recalls to mind one in particular concerning one of our officers, a man named Glenn Adams, and serves as an example of this macabre ritual.

Glenn Adams came to Camp Bradford, VA on March 3, 1943 where our 4th Beach Battalion was formed of men who came from all over the country. All of the platoon officers were buck-assed Ensigns. Glenn was assigned to the 2nd Platoon of our A Co. and was designated as C.O. with Walter Connolly, of Detroit, as his Exec. That afternoon we moved to Camp Allen, an embarkation camp, and the next night we loaded onto a train bound for New York and loaded on the Hospital Ship, Acadia. Our destination was North Africa where our formal combat training took place.

In the Navy, Ensigns had to stay in that rank for 18 months. From time to time a directive would come through whereby Ensigns holding rank since a certain date or prior to that date, were eligible for promotion to Lieutenant Junior grade (like a first looie). It was

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not entirely automatic since there were a few "Catch 22's." You had to be declared physically fit by your M.D. If he was pissed off at you, you were nursing a dose of clap or were a candidate for Section 8, you could be passed up and have to wait another six months. **GLENN ADAMS DID NOT LIVE LONG ENOUGH TO GET TO BE A LT. J.G.**

Glenn hailed from the little town of Tremonton, Utah which is about 10 miles west of Logan and north of Ogden. **GLENN WAS A GOOD MORMON. He didn't smoke or drink or openly chase women, but he did lapse into the vocabulary that became common to the rest of us and still is. HIS OTHER FAILING WAS THAT HE WAS JUST TOO DAMNED BRAVE.**

For the Salerno caper Glenn and his platoon were assigned to the 3rd Bn., 142nd and apparently came in right behind the 1st Bn., 142nd on Green Beach. Our 3rd Platoon, with the 1st Bn., had been shot up pretty good so Glenn took over. Most of the riflemen were on the line with the 142nd.

It was early in the morning of D + 1 and Glenn and three other officers (most probably from the 36th Div.) were combing up and down the beach in a Jeep trying to locate "stuff" needed on the line. Adam's Jeep took a direct hit! It could have been a shell or a bomb since we were under artillery fire and enemy air attacks were almost an hourly event.

What could be scraped up of Glenn and the other three officers was buried in the sand, just off the beach, in a hole the size of a garbage can and a marker put up with a note scribbled with a lumber crayon and may still be there for all I know. They probably could have put what was left of that Jeep in the same hole. **For sure, none of them suffered.**

When we got back to the States in late October 1944 and got our new orders taking us to the Pacific, we were granted 30 days rehab plus travel time. I lost no time in getting out to Salt Lake City as my wife and son, 18 months old, had gone there to be with her parents for the duration.

I was reading the Salt Lake newspaper and came across the obituaries. I was curious to see what the wartime obits looked like. **At the head of the list were several ADAMS' and one caught my eye. A guy from Tremonton had been killed in the Pacific. IT WENT**

Beachhead Burial Bizarre Business

ON TO SAY THAT A BROTHER, GLENN, HAD BEEN KILLED IN THE MEDITERRANEAN THE PREVIOUS SEPTEMBER.

I thought I should go look up Glenn's folks but maybe it was not the proper time under the circumstance, maybe later.

Five Years After War's End . . .

In 1952 we were living in Duluth, Minn., I had a good job and I felt well-healed enough to take the wife and three kids for a trip to Salt Lake City. I thought of Glenn Adams. I did not have his address — just Tremonton.

Many of you have taken it on yourselves to look up the families of buddies and to tell them more than the simple government message — "WE REGRET TO INFORM YOU." That's what I had in mind and would take the northern route to come down through Logan and Ogden. As an extra thought I packed the first American flag to fly over the invasion beaches at Sicily. (That flag is now in the 45th Division Museum in Oklahoma City.) I thought it would be a nice gesture to present it to Glenn's family.



The tired men of 4th Beach Bn proudly display Old Glory after we put the troops ashore at the SICILY Invasion where we handled the old 45th Infantry Division. This was the flag I wanted to give to GLEN ADAMS' family. It is now at the 45th Museum at Oklahoma City.

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I found a short cut from Logan to Tremonton and that all seemed to be farming area. Tremonton had a population of under 3,000 and scattered all over. I pulled into a gas station for a refill and some info.

I asked the attendant if he could help me find a family named Adams? He looked at me kinda funny and said, "Mister, there ain't but half of the people in this town and roundabouts named Adams. Which one was you lookin' fer?" I said, "This guy's name was Glenn Adams." He got an even more peculiar look on his face. He shoved his head in the side window and said, "Fer yer infermation, my name is Glenn Adams too."

Then he dug up a telephone directory of Tremonton and the surrounding area and, brother, there were more Adamases there than Andersons in Minnesota. I was stymied. I said, "I see what you mean. Thanks." At least I tried. It is said that the road to Hell is paved with the best of intentions. **Lead on MacDuff.**

E. Judson Bentley
1223 Minnesota St.
Hancock, MI 49930
906-482-1622



Jud (ole Bentface) Bentley spent a lot of time — looking up, because that was where the action was after the first few days. We asked Jud why he did not call his men — "My Sons of the Beach."



Q. Where the hell is HANCOCK, Michigan?

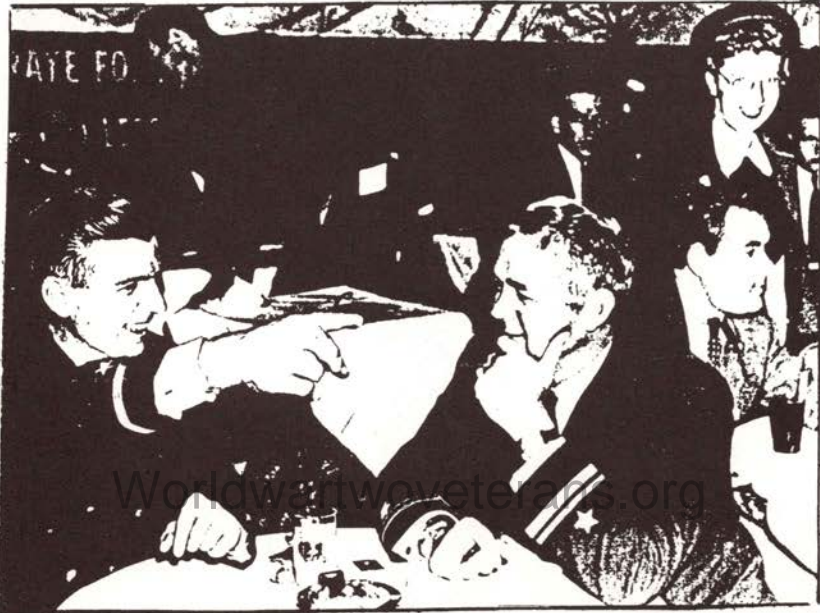
A. As shown on this map, it's out in the boondocks, the Upper Peninsula borders Lake Superior. Del Kendall calls it the "You-Pee" part of Michigan, cause he lives on shores of Lake Michigan.

Bentley is a big booster for the 36th, a Life Member and supports all our projects. Thanks, Judson.

Beachhead Burial Bizarre Business



The Nazis were a constant raider to our beachhead at Salerno. Here's a shot made by one of our 4th Beach Battalion boys . . . a JU-88 that crashed in our area - mid September 1943 - after a bomb-run on the arrival of the Task Force.



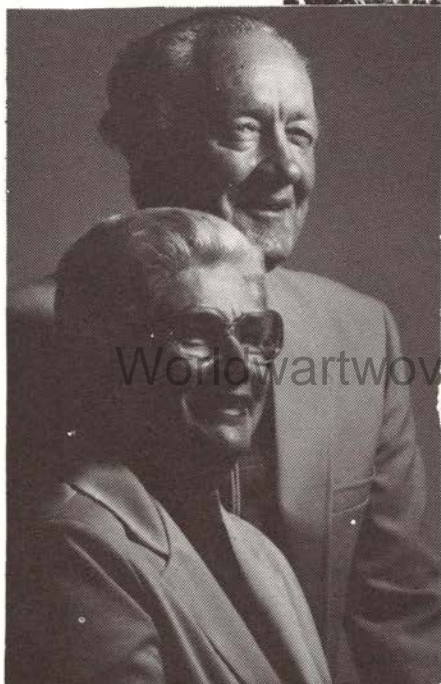
The Early Days - above foto was made Oct. 14, 1942 at the Village Barn, a popular hangout in the Greenwich area of NYC . . . that's me at left with Roger Stambaugh, former relief pitcher for NY Yankees. Next day we were ordered to go to North Africa for landings at Port Lyaury, Safi, and Casablanca. A great evening - Roger knew the owner - and the "night was on the house" for us. He was assigned to Safi, and I never saw him again, Jud.



“For The Children”

Robert G. Johnson Relates His
Tour With Co M 143rd Infantry, and
'Life' in a Nazi POW Camp

Happy Days for
Newlyweds — Sybil
and Robert Johnson
in a Wedding Foto,
March 16, 1941.



Forty-six years later —
we have this current foto
of Sybil and Robert
Johnson, Rt 1 Box 366-A
Sunset TX 76270.

Where's that?
Sunset is about six miles
south of Bowie, Texas,
where the great Colonel
Stovall resides.

"For The Children."

Sybil Johnson did not mention it, but it's a sure bet that she had a hand in the 32 page, spiral-bound booklet of Robert Johnson's War Story. Below is his Introduction Page:

TO MY LOVED ONES:

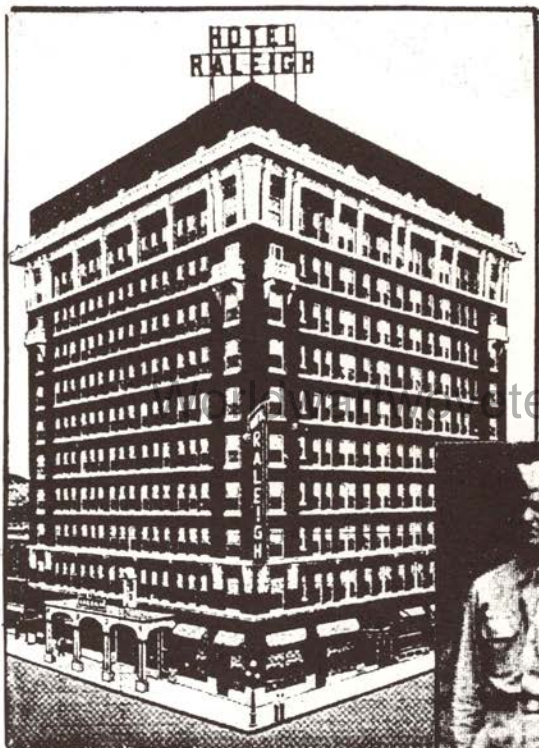
For several years now you have been asking me to put down some things about my years in the armed forces and in Prisoner of War Camps during World War II. There are some things I can remember well, and other things very vividly. I hope with this writing that you will remember that ours is a great country and that to you and your loved ones it will always be great. It has its shortcomings and it will be what people like you and me want it to be.

God said, "There will always be wars and rumors of wars." The rich and the poor, hunger and illness, suffering, theivery, murderings, etc. will always be a part of life. Because God gave man a mind and the ability to use it, man uses it selfishly. Only God can change you and make you what you ought to be.

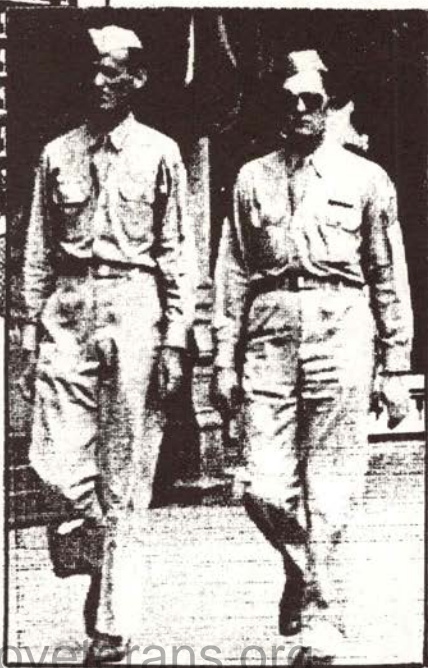


Old photos of family life abound in this historical document. Above is Robert G. Johnson (age 1) with sister Mildren E. Johnson (age 3). Foto at right — summer of 1945 — here's Earl Johnson of U.S. Navy and Robert Johnson, with a big smile — the war's over, over there.

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly



The old Raleigh Hotel of Waco was barracks for Co M 143rd prior to moving their tents at Camp Bowie at Brownwood, Texas.



ABOVE: Ed Pinter and Robert Johnson take a stroll at Hot Springs, Arkansas — 1945.

At Camp Blanding, old buddies, shown here at left: Robert Johnson and Harold Hudson in the summer of 1942.

"For The Children"



The Folks at Home Get a Telegram
 — Bessie and Ben Johnson are notified that son Robert, MIA since Sept. 19th — was captured by the enemy ... message dated Nov. 6th.

STANDARD TIME INDICATED
 RECEIVED BY
 TELEPHONE NO.
 TELETYPE NO.
 TELEGRAM NO.

Postal Telegraph
 Mark a Trade
 U.S. PATENT OFFICE
 COMMERCIAL LETTERS

NOV 6 11 47

TO: BEN F JOHNSON
 RURAL ROUTE NUMBER TWO BOX 130 WACO TEXAS

FROM: THE COMMANDING GENERAL NORTH AFRICAN AREA REPORTS THAT YOUR SON CORPORAL ROBERT F JOHNSON WHO WAS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED MISSING IN ACTION WAS CAPTURED BY THE ENEMY MAIL ADDRESS CAN NOT BE FURNISHED UNTIL CONFIRMATION OF CAPTURE IS RECEIVED THROUGH THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS IF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IS RECEIVED YOU WILL BE PROMPTLY NOTIFIED

ADJUTANT GENERAL

Kriegsgefangenenpost
 Stalag III B
 48
 Gopshof
 An Postkarte

Gebührenfrei

Abnehmer: Mr. + Mrs. Ben F. Johnson
 Dade, Texas

Employment: P.O. Box 130
 Waco, Texas

Ver- und Zusender: Cpl. Robert F. Johnson
 Gefangenennummer: 26372-7B
 Lager-Bezeichnung: 12326
 U.S. CENSOR

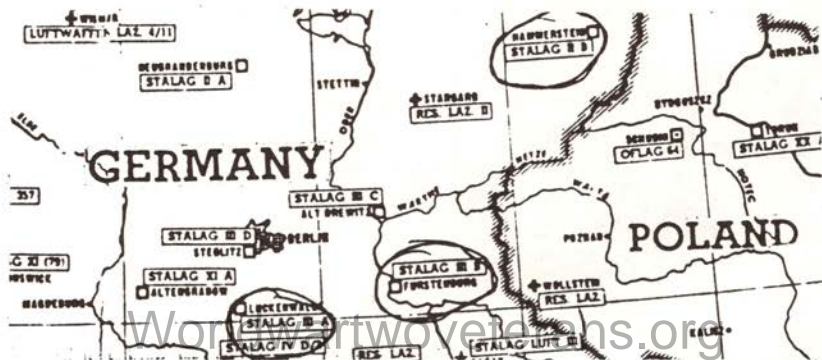
Postmark (Allgemein): 1-2-44

This is 'first' message that Johnson was allowed to send to his parents — dated Jan. 2, 1944, that's 3 months after he was listed as Missing In Action as of Sept. 19th, 1943.

Kriegsgefangenenlager
 Datum: 1-2-44

Dear Mother: Just a few lines to let you know that I am thinking of you always wishing you were here with me + much more of same. God bless you all Love always - Bob

I Remember Those Days At Stalag 3-B



At Stalag 3B some G.I.'s traded for a little crystal radio set. We could get the news during the night, write it down, and distribute it to the various barracks during the day. When this was done, we would place some of our men at the doors as guards. This way we always knew where the American Forces were at all times. Most of the time we could get news of what was happening at home in America, too!

We always had a lot of trade goods hidden in a "dug-out" area under the floor of one of the barracks. At various times we would have an assortment of food stuff, radios, an American Flag, a Russian Flag, and anything we had in surplus. The Gestapo and S.S. Troops knew or would get word of our "hoard" some way. Once, they made us all go outside in the snow. We would have to take all our belongings with us and line up so the Guards could check our belongings.

While they were checking us, some other S.S. Troops were going through our barracks, hunting our "hoard." They always found it! One of the main things they were looking for was **Swan Soap**. We got our heads together and decided the next time a search was ordered, we would take our soap outside and throw it in the open latrine pit. The Germans brought over some Russian POWs and made them go out in that mess, waist deep, at least, and retrieve the soap so the German Officers could have soap for their baths.

I don't know how much they took from all the other barracks each time, but they sure had some good American food for a few days. Our barrack was the last one to be searched and inspected, and the guards were getting tired. I stopped the old German Guard and gave him three packages of cigarettes. He grabbed them and motioned me on by without being searched.

In order to keep some kind of order while this was being done,

"For The Children."

they brought in a platoon of old soldiers. I am sure the old fellows were forced to do guard duty, or face a firing squad. One old fellow told me the German Officers told him, "**Take up that gun or you and your family will suffer.**" At that time he didn't know if his family was still alive or not. **They were Romanians.** We would do close order drill no matter how hard it snowed. This was the only way we knew to keep warm. It seemed to be snowing all the time!

There was a G.I. in that barrack that everyone called **Big John.** He was feeling real good one day and as he walked by, he made a grab for me. I ducked and flipped him over my left shoulder. My left leg and ankle kept his head and body from hitting the floor. I knew I was hurt bad from the sound of bones cracking. They took me to sick bay and placed my leg in a metal support and elevated the whole thing on my bed.

The German doctor told me I needed to go to a hospital in Berlin. I said, "**No way!**" The doctor didn't blame me for not wanting to go. He said all the little bones in my foot had been cracked and the tendons had been torn to pieces. My foot and leg, half way to my knee, turned blue.

For two months, it was swollen so much it looked like a club. The pain was so intense that each time I stood to go to the bathroom or to take a shower, I would almost faint. My trips to the bathroom were as few and as far between as I could possibly make them. **The only pain medication the Germans had was aspirin.** The Doctor told me I would have to work to get my leg back in condition and the only way to do that was to **walk.**

It was something like three months before I was able to walk back to the regular Compound. It was six months before I was able to walk without a limp. My foot and ankle still swell to club size if I am on it all day. Soon after that **I went back to the regular Compound** we were transferred to a barrack that had been formerly occupied by the Russians. **They all died and the Germans just moved us in. No clean up was done before the move.**

The Battle of the Bulge had just taken place. They knew we were aware of all this. The Red Cross had sent each of us (4,000) brand new rain proof field jackets. The Germans wanted the jackets for their Infantry men so they could infiltrate the American lines. The Germans told us they wanted us to put some clothes up in a certain building so they (the Germans) would have clothes for the new POWs.

We gave them the old jackets that we didn't use since we had gotten the new ones. The Germans hadn't expected us to do this! They came back with orders to turn in all new field jackets by 5:30 p.m. or they would come in with fixed bayonets and machine guns and get

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

them. Our "Camp Commander", (one of our own G.I.s), and several of our barrack leaders had a meeting. We decided that if they really came for the jackets we would destroy them. Sure enough, the S.S. Troops came in with fixed bayonets and machine guns. Everyone tore up his jacket and laid it on his bunk. The troops came into each building and ordered everyone to line up against the wall.

They picked certain men to get the jackets and carry them outside. Each time we picked up a pile of jackets, we would light a cigarette. We would drop this cigarette on the pile as we dropped the jackets. By this time it was so dark the Germans could not see what we were doing. They didn't discover until later what had been done to the jackets and about the cigarettes, too. **Too late then! As a result, our Commander was put in confinement for three days.** They turned him loose with no damage done, but they didn't have any jackets, either!

Most of the Russians died during the winter of 1943. They were literally skin and bones when they died. The Germans actually starved them to death. We were just across the fence, so day by day we watched this horrible thing happen and there was nothing we could do about it. **If you threw something over the fence about 12 or 15 Russians would fight over it like dogs. Most of them would not get up after the fight.**

We actually watched them as two would carry a dead "buddy" between them so they could draw his slab of bread and spoon of jam. **To me, this was worse than what they were doing to the Jews.** At least the Jews went quickly. These men knew for months what their fate was going to be! One day we threw bread over. We were trying to toss it in the window.

We were inside our warning wire (ten feet), over an 8 or 10 foot wire fence, and close enough to the window of their barrack that the Russians could catch the bread. One poor Russian decided he could jump out the window, grab the bread, and get back inside before the German guard would see him.

The Guard must have been watching because before the Russian could get back in the window the guard fired. **He was shot just like he was a wild animal of some kind.** They let him lay where he had fallen for about 30 minutes. **In five minutes our barrack was full of G.I.s who had cameras, all trying to get a snapshot of what had happened.**

Now, I can understand why there is so much hatred between the Germans and Russians, and why Russia felt they need to make all Germans suffer for what they had done. **I know now, that if we had been losing the war when I was confined, that my fate would have been the same as the Russian POWs.** About once a week the Ger-

“For The Children,”

mans would go into the Russian Compound with a wagon and haul out the dead men. They were thrown in one large hole and covered up.

We could hear the American bombers at night and see their vapor streaks during the day. We could see the German anti-aircraft fire light the sky. But the worst feeling was feeling the ground shake when the bombs hit their target. Sometimes our airmen would drop pieces of aluminum foil so they could mess up the German radar.

I remember one night they dropped some flares and the whole sky seemed to light up. The next morning, the ground was covered with foil, or at least our compound was, I know. We all figured the airmen knew where we were, or at least we hoped they did, since the bombs were shaking the ground so much.

The American Commandos or POWs were doing their part to slow the Germans too! During the summer of 1943 the Germans had about 80 POWs helping build a smoke stack for a nearby factory. When the stack was completed and the scaffolding removed, the stack fell. The G.I.s had not mixed the cement, sand, and gravel as instructed. This was why it fell so quickly.

The G.I.s were told that as soon as they got back to camp, they would go on bread and water for three months. But the Germans didn't carry this threat out. The G.I.s said they would catch a guard not watching and would toss a wrench or other tool in a generator or chop an electrical line or hose. The G.I.s were good saboteurs, like good soldiers are supposed to be.

No date was given as to the exact date that Robert became an owner of the famous Ruptured Duck, but in checking other papers, May 31, 1945 would be a wild-card guess.

Your editor hopes that this story of “getting the info” from the troops NOW is vital for a treasure which the young people today — want to know.

EVERY T-Patcher should do it, so why not give it a whirl?

LIBERTY COMES FOR LOCAL BOY

Cpl. Robert Johnson Liberated From German Prison Camp; He Was Captured Sept. 19, 1943

Mr. and Mrs. Ben Johnson, of the old Robinson road, have been informed that their son, Cpl. Robert G. Johnson, has been liberated from a German prison camp. Corporal Johnson was reported as missing in action Sept. 19, 1943, and later listed as a prisoner. A member of the 36th division, he was captured at Salerno, Italy. His brother, Lt. Lloyd Johnson, was killed in an airplane crash east of Dallas during a routine flight.



JOHNSON



“My Last Patrol”



By Justin “Ray” Runice
Co K 143rd Infantry

Worldwartwoveterans.org

I was assigned to K/143 as a replacement in the fall of 1944 when the 36th Division was in the Vosge Mountains. I became a rifleman in the 3rd Platoon under the leadership of Sgt. Lowell Penney as squad leader. After the first week of action, the squad was down to 6 men, so I was appointed Asst. Squad Leader, a position I was to hold until my departure from the company.

After our brief “Rest Period” in the Strasbourg area during the holidays we were moved north to help contain Hitler’s last big effort known as “The Battle Of The Bulge.”

The months of January and early February 1945, as I recall, were bitter cold and snow. We were kept occupied in early January constructing a switchline — checking out reports of Col. Otto Skorzeny and his troopers jumping behind our lines. A long day and night forced march to assist the over-extended 100th Division hold the line - battles in and around **Bitche-Haganeau — Bowden’s Woods — Gambshine Pocket — Weyersheim and Bischwiller** to name a few. And of course the ongoing combat patrols, regardless of the weather. We wore white sheets for camouflage, that made it nearly impossible for the Germans to see us at night.

Whenever Sgt. Penney was called on to lead a patrol, usually I went along and we were on many during that long cold winter. Sgt. Penney was to be a very good instructor in the fine art of staying alive and still get results.

I was to learn a great deal from him during this period in the ways of warfare not taught in the training fields back at camp Blanding.

On the night of February 19th, 1945 another patrol was called to reconnoiter the woods north of **Oberhoffen**. Lt. Walter Koons was to lead this patrol. (He had recently been assigned to K. Co. after

Credit for this story goes to SAM F. KIBBEY, the Kolonel of Kentucky Korn, who called his old Co K 143rd buddy — Ray Runice to get his story in for use in the Quarterly — and now we have it.

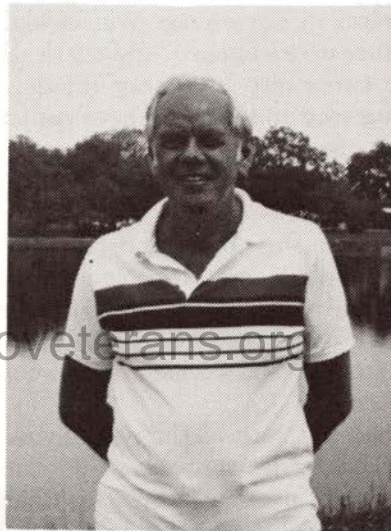
— My Last Patrol

receiving a commission from the ranks). Also with the patrol were Sgt. Penney, P.F.C. Arthur, W. Hunter, our new B.A.R. man from Canton, Ohio - P.F.C. Elmer Weitzel, from Bay City, Mich. - P.F.C. Alan Whitwright, from Chardon, Ohio - several other riflemen, and myself.

We departed the forward CP at about 11:00 PM, traversing a mine field to the area we were going into. The patrol entered the woods on the right but made no contact on the first long sweep. We assembled at the base of the hill at about 1:00 AM - Lt. Koons made the decision to make one more penetration into the area - this time we would go deeper.

We followed a drainage ditch at the bottom of the hill, then started our climb up into the woods in a staggered line searching for communication lines. After moving forward for what seemed an eternity, a line was discovered in the leaves - we fanned out and began to move forward cautiously, knowing that we were about to find the inevitable action at the end. Suddenly, someone hit a trip wire and a flare went up; **A Kraut machine gun immediately opened up and the firefight was underway — We had found what we came for.**

We tried to contact our B.A.R. man, PFC Hunter, but got no



THEN & NOW — Just a 'Ray' Runice in early days, and now — Ray says he retired from the Postal Service at Beloit, Wis., bought the Boulder Lodge and Resort/Campground on Ghost Lake, near Hayward, Wis. Ray has two sons, both vets of Vietnam and a daughter, to round out the family — have 7 grandkids.

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

response. I used up all my grenades and was firing my MI when suddenly we started receiving MG fire from our right flank — they had us in a crossfire!

I tried to burrow deeper into the ground when the second MG began to fire — my left shoulder landed over a tree root, which prevented me from getting below the line of fire, **bullets hit me in the right shoulder**. P.F.C. Whitwright, who was several feet from me, was also hit by this burst. I called to him to roll out of the field of fire which we both did — Fast!

We stumbled down the hill — the M.G. was still raking the area we had just left. At the base of the hill was Sgt. Penney and 2 or 3 other men. We waited for a period of time for any more to come down, but when no more showed up we moved out. We followed the ditch and with the assistance of Sgt. Penney and the other GI's I stumbled through the anti-tank mine field back to the C.P. under my own power.

Our company medic dressed our wounds, gave us Sulfa Pills, then sat me next to a wine barrel to wait for a Jeep from Battalion Aid. As I recall that was good wine... In a short time the Jeep arrived and we were loaded aboard. I bid farewell to Penney who said, "**Ray, you're going home, you have your million dollar wound.**"

At Battalion Aid we were tagged, given Morphine shots and placed into an ambulance for one of the wildest rides I ever had to a field hospital in Sarreburg. We backed up to the entrance — the ambulance doors opened, and there stood 4 Krauts.... the first thought that came into my fuzzy mind was "**the dumb S.O.B. went the wrong way and we have been captured.**" They were German POW's being used as aids. We were carried past a clock on the wall, it was 5:00 AM February 20th — this was the last I knew until February 22, 1945.

I was to stay at that hospital several days. My next stop was the 95th Evac. Hospital in Nancy. A body cast was put on me there, from the waist on up. I was then moved by train to Paris, then a flight from there to Salisbury, England in a C-47. I was to remain there about six weeks, where another unsuccessful operation was performed.

I had my 20th birthday and was scheduled to return to the good old U.S.A. peaceful 2 week cruise on the hospital ship "**SS Dogwood**" past the Azores to Charleston S.C., then by train to the VA Hospital in Clinton, Iowa. Discharged 6-26-45, **my patrol days were over.**

Justin "Ray" Runice

Rt. 7, Box 7433

Hayward, Wisconsin 54843

My Last Patrol

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T-Patchers!*



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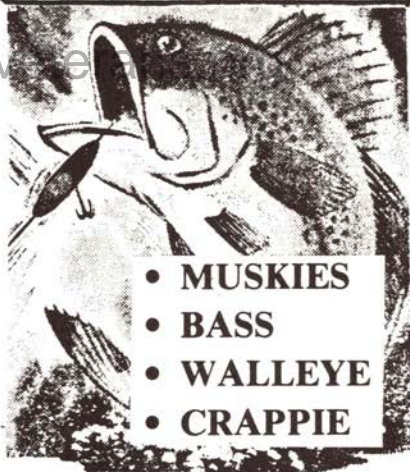
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Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly



T-Patcher Adams Has a Family Filled With Pride

Daughter
Jo Adams Radney
Composes Poem . . .
"DADDY"



It's been said — that The Quarterly brings all the family closer together . . . and this is one more example. Above is Jo Radney, whose love for her parents prompted her to write a poem about her Dad. It also touched her sister and two brothers and it is an example that many other T-Patcher families can do . . . put together a scrap book for all members and relatives to keep and treasure.

Below — Bill Adams, Co A 142nd and wife Cleo at home: 2506 S. Vernon St., Amarillo, TX 79103.



Adams Family Filled With Pride

Bill Adams Action at Siegfried Line With Company A 142nd Earns Silver Star for Capturing Pillbox



Resourceful Sergeant Win Three Coveted Decoration

TULIA, Aug. 1 (Spl.)—Staff Sgt. William A. Adams, 142nd Infantry platoon sergeant, was awarded the Silver Star, Bronze Star Medal and French Croix de Guerre for outstanding service in the European theater.

Williams accounted for a German pillbox last March 21, to earn the Silver Star. The citation said that "while advancing on a pillbox in the Siegfried Line the 2nd Platoon was halted by heavy automatic weapons fire coming from the emplacement. Adams observed an abandoned enemy bazooka about 50 yards to his right flank and crawled to it under the heavy fire. Securing the bazooka and seven rounds of ammunition, he worked his way forward to a small trench near the pillbox, temporarily silencing the enemy fire. Under cover of his fire the platoon worked its way around to the flank and captured the pillbox, taking its six occupants prisoner."

His Bronze Star Medal was won last Nov. 6, while he was a private first class, fighting in France. "Adams' squad was the leading element in his battalion's attack upon a town," the citation said. "They encountered intense enemy rifle fire as they approached a house on the outskirts. Deploying his squad and directing their assault by fire and movement to within a few yards of the house, he at the same time personally guarded doors and windows which offered an escape route and captured four of the enemy."

At Selestat, France, last Dec. 12, Adams exhibited exceptional gallantry that brought him the Croix



SERGEANT ADAMS.

de Guerre. The citation records that during a strong enemy counterattack Adams and his platoon were assigned the mission of clearing a side of the street that had been reoccupied by the Germans during their attack. When a strong point was encountered, Adams realized the need for more firepower and immediately moved to a knocked-out tank and dismounted its .30-caliber machine gun. Firing the weapon from the cradle of the arm, he led the assault against the Germans. Twenty of the enemy were killed and 30 were captured. Later, after being held up by more intense fire from another building he called for bazooka fire to blast open an entrance, then led his men into the house and captured the Germans.

Adams was born at Sweetwater. His wife, the former Cleo Chitty makes her home here. His parents are Mr. and Mrs. C. L. Holli of Roscoe.

“Daddy”

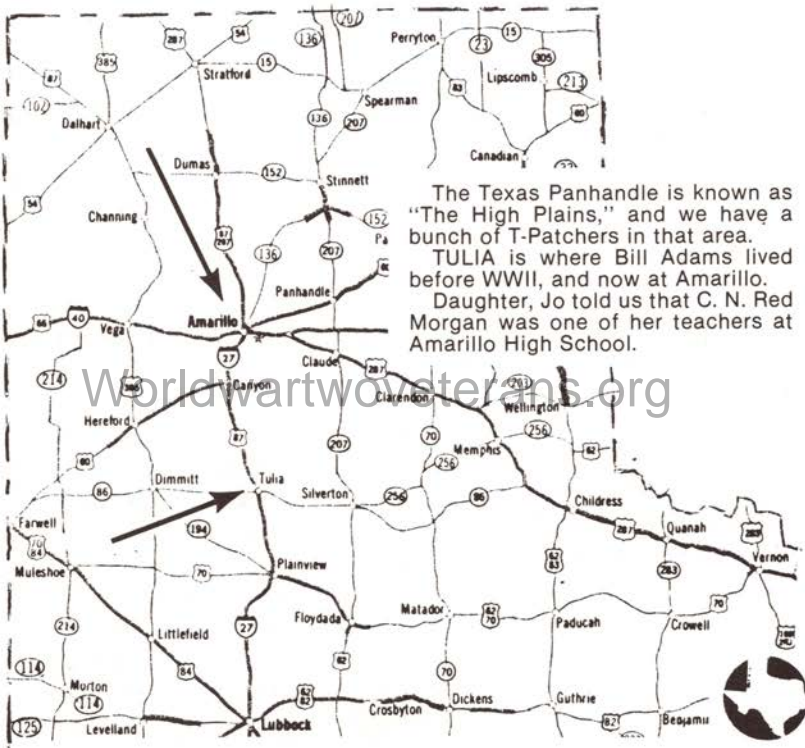
As you were growing from boy to man
I'm sure you discovered miles of land
Some sections over and over
Some I'm sure you still dream to cover
I feel sure when you became a man
You dreamed of a woman to have in hand
On a blind date, a lady named Cleo, took your heart and
ran
From that moment on you knew that she was the
only one for you, man
Uncle Sam beckoned not long after matrimony
And dad left without mom, scared and lonely
All of them worried day after day
And wondered if dad was warm, well, and okay
They knew war is hell just as we do today
And they as we prayed it will be okay
Dad returned two years later to everyone's
prayed over favor
He was worn and had seen what we hope to never
Dad's chest was covered in medals
His pride was shining on every level
Mother tells of nightmares that came for years
And we will never know his shed tears
Dad, you covered countless miles for us
And we've never heard you fuss
Through toil and strife
In the days of war life
Sir, you deserve a lot more
If only for your sacrifices during the war
So in this dialect I write to you
Honor, glory, and utmost respect is all that will do
My only wish is that God showers his blessings upon you
from above
And shows the world your true American love

By — Jo Radney
4339 S. Tyler, Amarillo TX 79110
March 14, 1987

Adams Family Filled With Pride



Christmas 1985 — Adams family reunion, sent in by Adams Radney . . . from left — Jo Radney, Kelly Adams, Linda Adams, Gary Adams — and Cleo and Bill Adams at their home — 2506 S. Vernon Street, Amarillo, TX 79103.



"The Little Green Bag"

A Tale of Humor,
Anxiety and Sadness
from

MARTIN CARETTO
Co E 143rd



LT. CORDUS H. THORNTON

A story of 1st Sgt. Cordus Thorton and Buck/Sgt. Martin Caretto and the "little green bag."

We were moving out of the olive orchard in Italy to engage the enemy. Soon darkness came upon us. Sgt. Thorton came to me and said my M-1 is jammed. "What can I do?" I replied. "Get some grenades. When the shooting starts there will be rifles all over the place." When the shooting started I got hit by a grenade or booby trap.

Anyway, it was something very close to me. I had to be-evacuated to an aid station. The litter bearers had the litter with me on it on their shoulders in pitch black darkness. We had to cross a small stream. The boys stumbled crossing the stream and dropped the litter and I got my rear end soaked. Finally we came upon a jeep equipped to carry litters. We soon arrived at a regimental aid station. Now the little green bag.

One of my boys reported me K-1-A. Well, Sgt. Thorton proceeded to get my personal belongings to send to my next of kin. The little green bag with a white name plate on it was all set to be mailed back to the states.

In the meantime, E Co. received word that I was in a hospital in Naples, Italy. Since the Battalion was pulled off the line to wait for new men and equipment, the Captain and Sgt. Thorton came to Naples to see some of the boys. Sgt. Thorton said, "Here you are," and handed me the little green bag with my name, rank, and serial number on it. Sgt. Thorton said, "You are one who got the little green bag in person." It is always sent to the next of kin.

I don't remember seeing Sgt. Thorton again. He made 1st Lieutenant. Finally went to Korea, and was killed by the Tiger "Butcher" of Korea.

"The Little Green Bag"

Dear Editor:

I'm sending along a tale about my connection with 1st Sgt. CORDUS THORNTON — which was titled . . . "The Day Cordus Thornton Got His Purple Heart" by Doney Philips (Vol. IV No. 3 1983).

When I received the little green bag from Thornton, he and our Captain Bond, I think that was his name, came to the General Hospital in Naples, Italy to see the boys from the 2nd Battalion.

I don't know if Thornton received more than 1 purple heart. I was with Thornton when he caught some flying steel. Thornton said, "**I got hit in the rear end.**" We were all disorganized at the time. I said to Thornton to go to Bn. Aid, he didn't want to go. I finally persuaded him to go. Thornton soon returned. I asked him if he found Bn. Aid. "**Yes,**" he replied, "**But what I have seen at Bn. Aid I am not even hurt.**"

We were sure having a good many casualties. I said go back after they evacuate the boys to Regt. Aid. (I think this was after the Salle River deal). That's where we lost Col. Jones, our Doctors and most of our officers, and most of the boys became prisoners. We were over run by armored "tanks." All we had were a couple of bazookas. This is where Sgt. Bilanosky, a Texas guardsman, received the silver star. He later got killed. Sure was a fighter. Got a tank and a weapons carrier, "German."

Later on I too caught some steel "shrapnel" and had about 40 stitches and was laid up for a couple of months. This is how I missed the Rapido River Battle, I was in the hospital at the time.

I joined the 36th Infantry Div. in Camp Edwards, Mass. I sailed with G. Co., Captain Steffens, to Oran, Africa. I made the Salerno landing on D. Day, H. Hour, then on to Anzio and Rome. I got shot north of Rome and was sent home and discharged October, 1945.

Yours in comradeship,
Martin Caretto
Co E 143rd



You can't beat the Then & Nows . . . here's Martin Caretto, 206 S. Briggs St., Joliet, IL 60433 of Co E 143rd Infantry (born 1913), at Camp Edwards, MA in 1942 — and NOW, **Life Member of the 36th Association Number 455.**



*“We Got Ram, We Got Spam —
Well, I’ll Be Damned” . . .*

Mess Sgt. Bob Nowell



Survives 50 years
of insults to have
the last laugh

By Alan Green
Words by Wire

Break out the Wonder Bread everybody: It's time to celebrate the golden anniversary of Spam.

In June, the planet's favorite luncheon meat, the much-maligned little loaf in the blue-and-yellow can, officially turns 50. But this milestone speaks of more than just longevity.

In those five decades, Geo. A.

Hormel & Co. has managed to unload more than 4 billion tins of compressed pig parts on the world. Talk about gluttons for punishment.

This unlikely success story began in 1937, when the Minnesota-based meatpacker, which a decade earlier had introduced canned hams to America, unveiled its newest concoction — a special mixture of chopped

The Rodney Dangerfield of meats

pork shoulder and ham — called Hormel Spiced Ham. This delicacy captivated America's taste buds and offered gourmands everywhere an added bonus: It was served up in a vacuum-sealed can that made refrigeration unnecessary. This vacuum seal is so tight, in fact, that a can of Spam has a remarkable seven-year shelf life.

packers, using recipes furnished by the Army Quartermaster Corp, joined Hormel in the manufacture of the pinkish meat. The real McCoy, however, was routinely shipped to England and the Soviet Union thanks to the Lend-Lease Act, which helped Uncle Sam become known overseas as Uncle Spam.)

But if this wasn't the real Spam,

"SPAM — The Ham That Couldn't Pass Its Physical" . . . G.I. Joe

Hormel always has shown marketing and public relations savvy with Spam. Its executives have reasoned that any publicity is good publicity and have gone about their business. They hired a troupe of corporate spokesmen, the Hormel Girls Corps, who crisscrossed the country in the late 1940s and early 1950s, making in-store appearances, performing concerts and conducting door-to-door Spam samplings.

It was World War II, however, that forever branded Spam in the nation's collective consciousness.

For an entire generation of soldiers, Spam offered proof positive that war is, indeed, hell. In truth, Hormel alone wasn't responsible for the canned C rations supplied to the U.S. armed forces, and, technically speaking, it wasn't really Spam the company supplied. (Other meat-

no one cared. If it looked and tasted like Spam, why quibble over the name of the god-awful stuff? Spam ("ham that couldn't pass its physical") became legendary, and stories such as this one were told and retold by GIs:

A downed flier wanders through the jungles of the South Pacific for weeks, subsisting only on berries. When he finally makes his way back to camp and is offered Spam, he flees back into the jungle, crying, "I'm going to eat the berries."

There was some concern at Hormel that Spam would be unable to recapture its phenomenal prewar popularity, particularly in light of the verbal assaults heaped on it by the nation's veterans, many of whom swore that they would never eat another bite.

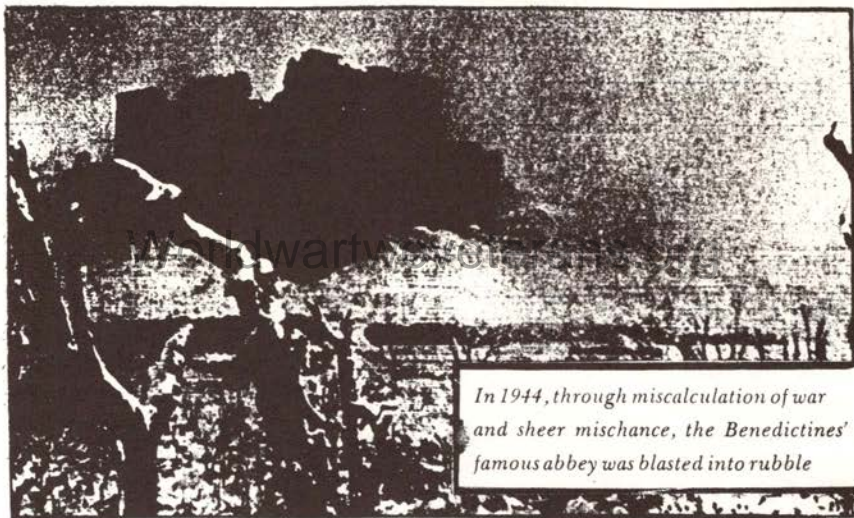
Since the days of Attila the Hun and other war makers, the old saying . . . "an Army Travels on its stomach" . . . may still be true. It did seem appropriate that we explore some of the finer parts of the FOOD as served by master chefs (our Mess Sgts) and their G.I. rations for the G.I. Joes.

Last issue we covered — what we now call INSTANT COFFEE in a nice new individual package . . . find SPAM is still going great guns. Bully for Hormel, and their continued sales we can credit to the Baby Boomers . . . they'll EAT anything.

Coming next — those lovely POWDERED EGGS.



Book/Magazine Review



In 1944, through miscalculation of war and sheer mischance, the Benedictines' famous abbey was blasted into rubble

In February 1944, clouds and fog billow around ruined Monte Cassino abbey after bombs had fallen.

Monte Cassino: a story of death and resurrection

By Otto Friedrich

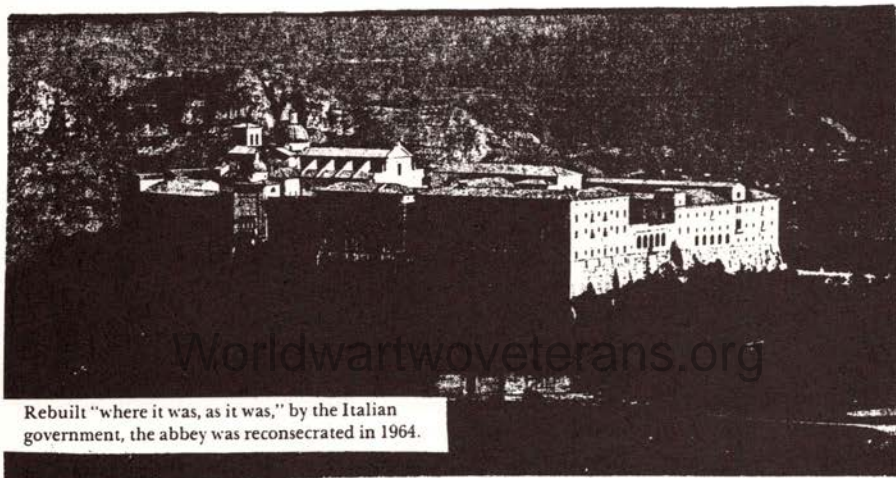


The monthly magazine of Man-
his environment, sciences, arts,
adventures, follies, fortunes.

"Like a lion it crouched," the young American lieutenant thought as he looked up toward the great abbey on top of the mountain, dominating all approaches, watching every move made by the armies down below." This was Monte Cassino, the mother of all Western monasticism in Europe, created by St. Benedict himself more than 14 centuries ago. Now it stood blocking the U.S. Fifth Army's march on Nazi-occupied Rome, just 80 miles to the northwest. It would have to be destroyed.

The lieutenant, Harold L. Bond, was surprised by both the grandeur and the serenity of the doomed monastery. "Its stone walls were yellow and unexpectedly warm on that cold January day," he wrote. "The sun reflected from some of the glass in the windows, and the great towers and dome were nobly outlined against the sky. . . . Some soldiers in the yard told me

Book/Magazine Review: Smithsonian Story of Monte Cassino



Rebuilt "where it was, as it was," by the Italian government, the abbey was reconsecrated in 1964.

that the Germans were using it for an observation post, and that was the reason why they had been able to fire with such deadly accuracy on all of our positions."

Bond and his men had clawed their way up that mountain, struggling through snow and rain and frozen mud, short of food and even ammunition. The American attackers finally captured a ridge within 1,000 yards of the monastery's wall, but could go no farther. Though they took 80-percent casualties, every attack was beaten back by the German defenders. When the shattered American force had to be replaced by New Zealanders for what was hoped to be the final assault, the monastery still stood there, still watchful as a lion.

"Oh, it was malignant," said an English sergeant serving with the New Zealanders. "It was evil somehow. I don't know how a monastery can be evil, but it was looking at you. It was all-devouring if you like—a sun-bleached color, grim. It had a terrible hold on us soldiers. . . . It had to be destroyed."

And so, at 9:28 on the sunny and nearly cloudless morning of February 15, 1944, a flight of 142 B-17 Flying Fortresses unloaded 287 tons of explosive bombs on the undefended monastery, along with 66 tons of incendiary bombs. Great clouds of smoke rose to cover the top of the mountain. Later that day, 87 medium bombers returned with a second round of devastation. The total: 493 tons of bombs, the heaviest attack ever launched against a single building.

Through a series of military miscalculations, the raids were staged at the wrong time and on the wrong day. The troops involved were not ready to begin their assault, and when the attack belatedly got under way, it failed. The bombing that was supposed to shorten the Allied march to Rome probably lengthened it. All that the bombing accomplished was to reduce St. Benedict's monastery, which once had preserved the relics of civilization through the long centuries of the Dark Ages, to smoking rubble.

- * The book by **HAROLD L. BOND**, "Return to Cassino" in hardback and paperback is source material for Otto Friedrich in this story. Bond served with 141st and Div. Hqs, was a professor at Darmouth, died February 13, 1986.



Monte Cassino: a story of death and resurrection

One of the major powers in Hitler's hands was the authority to decide whether and where to make a defense against the Allied invasion. The Italians had signed an armistice on September 8, 1943, shortly after the conquest of Sicily. Following that, the British Eighth Army crossed the Straits of Messina unopposed. Hitler drew a line—the so-called Gustav Line—that would enable the Wehrmacht to organize a defense south of Rome.

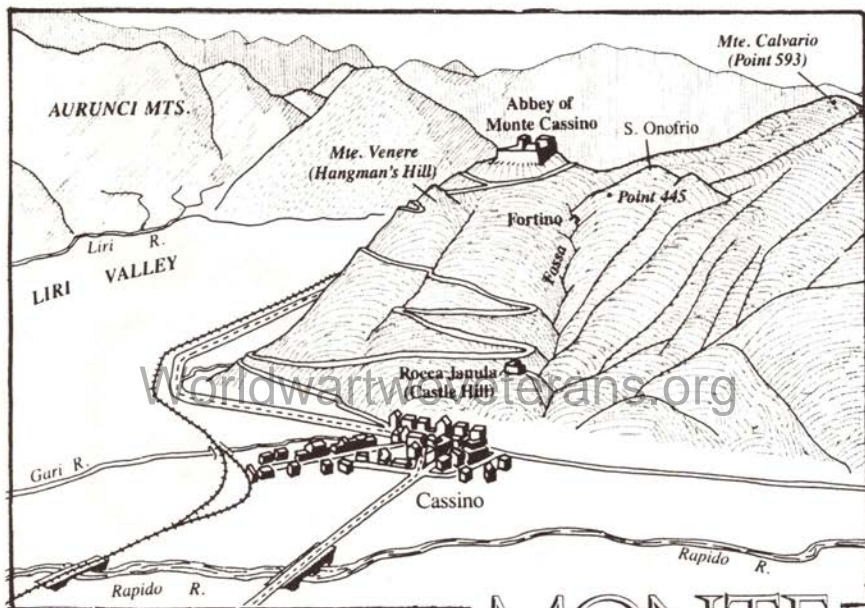
The Gustav Line, to be reinforced by mines, pillboxes, machine-gun nests and barbed wire, extended all across the mountainous Italian peninsula and through the center of Cassino.

Not only was the monastery itself one of the great art treasures of the world, but its library was filled with priceless medieval manuscripts. Indeed, the Italian authorities in Rome, who still lived under the illusion that the monastery would remain safe from attack, had shipped other art there for safekeeping in underground vaults. From the Naples Museum came 11 Titians, including the gorgeous *Danae*, Bruegel's *Parable of the Blind* and the only two Goyas in Italy. And more: 30 crates of things unearthed at Pompeii, a crate of ancient coins from Syracuse, two boxes of Keats and Shelley manuscripts from the Keats house in Rome.

In their book, *Monte Cassino*, the most detailed and interesting account of these events, David Haggood and David Richardson note that the obvious vulnerability of this hoard was at first realized only by a Dr. Maximilian Becker, who had been an archaeology student before the war and now served as a medic in the Hermann Goering Division. When Becker heard what had been stored at Monte Cassino, he made a private visit to persuade the abbot, Gregorio Diamare, to let the Germans remove his treasures for safekeeping in the north. The abbot, a small, plump man of 79, at first declined. He lacked authority, he said, besides, God's will would be done. But when the advancing Americans were only 50 miles away, and the town of Cassino had already been hit by the first Allied air raids, the abbot gave in. The Germans loaded up truckload after truckload of art and carted them away to their supply depot at Spoleto. Only then did Becker, having pledged his personal honor to the abbot for the safety of the treasures, learn that Col. Julius Schlegel, the division's ambitious transport officer, was now currying favor with Reichsmarschall Goering by offering him the pick of the Monte Cassino pictures. (After the war the Allies retrieved Goering's loot from Nazi hiding places in Austria.)

In the past decade, the SMITHSONIAN Magazine has come-on like Gang Busters . . . circulation is now almost 2,000,000 (and that ain't hay), and as a long time admirer — we recommend that you get a copy of this APRIL 1987 issue. The story covers about a dozen pages and we guarantee you'll enjoy it.

Monte Cassino in Profile



The most recent book on this subject is **MONTE CASSINO** by Hapgood and Richardson, published in 1984. It tells of the "thievery of the Nazis for plunder of the old art treasures of the Abbey.

David Richardson paid a visit to the 36th Reunion in San Antonio 1984, and he explained to your editor that he spent years on researching the book, which was written by his partner — David Hapgood, editor and writer for New York Times.

Hundreds of the book **MONTE CASSINO** were purchased by T-Patchers, and when the Smithsonian story came out in April, a dozen or so wrote in to urge our troopers to get a copy of this issue.

Bill Eberle (A/133) Columbus OH writes that back-issues of April 1987 are \$2.50 —

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION
P.O. Box 55583
Boulder, CO 80321-5583

Our friend Eberle has been a contributor to both the Newsletter and Quarterly, and he now joins our Editorial Advisory Board. The pay is zero, but the rewards are bountiful.

MONTE CASSINO

BY
DAVID HAPGOOD
AND
DAVID RICHARDSON

DAVID HAPGOOD was the principal author of *The Murder of Napoleon* ("History at its most electrifying." — *Newsweek*. "First-rate." — *The New Yorker*) and other books. He has been the editor of *Focus* and a writer and editor for *The New York Times*.

DAVID RICHARDSON has been fascinated by the Monte Cassino story since boyhood, when an uncle, chief of staff of the U.S. Air Force in Italy, told him of the bombing. He has spent the last ten years researching the real story.



WANTED

Your Story



The Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly has only one mission — to gather, compile, edit and publish stories written BY the men — who were there — in their own words. Plus, we have more and more from other T-Patchers who find news clips, and or write 'about' a buddy they liked and sent in their report.

MAKES NO DIFFERENCE . . . the objective IS TO GET THE STORY NOW, from or about this man. IF you put it off . . . it just may be too late. (The sands of time are now running out), but you know that.

WE BEG of all men of the 36th — who wish to tell a particular time and incident that stands out in his memory . . . tragic, funny 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.

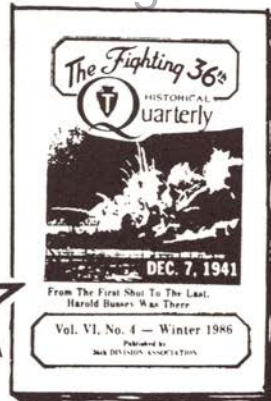


**Vol. VI
1986**



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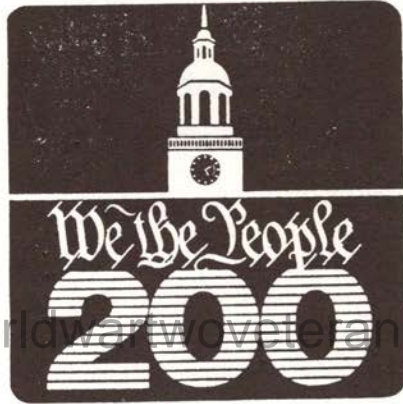
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Miracle at



Philadelphia

*It seems to me, then, little short of a miracle,
that the Delegates from so many different
States . . . different in their manners,
circumstances, and prejudices should unite in
forming a system of national Government.*

GEORGE WASHINGTON TO LAFAYETTE

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To bear up under loss, to fight the bitterness of defeat and the weakness of grief, to be victor over anger, to smile when tears are close, to resist evil men and base instincts, to hate hate and to love love, to go on when it would seem good to die, to seek ever after the glory and the dream, to look up with unquenchable faith in something evermore about to be, that is what any man can do, and so be great.

ZANE GREY



Sam F. Kibbey, K/143rd
Catlettsburg KY