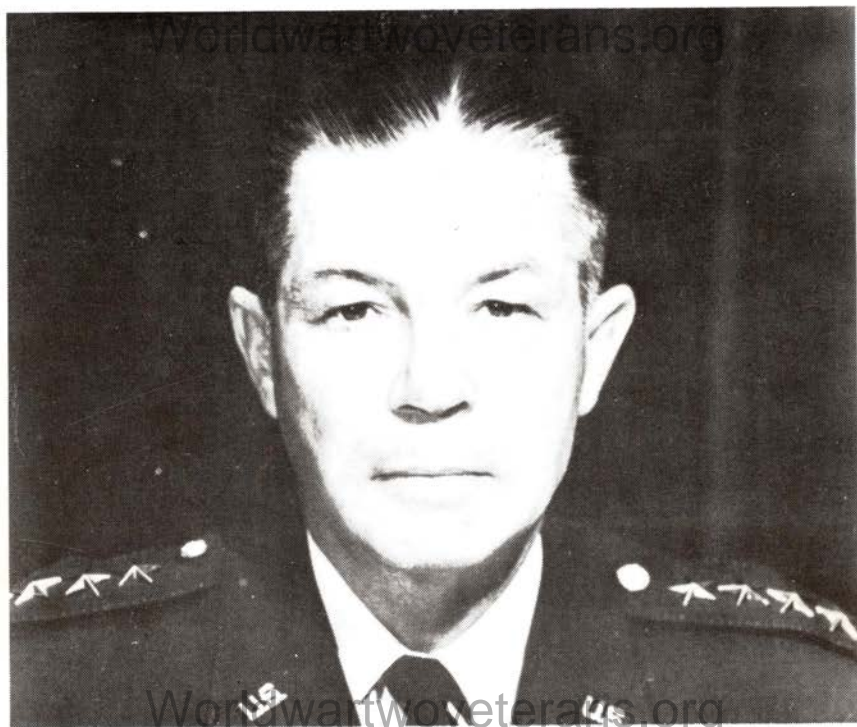


*William B. Wiley*

*The Fighting 36<sup>th</sup>*  
HISTORICAL  
Quarterly



*General Paul Dewitt Adams  
1906-1987*

**Vol. VIII, No. 4 Winter 1988**

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**HISTORICAL**  
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**VOL. VIII, No. 4 Winter 1988**  
**CONTENTS**

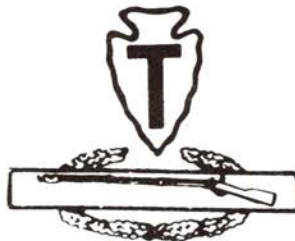
<b>1. COVER STORY—General Paul Dewitt Adams</b>	
Robert T. Adams, son .....	4
<b>2. HAZARDOUS HAITUS</b>	
R. K. Doughty .....	12
<b>3. A CLASSIC STRATGEM ON MONTE ARTEMISIO</b>	
Ernest F. Fisher .....	22
<b>4. KATRINA, WHERE ARE YOU?</b>	
Amil F. Kohutek .....	34
<b>5. ROME—PLUS 20 DAY—PART II</b>	
Julian (Duney) Phillips .....	38
<b>6. OUR REPLACEMENT</b>	
Lem Vanatta .....	58
<b>7. ASSIGNED TO THE FIGHTING 36TH</b>	
Col. M. Gist Welling (Ret.) .....	60
<b>8. ONCE UPON A TIME</b>	
Ramon Narvaez .....	64
<b>9. IN THE FOREST OF FOSSARD</b>	
Howard Katzander .....	68
<b>10. RICHARD WILBUR—U.S.A. POET LAUREATE</b>	
Sent in by Paul I. Wells .....	74
<b>11. INTERNMENT IN ARLINGTON CEMETERY</b>	
Some Facts You Should Know .....	75

THE FIGHTING 36th  
HISTORICAL QUARTERLY



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**General Paul DeWitt Adams, USA (Ret)**  
From Robert T. Adams (Son)



PAUL DEWITT ADAMS (1906-1987). U. S. soldier, World War II combat leader, chief of staff of the U.S. Eighth Army in the Korean War, Commander of American Land Forces Specified Command, Middle East in the 1958 intervention in Lebanon, and first Commander in Chief of the U.S. Strike Command.

Adams was born in Heflin, Alabama, on October 6, 1906. His father, Lovic E. Adams, worked for the Southern Railroad as a claim agent. His mother, Ruth Jackson Adams, was the daughter of a Methodist minister and bishop. *Adams entered West Point in 1924 and graduated in 1928, number 235 in a class of 261.* All of his duty in the inter-war Army was with troops, which was a personal objective from the beginning of his career. He had the good fortune to serve with the 29th Infantry at Fort Benning, Georgia, from September 1928 to September 1930, and as a

student officer at the Infantry School, September 1930 to June 1931, at which time Lieutenant Colonel George C. Marshall operated the school as Assistant Commandant.

In 1929, Adams married Mabel Gertrude Decker. They eventually had two children, a son Robert T. and a daughter Marjorie Ruth. (Their son, Robert was commissioned in the Regular Army as a lieutenant in 1960 as a distinguished ROTC graduate from Stanford University.)

Service in Panama, California, and the Philippines followed the tour at Benning. Adams became one of the Army's handful of experts on amphibious warfare, and was one of the official Army participants at the Marine Corps' fleet landing exercises in 1935 and 1936 where initially the only landing craft were whale boats and forty foot motor-sailers. In June 1938 he reached the apogee of his pre-war ambition, captain of infantry in the 45th Infantry in the Philippines.

During his tour in the Philippines, he was called upon to perform several unusual tasks. The first was extensive military reconnaissances in the northern, southeastern and eastern Luzon where few military personnel ever visited. In addition, when it was found that the existing defense plans for the Philippines had been sold to the Japanese, new plans were drawn up and he was detailed to survey in and prepare maps for all defensive positions for Bataan, and routes thereto, according to the new plan, which was used when the war broke out.

The outbreak of World War II in Europe caused Captain Adams to conclude that America would be drawn into the conflict, and that the country would mobilize a mass Army. In pondering over this new situation while on his way home from the Philippines in August 1940, he concluded that the sense of superiority by the Regular Forces over National Guard and Reserves no longer had any constructive role and therefore his job as a professional would be to train other officers and men who would in turn train men. His analysis proved perceptive.

On his return to the United States in 1940 he helped organize the 34th Infantry, 8th Division, Camp Jackson, South Carolina which participated in the First Army maneuvers in South Carolina in the late summer of 1941 where he was then a major commanding a battalion.

As the maneuvers came to an end, the 34th Infantry, due to its outstanding performance in the maneuvers, was selected for transfer to the Philippine Islands to reinforce the U.S. troops there. The regiment arrived in San Francisco and had all equipment loaded on Saturday night, December 6, 1941 and was due to load troops on Sunday night and sail for the Philippines. On Sunday, December 7, Pearl Harbor happened. This delayed departure, and one week later the regiment sailed to Oahu to reinforce the troops there. During the summer Adams was promoted to temporary lieutenant colonel. Shortly thereafter he was transferred to the First Special Service Force as second in command.

## Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

The First Special Service Force was composed equally of U.S. and Canadian combat troops and was a commando type unit to be trained in ground combat, airborne operations, mountain and arctic warfare, and demolitions. The Force was commanded by Colonel Robert T. Frederick, Coast Artillery Corps, who had been selected by General Eisenhower, then G3, War Department and approved by General Marshall, Chief of Staff. Frederick then chose Adams, an infantry officer, to be second in command and to train the Forces, and to be ready by December 1942.

After participating in the unopposed landing at Kiska, Aleutian Islands, the Force redeployed to Italy and was assigned the mission of taking Monte la Difensa, which two divisions, one British and one U.S. had failed to take. Following spectacular successes of the Force at Monte la Difensa and Monte Majo, General Mark Clark selected Adams for transfer from the Force to command the 143rd Infantry Regiment in the 36th Infantry Division which had just suffered two severe reverses at the Rapido River.

The Regiment was outstanding in the defense of Monte Castellone, a key terrain feature adjacent to Cassino, at a time when it was dangerously under strength. The enemy attacked with fresh full strength troop units far superior in numbers to seize the key terrain feature related to Cassino. They failed, due primarily, to the 143rd Infantry and its supporting divisional artillery. The battle ended when the enemy asked for a truce in order to remove its casualties from the battlefield. This battle was the turning point in the Cassino area operations.

The following Spring, the 36th Division participated in the breakout from the Anzio beachhead and the regiment played a key role in the successful attack on Monte Artemisio, which broke the Caesar Line and opened Rome to capture.

Even more spectacular successes awaited the 143rd in Southern France. It liberated Grenoble seven days after landing, then turned southwest and was the key blocking force in the battles of encirclement at Vizille and La Concourde. The unit also played a major role in defeating the German attacks out of the Colmar pocket.

In January 1945, Adams was promoted to Brigadier General and became Assistant Division Commander of the 45th Infantry Division, a unit led by Major General Frederick. At the end of the war, the division had captured Munich and in doing so overran Dachau Concentration Camp. Adams was put in charge of feeding the starving prisoners, providing hospitalization and repatriating them as soon as they were able to travel and acceptable arrangements could be made for them to be received in their homelands.



Adams returned to the United States with the 45th Division and was preparing it for the Orient when the war ended and demobilization was ordered. As the demobilization progresses, he reverted to colonel.

He attended the first class of the new National War College (September 1946-1947). Upon graduation he was assigned to the faculty of the Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas where he in time headed the Operations and Training Department. In 1949 he helped reestablish the Army War College where he headed the Operations and Training Department and participated in the transfer of the Army War College from Leavenworth to Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania in 1951.

In November 1951, once more a Brigadier General, he became Assistant Division Commander of the 24th Division in Korea, and succeeded to the command of the division in January 1952 as it rotated to Japan. Lieutenant General Williston B. J. Palmer, X Corps commander, brought Adams back to Korea to be his Chief of Staff in March 1952. During that time he briefly commanded the 25th Division. In July 1952, General James Van Fleet selected Adams to be Chief of Staff of the U.S. Eighth Army. He continued in that position under General Maxwell Taylor, and played an important part in the decision to reinforce the U.S. Garrison on Pork Chop Hill in the face of determined Chinese attacks. He was promoted to Major General on 7 November 1952.

After a short tour as commanding general of the 101st Airborne Division, then a training division in Kentucky, Adams was ordered to the Pentagon as the Deputy Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3. He was a strong proponent of a unified plan for Army aviation, for a separate staff agency for Army research and development, and for updating artillery doctrine, all of which eventually came to pass. Based on wide research among a large number of Army and Air Bases being vacated, he selected Fort Rucker, Alabama as the new site of the Army Aviation School and defended the choice before Congress. He was transferred from the army staff in August 1955 to take command of the XVIII Airborne Corps, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, with intructions from General Taylor, now the Chief of Staff, to improve the Army's mobility.

Adams initiated the development of what eventually became the Strategic Army Corps comprised of Army units and their logistic support available for immediate deployment by air to anywhere in the world. This included not only flying supplies but also rapid development of landing strips by airlifted engineers with their essential equipment. In all of this he had the enthusiastic and constructive support of Major General Chester E. McCarty, then commanding the Eighteenth Air Force comprised, at that time of all the U.S. Air Force airlift units, regular and reserve, stationed in the United States.

## Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

He also organized a provisional helicopter air cavalry unit for providing low level air support in foul weather and for tank and "bunker busting" fortified enemy heavy weapons emplacements and tested the unit in Exercise Sagebrush in 1955.

In July 1957 he departed the XVIII Airborne Corps to assume command of the Northern Area Command of the Seventh Army with headquarters in Frankfurt, Germany.

In July 1958, the Joint Chiefs of Staff selected Adams to command the Army and Marine forces ashore in Lebanon, where they had been sent to intervene and halt an impending civil war between Christian and Moslem factions. The title of the command was American Land Forces, Specified Command, Middle East.

Adams established good relations with General Fu'ad Shehab, the Commander-in-Chief the Lebanese Army which resulted in closely coordinated employment of Lebanese forces and U.S. Land Forces ashore in Lebanon. Adams, believing in the use of minimum force, worked on prevention of conflicts by having:

(1) Plentifully visible and wide ranging well armed day and night reconnaissance patrols, and,

(2) By his personal rule of fire which was, "Do not fire unless fired upon. If fired upon, raise the hostiles one weapon and shoot back, (i.e. If fired on with a rifle return the fire with a machine gun; and, if fired upon by a machine gun, fire back with tank fire or direct artillery fire.)"

The peacekeeping mission was successful and the Land Forces were withdrawn in October 1958. Adams returned to Germany where he was assigned as Deputy Commander, Seventh Army and Commander, Seventh Army Support Forces with headquarters in Mannheim. In April 1959 he was promoted to lieutenant general and assigned to command the V Corps, Frankfurt, Germany. It was there where he organized a provisional helicopter air attack unit to be used in a counter helicopter role in addition to low level ground support rules previously developed.

In October 1960, Adams was transferred from Germany to Fort McPherson, Georgia to command the Third Army, which was then comprised of thirty seven percent of all army troops in the continental United States.

In October 1961, General Lyman Lemnitzer, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff notified Adams of his appointment to command the U.S. Strike Command, a unified command designed to train joint forces, develop joint doctrine, and be prepared to conduct joint operations wherever the Joint Chiefs of Staff might direct. In the time of crisis the command would consist of the combat-ready Army and Tactical Air Force units in the continental United States. At the same time he received promotion to general.

In 1962, when the Chinese invaded India, he headed a joint observation group to go see the situation and to determine what could be done to assist India and Pakistan. His personal reconnaissance in the Khyber Pass and northern Pakistan, combined with observation of the armed forces of both countries enabled him to make recommendations that greatly assisted both countries. He also knew northeast Africa where the Soviets were penetrating energetically through Egypt's President Nasser acting as the Soviets arms supply sergeant in that part of the world. In addition he directed humanitarian operations including airlifting rations to starving natives in the heart of Africa and providing hurricane relief with food and medical support in Mexico and other Central American countries.

On November 5 1963 Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara announced that General Adams was assigned responsibility for all U.S. defense activities in South Asia, the Middle East, and Africa south of the Sahara.

When the U.S. Consul General was taken prisoner by rebels in Zaire, he provided the unified command group and communications for the recapture of Stanleyville, the Congo. As time went on, the Army Signal Corps was looking for a place to position the first communications satellite. He welcomed them to MacDill AFB and they launched it to a point on the equator above the mouth of the Amazon River. From that time on he sent all of his communications to Washington via satellite. The satellite worked so successfully that eventually three more were launched to provide around the world communications.

In training the troops assigned to Strike Command, Adams conducted numerous unified field operations. Those always involved major forces on both side from the Army and Air Force and as many National Guard and Reserve units as could participate according to their annual active duty training schedules. The largest of these maneuvers was Desert Strike in the Nevada, New Mexico, Arizona and California desert areas. The forces included on the ground two opposing army corps and two air forces each under the strategic guidance of two cabinets composed of former statesman and two former members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff supported by two joint headquarters trained and provided from the Strike Command's unified staff.

General Adams had the reputation of a demanding and sometimes irascible (hard boiled) superior. He was an officer who always went to great lengths to further the welfare of the troops under his command by seeing that they were well fed and otherwise cared for, and spending many nights with them at the front. He had six hundred and twenty five days and nights front line combat. He had an important, if intermittent, influence on the development of U.S. Army organic aviation.

## Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

General Adams was a Combat Infantryman and a Parachutist. His U.S. decorations include:

Army Distinguished Service Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters

Air Force Distinguished Service Medal

Silver Star

Legion of Merit with two Oak Leaf Clusters

Bronze Star with "V" Device and three Oak Leaf Clusters

Twelve Campaign Stars

His foreign decorations include:

French Croix de Guerre (two awards)

Republic of Korea (taeguk) Distinguished Service Medal

Colombian Order de Boyaca

Ethiopian Order of Nenek



# The Heroes

Worldwarveterans.org

## BELL, BERNARD P.

*Rank and Organization:* Technical Sergeant, Company I, 142d Infantry, 36th Infantry Division. *Place and Date:* Mittelwihr, France, 18 Dec. 1944. *Entered Service at:* New York, N.Y. *Birth:* Grantsville, W. Va. *G.O. No.:* 73, 30 Aug. 1945. *Citation:* For fighting gallantly at Mittelwihr, France. On the morning of 18 Dec. 1944

# RAMBLIN' ON THE RUE

BY T-BONE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **Hazardous Haitus**

*R. K. Doughty*

*815 Stuart Ave.*

*Mamaroneck, N. Y. 10543*



WorldwarVeterans.org

Once the war ended, the thought of having made it through the amphibious landings, the battles for the freezing Italian mountain tops, the closing of the trap on the German 19th Army, river crossings galore, the conquest of the Vosges peaks and the capture of the German High Brass, to say nothing of the initial safe passage of the Atlantic when it was dominated by German U-Boats, brought the euphoric sense that, with the closing of hostilities, the world was, once again, a safe place. Nothing could have been further from the truth starting with the day following V-E Day.

Despite the various reports I've seen about what happened to Reichsfuhrer Herman Goring after his capture, I know that he, his wife and daughter were kept under guard over night at the Grand Hotel in Kitzbuhl, Austria. The next day he was sent on to higher headquarters.

On that same day I was delegated by General Dahlquist to go to Saint Johann Austria to deal with the Commanding General by the German troops we had driven out of Germany into Austria. What their designation might have been was not generally known at that time although Seventh U.S. Army Hq. had sent a signal announcing the surrender of "German Army Group G." I have always assumed that that was the correct identity of the troops confronting our division when the war ended.

In any event, for whatever reason, there were few of the Division's staff available for the trip to St. Johann so that I found myself accompanied by a German Captain who spoke English fluently and who would act as an interpreter.

He had been sent to the 36th Division Hq. on V-E Day to act as liaison officer between us and the German headquarters in St. Johann. During the one night he'd spent in a room of the Grand Hotel, someone in our headquarters, thinking, no doubt, to prolong the war, had built a fire

against his door contrary to the undertaking that General Dahlquist had assumed with the German commander when he assured him of the Captain's safety. The fire was discovered and extinguished with little damage except to General Dahlquist's credibility. He, of course, was furious over the incident but the perpetrator was not discovered.

We arrived at a square in St. Johann fairly early in the morning and our driver parked our jeep in front of a three-story inn which was obviously a headquarters, judging from the number of heavily armed sentries at its various doorways. The German Captain preceded me while a German soldier, armed with a Schmeiser machine pistol motioned to our driver to stay put behind the wheel. There were no smiling faces anywhere.

The Captain led the way upstairs in the inn. On each landing, giving the place a crowded look, were two more guards armed with machine pistols and representing the flower of what was left of the German Army. They were all big men; all had been decorated with iron crosses of one class or another and all wore special uniforms and scowls.

We climbed to the third floor where the interpreter rapped on a door. Someone inside the room responded and the Captain answered and opened the door. There, crowded together under the sloping eaves of that country inn were some two dozen German General Staff Officers standing around a large arm chair on which sat a beefy-looking, Junker-type German General. After I entered I came to attention and saluted the General and he arose, albeit with some difficulty due to his bulk, returned my salute and said "Ritter von Hengel" in one of the deepest voices I'd ever heard.

I said to the interpreter, "I shall expect you to interpret to the best of your ability exactly what I have to say to the General." The interpreter was far from at ease with drops of perspiration running down his cheeks. General Dahlquist had said to me before I left that morning, "Put it on them good, Doughty! Ike wants them told off by the numbers!" I had replied, "In that case, General, why don't you do the talking? You're wearing all the brass and that would carry a lot more weight." He declined with a wave of his hand.

Before I could initiate the conversation, General von Hengel started to rumble and rant in what sounded like the beginning of a long tirade. I help up my hand to stop him and, strangely enough, he ceased talking.

"Tell him," I said to the Captain, "that I represent General John E. Dahlquist Commanding General of the 36th Infantry Division of the United States. He, in turn, is General Dwight D. Eisenhower's emissary."

The Captain complied. I had listened to the interrogation of thousands of German prisoners during the war and, while I couldn't speak the language, I had a fair idea of what was said.

## Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

“General Eisenhower wants you to understand that the German Army has been defeated in the field,” I went on. “He hopes there will be no repetition of the claims by your General Staff after World War I about the invincibility of your Army.”

The Captain hesitated and I said, “Either tell him exactly what I’ve said or we’ll return to my headquarters for a different interpreter.”

There was a perceptible increase in the tension of the room once the Captain repeated what I had said. The staff officers seemed to be controlling their breathing so as not to miss anything the interpreter said.

“Ask the General,” I said, “how many troops he has under his command.”

The answer came back, “He’s very sorry but he’s been moving so fast lately that his records are not current!”

“He says that he has been moving in many directions recently,” the interpreter responded.

“Tell him,” I said, “that if these are samples of the kinds of answers he thinks are satisfactory under the circumstances confronting him, they are not and that he would do better to cooperate.”

I then went into detail as to what was known about the General and his troops telling him that we were aware that he had but 300 men under his command, that his direction of movement had been to retreat for weeks and that since his command had been driven out of Germany thousands of his troops were surrendering while fully armed and equipped. I also said that the 36th Division had taken some 30,000 of them prisoners of war and that they were subsisting as a mob in a field, lacking discipline of any kind.

Then I said, “The war is over. General Dahlquist wants you to know that we have a mutual problem and that is to get your troops demobilized and back home where they can start rebuilding Germany.”

At this juncture I could sense a change of attitude on the part of the whole staff. There was a clear easing of tension. Probably the mention of the words, “mutual problem” had made the difference. However, as we had discussed at the 36th General’s Mess we had a big problem and needed help.

While some sort of plan had been sought from higher headquarters, none was forthcoming for the simple reason that the war’s end had clogged channels of every kind throughout Europe. Masses of people, having to be accounted for in one way or another, had blocked all pipelines. The 36th Division, stuck in the mountains with little or no road-net and with insufficient transport, housing or food to handle thousands of displaced persons of dozens of different nationalities, plus thousands of POWs, more thousands of surrenderees, added thousands of its own men anxious to return home or go on leave, had to find help somewhere.



During that time, too, long German hospital trains full of wounded soldiers, would appear as though out of thin air, as their crews sought to escape capture by the Russians to our east.

With this in mind, there was little doubt but that the German officers could do more than anyone else to expedite the demobilization of their own troops. However, there was one consideration that was the linch-pin in such an operation: all SS officers and troops had to be placed under automatic arrest.

General von Hengel asked if he could say something and started talking before I could answer. After a couple of minutes of his deep-chested rumblings, I raised my hand and asked for an interpretation. I had been able to judge from the facial expressions of his staff that they were not happy with what he was saying.

"The General," the Captain said, "is very much in favor of re-instilling discipline into the German troops under your control. However, he feels that both the Allies and Germany would make the greatest mistake of all time if they did not unite, now, in attacking Russia—"

"Hold it!" I said. "Stop right there! Apparently the General has a one-track mind. The war is over! I'm not sure I want to tell General Dahlquist we can rely on your general even if he agrees to cooperate. Tell him that. Also tell him that there will be no more talk of attacking Russia."

The Captain did so and von Hengel subsided into a grim silence while I pointed out on a map the places where ordinance, vehicles and small arms were to be deposited for our convenience.

Before I left, however, von Hengel agreed to arrest all SS members and added that while he had a few more than three hundred men in St. Johann, there were other troops under his command in the general area with whom he'd lost contact. He could not be certain, therefore, of how they might react or even if they knew the war had ended.

As I started out of the room I turned to von Hengel and said to the Captain, "Do you know the meaning of the word 'thugs'?" He said he did. I then said, "Tell the general that he is to remove all machine pistols from the thugs guarding his headquarters."

Again, the Captain hesitated and I said, "Germany has been disarmed. There is no good reason for this headquarters to be bristling with such weapons at ten foot intervals. All such weapons are to be thrown into the field already designated for that purpose, not later than tomorrow. Your guards can use pistols for their work from now on. Tell the general." He did.

## Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

I reported my contact with von Hengel and his staff to General Dahlquist and it wasn't very long before the German generals were assisting with the business of getting their troops, minus the SS, home.

However, something that von Hengel had told me came home to roost that same afternoon. As I left General Dahlquist's office I met some of the staff who were about to leave for the top of the mountain in Kitzbuhel that is served by cable car. They were accompanying Red Cross girls who wanted to see the view from that height that is renowned for its skiing surfaces. I joined them.

We approached the cable car station where an elderly German in a once resplendent uniform gave us a lot of trouble about taking the trip. At first he said the cars weren't running. Then he said they weren't safe. We had him run a car up to the mountain top and, of course, another descended to our station at the same time. We said we'd take the chance and about a dozen of us got aboard. If there was anything wrong with the cable system it escaped our notice.

Once atop the mountain several of us walked out onto a promontory to admire the view which even in May was completely snow-covered and, of course, mountainous in all directions. It was a bright, clear day. Returning along a pathway past the station we started through a snow tunnel to gain the top-most peak of the mountain when we heard the unmistakable sound of someone pulling back the bolt of a machine gun to load it.

Emerging from the tunnel we were jolted to find ourselves covered by the muzzle of a machine gun operated by a crew of three in a sand-bagged enclosure. The fact that the Red Cross girls were leading and the further fact that none of us accompanying them had thought to bring along a weapon was probably fortuitous. However, I had a sensing that we were expected and remembered seeing a telephone at the base station where the old attendant had tried to steer us away from the mountain.

We were conducted by a non-com to a building that looked like a small hotel at the crest of the mountain. There, an officer who spoke English met us and asked us what we were doing there. We explained that the war had ended the day before (a fact that I was sure he knew) but he said he'd had no word to that effect.

In a large bowl-like depression to the east of the hotel were thousands of German ski troops performing what looked like perpetual motion maneuvers by skiing down one side of the bowl and, after gaining speed, swooping up to a higher level, turning as they lost momentum and repeating the performance around and around the natural theater.

There were mountain pack howitzers in place here and there together with ammunition bays. It occurred to me that this was probably all that had been produced by way of a National Redoubt which the Allied Brass

was said to have considered sufficiently important to divert several armies southward instead of allowing them to continue to Berlin.

It was difficult to feel that the situation was dangerous primarily because we were treated civilly and courteously. We were given something to eat and drink while we sat on a sun deck at the hotel and watched the skiing troops. As the afternoon passed and the temperature on those barren slopes dropped we asked that the Red Cross girls be allowed to return to Kitzbuhl with some of the German officers. The latter were to try to confirm the cessation of hostilities and return as soon as possible.

It was getting on toward dark, however, before the German escorts returned to report the war's end. As we stood on the station dock awaiting a cable car, the German officer who had treated us so well said he would see that the German troops came down off the mountain the next day. We asked him if he would leave all weapons and ammunition on the mountain for later collection, thinking that it could prove hazardous if the ski troops came swooping down the slopes fully armed.

The 36th Division moved from Kitzbuhl to Kaufburen once the 42nd Division took over from us. After a short stay at Kaufburen we went into occupation at Geislingen, Germany. Among other things, while there, we sent troops to Paris via Strasbourg, the trip to Strasbourg being accomplished overland by bus.

I went with the last contingent to Paris and because we had two slots left over after filling most of the quota with veterans we took along two brand new recruits who'd never been in combat.

The buses we used were sleek looking, stream lined vehicles captured from the Germans but with very little serviceable time left in their motors. Because of break-downs and general inability to climb hills, our three-bus column left Geislingen some 10 hours earlier than would have been necessary had we had good transportation.

The bus I rode in was named by the driver "Houston Special" indicating the probable home site of the driver. There was just one thing about him that, in ordinary circumstances would have caused no problem: he hated Krauts! In our particular instance it proved troublesome.

We had moved with our snail-like pace across country toward the Rhine River with the buses barely able to make it up most hills. The time was getting on to a point where our ten-hour leeway was reduced to about one hour. As we reached the Black Forest area and could look down through the mountains to the silvery streak that was the Rhine, a German mechanic riding in my bus reached over to the motor which was mounted inside the bus beside the driver and turned a small valve.

The driver, just about to drive onto a long precipitous run down a

## Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

mountain road toward a hair-pin turn, looked across the engine cover to the mechanic and said, "Keep your goddam cotton pickin' hands off the goddam engine!" With that he turned the valve back to its original position.

The German threw up his hands and yelled something and sat back down. We were gaining momentum and from my seat immediately behind the driver, I saw him start pumping his foot. While I realized that he must be braking there was no indication of slowing; instead we were gaining speed.

At that moment I knew without anyone saying anything that we had no brakes and that there was no way we could escape annihilation. From where I sat I could see that we were approaching a precipice and that there were no guard rails to keep us from hurtling over it. These were not conscious thoughts as my mind was reeling. All I could think of was, "This can't be happening to me! Not now! Not after making it through the war!"

I felt the bus move to the outside of the roadway and looking out my window I was certain that one of the rear wheels was partially extending into space. If we fell off that side before hitting the hair-pin bend there was still a fall of several hundred feet we would not survive.

There was nothing anyone could do and yet there wasn't a sound from anyone in the bus. But we hadn't reckoned on the driver. He had spotted a huge tree over the top of the escarpment forming the right side of the road. While it appeared to be about half way around the bend he was trying to make it around the corner by taking the bus wide to the left. At least that was my reflex reaction to what I thought he was doing. Why anyone had any right to believe that a tree would be growing on the outside of a road carved into a cliff is one of the smaller wonders of the world.

Skirting the outer rim of the cliff the bus made it part way around the bend before I shut my eyes and waited for the end. We sailed over the edge and dropped only to come to a grinding stop wedged between the cliff and a huge pine tree that grew out of the cliff some thirty feet below the roadway. A loud crash caused me to open my eyes as a steel barrel full of Diesel oil fell from a freight compartment at the rear of the bus and broke through the windshield without striking anyone in the bus. We were thrown about some but the bus, thanks to the driver, had hit the tree squarely and was standing on its radiator instead of rocketing toward the Rhine in free fall hundreds of feet below.

I spoke but it didn't sound like my voice. "Is anyone hurt?" I asked. Since no one seemed to be injured I asked if anyone could get out of the bus through the rear door. A small trooper, moving carefully, worked

his way into the freight compartment, cranked down a window in a door and crawled onto the top surface of the cliff. "Move out," I said, "two at a time with one on each side of the center aisle so as not to upset the balance of the bus."

In ten minutes, using the bus seats as a ladder we were all standing on the road congratulating the driver and ourselves for the miraculous escape we had just made from destruction. The driver even shook hands with the German mechanic who finally made clear the fact that he had tried by turning the small valve to put more compression into the braking system because of the rarified air of the mountain we were standing on.

It wasn't until we saw the horrified looks on the faces of the men in the other two buses when they arrived at the scene that we fully realized the enormity of the situation. We over-loaded the other buses and I told the driver of the lead bus in which I rode to move slowly and not to try to make it in time for the train from Strasbourg.

It was getting dark when we reached the Rhine where we had to cross a swollen river on a ponton bridge. About half way across the pontons were out of verticle alignment in one place and as our rear wheels crossed the seam all four rear tires were cut and blew out.

I got out on the bridge and because of the speed of the current passing so close underfoot almost lost my balance as I looked at it. Realizing the need to focus on some distant steady object if we were to escape further hazards I passed the word to all the others following me to watch only the far shoreline. At that point we saw the train for Paris steaming past the end of the bridge.

We hiked into Strasbourg and at the railroad station I talked to all 150 men and told them I was putting them on their metal to behave themselves. Many of them had friends in and around the city and wanted to visit them. I said that I would extend their stay in Paris to four days instead of the original three provided that no one got out of line or in anykind of trouble in Strasbourg.

"However," I said, "if one of you fouls up we all go back to Germany tomorrow. Be back here by 4 PM tomorrow as there is only one train a day to Paris and that leaves at 5 PM."

They all walked the line and as a result had the longer stay in Paris. In the meantime I wired General Dahlquist telling him of the near catastrophe and saying that we were junking the buses and would need transportation on a given date for the return trip to Geislingen from Strasbourg. I also told him that the men needed extra time in Paris because of the travail caused by the German buses.

On my second day in Paris, I received a call to come to a hospital there. I found that the two recruits who'd been in the bus with me when it

## Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

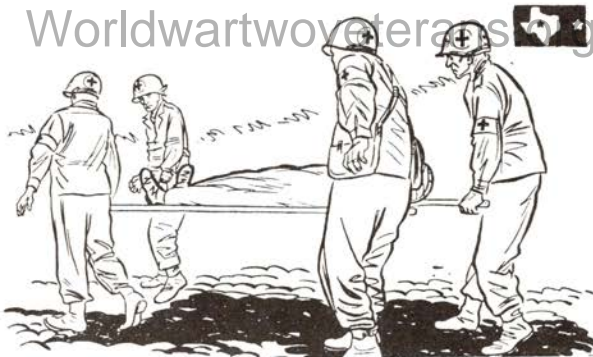
went over the cliff had suffered delayed shock and were in bad shape. It is, of course, understood that no one gold bricks by going to a hospital in Paris, of all places. They were ill for several weeks and never did get to enjoy the City Of Lights. I don't know what this proves except that veterans are very likely tough old coots and highly shock-resistant.

I'll close this tale of post-war safety conditions, or lack of them, by indicating briefly one other incident that took place on a Liberty ship en route home. We ran into what the Navy called a "Little Blow" off the coast of Ireland in September 1945. It had a lot of people, including the crew, sea sick. My semi-circular canals have been a Godsend to me many times for I have never been sea sick and wasn't at this particular time. As a result, the Captain invited me to the bridge and there for the only time in my life I saw a ship being practically swallowed up by sixty-foot waves.

The crew kept a daily chart of our voyaging by inking in a leg of our journey each day. The average run was 400 to 450 miles a day. However when it came time for us to see the mountains of Greenland there were none in sight.

The Captain explained it this way, "Well fellers," he said, "when we hit that storm off Ireland we didn't want to tell you it was a hurricane or that we went backwards 50 miles that day! So we charted our usual 450 miles for that day's run. We figured it would be easier on your morale to tell you about it when we got a lot nearer the United States. So, you see we have about 500 miles to go to catch up with our chart! You'll see Greenland tomorrow."

The only things I've had nightmares about arising from the war are those 60-foot waves. A recurring dream over the years doesn't find me on a ship coasting down the damn things. Instead I'm in a safe harbor approaching the sea and over a distant sea wall I can see them towering over everything waiting for me. Waking in a cold sweat is still preferable to continuing the dream.



# 142nd Louisiana Infantryman Lead Assault Squad To Smash Foe Near Magliano



WISE, HOMER L.

*Rank and Organization:* Staff Sergeant, Company L, 142d Infantry, 36th Infantry Division. *Place and Date:* Magliano, Italy, 14 June 1944. *Entered Service at:* Baton Rouge, La. *Birth:* Baton Rouge, La. *G. O. No.:* 90, 8 Dec. 1944. *Citation:* While his platoon was pinned down by enemy small-arms fire from both flanks, he left his position of comparative safety and assisted in carrying one of his men, who had been seriously wounded and who lay in an exposed position, to a point where he could receive medical attention. The advance of the platoon was resumed but was again stopped by enemy frontal fire. A German officer and two enlisted men, armed with automatic weapons, threatened the right flank. Fearlessly exposing himself, he moved to a position from which he killed all three with his sub-machine gun. Returning to his squad, he obtained an M1 rifle and several antitank grenades, then took up a position from which he delivered accurate fire on the enemy holding up the advance. As the battalion moved forward it was again stopped by enemy frontal and flanking fire. He procured an automatic rifle and, advancing ahead of his men, neutralized an enemy machine gun with his fire. When the flanking fire became more intense he ran to a nearby tank and, exposing himself on the turret, restored a jammed machine gun to operating efficiency and used it so effectively that the enemy fire from an adjacent ridge was materially reduced, thus permitting the battalion to occupy its objective.

# A Classic Stratagem on Monte Artemisio

Worldwartwoveterans.org

Passage of a lightly held or unguarded sector of the enemy's lines by stealth and at night is an ancient stratagem—as old as the history of warfare.

In the Bible the Hebrew chronicler describes (in Samuel I, chapters 13 and 14) how, when King Saul and his son Jonathan besieged the Philistines encamped in Michmash, that Jonathan, accompanied by his armor bearer, slipped through the pass at Michmash, between Bozez and Seneh, to a place high up, about “half an acre of land, which a yoke of oxen might plow.” There they surprised the sleeping Philistines who, when they awoke, thought that they had been surrounded by the armies of Saul and fled. Saul then attacked with his whole army. It was a great victory for him; his first against the Philistines, and “so the Lord saved Israel that day, and the battle passed over into Beth Aven.”

In another Palestinian campaign, this one during World War I, a British brigade found itself before the same Michmash, with orders to attack toward Jericho and drive the Turks across the Jordan. Pondering the Scriptures the night before what promised to be a costly frontal attack, the brigade major and his commanding officer came across the account of Jonathan's stratagem at Michmash. Determining that the terrain had changed little since that time, the brigadier decided to lead his troops over the path taken by the ancient Hebrew King. Moving up the mountainside under the cover of darkness, the British passed through the lightly held pass of Michmash to rout the Turkish garrison as the dawn's first light broke over the ancient town.

Familiar, too, is General Wolfe's clever tactic before the French stronghold of Quebec when he led his men up the slope of a woody



precipice to overpower a small detachment at the Anse du Foulon, and to appear the next morning with this entire army drawn up on the Plains of Abraham before the eyes of the surprised French garrison.

The Allied campaign in Italy in World War II also produced a notable example of this stratagem, worthy of joining the three just cited in the annals of military history. This was the successful passage of the German lines at Monte Artemisio in May 1944 by the 36th Infantry Division, then commanded by Major General Fred L. Walker.

#### **Hard Luck Division**

The 36th Division, a battered veteran of the American 5th Army's winter campaigns at San Pietro and along the Rapido, had acquired among American troops the reputation of being a "hard luck" division. Ever since September 1943, when it had come ashore on the Italian mainland at the ancient Roman settlement of Paestum near Salerno, the 36th Division had known difficult and costly missions. After being relieved from the Rapido front in February 1944, the division had been resting and training at Madaloni and near Avellino where it had engaged in extensive mountain training in preparation for the 5th Army's May offensive across the Garigliano between the Liri Valley and the Tyrrhenian Sea, which was designed to link up with the Anzio forces and to capture Rome.

Anxious that General Lucian Truscott, his 6th Corps commander on the Anzio beachhead, have adequate strength for his breakout offensive, General Mark W. Clark, the 5th Army commander, changed his plans and sent the 36th Division instead to join the 6th Corps.

At dawn on 23 May 1944, General Truscott hurled the seasoned 3rd Infantry Division and the 1st Armored Division against the center of the German 14th Army's defenses at Cisterna. After 24 hours of some of the costliest and bitterest fighting in a campaign which had long been characterized by such fighting, the two divisions broke through the German defenses on either side of Cisterna and swept up a three-mile-wide corridor, flanked by the Alban Hills on the left and the Lepini Mountains on the right. The object of the 6th Corps' drive was the town of Calmontone, an important road junction on the Via Casilian (Highway 6), the main line of communications between the German 10th Army, opposing the bulk of the 5th Army, and the city of Rome.

#### **The Alban Hills**

General Clark had long been concerned that his 5th Army reach Rome before the Allied armies landed in northern France. A possible solution to Clark's problem lay in the volcanic mass of the Alban Hills towering above the beachhead. This high ground provided the Germans with excellent observation which enabled their artillery to harass the 6th Corps stretched through the valley below. And through these hills ran the Ap-

## Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

pian Way (Highway 7), the most direct road from the beachhead to Rome.

It was to this area, then, that General Clark directed his attention and hopes for a speedy capture of Rome. Accordingly, on 26 May—one day after the linkup with 6th Corps had been accomplished—Clark ordered Truscott to turn the bulk of his corps to the left and to attack the German defenses along the southern slopes of the Alban Hills between Lanuvio and Velletri.

At 1100 on 27 May with the United States 45th Infantry Division on the left astride the Via Anziate, the 34th Division in the center south of Lanuvio, and the 1st Armored Division on the right, most of the 6th Corps wheeled left and attacked the German positions in the Alban Hills. Only the 3rd Infantry Division and the 1st Special Service Force, a brigade-strength commando force assisted by an armored combat team from the 1st Armored Division, continued the offensive in its original direction toward Valmontone and Highway 6.

For the next few days the one armored and two infantry divisions launched a series of attacks against stubborn German defenders along the Velletri-Lanuvio-Campoleone line. Instead of breaking through quickly to “the most direct road to Rome,” the 6th Corps struggled fruitlessly for four precious days along the southern slopes of the Alban Hills, and at the end found itself no closer to Rome.

Moreover, the relatively weak force which had continued north-eastward toward Highway 6 in the original direction of the beachhead offensive had also been checked when elements of the Hermann Goring Division counterattacked between Valmontone and Artena. As night fell on 30 May, the 6th Corps offensive had definitely stalled on both sectors.

Meanwhile, the British 8th Army had captured Frosinone, the last major road junction on highway 6 south of Valmontone, and the Allied invasion force in England had moved into its final assembly areas preparatory to the long-awaited invasion of northern France.

General Clark was understandably concerned about the unexpected delay in the offensive and realized that unless the German defenses in the Alban Hills were cracked within the next few days, he might have to wait for the 8th Army to pull abreast and join his own army in a coordinated attack on Rome.

On 26 May General Walker's 36th Division had relieved the 1st Armored Division in the sector immediately south of Velleri. It was General Truscott's intention then to use the 36th Division as a holding force and to shift the 1st Armored behind either the 34th or 45th Divisions to exploit any softening of the German defenses in the Alban Hills.

General Walker moved his command post from the Nettuno area into the shattered buildings of a dairy farm near Torrechia Nuova, about two

and one-half miles northeast of Cisterna and five miles southeast of Velletri, while his 141st and 143rd Regiments began the relief of the 1st Armored Division.

On 28 May Walker learned that Truscott now planned to use his division to relieve the 34th Division which had bogged down in a costly stalemate before Lanuvio. Recalling vividly an earlier bloody frontal assault against a well-entrenched enemy along the Rapido River, the 36th Division commander did not relish a repetition of this experience. He began, therefore, to search for a possible alternative to simply taking over from the 34th Division an apparently hopeless task.

General Walker had studied the forbidding bulk of Monte Artemisio both from the cabin of an artillery observer's aircraft and from the forward observation posts of the 141st Infantry, then holding a line along the road at the base of the mountain. The division staff had also made very detailed studies of aerial photographs of the terrain before them and had found no evidence of enemy activity. When reconnaissance patrols reported on the 27th that they had found no enemy positions on the slopes of Monte Artemisio, General Walker called the division engineer, Colonel Oran C. Stovall, to the command post to discuss the possibility of locating a suitable trail leading over the mountain and through the German lines.

### **Conference**

Meeting Colonel Stovall on the road just outside the dairy farm command post, General Walker held an alfresco staff conference, using the dusty road as a situation map. He explained to Stovall the problem facing the division and a possible solution. As he traced on the ground a rough map of the division's sector, the general confided to Colonel Stovall his concern that the corps commander might send the division into the 34th Division's sector, not to exploit a breakthrough, but to relieve a battered division whose repeated frontal assaults had gained only a few yards after two days of costly fighting.

The division commander now turned to consideration of the enemy's dispositions. The unexpectedly strong defense encountered by 6th Corps between Campoleone Station and Lanuvio and the appearance of the Hermann Goring Division in the vicinity of Valmontone led him to conclude that in order to build up these two sectors General Albert Kesselring must have thinned out a sector which he believed secure. Monte Artemisio, the heavily forested mountain wall to the front, seemed to the 36th Division commander the most logical sector for Kesselring to have left lightly guarded.

If the 36th Division could climb Monte Artemisio and slip in behind the German defenses, Walker explained to Stovall, Kesselring's grip on the Alban Hills would be broken. Walker doubted that the Germans

## Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

would be able to establish another defense line south of the Tiber.

If two of the infantry regiments climbed the mountain and passed through the enemy's lines, Walker believed that he would also have to move armor and artillery in to support them if this action was to develop into a genuine breakthrough. Infantry alone would be unable to close the escape routes leading northward from Velletri; and he did not wish to expose the right flanks of the attacking regiments to possible enemy thrusts from the northeast. The force cutting the German withdrawal routes north of Velletri must be strong enough to check such counterattacks, as well as any attempt by the garrison to escape from the town. Moreover, until Velletri was taken, the infantry would be dependent upon a line of communications extending eight miles over a 3,000 foot mountain which possessed no roads and only a few foot trails.

Success of the plan, as Walker saw it, turned upon the construction of a road adequate for tanks and tank destroyers as well as the necessary supply trains. Walker wanted to know if the engineers could build this road.

Unable to give an immediate answer, Colonel Stovall put his staff to work at once to study the terrain. From the air, from forward observation posts, and on aerial photographs the wooded slopes of Monte Artemisio were carefully searched for the most promising trail. The next day—the 28th—Stovall reported that the engineers had located a suitable route up the mountain and could do the job.

### A Gap

What General Walker and his staff had discovered was a gap, approximately two miles wide, between the left flank of the German 1st Parachute Corps and the right flank of the 76th Panzer Corps. Since the night of 27-28 May General Wilhelm Schmalz, commander of the Hermann Goring Division, had been agonizingly aware of this gap. Patrols, sent out by his right flank battalion, had gone as far as a fork in the road just northeast of Velletri before encountering troops of the 362nd Division on the 1st Parachute Corps' left flank.

Although Schmalz had observed American patrols scouting this area during the 28th, there was little he could do to close the gap; his own division's front had been stretched to the breaking point. Realizing, however, the peril which this gap posed to the entire Caesar Line, Schmalz committed his right-wing regiment's last reserve, an engineer platoon, at Castel d'Ariano on Monte Artemisio, a small force hardly sufficient to close the two-mile gap.

The Hermann Goring Division's commander also sent an officer-led patrol to occupy a small group of houses at Menta on the corps boundary, and from the 28th through the 30th repeatedly requested 14th Army headquarters to direct the 1st Parachute Corps to establish contact

with his right flank by means of a similar patrol. His pleas were unheeded.

Even as Schmalz was reporting the gap to his superiors on 28 May, Walker notified General Truscott of the apparent German weakness in the Monte Artemisio sector, and mentioned to the 6th Corps commander that he had directed patrols to take and hold any unoccupied ground. Although General Walker had not yet fully developed a plan to exploit this weakness, he informed the 6th Corps chief of staff, Colonel Don E. Carleton on the afternoon of the next day that he would keep on trying to work his way to the northeast, above the town, and approach the position from the rear. Colonel Carleton agreed that if the 36th Division could do this "the Boche in there (Velletri) would find themselves in a tough situation, and the town might just cave in."

#### **Another Plan**

Although prospects now appeared brighter for the development of Walker's plan, the corps commander had a plan of his own. Summoning his division commanders to his command post late in the evening of 29 May, Truscott confirmed General Walker's fears with an order for the 36th Division to move the next day into an assembly area in the rear of the 34th Division preparatory to taking over that division's sector on the night of 31 May-1 June. Returning to his own headquarters later in the evening, Walker issued warning orders for the move to his staff and, at a conference the following morning, a final oral order to his subordinate commanders.

While the division prepared for the move to the Lanuvio sector, General Walker and his staff continued to develop a stratagem to exploit the gap discovered on Monte Artemisio. The more they considered this plan and compared it with the situation they expected to encounter before the enemy stronghold at Lanuvio, the more convinced they became that their plan offered a better chance to penetrate the enemy's defenses at far less cost.

Since time was running short, General Walker resolved to lay the plan before the corps commander at the earliest opportunity. Walker's opportunity came when Truscott visited division headquarters shortly before noon on 30 May to inspect preparations for the move. The 36th Division commander outlined the division plan, pointed out its advantages, and requested that it be substituted for the mission which Truscott had already assigned.

The plan was simple. The 142nd and 143rd Regiments, with the former in the lead, were to pass through the lines of the 141st Infantry during the night of 30-31 May to seize the Machio d'Ariano and Hill 931, two prominences at the northeastern end of Monte Artemisio. After reaching the crest, the 142nd Infantry would advance southwest along the crest of the

## Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

mountain to positions about two miles north and west of Velletri, where roadblocks could be established across the two remaining routes of withdrawal left to the enemy garrison in Velletri.

The 143rd Infantry, meanwhile, would move northwestward to seize Monte Cavo and the Rocca di Papa, the highest points within the Alban Hills. After the two regiments had reached the summit of Monte Artemisio, the 141st Infantry would shift its attack to the west and capture Velletri by an encircling maneuver in coordination with the 142nd Infantry. With the enemy garrison virtually surrounded, the 36th Division could then quickly destroy the remaining defenders of this part of the Caesar Line, and the "shortest" road to Rome would be open.

General Walker concluded with the statement that his reconnaissance had located a suitable cart trail crossing the enemy lines about three miles northeast of Velletri, and that his engineers were confident that this trail could be enlarged to enable tanks and trucks to follow the infantry closely.

### Approval

General Truscott carefully questioned Colonel Stovall about his proposals to construct a road up the mountain, and, having satisfied himself that it could be done, agreed to discuss the plan at once with his staff at corps headquarters. Despite strong objections from the corps engineer concerning the plan's feasibility, General Truscott phoned Walker at 1300 not only to approve the plan, but to place the 36th Engineer Regiment to support Walker's division.

There was no time to be lost. Walker promptly issued a new warning order to his staff and called a meeting of his unit commanders at 1500 at division headquarters to give them final instructions for the operation which was to take place that night. The 142nd Infantry was to move after dark by truck from its reserve position to the division's right flank where it was to pass through the 141st's lines and scale Monte Artemisio over the trail which the engineer would mark. The 143rd Infantry in line before Velletri was to be relieved by the attached 36th Engineer Regiment. The 143rd Infantry was then to move by truck via Cori to the right flank where it was to follow the 142nd up the mountainside.

Colonel Stovall now moved his own engineer battalion into position to support the attack, and selected Captain Orval W. Crisman's Company B to construct the road up the mountainside. A minelaying platoon from Company B was attached to the lead infantry battalion to assist the infantrymen in establishing roadblocks behind Velletri.

As his division prepared to move against Monte Artemisio, General Walker noted that "our operations for tonight and tomorrow have promise of being spectacular. We are taking chances, but we should succeed in a big way."

## **Infiltration**

At 2255 on 30 May, the 142nd Infantry, commanded by Colonel George E. Lynch, crossed the line of departure in a column of battalions. Aided by a new moon, whose light was just sufficient to enable the men to pick out the trail, the leading company reached the road at the base of Monte Artemisio by 0130. From there the troops followed the trail up the lower slopes of the mountain through lush vineyards which provided welcome concealment. On the left the men heard the distant chatter of machinegun fire. This was the 141st Infantry Regiment probing the German defenses on the outskirts of Velletri.

As the silent columns passed darkened and presumably deserted houses, the bark of a nervous dog set off a cacophony of howls, punctuated by the braying of a jackass. Occasionally, a shot rang out, followed by moments of breathless anticipation as to what would follow. About 0300 the menacing rumble of aircraft engines shattered the night. Friendly anti-aircraft fired a sparkling display at the invisible enemy aircraft which, in turn, dropped hundreds of flares illuminating the surrounding countryside for miles around.

Everyone hugged the ground and waited in silence. Bombs fell and strafing was heard in the direction of Velletri. Fortunately, the regiment had not been discovered; the aerial attack seemed to be aimed at the troops south of Velletri. The flares lasted about half an hour; as the planes roared away, the men scrambled to their feet and resumed the march.

It had been a close call, and the delay had cost the regiment valuable time. Dawn would soon be breaking, and the bulk of the mountain still lay before the marching columns. About 0415, as the first gray light began to obscure the stars, the lead battalion began to cross an open field, fortunately shrouded in an early morning haze. Tension increased as the troops started to climb the steeper slopes just below the summit. As the men saw their goal looming before them they quickened their pace, and by 0635 the advance guard, accompanied by artillery observers, scrambled onto the summits of Maschio d'Ariano and Hill 931. On the first peak they surprised and captured three German artillery observers—one was taking his morning bath. Not a shot was fired.

Even as the lead battalion of the 142nd Infantry had begun its ascent of Monte Artemisio, Captain Crisman's company of engineers, under cover of darkness, moved forward to begin work on the trail. The phenomenally rapid improvement of the trail into a rudimentary one-way road—but, nevertheless, a road—was largely the work of three bulldozers manned by skilled and determined operators.

## Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

### Counterattack

Ironically, as the two regiments moved up the mountainside toward the Maschio d'Ariano, the German engineer platoon commander from the Hermann Goring Division, unaware of the size of the American force, reported to his battalion commander only that he had been engaged by some American infantry—nothing more. Consequently, General Schmalz was not immediately informed of the breakthrough, the danger of which he had so long foreseen. Not until the Americans were well established atop Monte Artemisio during the afternoon of 31 May did Schmalz receive from 14th Army an order to counterattack an enemy force which had penetrated the line between his division and the 362nd Infantry Division.

But now the unfortunate general had only four or five operationally fit tanks left in his division, and they were engaged near Valmontone. The best General Schmalz could do was to throw a battalion of his *panzergrenadier* regiment into the breach late in the day. Already weakened by heavy losses, this battalion was no match for the 142nd and 143rd Regiments. The counterattack failed, and the Americans continued to widen and strengthen their penetration.

While the engineers worked on the trail throughout the morning, the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 142nd Infantry moved southwest along the crest of Monte Artemisio toward the Machio dell'Artemisio, overlooking Velletri from the northwest. Despite the German counterattack in the afternoon, the 142nd Infantry continued steadily toward its objective, which it occupied by 1930.

Enemy tanks and 20-millimeter flak guns in the vicinity of Lake Nemi northwest of Velletri now opened fire on the regiment which held its ground throughout the night. But well supported by tanks and self-propelled artillery, the US infantry set up roadblocks north and west of Velletri and by dawn on 1 June had virtually surrounded the enemy garrison. Over 3,000 US infantrymen were firmly entrenched on the heights above Velletri in the enemy's rear.

The move had come as a complete tactical surprise to the Germans. American casualties had been relatively light. The 142nd Infantry Regiment had lost eight men killed, 52 wounded, and one man missing. In the 143rd three men had been killed, 94 wounded, and 11 missing—a relatively modest price for the ground gained.

### Withdrawal

The 143rd Infantry, which had followed the 142nd up Monte Artemisio, had meanwhile marched straight across what had once been the floor of the ancient crater to capture Monte Cavo and Rocca di Papa, the two highest points in the Alban Hills. Deprived of their most important observation points overlooking the 6th Corps front, the Germans had no alternative but to fall back on Rome and beyond the Tiber.



American artillery observers accompanying the infantry quickly established themselves on these two heights to take full advantage of the excellent view they had of the German held area. It was an artilleryman's dream, and throughout the day they kept their guns busy pouring destruction and confusion onto the crowded network of roads behind the German lines.

Meanwhile, General Walker's communications people intercepted an order from the 4th Parachute Division to the 12th Parachute Regiment to withdraw from the town and fall back to the far bank of a stream about half a mile west of Velletri. Forewarned of the enemy's intentions, the 142nd Infantry supported by tanks moved swiftly to cut off their escape.

It was now the 141st Infantry's turn to attack. Two of its three battalions closed in on Velletri over terrain made treacherous by numerous vineyards and orchards which restricted observation and made control of smaller units extremely difficult. Fighting back a last enemy counter-attack early in the afternoon, leading elements of Colonel John W. Harmony's regiment entered Velletri at 1630, and one hour later had penetrated to the center of town.

The place was in ruins. Enemy dead and material littered the streets, and in the remaining buildings numerous dead and wounded were discovered. Hundreds of prisoners were routed from the extensive fortifications, tunnels, and reinforced gun positions—mute evidence of the important role Velletri was to play in the German defense plans. Despite the stubborn resistance of the survivors of the enemy garrison, the 141st Infantry incurred few casualties—one man killed and 38 wounded.

General Walker's stratagem had worked. An entire American infantry division now moved into the Alban Hills. Field Marshal Kesselring's last defense line south of Rome had been shattered, and General Truscott's 6th Corps, led by the 36th Infantry Division and the 1st Armored Division, now pursued the Germans across the historic city.

"This was," General Truscott later remarked, "the turning point in our 'drive to the northwest'."

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## Letter of Inquiry

From: Robert J. Ganns

Dear Sir:

Perhaps you can help me. I am trying to locate the name and location of a town in Northern France. It is important to me. I want to return there and fulfill a promise I made over 45 years ago.

It all started in 1944 around the 16th or 17th of September. I was leading a platoon for I Company, 142 Regiment and we had just helped to capture Luxeuil and then we pushed on towards Remiremont. The 3rd Battalion had I Company out in front and my platoon, reinforced by a section of mortars, was the "point" for the company and the regiment. We walked briskly down a highway, all 29 of us. I had Carnes and Bell up front when we noticed a small village to the right of the road. Out from the village appeared a strange sight, over 10-12 Germans on bicycles pedaling as fast as they could go.

We fired a few shots and they flung themselves into a ditch and upon our approach they surrendered. I questioned them and they informed us that the town was loaded with Krauts, including some artillery and a large tank. I radioed back to company headquarters and asked for directions and orders. Back came the order "continue on down the road, BUT clean out the enemy from the town!" I didn't think I heard right. "Clean out the town?" It was full of Krauts, plus ordinance! Oh well, orders are orders. We did a 90° turn. I put a squad on each side and one squad in the rear and started toward the village. Out from the last house a German soldier ran directly at us and as he drew close he stopped short and stared. I guess everyone must have shot at him because he simply disintegrated with bits of him flying all over.

I had been personally training my men in a style of fighting that was a bit different in those days. I had enjoyed some success by firing everything we had in the direction of the enemy and screaming and yelling. I called it "Buck Rogers" and the men seemed to like this style. Well anyway, I yelled out "Buck Rogers" and we all advanced into the town screaming, yelling and firing! Germans were running in every direction. We heard a loud bang from down the street and realized that we were being fired on by several large mouthed howitzers. I yelled for Lt. Alberty and he hustled up with his 60 MM mortars and began to lay in 6 or 8 rounds.

The artillery stopped and we resumed our advance. Krauts came out from all over with their hands up. We just motioned them to the rear and kept yelling "Kamerad, you bastards!" At the end of the street we saw the result of Alberty's mortars. Six Germans were huddled around two guns, all of them bloody wounded and fragments of mortars had riddled the sides of the houses. The town formed a sort of an "L" and when we

reached the L juncture a front machine gun opened up and wounded our lead man and we dragged him back. The situation was fluid now with lots of shouting and yelling going on and I motioned the men to hang back. PFC Carnes and I stalked down the street to the left shouting and yelling. At the end of the street in an apartment house we heard shouts of surrender and a white rag showed out of a window.

"Come out you bastards" I shouted and as Carnes and I watched in amazement a huge amount of over 100 Germans came out with hands held high.

While all this was going on, the Battalion C.C. Col. Simpson and Capt. Hughes had reached the street junction. Carnes and I collected the prisoners and marched them back to the astonishment of Simpson and Hughes. I offered Col. Simpson a lovely Luger I had appropriated and he patted me on the back.

Now, all the firing had ceased and the townspeople came out and started to cheer and even cry. They started to point at various Frenchmen and wanted us to arrest them. One of them kissed me on the cheek and said in English, "We will never forget you" and I answered "I will come back here some day and we will meet again"!

That day we had killed and wounded 45 Germans, destroyed 5 Pack howitzers and captured 202 prisoners. I asked one of the German officers why they had fought so poorly. He was a nice looking Kraut and spoke good English. He said that they knew the 36th Division was coming up the road toward Remiremont and they were ordered to fight a strong holding action, but the screaming and shouting and aggressiveness of my 29 boys had completely unnerved them! They thought the whole regiment was attacking!

So, that's my story. I have tried to figure out the name and location of the village. I really want to return for in that village for one day, 29 men of the 3rd Platoon I Company 142 Regiment of the 36th Division were real heroes!

'Bye now,

Robert J. Gans



ROBERT J. GANS  
1100 N. Alta Loma Rd.  
Los Angeles, CA 90069  
Apt. 1102



## KATRINA, WHERE ARE YOU?

By Amil F. Kohutek  
Battery C 132nd

Battery C 132nd Field Artillery Bn, was in position in Alsace Lorraine, in an area North of Strasburg, or near Sarguminess. The exact location and time is lost. It was a short time after Christmas, 1944 when the 132nd was moved from a relatively quiet area to this particular gun position. Very little firing was done from this gun position. The snow was deep and very cold. For reasons, never explained, we remained in this position for several days...highly unusual for a gun Battery to stay in one place. Soon after setting up the guns, the kitchen arrived and hot meals were served. The First Sgt. Tanner, announced that half the men in the Battery could, if they found a place, do their laundry.

Big Frank Bolick, PFC Conover, North Carolina, teamed up with me in the back yard of a farm house. As we crossed the yard, we noticed the farmer's wife in a partly enclosed shed, milking a goat. I told Frank if they offered us food made with milk products, to politely decline. Frank suggested that maybe we could take it to Mess Sgt. Johnson's kitchen and he could make gravy without lumps. We were invited in the house, next to a warm stove. In time, the farmer, we learned was a German. At that time Alsace Lorraine was a part of France, until the Germans took it over early in the war. Both man and wife were in their 60's. They had no family, and did not show family pictures. In time, Frank, more often called "Doc," got to know this couple quite well.

The husband passed drinks to us a couple of times on our visit, which was enough to warm our insides. Old Doc said that was the strongest white lightning he had ever tasted. And I am sure Old Doc tasted a lot of Shine.

The next day, we still had not done our laundry. Old Doc and I took off in another direction through the snow banks. Over a rise into a clearing, we found the beginning of a railroad...couple of tracks ended right where we were standing. More for curiosity, we followed the tracks through brushy country, around bends. Soon the tracks went into a barbed wire enclosure, with lookout towers at the entrance and others near by. High barbed wire was possibly once electrified. No guards, and no one else were in sight. We walked through as if we knew where we were going, followed the track into a large building. Inside was a partly assembled locomotive. That sort of explained the tracks that led to nowhere. Machine shop equipment was scattered all around.

Old Doc and I walked through another wide door, and into a clearing we saw another barracks-like building. It looked deserted. We walked inside and were greeted by warmth—not nearth kind, but human warmth.

We had stumbled onto a Russian Prison Camp that had only been liberated for a short time. There was no way for them to return to Russia at that time. This was not a prisoner of war camp. It was a slave-labor camp. It was a Russian Women's Camp...not a male slave laborer...only women. I never saw in my life such squalor. These women were huddled together to keep each other warm as best they could, literally starving. There were no medical facilities, no firewood and no stoves. It is not known how many women were still here. The able-bodied, if there were any, made it outside the compound. The few still behind might have been frightened and would not leave. Most were starved and unable to walk. There were no inside bathrooms, no bathtubs and no toilets. Such as the toilets were, it was a slit trench between two barracks. Same clothing worn for months, looked like rags. Old Doc Bolick and I were stunned beyond belief. We could not even talk to each other. I found for the first time ever, that my Czech language came in handy. Some part of Russia, Poland and Yugoslavia speak a slavic language. Soon, I had a conversation going with a Russian woman who could talk the language; however, we misunderstood much. But I gained some. These women were very young two or so years back, and were brutally rounded up by the Germans in Ukrania or White Russia. This woman told me that one day the Russian soldiers were there, some shooting off heavy artillery was heard from the West. The Russian soldiers promised the civilians that the Germans will not reach that village. Most retired to shelters and basements. Daylight next morning they came out and instead of Russian soldiers, were Germans. The Germans promised they would not harm them. Few days later the Germans rounded up all the Jews and marched them to a cemetery. Another group of Germans marched the rest of the village people to the same cemetery. They had to watch the Jews dig their own graves. They were machine-gunned, and the Russian people had to bury the Jews. This woman told me that she shoveled dirt on Jews still living and when through, she said the ground was heaving up and down. This finally stopped, because the Jews were smothered.

Soon, the Germans announced that able-bodied women, sixteen to forty years old were asked to go to Germany and work in war plants, with promise of good wages and proper living conditions. The first group were the women in this camp. They were rounded up one morning, without warning, marched to a railhead loaded on overcrowded cattle cars. Through cold rain, sleet, snow and hot sun, they rode the boxcars without food, water, and restrooms. Many died along the way. They were shoved out of the train to make room for survivors and the few who did survive became slave laborers in this machine shop. They made locomotive engines. This Russian lady told me that they worked at one job thirty-six hours straight, then were off thirty-six hours. While one shift worked, the other shift slept in one bed of sorts. Then she said she got up and the other slave had the same bed. Sometimes one was sick as they often were and then one had to sleep on the floor. Workshop was

## Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

unheated so as to get more work out of the women. Nationality of the guards changed often. Sometimes Pollocks were guards. The women were terribly mistreated by the Poles. Sometimes they were guarded even by Russians. She said the Germans were far more polite and kinder than their own.

This Russian woman then took me to the far corner of the shabby filthy barracks. In the lower bunk of a double bunk was what I thought was a small child. It was a Russian sixteen-year-old redhead. Her name was Katrina. She had been sick in bed for days. We were told that nothing could be done for her. There was no medicine, no drugs and nothing to eat. Under very trying conditions, some civic organizations made an effort to set up soup kitchens, possibly Switzerland or Sweden. Never no more than one bowl of thin soup a day per person.

Old Doc Bolick and I looked at each other and he said, "Let's get out of here." Outside, inhaling fresh, arctic air, the two of us held a conference. What could Doc and I do to help this poor, sick girl? We decided since she appears to weigh so little that we could take turns and carry her to the German farmer and his healthy-looking wife, and hopefully they could find a doctor. Old Doc and I barged inside one more time. On the way to the girl's sick bed I spotted a GI blanket. "Thank you, Uncle Sam," I said as I bundled her up best as I could. I then discovered that she had been lying in her own waste...she was soaking wet and appeared to be feverish. I wrapped her in the blanket. Doc held the door open and we lit out for the German farmer's house. The snow was falling and the wind blew snow into deep drifts. This little girl so sick was shy of one hundred pounds. I carried her for awhile until I tripped into a snow bank. Then Doc picked her up and he fell, too. We took time-about for about a mile. As we came to the German's house, the wife opened the door. She let out a scream. We went in and put the girl on a sofa of sorts, near the stove. The German lady took over, and in time had the girl cleaned up and in a proper bed.

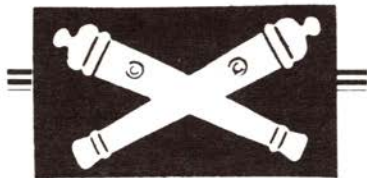
Old Doc and I visited this family a couple of more times. Each visit the girl had improved and on the last visit, she smiled at us. She made it fine with this family. She had studied German and knew how to converse. On our last visit she told us how she got to Germany in the cattle cars. She was not picked to go. Her older sister was in this group and Katrina did not want to stay behind, because she feared that the Germans would do her like they did the Jews. She broke from her mother's arms and joined the ranks of her sister. Her mother tried to get her away from this group, but a German soldier used the butt of his rifle and the mother fell moaning and bleeding. No one was allowed to come to her aid. The train was loaded with Katrina and her sister. Now, more than two years later, she did not know if her mother survived the beatings. Her sister, once a bundle of energy and full of life, was the first to die from exposure and hunger during the long train ride to Eastern France. She was kicked out into a snow bank along the railroad, likely to remain throughout the war.

Some good Poles, with a heart, sometimes threw rank potatoes, apples and oranges to the hungry people on the train...never enough to feed everybody. The German guards were entertained to watch women fight in the trampled mud for just a stale potato. Sometimes a town bakery gave a few meager loaves, which were devoured. The Germans had taken over this part of Poland and left nothing that the people could eat. A few lucky Poles had potato bins hidden from the Germans, and survived on such. Katrina said she worked in the locomotive factory about two years. She was not sure as time meant nothing. One day, around Christmas, the power went off—the power had gone off before, but was soon restored. This time it remained off and they went outside the factory. They soon noticed the dreaded watch tower and that it was not manned. The lone guard once at the gate was not there. They did not know what to do. They knew that the long way around was not the way to go home. The German-speaking people in Alsace were not friendly, so most elected to stay at the factory.

The last night Old Doc and I visited the farm house, we stayed up all night as the girl told horror stories. For the German couple, she translated in German. The German couple seemed horrified. Daylight found Doc and me running to the formation of C Battery—caught the tail end of the Battery preparing to eat breakfast. First Sgt. Tanner walked up to me, as he had done so many times in the past. I knew I was in trouble. Before he got nose-to-nose with me, he said, “Kohutek, where in the hell have you been?” I told him I was at that farm in a goat shed trying to milk a goat. I did not impress him. I turned my head to suppress a grin. He then told me to report to the Captain and drive the lead jeep. The regular driver, Cecil (Chick) Walden, was in the hospital with malaria. After breakfast of fried eggs, sunny side up, I serviced the jeep and reported to the Captain.

Soon all the prime movers arrived, guns were limbered, phone lines recovered and the convoy slowly moved out, never to return. As I drove past the German farm house, one last look at the house, I saw a hand wiping the fog from inside and a bit of red hair for the last time.

I waved a gloved hand and the Captain asked me “What have you got there?” I told him a little sixteen year-old Russian girl who was homeless. And I said when the war is over I am coming back here and take her home with me.





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**Rome—  
Plus 20 Days**

**Part Two**



*by Julian (Duney) Phillips*

It was around 10:30 hours when we heard a few shots from the head of the column. It had halted, then I heard Lt. Kulicks voice above the noise saying, "It's just a damn sniper, keep the column moving." The Column started moving north again and everyone had a chance to drink a little water to keep the dust out of their mouths. We only had a quart and had to make it last all day, which wasn't going to be easy.

*The after-action report of the 143rd Infantry indicates that on 7 June, Col. Paul Adams the Regimental Commander issued orders that water for his troops had priority over Ammo.* Trucks from our Service Company that was carrying Ammo, dropped their load to go back for water for the men. This gesture, plus many more similar ones was why Col. Adams was thought so much of by the men serving under him.

It was just before noon on the 7 June 1944 that Co. E hit the first German rear guard that was left to try and stop the column. The Germans needed time for their units to withdraw ahead of the advancing 5th Army.

Most of the fire came from a hill to the left of the road. Lt. Kulick started forward with his runners, yelling orders for the 1st and 2nd pla-



toons to go into a skirmish line to take the hill. He placed his machine gun sections where they could cover the platoons advance and instructed the mortar section to lob a few shells onto the hill where the fire was coming from. By now, Kulick was out in front of the men, leading the attack while his Captain stayed with the 3rd platoon as an observer.

A runner came from Battalion Headquarters with orders for the column to keep moving. Co. F, would move to the head of the column and lead, while Co. E eliminated the Germans. I read them and turned to White and said, *"the party's over, let's go up with the 1st platoon."* Captain Birkhead was between 1st and 2nd Platoons when White and myself got there. I handed him the orders and said, *"Tom, battalion wants us to keep moving, Company F will fall into the rear when Kulick clears the hill."*

I went on to say, *"White and myself will be up with the 1st platoon."* I yelled for the men to get out of the ditch, so we could move out. By this time White and myself were at the head of the column. Co. F, was lucky again. There were just a couple of snipers who had been dropped off to slow our progress. They seemed more interested in surrendering than giving their lives for Hitler.

Around 1400 hours one platoon of tanks moved forward into our company area with the lead tank creeping up with the 1st platoon. It was around 1600 hours and we were just south of Bracciano. We spotted ten Germans, about seventy-five yards to the north waving white flags. To me this was a sign of surrender.

The Sgt. in the lead tank pulled up abreast of me and radioed his platoon leader that there were ten Germans about seventy-five yards to the front waving white flags. The person the Sgt. was talking to came back over the radio with *"Button up and put a couple of rounds into them."*

As I listened to the transmission, I yelled to the Sgt. as he started to slide down into his tank. He heard me yelling, not to fire, so he stood up half way out of the hatch.

I said, *"Don't start a fire fight here, my men have no place to go but the ditch. If those Germans want to give up, let them, this could save the lives of some of my men."*

The Sgt. relayed my message to his superior and received the transmission back. *"Hold your fire and move on up to take prisoners."*

Before I could stop him he slid down into the tank, pulling the hatch cover shut as the tank moved into the Germans position.

There were two large houses just to the left of the road in front of the waiting Germans. As the tank moved north ahead of the column, I started Co. F moving north instructing my men to keep their eyes open and to check their weapons. The first house had a large wall enclosing the

## Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

property with an open gate. I was just at the corner of the stone wall when the tank pulled in front of the second house. There was a tremendous explosion with armor sheets flying into the air about thirty yards to my front. At the time I thought a German had fired a Panzer Faust from inside the house. I ran toward the large gate leading into the court yard of the second house, yelling for the 1st platoon to follow me.

When White and myself entered the courtyard, I yelled for him to see if he could get into the house. By now we had about twenty men from 1st platoon who had followed us into the court yard. White opened the door as I yelled for him to search the house and get the men to the second floor.

I couldn't believe what I saw. The tanks were backing down the highway and the men of Co. F were walking abreast of the tanks.

The German machine guns and rifles had not fired a round. The ammunition was exploding inside the tank that was sitting in the middle of the road. Still I saw no crew members, so I presumed they were dead.

I moved into the house, pulling the door shut behind me as I yelled for White. He came down the steps two at a time and seemed nervous as he said, "Duney the Captain is pulling the Company back and the tanks are running. We are here by ourselves. I answered, "I saw them pulling back, but we can't help that now. Get a few men and lets bar all the first floor windows and doors while I get to the second floor to see if we will be able to defend this building."

White spoke, "Duney, don't you want to go with the company?" I answered, "No one has fired a shot yet. These Germans don't want to fight, they are trying to surrender. Push all this furniture in front of the doors and windows, after you lock and bolt them. We are staying."

*When I reached the second floor, White had assigned two men per window, on each side of the house. We had just nineteen men to include White and myself.*

Everyone wanted to talk at once to tell me that battalion and the tanks were withdrawing to the south and shouldn't we go with them? I said, "No, we will hold this building. We lost the tank, but no Germans are trying to take this house and I believe we can defend it until someone back at headquarters kicks ass and sends the battalion back up here. Let's settle down and you men get back to your windows, and don't stick your heads out and stay out of sight."

Everyone had a carton of K-rations, so this would be our evening meal.

The sun was going down when one of the men on the west side of the house asked me to step into the room where he was posted. His voice was nervous as he said, "Lt. Philips there must be two or three hundred Germans coming toward this house. I moved to a spot where I could see, but

not be seen, and sure enough there were at least two companies of Germans on foot, heading for the road. By now, they were just at the corner of the south wall of the fence, that was surrounding the house we were in. I could see no tanks or vehicles. I hurried to the windows that overlooked the gate. I explained to the men who were posted there, that if a German came through that gate to kill him. They were not to let him get up to the house. I went on to the front of the house where the windows overlooked the road below. I told the men there, to use their grenades first. I then reassigned the men with Thompson Machine Guns to the front windows and told them I wanted no Germans to crawl over the fence, that if we had to kill one to let him come into the courtyard first. By now the first German was on the road southeast of the house. He hesitated as he looked at the burning American Tank and smelled the sulphur from the exploding ammo. When the group of Germans grew to around twenty, they started north passing in front of the house. I told the men who were posted at the windows to hold their fire until a German attempted to come over the fence or through the gate. If they kept moving to let them go. They had been dropped off as a rear guard and were now trying to get back to their unit.

They passed in front of the house for twenty minutes and we judged there were about two hundred fifty to three hundred of them. They were close enough for us to see their military decorations, among them were, Iron Crosses, combat assault and wound badges worn on the jackets of many of the soldiers.

I wasn't sure the Germans could have taken the building we were in, but I saw no need to test them without support from Battalion. Not one stepped through the gate leading into the court yard. They stayed on the road and walked north. I was willing to let them go and fight another day.

We all breathed a sigh of relief when they disappeared out of sight.

I called everyone together and asked for two volunteers to go south until they hit the American outpost. There, they were to contact our unit to let them know we were alright. No one spoke, so I asked the second time, thinking White would volunteer. Still no one uttered a word. I then explained that I would pick one man to go with me, that it was important for Battalion to know we were alive and still holding the building we were in when they pulled back. White spoke and said, "Lt., I'll go with you." I answered him by saying, "I asked for volunteers and you didn't open your mouth. You will be in charge while I'm gone. I'll be back as soon as I can."

Clouds had begun to form and there was no moon to light our way. White opened the door to let us out into the night.

## Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

We had gone south three miles when I spotted three men on an outpost all bunched up, talking. I challenged them and they answered with the countersign. They were from Co. G, 143rd Infantry outposting the front for the night. I asked where the company C.P. was located and one of the men pointed to a building about two hundred yards to the south. When we walked toward the building, we were challenged. I gave the countersign and was told to move to the building to be recognized. The guard told us the Captain was inside and for us to go in. It was old home week when we entered. Captain Earl Higginbotham had been told that I was killed or captured before the tanks and Co. F pulled back.

I asked Earl if he had a jeep near by, he answered he did and it was located on the south end of the building. I asked if I could borrow it to get to Battalion Headquarters to make my report. He went into an adjoining room and returned with a driver. He told the driver to take us to Battalion Headquarters, then to the Co. F area. When we arrived at Battalion Headquarters, everyone was surprised to see us because the Captain had reported one officer and eighteen men killed or captured. I reported the location of our position and explained I had other stops to make before going back to my men. The S-1 spoke, saying "Lt. Philips you don't have to go back tonight because we are going to drive through in the morning." I told him I had promised my men I would be back as soon as possible and I needed to be on my way.

When I arrived at the Tank C.P., I was ushered into the Captain's office. I told him of the destruction of the tank and reported three men dead. I told him I saw no one get out of the tank and I thought a Panzer Phaust had hit it. The Captain thanked me for coming by the C.P. to make my report. I left and had the jeep driver take me to Co. F area. As the jeep drove up to the C.P. it was like walking back from the dead.

Captain Birkhead had not seen anything of the happenings that afternoon, so he reported hearsay. He had been told all kinds of stories as to how many bodies the platoon counted before pulling back and that I had been killed or captured. Everyone had jumped to the conclusion that all had been killed when the tank exploded.

He wanted me to stay back to go with the Battalion for the attack the next morning. I tried to explain to him that we had seventeen of our men who were waiting for my return that night. I also told him I would see him the next morning when the Battalion pushed through us.

Captain Higginbotham's jeep took us to the outpost we had come through earlier that night. I thanked the driver and asked the men on outpost if anything had happened or had they seen anyone since we came through. The answer was "no", so we took off north. A drizzle had started, making it a little harder to hear and slightly uncomfortable on the body.

We were moving slow, just a few steps at a time, then we stopped to listen. I counted on my ears to pick up sounds that the enemy was near. I figured we had traveled about two miles when we came to some trees that were lining both sides of the road, making an umbrella effect, with no light penetrating through the limbs. We had traveled about two hundred yards along the tree lined road when I thought I heard something. I stopped to listen, took only two more steps and stopped again. By then I was straining my eyes to see what I thought I had heard. As my eyes became accustomed to the darkness, I made out three bodies crouched near the ground just four feet to my left front.

I pushed the safety off my Thompson and jammed it into the back of the first man and asked in a low voice, "Are you Americans?" The voice came back so low I could hardly hear, "Yes we are Americans." I asked them to stand and I inquired as to what they were doing in front of the line. The spokesman said he was a Sgt. and the two other men were his tank crew. They had lost their tank that afternoon. Then it hit me, so I asked if they had been in the lead tank in the column that was going up to get the Germans who wanted to surrender? The Sgt. said "that's us, and we are burned pretty badly. How far are the American lines?" I explained the situation that was to take place the next morning and they would only have a mile to go back to the house where my men were waiting for my return.

The Sgt. said they needed a doctor as soon as possible. I asked if they *knew the password or the countersign. They knew nothing, so I gave them the information and explained they were only two miles from our lines and could get a jeep just a short distance from the outpost.* I told him the outpost was manned by Co. G, 143rd personnel and to ask the Sgt. there to phone Captain Higginbotham for a jeep to pick them up. Then I laid it on them by saying that I was just returning from their C.P. and had reported to their Captain that all inside the tank had been killed. I told them how lucky they were to take care of themselves. I said I had made the trip both ways that night and felt they wouldn't encounter any Germans before they reached the outpost. They thanked me for the information and expressed relief at being discovered by Americans, instead of Germans. Without weapons and in bad shape from their burns, they headed south toward the American lines.

As we turned off the road into the Italian courtyard of the house where I had left the men, I expected to be challenged by one of them. We walked across the court yard and still no challenge. I spoke "White are you awake?" I was afraid to raise my voice, so I picked up a pebble and tossed it against the window. In the stillness of the night that pebble sounded like a boulder. Still there was no response. I tossed three more pebbles against the window and each time they fell back to the ground

## Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

with a big thud. By now I was mad. The whole damn bunch was asleep. I walked back to the gate and picked up a rock about the size of a baseball—hailed off and threw it through a window. I got their attention that time. White's head appeared through the window and asked "Duney is that you?" I answered, "you damn right it's me. You get your butt down here and open this damn door."

As I stepped inside I started on him by saying, "The whole damn bunch was sleeping including you. You had better be glad I wasn't a German patrol, they would have chewed you up."

White was hurt. He said, "Lt. Philips, we had guards posted." The chewing continued until we reached the second floor where I lit in on all the men as a group. When I quieted down, I said, "We are at war over here. This is not maneuvers back in the states. These Germans play for keeps—you make one mistake and your folks get a telegram saying you were K.I.A. When you make a foolish mistake such as tonight, you hurt me, for I try to keep you alive." I finished by saying "go on back to sleep, we have a few hours before the tanks and trucks come to pick us up."

A few tried to ask questions, but I cut them short, as I moved to the broken window where I could see the courtyard and the large gate.

White followed me to the window and tried to change the subject by asking why I thought Captain Birkhead had pulled the company back with the tanks. I told him I didn't know and that he had reported all nineteen of us dead or captured.

White and myself stayed at the window making small talk until day break. I said I wasn't sure when the column of tanks would get there, but to get everyone awake and fed since all we had were K-rations, I told him to check the kitchen downstairs to see if there was anything we could use.

I decided to go out on the road to check the burned out tank, with White at my heels. When I got to the gate I took my time to see if there were any Germans still lurking about. When I felt it was safe, we approached the tank from the rear. We saw sheets of armor plates laying on the ground on both sides and a thin spiral of smoke still rising from the hatch opening. Then I spotted a hole about 18 inches deep where the tank had run over a Teller Mine. We checked the tank and I told White I didn't see how the crew was able to escape from the burning tank. (It just wasn't their time to meet their Maker.)

By my estimates, we were just south of Bracciano, Italy and west of a large lake with the same name.

When we returned to the house we smelled the aroma of fresh eggs frying. There were Italian hard rolls and jam to go with the eggs—what a feast.

About the time we finished breakfast the first tanks and trucks arriv-

ed. We loaded the men and motored into Bracciano and from there we were trucked to the Italian town of Allumier, where we spent the night of June 8, 1944.

Allumier, Italy is just east of Civitavecchia, a port city that the Allies needed to help support the 5th Army. The port was very important to the Army because it was the nearest base to the frontline. The G.I.'s remember it for another reason, "The Anzio Express." This 280 MM rifle mounted on a railroad flat car had given the troops of Anzio bad dreams for months. It had done it's job of demoralizing the foot soldier. Until the Germans abandoned it on their drive north.

I would never be able to forget that first night on Anzio. We were having a cup of coffee in Sgt. Nowell's dug in the kitchen when the "Anzio Express" fired from the north. No one had to explain that the shell coming in was something we had not heard before. Everyone stopped what they were doing, not a word was spoken, each listening to the sound of that tremendous shell heading our way. Everyone was praying, in their own way, as we followed the shell with our ears until it passed overhead. The first shell hit the ground about a half mile beyond the kitchen. The explosion reminded us of a bomb, but we knew we were safe from "that" shell. Sgt. Nowell's coffee was hot and strong and talk was back to normal after the shell exploded.

The Division moved north as if nothing could stop them. The German rear guard plus units they had left, were ordered to fight to the last man to try and stop the Allies advance.

On the drive, north from Rome we captured Mongolians and other non-Germans who would throw down their weapons as soon as they saw we were going to take their positions. During 13-15 June, the 2nd Battalion ran into some of the hardest fighting on the drive. Co. E, 143rd Infantry being the hardest hit.

Commanding Officer, Lt. Joseph Kulick, was coming to the end of the road. He came by Co. F, to tell me he was tired of the fighting and was quitting the war.

Kulick had been at Pearl Harbor when it was bombed. He had received a D.S.C. and Silver Star in the Pacific before coming to the 36th Division. I considered him one of the best Infantry Officer I had met during the war. I told him the war was a long way from being over and that "No One" quit, they either go home on a stretcher or in a box.

He left to see the Battalion Commander to tell him he was through with the war and that he wouldn't go back into the line to lead men to their deaths.

After his meeting with the Battalion Commander he came back to say good-bye and wished me well. His last statement to me was "Duney I hope you make the rest of the war and get back to the states to your fami-

## Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

ly. Joseph got to "QUIT", he left that night and headed back to the states. (That night, with every star shining it's brightest, the 36th Division, lost one of it's best Company Commanders.")

On the 15 June, the 143rd Infantry was east of Grosseto when the town fell. 2nd Battalion was given the assignment to take the Grosseto Airfield, with Co. F leading the attack. Tanks were assigned to be used in the attack, so I loaded the first platoon and started clearing Germans from the hangers and other buildings. We loaded the men back on the tanks and started to the northwest side of the Airfield to set up our outpost and hold the field.

The Allies needed this airfield above Rome to use as a tactical field for it's fighter planes, that would give close in support for the divisions.

We were out in the middle of the runways when three German Self-propells opened up on our tanks. I quickly realized they wanted to destroy the tanks, so I halted the column and asked the men to climb down. I then instructed the tank commander to follow the Infantry about 500 yards. The self-propells continued firing on the tanks, so I sent White back to tell the tank commanders to move behind the hangers for protection.

We took our objective, set up our outpost, where we would rest for the next thirty-six hours.

Our days of rest, on the drive north of Rome were always needed. We enjoyed every minute. It gave us a chance to write letters, get three hot meals, clean our weapons, draw equipment if needed, but most of all we weren't losing men.

Just west of the outpost there was the largest Fascist horse stables I had ever seen, with hundreds of pure bred race horses. There was only one thing blocking me from visiting the stables—a two hundred yard deep mine field. The Germans tried to go through the night before and left ten dead among the mines.

My runner, Darol White and myself watched the horses running and playing and it hit me like a magnet. I had to go and all the time White saying, "Duney that mine field is deep let's don't go." I told him he didn't have to go, but I was going. I studied the field and thought I understood how the mines had been laid. Each one had been marked with a fir branch, so off we went.

When we walked up to the first dead Germans I came to the decision they had run through at night. One was armed with a pistol, we discussed the pistol, being booby trapped, so I took my knife and cut his belt, pulling his holster off the belt and realizing it was a P-38. We took it and headed for the stables. The horses were beautiful, no one was around, the tack room had hundreds of bridles, saddles, blankets, the colors of the stables plus caps, pants and shirts needed for world class races.



White and myself were like kids in a candy store. I began to throw things such as saddles, bridles, blankets, and jockey uniforms into a wagon. White said, "Duney we were lucky walking through that mine field. You aren't planning to pull this wagon through, are you?" I didn't answer him, just got me a good lariat from the tack room and stepped out into the pasture and roped the first four horses I saw. The first we hitched to the wagon where all the gear had been stacked. (I'm sure this race horse must have thought we were crazy fitting him out as a work horse.) Each time he bucked we would rub his neck and he would settle down. The other three we tied behind the wagon and it was White's job to keep the three horses directly behind the wagon at all times.

By the time we reached the mine field the lead horse was pulling easy. I studied the branches above each mine and picked my route. I led the horses and wagon into the mine field, twisting and turning to miss the fir branches with White yelling for me to slow down that we had almost ran over one.

We both breathed a sigh of relief when the three horses tied to the back of the wagon passed the last mine. Half of the outpost was there to see us through and to give a big cheer for our crazy venture.

Horses were saddled by the men of Co. F 143rd Infantry on an outpost northwest of the airfield at Gresseta, Italy, and for a few hours we forgot we were in a war.

I was from Texas and was supposed to be able to ride a horse, but there were men from New York and New Jersey who could out ride me any day of the week, but we all enjoyed ourselves.

From time to time, combat seems to be a million miles away. There would be no killings on either side and a person would let himself think that he was going to live through this hell.

On the 17 June 1944, Captain Earl Higginbotham from San Antonio, Texas, the commanding officer of Co. G, 143rd Infantry, was moving some of his men north of Gresseta when he rounded a building and just 100 yards to the north was a German Mark IV tank with it's commander standing half out of the turret.

Earl never knew how to run, he hit the ground and got the first shot off, killing the tank commander. The gunner laid his first shell just in front of the Captain. As the shrapnel tore into Earl's arms, everything went black.

The German tank driver, knowing his Commander was dead, started backing his tank north, away from Gresseta. Captain Higginbotham had stopped the German attack.

The men from Company G, pulled their Captain behind the building so aid-men could look after his wounds.

## Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

The admiration I carried for Captain Higginbotham was second to none. He had done so much for Co. G, 143rd Infantry with his leadership and fondness for his men.

This was the second commanding officer from 2nd Battalion we had lost in just four days. I kept asking myself, why, oh why, do we have to keep the good ones? In my mind I knew. They were always exposed and out front.

It had been said in the past that I enjoyed the war. Some of my friends went on to say I was sorry when it was over. World War II had taken a high school graduate and turned him into a combat officer where he was caught up in a game with the Germans. A bloody game of kill or be killed.

From time to time I found myself not wanting to know about the families of my men or letting myself get too attached to a group of men. The war in June 1944 was a long way from being over and losing a close friend seemed to break my heart.

We were just north of Gresso, in a small town, Co. G had taken that morning. Sgt. Nowell and his kitchen personnel had moved up to feed the men a hot noon meal which was a welcomed sight for the men of Co. F.

Around 1500 hours, the phone rang from Battalion headquarters. It was our Captain asking to speak to me. He went on to say Co. F, would attack, starting at 1615 hours and were to take the ridge line to our north. I asked if he was going to be with the Company during the attack? He said he would meet me on the hill.

The 2nd Battalion, 143rd Infantry was commanded by a West Pointer, Lt. Col. Gualden M. Watkins. He was fresh from the states and wasn't at all familiar with combat, but went along with the orders.

I asked White to round up the platoon leaders and meet me on the north-side of town.

G. Company was outposting that section so I had an opportunity to look over the terrain before the attack. I stopped to chat with the men on the G. Co. so I could see the area north of the town. Our objective was to take the ridge line to my front and we would cover about a thousand yards of open field before we started up the high ground.

No information was given as to estimated German strength. Having looked the area over I was sure we could take the German position.

There was only one thing that looked unusual. About 50 yards north of town and running 100 yards deep, were over 150 foxholes neatly dug and camouflaged. These neatly dug foxholes kept bothering me.

White arrived with the platoon leaders and a few platoon Sgts. who wanted to see our objective. We moved inside a large house so we

couldn't be seen as a target for the Germans. I explained that we would leave the town in three columns of platoons. We would walk at a fast pace until we were fired on, then the walk would change to a steady run. I told the Sgts. not to let anyone stop or hang back unless one had been wounded.

I didn't intend to stop until I had reached the crest to the north. "1st platoon, your area will be the westside of the Ridge Line along the tree line. 2nd platoon will take half the tree line and will follow me. I'll climb the Ridge Line in your area, stay up with me, I don't want to be alone on that hill tonight. 3rd platoon, you take the tree line to the right." Then I added, "I don't like those foxholes in the field there," as I pointed to the camouflages that partly concealed the new dirt. I told them to stay there until I had a chance to check a few. "I knew something was wrong because Germans don't dig foxholes for the enemy."

When I left the building, White was at my heels. I turned to him and said, "you don't have to expose yourself or draw fire, stay behind the building."

I moved to the first foxhole and there were prongs of a "Bouncing Betty," a German Personnel mine, buried in the center of the foxhole. I was looking into my second foxhole when White said, "Duney these holes are booby trapped, there is a Bouncing Betty in this one too." No one had fired on us, so I told him to check a few more. We moved fast until we had covered at least twenty, so I waved White back undercover of the building. I knew the Germans were watching us and I wondered why we were not fired on. Then it hit me, they wanted bigger game for all the work they had put into digging such neat foxholes.

I returned to the house where the platoon leaders were assembled and White was passing on to them what we had found. I broke in to say, "The Germans have this area zeroed in and I suspect when we get into the foxholes area we will draw fire. Tell every man in your platoons they are not to get into a foxhole, no matter what happens. There is a mine in each hole and most are in the center. It's instant death if they lay down on those mines. When the Germans open up I will start running—tell your men to keep up, only hitting the ground if the shell is going to be close."

White and myself were through the foxholes when I heard the two German self-propells fire their first rounds. I turned as the shells passed overhead and hit the ground in the 1st platoon area. I saw two men slump to the ground as shrapnel tore into their bodies. We were still moving at a pretty fast run and I yelled for the men to keep up.

There were three self-propells firing 75 MM rounds. The shells were slow so it gave the men plenty of time to get to the ground where they were safe.

## Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

We secured the hill one hour after night fall, expecting the Germans to counter attack any minute.

We regrouped and then realized we had taken five WWI Vintage artillery pieces and their crew hadn't fired a round on Co. F. They wanted me to know they hadn't fired on my men, they put the blame for my casualties on the three self-propelled that had slipped out to the north as they saw we would take the ridge.

The Captain arrived in the company area as we were interrogating the prisoners and said he wanted to send them back for Battalion to interrogate as soon as possible. I explained that Battalion had not used one man in the attack and that our men deserved all pistols, daggers, plus any other loot. They didn't need to be sent to Battalion Headquarters for that bunch to get souvenirs. The prisoners would go when they were clean.

After securing the Ridge line the 1st platoon was overlooking the main road to the west. We could hear Germans pulling out in the dark of night.

It was around 2200 hours that a beautiful Italian moon broke through the clouds. It made the night nearly as clear as day.

We could hear the German soldiers talking to each other as they moved north.

I went back to where I had set up the company C.P. and spoke to the Captain. "Tom, I think I'll take the 1st platoon and set up a road block and see how the Germans will react. We can cut off their withdrawal with just a few men." The Captain answered, "Duney, this hill was the objective for the battalion. We are not expected to set up a road block or start a fire fight tonight. We are supposed to hold this ridge line until morning." I said, "OK, but White and myself are going to work ourselves down to the road to see what the Germans are doing." The Captain came right back, "Duney you are not to start a fire fight. We have taken the ridge line, let's be satisfied." I answered, "The Germans don't want to fight, they are trying to stay ahead of us by pulling out tonight. I'll be back in a little while."

We moved to the outpost to tell our men we were going down to the road and for them not to fire on us when we returned. One of the men said, "Lt. Philips, we can hear Germans on the road, be careful."

The moon was bright, so we had to move with caution. White was saying, "Duney, you should listen to the Captain—that way I could get some sleep tonight." I answered, "We won't be gone long and then you can get a couple of hours of shut eye."

The wheat field stretched from the base of the hill to the road and was ready for harvest. We moved into the field and just a short distance in I realized our bodies above the wheat were good targets for the Germans. We dropped to our knees and began to crawl to the north toward a deep

ditch. When we hit the ditch I turned to White and said, "There will be a bridge where this ditch hits the road. Let's go."

The ditch was at least ten feet deep with no water, so we made good time as we headed toward the road. We were about 50 yards from the road when we spotted about twelve Germans moving north. I motioned for White to ease to the ground. The Germans crossed the bridge and continued moving north. When they were out of sight White said, "Those are Germans, we've seen enough. Let's go back to the Company." I motioned to him to follow as I moved toward the bridge. We were only eight to ten yards from the bridge when I found a cement culvert where the water could drain from the road to the drainage ditch. The culvert was large enough for both of us to get into with room to spare.

We could hear Germans to our left about fifty yards away. They were under a tree and we couldn't make out how many there were but thought about five. We decided this must be a check point for them.

About that time we could hear and see another eight to ten men heading for the road south of the German outpost. The guards from the outpost spoke first, then the Germans heading for the road answered. It wasn't like a challenge that an American outpost would make but more like they were checking in with the outpost. Since neither of us could speak German, we had no idea what they were saying.

They moved over the bridge as we ducked into the culvert. We were only ten yards from the closest German. We both had two grenades ready to toss on the bridge if we were spotted and had our Thompson submachine guns by our side.

At least one hundred German soldiers had checked in with the outpost, then passed in front of us moving across the bridge going north.

White kept saying, "Duney, we've seen enough. Let's go back to the Company." I answered, "Let's stay a little longer, we don't get to see Germans this close up very often and they haven't seen us yet."

Just then I heard the sound of horses hooves on the road to the south. When the horse and rider came into view the German outpost sang out a challenge. The German on the horse answered, then they talked back and forth until the rider was past the outpost.

The moon was still out when the rider came into view and we could see it was a German officer and he was heading our way alone.

We eased back into the culvert with our heads and shoulders exposed as we had been with the other Germans. This time we would cover him with our Thompsons. When he got to the middle of the bridge he pulled on the reins to stop. He threw his left leg over the horse's neck, facing us. (Both Thompsons were covering him). His battle decorations were visible. He wore two Iron Crosses, 1st & 3rd class, an Assault Badge and his

## Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

Wound Badge. The Wound Badge is equivalent to our Purple Heart. All this he wore on his dress uniform and he really looked sharp but so close to death.

Then we realized what he intended to do. When he unbuttoned his fly his eyes came to rest on White and myself. I knew he had seen us and saw our Thompsons covering him. His eyes never left us. He relieved himself, buttoned his fly, never taking his eyes off the two Thompsons covering him. He threw his left leg back over the horse's neck, touched the animal in the flanks with the heel of his boot, looked over his shoulder at White and myself nodded his head, raised his right hand to the brim of his cap as if he was saluting and headed north.

As the horse's hooves faded into the distance I told White we need to get away because we had been seen.

We stayed about twenty yards off the road and moved north with the Germans until we came to their headquarters and aid-station. There we saw at least one hundred officers and men getting ready to move north. We stayed beside the road watching Germans move to the north. The moon moved behind the clouds and we were in the dark. We headed back to our company after an experience we would never forget.

It would have been so easy to set up a road block and cut the Germans withdrawal, but the Captain didn't want a fire fight that night.

We kept driving the Germans north and on 20 June we took Montepescaï. It seemed as if nothing could stop us.

It was after dark when we attacked and took hill 409 from the Germans, just off Highway I. We secured the hill and began to set up our defenses.

Everyone in the company was tired and most everyone tried to get a little sleep. It was about day break when the Germans counter-attacked.

White and myself were sharing a shallow foxhole when the first German opened up with a machine pistol. We both raised up to a sitting position and after looking over the situation we lay back down! When my back hit my blanket, all hell broke loose. The German counter-attack was strong, they intended to recapture Hill 409.

Our first casualty was our forward observer who was our artillery officer. He had taken three slugs from one of the machine pistols.

It had been my policy in combat to send an aid-man back with each wounded officer. I checked the officer over and told one of our aid-men to get him back down the hill to our battalion aid-station.

After we took care of the wounded we began to get things organized. Just about then two German stick grenades were lobbed into our company C.P. The shrapnel from one of the grenades tore through Captain Birkhead's scalp. I was only three steps from him when he was hit, blood everywhere. He took the three steps and was into my arms yelling, "Duney, I've been hit." I answered, "Hell, Tom, I can see you've been

hit, sit down and let me see how bad it is." It was a deep scalp wound, but knew he would live.

About that time I heard the M-34 fire behind the hill. Word came to the C.P. that the forward observer and aid-man were killed crossing an open field on the back side of the hill.

I looked at the Captain and said, "Tom, I'm sorry I won't be able to send you back to the aid-station right away. Just stay on the ground and we will take care of the Germans in a few minutes."

In the next twenty-five or thirty minutes we had three more officers hit, plus a number of men.

White and myself worked our way into a clearing so we could see to the north. There in the valley were four German Mark VI Tanks with their weapons pointing toward our position.

The counter attack was over as fast as it had begun. The Germans withdrew from the hill and the tanks started firing into our area.

We started our wounded down the backside of the hill, staying out of the clearing. There behind the hill was a company of American tanks on the road. I got the artillery Sgt. who was in charge of our forward observer team and told him to start firing on the German tanks. Sgts. were getting squads and platoons reorganized and back into their positions, while the men dug their foxholes deeper. We were here to stay.

I told my runner I was going down the hill to talk to the tank commander to be sure he knew what was ahead of him. I was about half way down when I ran into Captain Julian Quarles, the Battalion S-3, coming up the hill toward our position. I explained there were four German tanks in the valley to our front. I could see no road leading out to the north which meant they would have to come over us to get back to Hwy I.

Quarles pointed to the second American tank and said "The tank commander is in that tank. Let's talk to him." We hit the road and headed toward the Captain, standing half out of his tank turret. The tank Captain spoke, "What's on the other side of the hill? Tiger tanks?" I told him there were four of them firing on our positions from the valley. About that time word came down the hill that one of the tanks was moving toward the road on the east side of the hill.

The tank Captain heard the report that the Mark VI would be coming around the hill any minute.

Captain Quarles and myself couldn't believe what we were hearing. The Captain had just radioed all of his tanks to back out, turn around and pull back toward Hwy I.

Captain Quarles screamed above the roar of the motor, he said, "Captain you can't pull these tanks out. There's only one tank coming around the hill." The Captain answered, "There's only one tank coming, but it's

## Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

a German Mark VI and I don't intend to fight it."

We all knew what this sixty ton monster could do with its long barrel 88. We had seen Tigers in action before.

Quarles yelled, "Captain, Captain." The tank Captain looked down as Quarles spoke, "Captain, I'm ordering you in the name of General Walker to keep these tanks here and fight the Germans." The tank Captain looked down at Quarles and said, "Captain, I don't take my orders from General Walker." He touched his microphone and said, "Pull your tanks back." Captain Quarles pulled his forty-five out of his holster as he yelled, "I order you to stay and fight." The tank Captain saw Quarles pistol and dropped down through the hatch and pulled the hatch cover in place.

Captain Quarles and myself couldn't believe what we had just witnessed. Here again, the 2nd Battalion, 143rd Infantry, the old dough boys, the Infantrymen, the "Queen of Battle", standing alone to face the Germans. The only weapon we had to support our battalion was one of our Regimental Anti-Tank Company's 57 MM gun. The gun was sitting just across the road from where I was standing and was facing east where the road rounded the hill just a 100 yards to our front.

Captain Quarles walked over to the Anti-Tank gun and spoke to the Corporal. "Son, that German tank will come around that hill any minute. Have your gun crew to fire three shells, then tell them to get away from the gun."

There was never any doubt in my mind that these men of the 143rd Anti-Tank Co. wouldn't do his duty. This was a part of our team, "The Queen of Battle."

When Captain Quarles stepped back onto the road the long barrel of the 88 could be seen easing around the edge of the hill.

I had been told in the past this Tiger Tank, with its nine inches of armor in front, could take most Anti-Tank shells, head on with no damage to the tank.

The Anti-Tank crew was ready. The gunner and loader were crouched behind the small 57 MM Gun looking at the long 88 barrel ease around the hill, then the monstrous sixty tons of steel followed. It was in full view as the gunner pushed his trigger, sending the first projectile on its way. The shell hit the front of the tank and ricocheted toward the sky. Before the projectile hit the tank the young loader had ejected the empty casing from the breach and was inserting another live round.

The gun crew had been trained well and they were showing no fear of this German Tiger Tank. Quarles and myself saw two of the three projectiles ricochet off the front of the tank toward the sky. For some unknown reason the German tank crew did not fire. The driver stopped his forward motion and placed his gears in reverse and the monster back-



ed around the hill. When the German tank eased back out of sight we could hear the tank stop as the driver changed gears.

By now the Sgt. of our Field Artillery Team was firing on the three other tanks in the valley.

Captain Quarles had jumped the ditch and was standing next to me. His face was red and he was still shook up as he spoke, "Duney I would never have believed what just happened, when that Captain refused to stay and fight and then pulled his tanks out." I said, "Captain, they have left us before and I'm sure this won't be the last time that tanks will leave us when the fighting gets hot."

We could hear the Tiger tanks motor idling and we never knew what he was going to do until the driver changed gears and reved up his engine. As he crept forward that long 88 came into view first. He never had to move the gun much because it was pointing down the road toward us. This time he was only after the Anti-Tank Gun.

The German gunner fired only one round. It hit the Anti-Tank Gun on it's shield, sending it about six feet into the air. As it hit the ground it was only good for scrap metal.

The German tank driver reversed his gears and backed his tank out into the valley with the other three tanks.

The Sgt., calling artillery fire on the enemy tanks was doing a good job, but each time he was ready to have his batteries of guns to fire for effect the Germans would move their tanks to another part of the valley.

This went on until late afternoon when one of the tanks erupted into flames. The forward observer wanted credit for the tank, but I was of the opinion the Germans did not know what else we had behind the hill. An Italian forest blocked the ways to the north of the valley, so they decided to destroy their tanks and walk through the rest of the forest on foot.

In a few minutes all four German tanks were burning in the valley to the north of Hill 409.

The Americans were still holding Hill 409 and we all breathed a sigh of relief that evening. We had been lucky again for everyone knew the Tiger Tanks could have wiped us all out at any given time.

Here on Hill 409, on 21 June 1944, Co. F had lost its Artillery Officer in charge of the F.O. team, its Company Commander, three other officers and eighteen good men before we stopped the counter attack.

The 143rd Infantry reverted to Division Reserve on 22 June and stayed as Division Reserve until 24 June 1944. That gave us a much needed rest.

These numerous rest periods on the drive north had helped the men of the 36th Division. The units hit the Germans for one or two days, then another unit would pick up the drive and push on. These leap frog tactics were quite successful with the units of our division and it gave the men a

## Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

mental rest that was always needed in combat.

Before daylight on the morning of 25 June, scout cars and tanks pulled into the 2nd Battalion 143rd Infantry bivouac area. We loaded Company F on the lead tanks and headed for Hwy. I. It was a beautiful hot day as we moved north, with the knowledge that every mile we made without a fight or a road block was a gift.

Other units had patrolled this area we were moving through, so we were only hitting stragglers. Ran across some Germans who were lost from their units and were trying to move north ahead of the advancing Americans.

It was just after one o'clock when we started across a very large valley with a high ridge line to the north. The town of Piombino was on a peninsula to our left with the beautiful Tyrrhenian Sea off in the distance. When we approached the high hill, the column of tanks turned off Hwy. I to the east. They pulled into a dry stream bed and headed away from the highway. As the last tank turned off the main highway a radio command was given to half the column to turn each tank to the north facing the high ground.

When the tanks came to a halt, all the Infantry got their gear and climbed down. They knew what our mission was to be. We were to take the ridge line to our front.

Our company commander reported to Battalion and learned what our objective would be. We were to attack on a battalion front and while we went over our attack orders, battalion set up a C.P. in the dry stream bed.

No maps were needed because we were looking at our objective and the company boundaries had already been established as to how the companies would attack.

All the company commanders became quiet as we heard the radio message from the nearest tank. "This is your battalion commander, all tanks prepare to fire. Do you see the large green house half way up the hill with three gables? Fire on my command. FIRE."

One hundred tanks fired as one. The large green house was now only a pile of rubble. We had seen the building disintegrate before our eyes. The tank commander continued, "Do you see the brown building on the crest of the hill with the two trees in the front yard? Fire on command. FIRE." This continued until ten beautiful houses were ten piles of rubble.

The 36th Division had been in combat nine and one half months and this was the first time we had witnessed our tanks putting on a demonstration such as the one we just saw.

The flares arched across the sky and this was our signal to take the ridge line.

What was left of the three rifle Companies from 2nd battlion 143rd

Infantry were climbing out of the stream bed to assault and secure the hill to our front.

We were just fifty or sixty yards in front of the tanks when a lone rifle shot echoed across the valley. All heads turned to the center of the ridge line. There stood about fifteen German soldiers, each waving a white flag. The shot had been fired to make sure these men were not overlooked. They wanted to be taken prisoner. It was the responsibility of G Co. to capture them and send them down the hill to Battalion headquarters.

The 2nd Battalion units went about setting up their defenses as our mess trucks started climbing the hill.

S/Sgt. Robert Nowell pulled into Co. F defensive area and in just a few minutes word passed among the platoon that the kitchen was ready to feed.

We had eaten a good breakfast that morning before loading on the tanks for our push north. It was just about dark and our mess personnel was again ready to feed us a delicious hot meal.

I sat watching what was left of Co. F, 143rd Infantry, move through the mess line. From time to time a Sgt. would sing out, "Don't close up—keep five yards from the man in front of you."

We could hear the other companies getting the mess lines going. Company E was to our west with Co. G to the east of Co. F.

Dusk was setting over the hill, when I heard the outpost from Co. E yell out. "Halt, who goes there?" The answer was, (in poor English), "We are Italian civilians going to our homes."

The machine pistols rang out across the valley and we knew it was a German counter attack.

Co. E., handled the Germans well and it was over as fast as it started. The Germans had forced forty to fifty Italians who lived in homes on the ridge line, to walk as a group, close together with the Germans in the middle. When the firing started the Italians hit the ground. Co. E finished off the squad of Germans then gave first-aid to the Italians who had been wounded before sending them down the hill to our Battalion aid-station.

It was around 2300 hours when the 34th Division moved through our positions to the north.

The 36th Division who led the Americans ashore on September 9, 1943, as a green inexperienced division was now considered one of the best Infantry Divisions in Europe.

The men of the 36th Division had been through some of the heaviest fighting of the war in their nine and a half months in Italy.

We would leave Italy with heavy hearts because we were leaving many friends in cemeteries under white crosses.

June 25, 1944 would be the last day of combat in Italy for the men from Texas.



## “Our Replacement”



Worldwartwoveterans.org

By Lem Vannatta,  
Service Co. 143rd Infantry

About September 15, 1943 when we were relieved at Salerno, our Company went into Bivouac on a nice slope below Altavilla. We had a paratrooper scare, or two, but most of our work was hauling replacements for the regiment and drawing new equipment. We lost two truckdrivers in the battles on the beaches. All we drivers had to shoulder our rifles, fight as line troops. The Col. gave us all Combat badges. We were very proud of them as we were the only drivers to receive them. We got two replacement drivers. Our Ammo section wanted a big healthy guy as our replacement; we had found out that we were the labor detail on the Ammo dump. We wanted a strong back, weak mind type. Well, we got a 5'6" runt who had left the Pennsylvania penitentiary to join the Army. We looked him over and decided he would never make it. Well, he made it all right and came home with the 36th Division when it was all over. His name was Shorty Lee. I had the pleasure of checking him out as a driver.

The first night we had an air raid, Shorty and I shared the same hole—it was my hole. He didn't dig one, said he would make out. He did. He beat me to mine. While we were in the hole, he picked my pocket and stole what money I had. He even managed to get the billfold back in my pocket. The next day we had to take a load to Naples to the 82nd Division. (They were using our trucks.) There were peddlers, bootleggers, etc. all up and down the road. I told Shorty as he had been on the move and not being paid, I'd let him have some money. Of course, when I took the billfold out it was empty. He looked sad and confessed being a pick pocket. He gave me back my money and said I was nice to stake him.

As I checked him out, I found he was a better driver than I was. As I was around him more, I found out he had driven for a steel mill, and had

gone to the pen for failing to pay alimony. He was everything you would want in a driver, so I gave him an OK and he was put on a truck. He took good care of his truck and was OK as a laborer in the dump.

He was an old man—thirty years old, and had been around. He was a ladies man, mostly older women. He always had one in line. Once, I was on guard and heard some whispering coming out of his truck. I looked in and he had a local farmer's wife in the truck. I ran her off. He got mad as hell, said I was busting up his love life.

The woman who had him locked up over alimony had signed a release so he could join the Army and she could get an allotment and maybe his insurance in case he was killed. When he got out of the pen he married a mail order bride, to spite his ex-wife. The ex-wife wrote him regularly, cussing him out, and hoping he would get killed. He let us read her letters, and his answers to her. That was our Shorty.

We ribbed him about how bad combat was. We moved back to the front near Venafro. We all dug holes and put tents or some shelter over them. Not Shorty. He said, "Hell, I'm not afraid of anything." He put him a pup tent up and made his bed on top of the ground. After dark the first night, Jim Edwards and I got behind his tent and let out a sound like an incoming shell and threw a concussion grenade and ran. Shorty came out scared as hell and crowded into our hole. He found out about the trick. Next night, he got a frag grenade and threw it at our tent, cut it all to hell. A piece of the grenade got him in the butt. We had to send him in as wounded in action. He was always proud of his Purple Heart. We caught hell over the horse play. Shorty didn't know one grenade from the other.

The farther the war went the more Texan Shorty became. He could get around some strange fellows, and brag on his ranch and Texas home and even we would believe it.

When the war ended we all began to leave out to come home on the point system. Shorty didn't have many points so we left him behind. He said he had finally lost a round to us Texans.

After we left, Shorty sucked up enough decorations to get a few more points. I guess the new Company Officers believed his tales of winning the war. He was from Pittsburg, Pa. He wrote me that he got a hero's welcome, almost as big as Commando Kelly.

In 1950, Shorty and his wife came to see me. The first night I took him to a beer joint for a beer. The gals who worked there were the Old Painted Up type, so "Shorty of old" took over. He had the time of his life. We went back by Jim Edwards' and visited him. Shorty went home, happy and we had all enjoyed his visit.

A few years ago, I got a letter from Shorty saying he was single and retired and was coming to see me. I wrote back welcoming him, but mentioned I had reformed and could not drink with him. I've never heard from him again. I guess he decided he had lost an old drinking buddy.

## Assigned to The Fighting 36th

By Col. M. Gist Welling (Ret.)



Worldwveterans.org

It was a dreary cold Saturday that two young 2nd Lts., M.G. Welling and Wharton joined the 36th Division at Camp Edwards on September 26, 1942.

They were 1942 graduates of the University of Maryland and The Rifle and Heavy Weapons Course at Fort Benning, Georgia.

They were Marylanders who soon learned there was a state called Texas and songs such as "The Eyes of Texas are Upon You," "Deep in the Heart of Texas" and the Baylor Song which were played between First Call and Reveille. How the band could play and the bugler blow the service calls in the ice, snow and cold of Camp Edwards is still a mystery. One thing is sure, once you got out of the sack, you kept moving the rest of the day to keep warm.

Lt. Welling was a farm boy from Sykesville, Maryland and Lt. Wharton was a football player from Baltimore, Maryland.

These two officers saw much action in Italy from the Salerno landing, Chiunzi Pass, Naples, San Pietro, Rapido, Cassino, Cairo. Lt. Welling was wounded in October and Lt. Wharton in December at San Pietro. Due to the seriousness of his wounds at San Pietro, Lt. Wharton was sent to a hospital in North Africa and then home to Walter Reed Hospital in Washington, D.C.

Lt. Welling was assigned to Co. A, 143 Infantry commanded by Capt. Joe Peterman. After welcoming the new officers assigned to the Company, Lt. Fred Young, Lt. Gorman, and Lt. Welling, Capt. Peterman pointed out the officer's tent and told us to go to Major Frazier's supply tent and draw our equipment. He was then off to Falmouth and returned Monday. Lt. Wharton, 0-463950 was assigned to Co. G, 143rd commanded by Capt. Steffen.

The first order of the day on Monday was assigning the new officers to their respective platoons.

Capt. Peterman had First/Sgt. Voss fall out the company. With the company in formation, Capt. Peterman with his new officers proceeded with their assignments.

First Platoon Staff Sgt. Creekmore called his platoon to attention and saluted. Capt. Peterman said, "Sgt., Lt. Young is assigned as platoon leader of the First Platoon."

Sgt. Creekmore said, "Very well, Sir." Lt. Young said, "Sgt., this is my platoon." You can imagine how Sgt. Creekmore received this remark after having been platoon leader of the First Platoon for such a long time.

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*Captain Welling in front of his C.P., Korea*

Lt. Young was later assigned to the ammunition and pioneer platoon where he did an excellent job keeping ammunition supplied to units of the First Battalion.

I will never forget Lt. "Dynamite" Young, a cocky, capable and dedicated officer who was all soldier and leader of men.

## Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

Then Captain Peterman and I approached the Third Platoon. Staff Sgt. William Parrott called the platoon to attention and saluted. We both returned the salute. Sgt. Parrott was a fine looking soldier, six feet tall, about 200 pounds and all man. Capt. Peterman said, "Sgt., Lt. Welling is going to be assigned to your platoon."

Sgt. Parrott saluted and asked me, "Where you from Lieutenant?" I replied, "Maryland." Sgt. Parrott said, "What *County* is that?" I knew then that Texas had never heard of the *big* State of Maryland, or could care less.

I replied, "Sgt., together we will have a good platoon." The Third Platoon of Company A was a good platoon of which I was very proud.

Capt. Peterman affectionately known as "Smokey Joe" was a long lankey Texan who cussed like a trooper and played a mean hand of poker. He was killed at Guigliano on the way to Naples when direct hits by artillery and mortars on the columns killed 12 officers and enlisted men including Major Land, Battalion Executive Officer, Capt. Peterson, Battalion Adjutant, and Capt. Peterman of Co. A.

Lt. Fred "Dynamite" Young provided excellent support to 1st Battalion during this engagement by providing ammunition and removing mines on our way to Naples.

Lt. Klinger, weapon platoon leader of Co. A, had been seriously wounded earlier in the engagement as we moved from Chiunzi Pass to Naples. Twelve officers and enlisted men were wounded, including myself. I was sent by hospital ship to North Africa and returned in late December to the San Pietro area.

Lt. Jim Wharton was assigned to the Weapons Platoon of Company G, 143rd Infantry. Capt. Milton Steffen was the commander, a brilliant officer and a leader of men.

Lt. Col. Phillips, Duney, was with the 1st Platoon until he went to OCS. Jim was constantly being reminded that if Duney was here, we would do it this way. Jim thought that Duney must be Paul Bunyon.

Capt. Jim Wharton, a fine officer and combat commander, was seriously wounded at San Pietro while leading Company G, an outstanding company. He received the Silver Star for bravery and gallantry in action leading his company against strongly fortified positions at San Pietro.

Col. Denholm sent Lt. Duney Phillips to help Wharton when he was wounded. When he reported to Capt. Wharton, Jim is reported to have said, "Paul Bunyon has come home." and passed out as a result of his wounds.

Duney carried Lt. Wharton off the hill and saved the life of my good friend and comrade in arms. I am indeed grateful.



Lt. "Red" Gorman, a Regular Army enlisted man from Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, who had just completed OCS was assigned to the 2nd Platoon.

Lt. Gorman was a red faced Irishman from Brookline, Mass. who had no trouble with the cold weather at Camp Edward. He had a constant supply of Anti-Freeze. He was a soldier's officer and good friend.

I stayed in the U.S. Army Reserves and was recalled to Korea, serving as Company Commander of Co. K, 7th Infantry of 3rd Division. Col. Edwin Walker, who also served in Italy with the U.S.-Canadian Special Forces, was his Regimental Commander. When Welling reported to Col. Walker, he said, "Capt. have you been in combat?" "Yes, Sir, I was in Italy with the Fighting 36th," was the reply.

The Colonel then said, "Very well, Captain. You are assigned to Co. K and will take over the company tonight." I was back on the line again with men who had seen previous action in Korea.

I retired in May 1980 as a Colonel in the U.S. Army Reserves. I am proud to have served my country as a Combat Infantryman in two outstanding Infantry Divisions—The Fighting 36th Division and 3rd Division. I am a lifetime member of the 36th Division Association, and a retired professor from the University of Tennessee, married to 1st Lt. Katherine Godwin, Army Nurse Corp., who served in Europe and the U.S.A.

I will always remember soldiering with the fine men of Company A, a good company, well trained, dedicated and ready for combat.

Col. M. Gist Welling, Ret.

U. S. Army Reserves



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## Once Upon A Time !!



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*Ramon and Maria leaving church after wedding ceremony at Hi Mass at San Ramon Pisa, Italy. The song Ave Maria was sung by a young boy choir during the mass.*

# Marriage of Ramon and Maria

*by Ramon Narvaez  
Co. H. 143rd Infantry  
Reg. Band, 141st Infantry*

The "Once Upon A Time" story of Ramon and Maria is a true story of the destiny of a young couple who met in Italy, September 17, 1944, one year after Salerno. We met near San Romano and Ponte a Egola, two small towns between Pisa and Florence, near the Arno River where, during the Spring/Summer of 1944, the American Army had been held by the German Army.

On September 15, 1946, Ramon and Maria were married at San Romano. This followed a brief romance between two young persons who experienced war, invasion, bombardment, destruction and home evacuation as well as separation from each other.

July 29, 1947, a daughter, Patricia, was born to Ramon and Maria at the American Army Hospital at Ardenzia near Livorno, Italy. Ramon was released AGRS/MZ in October, 1948, and he and Maria and their daughter came to the United States and resided in New York City, in Galveston and settled in Houston, Texas at 3609 Lazy Spring, 77080.

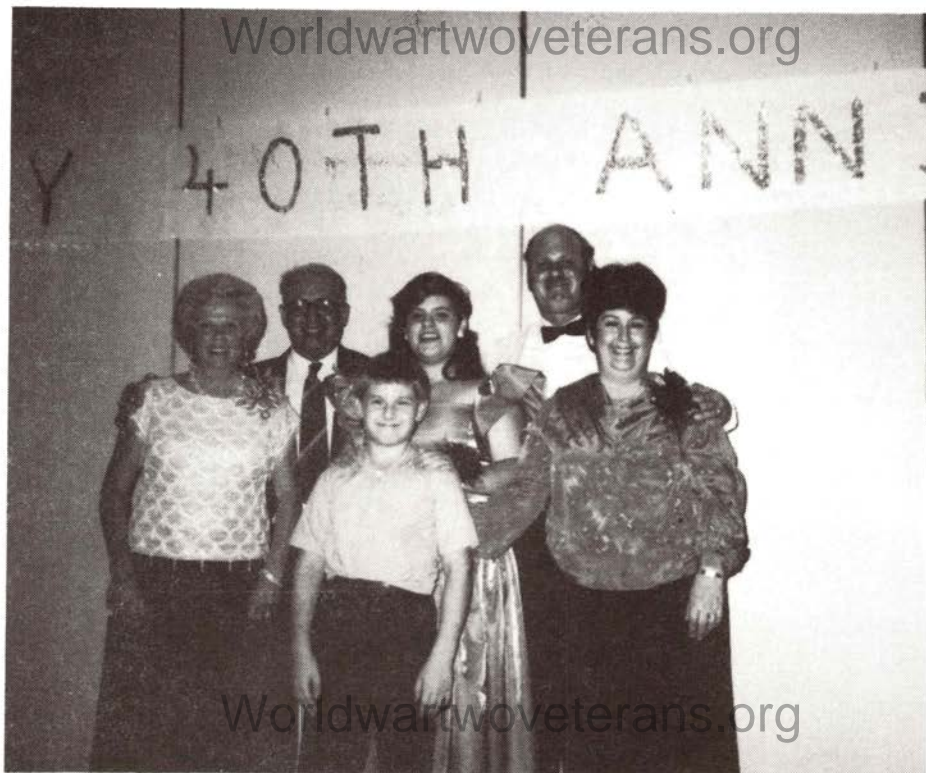


*Ramon Narvaez, Jr. & Maria Martelli near Montopoli, Italy.*

## Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

On June 21, 1954, Maria became an American citizen. Ramon retired from the Air Force Civil Service in June, 1973 and from the USAF Reserve in the grade of Master Sergeant, March, 1978. Both Ramon and Maria are current members of the Houston Chapter of the 36th Division Association.

Ramon and Maria wish to dedicate this story to the officers and enlisted men of the war years who may have experienced a similar course of events. We feel there are many. We also dedicate the story to those comrades who gave their lives, especially to the Texas 36th Infantry Division where this course of events began and which brought Ramon and Maria together.



*Ramon & Maria Narvaez, 40th Anniversary  
Maria & Ramon are given a 40th Anniversary Party by  
daughter Patricia, husband Frank and Children Michael Paul  
& Laura Ann.*

## What Did Defending the Alamo Accomplish?

To the editors: Concerning Doug Harlan's column on the battle of the Alamo, two questions arise. First, was it a foolhardy decision for Col. Travis to defend the Alamo? Secondly, was the defense of the Alamo an event without military significance?

It must be admitted that 182 men were not enough to defend a fortress the size of the Alamo. The evidence indicates that the Alamo defenders had reason to believe that Col. Fannin would bring his command to reinforce the Alamo. Had this occurred, the defenders would have grown to over 500. This would probably have given the Alamo enough firepower to hold out for a month or more, possibly long enough for Houston to raise a relief army. So what, if anything, did the defense accomplish?

First, it stopped Santa Anna for two weeks during the siege, and three more trying to regroup after the large number of casualties he had received. This time was critical for Sam Houston in his efforts to train and equip an army and get it



into fighting shape. It is not far-fetched to think that Col. Travis realized this. Had he abandoned and blown up the Alamo as he was indeed ordered to do, what could have happened?

Quite possibly Santa Anna, with no obstacle at San Antonio, could have swept across Texas to the Sabine, overwhelming or scattering Houston's army before he was ready to fight. Possibly Col. Travis' stubborn bullheadedness directly led to this great 150th birthday we are all celebrating.

—JONATHAN SHEA,  
Garland, Texas

Men of the 141st Infantry, whose regimental logo is inscribed - "Remember The Alamo". They feel much pride in the battle for independence in 1836...and the above letter to the Editor of the Dallas Morning News gives a vivid opinion of Shea's rebuttal to all the pros and cons about this debacle.

## In the FOREST OF FOSSARD

The element of confusion was strong in the morning gloom, and the men of 'A' Company, fighting a jungle-like war in the damp underbrush, couldn't tell friend from foe at 400 yards.

*By Pvt. Howard Katzander*

With the U.S. Seventh Army in Southern France—Across the tilted floor of the mottled forest of the Vosges Mountains, veterans of the Seventh Army are fighting a strange jungle-like warfare, slashing their way through rain-soaked underbrush in a slow, painful advance.

On damp autumn mornings, in the mists and rains that veil these hills, enemy troops sometimes pass within a few yards of our men, unseen and unseeing, or seen and unrecognized. The element of confusion is strong.

In the battle for the village of St. Ame—a handful of houses, a sawmill and a lumber yard on the edge of the Forest of Fossard—the element of confusion was supreme.

The first battalion of a 36th Division regiment had been furnishing security on the flank of two other battalions. In the blackness of a rainy Monday morning's pre-dawn hours 'A' Company was ordered to leave its positions in the shelter of the forest and go forward to protect two OPs. The OPs were threatened by German troops in St. Ame; so the company moved to the outskirts of the village.

'A' Company, commanded by Lt. Martin Higgins of Jersey City, N.J., cut across a road and halted amid piles of lumber outside the town. As they stopped, the rustling of their column gave way to the sound of marching feet on the road they had just crossed. There was the thud of hob-nailed boots. Lt. Higgins called to the approaching men to halt and there was no reply. He called again. Silence. Then he fired a grenade toward the footfalls which by then were a scant 50 yards away. Running

feet then, and silence. Higgins dispersed his men, chose machinegun positions, and the company settled back bleakly to await light.

In the first dawn the men could see the buildings and sheds of the lumber yard and the straggling houses along the curving road that marked the beginning of the village, but they could see nothing of the waiting enemy. With Pvt. Harry Crook of Asbury Park, N.J., as first scout a squad was sent up to "bird dog" the nearest house. They crept up to the building and took up positions commanding its exits. Then they called to the occupants to surrender. There was no reply; so they kicked open the door and tossed three grenades into the building.

A moment later three Jerries burst out, firing their rifles as they came. One man in the squad went down, wounded, but the others captured the Jerries. Other squads, meanwhile, were clearing adjacent houses of enemy troops without casualties.

At the same time the first platoon had been sent up to form a road block and to establish a right flank for the company. The block was well timed. A convoy of about 50 Jerry vehicles and some antitank guns hit it only minutes after the platoon was set in its positions. In the wild fight that followed most of the vehicles were captured or destroyed.

At about 1000 came word that a company of troops was emerging from the forest and approaching the village. Lt. Higgins dispatched a man to investigate and he returned with word that Company 'G' was approaching to support 'A' Company. The infantrymen held their fire and watched as the Company walked by, 400 yards away, in the misty morning light.

The infantry couldn't see very well. At 400 yards they could only tell that men were moving by beyond a misty veil that dissolved their shapes and neutralized their color. But if the men of 'A' Company had not been lulled by the idea that this was one of their own outfits they might even then have recognized the men as German infantry.

As it was, a company of Germans marched by unchallenged, well within range of fire power that could have ripped them to shreds, and went out of sight into the village.

A platoon sergeant went down the road in the direction they had taken, still believing them to be friendly. As he emerged from the cover of a building he was hit by a burp gun burst and he fell with a bullet wound in the head. Somehow he managed to crawl off the road and into the building. Two medics went up to get him. They were driven back by enemy fire. They tried again, and again they were fired on. Perhaps in the mist and the gloom their insignia couldn't be seen. Or perhaps the Germans didn't care.

## Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

Immediately after their second attempt to save the wounded man, the Jerries opened up on the building with a long burst of tracers from a machinegun. The building started to burn and once the smoke became evident the Germans turned their attention from it to concentrate on the medics again. The platoon sergeant died in the burning building.

Pvt. Crook and three other men, Pvt. Everett Cox of Marlboro, Mass.; Pvt. Elvis Cox of St. Louis, Mo., and Pvt. Steve Huszer of South Bend, Ind., had set up a machinegun in the second floor of a house that commanded part of the highway and a crossroads nearby. As they watched the road they saw three Jerries make a dash for the other side. The MG fire hit all three. One, wounded in the leg, calmly kneeled in the middle of the road and bandaged his wound. He wore a GI shelter half over his shoulders to keep off the rain. Because of that shelter half and because of the light that made it impossible to determine positively that he was a German, the man was allowed to bind his wound and leave the road.

But the GIs in the building weren't kept in doubt for long. Under cover of a hedge the Jerry approached the house and before he was discovered he tossed four potato mashers at them. The machinegun put a stop to that. This time his wounds were beyond bandages.

By afternoon the light was such that the element of confusion was less strong. A counter-attack poured out of the woods and "A" Company's men, now that they could be seen, mowed it down.



Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly



## From the Desk of Ray Dailey

Dear Ann Landers:

This is a plea for compassion from the 71-year-old bore who turns every conversation into an opportunity to talk about World War II. He deserved better than you gave him.

I am not obsessed with the subject but I feel as he does. Nothing in my life was as important as my participation in that war. Although I have raised a fine family and owned a successful business, my service in that war was my only lasting contribution to the country that I love.

I talk about World War II, but only with those who were there. They are the only people who would understand. Forty years later, when I knelt among the crosses in Normandy, tears streaming down my face, people asked, "Did you know him?" I replied, "Yes, I knew them all."

Be patient with us, Ann. *Our ranks are becoming thinner every day.* Soon there will be none left of a generation that thought freedom was worth dying for.

If you print my letter, please withhold my name. I am—A veteran in *Rockport, Texas.*

Dear Friend:

Your gentle message was received and duly recorded. I'm sure I'll be more patient with *World War II stories from now on.* Thank you for a lesson in compassion and understanding.

**Now let's continue:**

***They're Not Tall Texas Tales...  
Just Plain...***

## Stories Of Heroism

The tales that Texans bring home from Italy aren't tall tales. They are stories of heroism, courage and sacrifice, made of the fabric of truth.

Here are a few more, brought back by the wounded who came back to McCloskey General hospital this week from the 36th Division's battlefields.

These, for instance, come from Sgt. Sidney Modgling of Salado, 24-year-old veteran who went to school at Thurber—

"There was Sgt. Jay Townsend of Bartlett... Things were looking bad. Townsend said to us, 'We've got to stop those b.....s!' He grabbed a bazooka and crawled out in front of us and hit a machinegun nest. He was killed after he had accomplished it."

## Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

And Modgling told of Sgt. Joe Furness of Belton "who saw a German trying to put a machinegun in action. He shot him and another German came out. He shot him and a third one started for the gun. He killed all three before he was hit himself. He was hit so badly he couldn't sit up but he asked to take JUST ONE MORE shot at 'em!"

Modgling was shot through the leg at San Pietro.

PFC Luther Swan of Tyler said if he knew what was coming he would have gone to church that Sunday morning, Jan. 30, when he was shot in the leg by a sniper at Cassino.

He tells how his company, commanded by Capt. Carl Mattney of Vernon captured 50 German prisoners after being pinned down by enemy artillery fire for 36 hours.

"We had been fighting alongside a Free French outfit composed principally of Goons. The Goons are natives of French West Africa who apparently always wear a heavy overcoat. I don't believe they ever take them off. At least, I have never seen a Goon without his overcoat. The Jerries are scared to death of those fellows because they are fearless in battle. Just give one a long knife and a few hand grenades and he will attack an entire German division!"

\*\*\*

Sgt. Claude E. Scott of Vernon tells this story of Salerno. "We were being shelled all the time. The machinegun fire was from tanks. Our artillery chased them out. Nothing happened for three or four days and then the Jerries staged a counter-attack. We pulled back a couple of hundred yards. Soon 13 of us were cut off in one place and 34 in another. The Jerries knocked off most of our outfit, killed or captured." Scott lost a hand when hit by a hand grenade in hand-to-hand fighting at San Pietro. He tells a story of a week spent between American and German lines.

"There were 12 of us. We lived on a half can each of C ration a day. Next to the last day we ate only raw potatoes and onions. The last day we had nothing. When we came out we were so weak we wobbled. We had been cut off by a Jerry counter-attack."

Corp. Richard W. Reno of Pecan Gap landed in North Africa on his 28th birthday, April 14. On his 29th, his parents, Mr. and Mrs. W. I. Reno of Pecan Gap, welcomed him home at McCloskey and celebrated the birthday with him. His is a story of Altavilla.

"The Jerries executed a successful counter-attack and recaptured the village. Several of us were trapped in a small building. All of us were injured. One bullet got me in the left thigh another in the right shoulder. German litter-bearers took me to an aid station and on Sept. 16, German

medics operated on my leg and put it in a cast. They used American medical supplies. On Sept. 21, the 36th stormed Altavilla again and forced the Jerries to retreat. All prisoners who could walk were taken along but the rest of us were left behind.

“There were 28 of us in all. An American medical officer was permitted to remain with us. Capt. Alfred J. Laughlin and Corp. John McQueen, both of Moody, and Sgt. August Waskow of Belton, were in the group.”

The first person to reach Pvt. James G. Weatherall of Fort Worth when he was wounded at Cerserto, Italy, the night of Jan. 8, was a chaplain. “There were three of us. The chaplain looked after us until the medics arrived.”

“We had been working in a small valley (on communication lines) surrounded on three sides by German artillery. The Jerries were using 170 mm guns. They hit an aid station, several bridges, an ammunition dump and several highways. I caught a shell burst through my upper left arm and left side. It severed one of the nerves in my arm, but I am sure the medics will fix me up OK here at McCloskey. It doesn't worry me a bit.”

Weatherall was with a signal corps unit attached to the Fifth Army.



Its peaceful there beneath the trees  
The White Crosses stand in Coastal Breeze  
The grass so green and freshly mown  
In contrast to the white so plainly shows  
Every cross alike and line in rows  
They lie in rest, no difference shown.

I stand and look and there I see  
Only by the Grace of God, it could as well be me  
That gave, My All, for Liberty,  
And standing there in humble state  
I marvel at the acts of fate,  
The horrors of War, shared as well  
Why is it then, Not Me, but Them who fell?

A certain reverence is felt while there,  
Their role in death we'd like to share  
Or just let them know we surely care  
Yet there is not wya, so in vain despair  
We Pray that God will give us the grace  
To show their Courage as death we face.

Bob Nowell

**Poet laureate of the United States**  
**Former member of the Message Center**  
**Section**  
**36th Signal Company**

**Richard Wilbur**.org

**Information sent in by**  
**PAUL I. WELLS**

Success comes to an individual sometimes by chance or it may come through perseverance and hard work. Or it may come through one's talent. For Richard Wilbur, recently nominated Poet Laureate of the United States it came as a result of talent and perseverance.

Wilbur served in the 36th Signal Company and his most celebrated early poems deal with his experiences of World War II. Of these, "First Snow in Alsace," "The Peace of Cities" and "Tywater" are among the best poems to come out of that war.

A supremely articulate man and an erudite writer, he speaks on behalf of poetry in a deep, casually aristocratic voice, and possesses many of the characteristics of a certain breed of poet native to college campuses. Blue blazer, Khaki pants, blue button-down shirt, a pipe to fiddle with, a dog at home that needs tending. He has an Anherst degree, early successes, 20 years teaching at Wesleyan University, seven at Smith College, a resume studded with Gugenheim and Ford Foundation grants.

During the heyday of formal poetry—the late '40's and the '50's—Wilbur was king. While still in his mid 30's, in 1957, his third book of poems received both the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award. It is in framing an attitude of civilized composure, as well as his ability to write memorable poems, that Wilbur deserves all the praise he has received.

At 66, he worries that like some others who favor the highly personal voice of the lyric poem, he may "dry up" utterly. As one grows older, it is possible for one's vitality generally to reduce. In writing a poem you draw on everything you are, including your physical reserves."

# Interment in Arlington National Cemetery

## Some Facts You Should Know

### THOSE ELIGIBLE

Because space is limited, burial at Arlington National Cemetery is restricted to a very few categories of those who have served honorably in the Armed Forces. These include:

- Those who have died on active duty.
- Those having at least 20 years active duty or active reserve service which qualifies them for retired pay either upon retirement or at age 60, and those retired for disability.
- Veterans honorably discharged for 30% (or more) disability before 1 October 1949.
- Holders of the Nation's highest military decorations (Medal of Honor; Distinguished Service Cross, Air Force Cross or Navy Cross; Distinguished Service Medal; and Silver Star) or the Purple Heart.
- The spouse or unmarried minor (under 21) child of any of the above or of any person already buried in Arlington. An unmarried dependent student qualifies up to age 23.
- An unmarried adult child with physical or mental disability acquired before age 21.
- Provided certain special requirements are met, a veteran who is the parent, brother, sister or child of an eligible person already interred. Interment must be in the same grave as the primary eligible, the veteran's spouse must waive his or her eligibility for Arlington, and the veteran can have no dependent children at the time of death.

### THOSE NOT ELIGIBLE

Except as indicated above, parents, brothers, sisters, or in-laws are not eligible, even if they are dependents of an eligible person. Neither is the remarried widow or widower of an eligible person, unless the former is no longer married at death. A person whose last discharge was less-than-honorable is also ineligible.

(NOTE: For brevity, the above categories are generally described. For more detail, or evaluation of particular cases, contact: The Superintendent, Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, VA 22211).

### THE CREMATION ALTERNATIVE

In addition to ground burial, Arlington also has a Columbarium for cremated remains. Any honorably discharged veteran or his spouse or dependent children can be inurned there. The ashes of a person who

## Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

meets the criteria for burial can either be inurned in the Columbarium or given ground interment, according to the wishes of the eligible or next of kin.

For information on shipment of cremated remains, contact the Superintendent, Arlington National Cemetery.

### **REQUESTING AN INTERMENT**

The person (usually a Funeral Director) who arranges for interment should contact the Office of the Superintendent as soon as possible. The Office is open 7:30 AM-4:00 PM Monday through Friday, and 8:30 AM-12:30 PM on Saturday. Call: 202-695-3250, 53, 55.

Cemetery personnel will verify eligibility. Do not ship remains until notified that verification has been made. Neither should the date, time, and place of interment be announced until confirmed by the Superintendent.

To ensure that all will go smoothly when interment is requested, it is a good idea to assemble discharge papers, Veterans Administration disability findings, records of decorations, and other supporting documents before actual need. These items should be filed with other important papers so that they will be readily available at the time of death.

### **SPACE ASSIGNMENT**

Cemetery personnel will assign a gravesite when interment is requested. Only one gravesite will be assigned per family. No site can be reserved before actual need.

If the spouse or eligible child of a primary eligible dies first, space will be assigned for the spouse's or child's interment provided the primary eligible agrees in writing to be buried in the same site.

### **FUNERAL EXPENSES**

There is no charge for a grave (or Columbarium niche) in Arlington National Cemetery, for opening and closing the grave, or for a government headstone or marker. Except for active duty personnel, all other costs must be borne by the family. Those who die on active duty are allotted a funeral expense allowance, and the Government will also pay in full for transportation of the remains of active duty personnel or their dependents from place of death to final destination.

For retirees and veterans, both social security and veterans' burial allowances can offset funeral costs in some instances. Contact a local VA or Social Security office for details in the respective benefits available.

### **MILITARY HONORS**

Military personnel, retirees, and veterans may be interred with military honors if they are requested. The Superintendent of Arlington will assist in making arrangements for such honors.

### **HEADSTONES AND MARKERS**

The VA provides upright marble headstones to mark the graves of those buried in Arlington. These headstones are ordered by the Cemetery

at the time of interment. The next of kin is asked only to fill out a form verifying the correctness of what is to be inscribed on the headstone.

The VA also supplies memorial markers, which honor members of the Armed Forces whose remains have not been recovered. To secure such a marker, the next of kin should make a formal request to the Superintendent, Arlington National Cemetery for forwarding to the VA. Request forms can be obtained from either the Superintendent's Office or a local VA facility.

14

For more information on the Government Headstone and Marker Program, write:

Director, Monument Service (42A)  
Veterans Administration,  
Washington, D.C. 20420

**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION** or assistance with special problems or circumstances write:

Superintendent,  
Arlington National Cemetery  
Arlington, VA 22211



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Unit Served \_\_\_\_\_

## P. O. W. MEDALS AWARDED

ROY E. HODGEN — Co. K 142nd Inf.

Lt. Col. Jimmy R Hodgen, Executive Officer of the 2nd Brigade of the 2nd Armored Division, applied for the P.O.W. Medal for his father, ROY E. HODGEN who served with Company K 142nd Infantry, then invited him to a presentation ceremony at Fort Hood, Texas. "I'm the one who's proud" said Col. Hodgen who was born about two years after his father was liberated from a German P.O.W. Camp in 1945.

Roy E. Hodgen hit the beach as a squad leader with the 36th Division on September 9, 1943. He was shot in the elbow but continued to fight with his unit. On September 13th, he suffered shrapnel wounds in the arms and legs and was captured.

The Germans mercilessly marched Hodgen and about 300 captives approximately 150 miles over mountainous terrain to Rome. Those fortunate enough to survive the trek were taken by train to Germany.

Hodgen was finally liberated on April 22, 1945 when Soviet soldiers overran his German P.O.W. Camp.

Hodgen's said he knew of the Medal and was offered other opportunities to receive it but never would have applied for it on his own. Thanks to the action taken by his son, Col. Hodgen — who pinned the Medal on his father, he now has it. As Col.

Hodgen remarked: "he has always been a hero in my eyes, and I wanted him to have the Medal he deserved."

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ROBERT H. BIGGS — Co. A 143rd Inf.

ROBERT H. BIGGS of Mishawaka, Indiana who served with Company A 143rd Infantry, received his P.O.W. Medal during the last week of 1988. Biggs said he was fortunate to have documentation of his status as a P.O.W. in the form of a telegram the Army sent his parents after he was captured near Epinal, France on September 22, 1944.

After being captured, Biggs and others of his unit were marched to Stalag 7A at Moosburg, Germany. Most of their nine months in captivity were spent in a work detail in Landshut, Bavaria near Munich.

The prisoners were finally freed in May 1945 after the Germans surrendered.

Biggs said he is happy to have the Medal but a little surprised to get it, even after 43 years. "I'm still waiting for my Good Conduct Medal", he commented.



# T Taps

## William E. Jary

BY GEORGE SMITH  
Fort Worth Star-Telegram

A page of Fort Worth history is gone. William E. "Bill" Jary Jr., a fountain of knowledge of the city, its history and its residents, died yesterday at his home after a battle with cancer. He was 77.

Funeral will be at 3:30 p.m. tomorrow at Greenwood Funeral Home. Burial will be in Greenwood Memorial Park.

Mr. Jary retired many years ago from his advertising and public relations business and had since devoted much of his time to compiling and cataloging his vast collection of memorabilia.

Mr. Jary was the authority on the Army's 36th Division, from its World War I days at old Camp Bowie on the city's West Side, to the World War II unit which gained fame in Italy.

He was assigned to the division in World War II and was editor of the *T-Patcher*, the division's newspaper, in Italy and in France. That's where he developed a friendship with cartoonist Bill Mauldin.

A longtime friend, Bert Carlton, met Mr. Jary after he had arrived at the 36th. Mr. Jary had been assigned to the 133rd Field Artillery, Carlton said, and then joined division headquarters in the intelligence section, where Carlton was a liaison officer.

The 36th Division Association, which was formed in 1919 after World War I, was suspended during World War II but resumed activity in 1946.

For many years, and until recently, Mr. Jary edited the association's newsletter as well as the historical quarterly, *Fighting 36th*, which recounted stories of the 36th. Copies were presented the Fort Worth Library at the dedication of the World War II 36th Division monument in Veterans Park on Camp Bowie Boulevard last summer.



Institute. He clipped and filed everything that mentioned the city and its reference to Fort Worth, and its role in the history of Texas and the Southwest.

The material was to be used as a handy reference guide, he told a reporter a few years ago. But it became more than that, he said.

Mr. Jary did research into the lives of Sam Houston and his special hero, Thomas Jefferson Rusk, and the 60 signers of the per diem roster of the men who in 1845 framed the document of state government that preceded the annexation of Texas. Rusk was the president.

The 1930s and especially Casa Manana in Fort Worth had a special spot in Mr. Jary's collection, and in his heart.

The first "big job as a young buck just starting out in public relations," he told a reporter, "was Billy Rose's Casa Manana at the Frontier Centennial of

## Jary:

1936." He had a large file on Casa, including the "biggest neon sign of all times advertising a musical show."

That sign, for which Mr. Jary was responsible, was on the outskirts of Dallas advertising the Fort Worth show.

He also had a collection of posters and photographs from the show along with many from other entertainment events in the city.

He inherited some of his collecting talent from an aunt, Mrs. J. Walter Poindexter, who was keeper of scrapbooks at the Woman's Club of Fort Worth for 22 years. In later years he gleaned much information from those journals.

He was a believer in restoration and preservation of the Fort Worth of the past, pointing out Thistle Hill as a prime example.

He also was a listener, and recounted how as a youngster, he would listen to his mother and aunts as they discussed various things. They were great talkers, he said, and didn't always notice he was around.

He also collected books of all description on Texas history and had records of the Texas & Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association, the packing plants and cattle brands.

He created the Ridgela Country Club newsletter, which became the standard for newsletters produced by the other country clubs. Some of his accounts included Casa Manana, Jack Williams Chevrolet, Pangburn's, Tandycrafts, King's Candy, Charlie Hillard Ford, Quarterhorse Association, Western Hills Hotel and Bill Martin's Zuider Zee. During his more than 50 years in business, his advertising and public relations accounts read like a who's who of Fort Worth business.

Mr. Jary also had exhaustive records and writings of the Saunders family and of other early Texas cattlemen and many notable newspapers that carried

significant news of the times, such as the front page of the *Star-Telegram* when prohibition ended.

His collections will be preserved. The Tarrant County portion is at the University of Texas at Arlington and the Dallas portion is at the Dallas Public Library.

He was a former member of the Steeplechase Club and the Fort Worth Boat Club.

Mr. Jary once said, "All history has to be rewritten now and then. It cannot be embalmed in musty pages. The facts of men shaping their destinies continue to emerge, the struggle shows through . . . and there are many fascinating corners yet to be explored."

Survivors: Wife, Billie Jary of Fort Worth; son, Edmund "Sandy" Jary of Fort Worth; and daughter, Suzie Jary of New York.

Mr. Jary also was the editor and illustrator, and primary author, of *Camp Bowie, Fort Worth, An Illustrated History of the 36th Division in the First World War*.

After World War II, Mr. Jary met Billie Landrum, an American Airlines flight attendant, and they were married in 1948.

Mr. Jary came from a long line of influential Texans. His grandfather, George W. Saunders, was one of the cattlemen who drove Longhorns on the trails in the 19th century.

His father, William E. Jary Sr., came to Fort Worth in 1902 to manage a commission office in the Fort Worth Livestock Exchange for his father-in-law, and later founded the Jary Co.

Mr. Jary said he began saving everything with a Fort Worth connection he could lay his hands on when he was a 19-year-old student at the Chicago Art

# The Fighting 36<sup>th</sup>



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Congressional  
Medal of Honor



Distinguished  
Service Cross



Silver Star



Purple Heart



Distinguished  
Service Medal



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