The Fighting 36th HISTORICAL Quarterly

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The Fighting 36th HISTORICAL Quarterly

THE FIGHTING 36th HISTORICAL QUARTERLY

Think of it as a 320 Page Book – In Four Installments

Each member of the Division has at least two or more good stories that would be of interest to others. They can range from humorous to sad or tragic involving either training periods or combat situations. If you are unable to write it yourself, enlist the help of a family member or good friend. BUT DO WRITE IT — you will feel good about it and proud to see it in print.

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Excerpts from Paul Well's History of the 36th Signal Company

by Paul I. Wells

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PORT-AUX-POULES, ALGERIA PHASE: (Aug. 1943) 1st Lt. Wingo

In late July or early August 1943, the Signal Company moved from Rabat, Morocco to the vicinity of Port-Aux-Poules, Algeria near Arzew/Mostagnem. The Company bivouac was located just back of a beach on the Mediterranean Sea where it remained for the balance of our stay in North Africa. Intense training was conducted for the entire period of our stay in this area. Technical training in communications subjects; individual and crew served weapons; and waterproofing of vehicles/Signal equipment. At this time the 36th Signal Company was tasked to mount Radio Sets, SCR-499 in 2½ DUKWS. This involved the fabrication of plywood shelters in the cargo hold of each vehicle to house the radio set. These radio sets were to be used in the very early phase of combat to provide communications and Message Center service between troops ashore and higher Hq afloat. As the 36th Division and attached troops were in the final phase of preparations for the combat loading of vehicles and equipment aboard ships, the Signal Company was tasked to provide supervision/inspection services to ensure that all communications equipment was properly protected against water damage during over-the-beach landing operations. 1st Lt. Paul I. Wells was assigned to

this detail together with other Signal Company personnel assisting. Some of the communications equipment included radio sets mounted in armored vehicles; radar sets; and cargo loaded "hand carry" items. Lt. Nathan Harris was assigned as Signal Company loading officer responsible for ensuring that all Company vehicles were loaded on desingated ships at the port of embarkation. Lts. Nathan Harris, Ercil D. Miller and Robert D. Seaman joined at Port-Aux-Poules, Algeria.

SECTION—VI

ITALIAN PHASE: (Sep 1943 to Aug 1944)

1st Lt/CPT Charles A. Wingo & 1st Lt. Paul I. Wells, C.O.'s

EMBARKATION PHASE: The "D" day and "H" hour was soon to come for us. Our stay in North Africa was about to end. 1st Lt. Charles A. Wingo, was our Commanding Officer at this time. The "Dry-Run" training days were soon to be tested by actual combat. Officers assigned to the 36th Signal Company in addition to the Company Commander and Division Signal Officer, LTC Robert L. Cox included the following: 1st Lt. Edward P. Fogg, 1st Lt. Paul I. Wells, 1st Lt. Joseph D. Alston, Jr., 1st Lt. Hiram M. Hicks, Jr., 1st Lt. Jack J. Forman, 1st Lt. John S. Mercaldo, 2nd Lt. Nathan Harris, 2nd Lt. Ercil D. Miller, 2nd Lt. Robert D. Seaman, 1st Lt. William J. Marshall and WOJG John M. Grasshoff. Key Non-Commissioned Officers included: M/SGT Lionel Cooper, M/SGT Austin J. Knickerbocker, M/SGT Richard Riggins, T/SGT Sidney D. Bruton, M/SGT Cecil Spindle, 1st/SGT Howard V. Gran and S/SGT Harry V. Scott, Jr.

Prior to 1 September 1943 Lt. Ercil D. Miller and a detail of 68 Enlisted Men and 54 vehicles containing organizational equipment were dispatched by motor vehicle convoy to Algiers, Algeria for the purpose of loading and forming the "D" plus 7 convoy for Italy. As part of the arrangements for the departure of the main body of the Signal Company, 1st Lt. William J. Marshall and a detail of 16 Enlisted Men were to be left behind with a "Special" Company to bring up the Company Kitchen, Signal Repair vans and personal equipment at a later date. This equipment was left in a bivouac area at "Port-Aux-Poules", Algeria. It was later learned that Lt. Marshall was sent to Algiers, Algeria to act as TQM (Transport Quartermaster) on a ship. On Thursday, 2 September 1943 at 1130 Hours, the remainder of the 36th Signal Company was shuttled in QM trucks to an open field on the outskirts of Arzew, Algeria and told to wait. The night of 2 September 1943 was spent in the field. A reveille formation was held on the morning of 3 September 1943. Reveille was soon to be dispensed with for the duration. MBS (Mediterranean Base Section) trucks arrived at 1530 Hours, 3 September 1943 to shuttle the 36th Signal Company to the port area of "Mers-El-Keber" (vicinity of Oran, Algeria). Officers and Enlisted Men were loaded aboard the ship "Marnix" with full field equipment. Personnel of the company loaded aboard the ship consisted of: 9 Officers, 1 Warrant Officer and 170

Enlisted Men. The "Marnix" a civilian passenger liner converted to troop transport vessel status. It had been in service between Amsterdam, The Netherlands and the Dutch East Indies. The crew was Dutch under control of the British Navy. Loading of the "Marnix" was completed on 4 September 1943 and by noon 5 September 1943 she was at anchor in the outer harbor awaiting orders to join a convoy at sea. At 1600 Hours, 5 September 1943 the ship got underway. As we passed Bizerte, Tunisia another sizeable convoy joined us. Only two air raid alarms were sounded during the entire voyage. Our general destination area in the Bay of Salerno, Italy was reached during the evening of 8 September 1943. The ship "Marnix" together with other ships of the convoy "stood-to" approximately 12-14 miles off shore near Paestum, Italy. Our eventual destination and combat mission had been revealed to us soon after the convoy left Oran, Algeria. With all available information at hand we studied maps and made our detailed plans for the "over-the-beach" landing problems and follow-on phase for establishment of the 36th Division communications system. Prior to debarkation, and while still aboard ship "Marnix", our Supply Section issued each individual: two "D" rations, one "K" ration; seven days supply of Aterbrine; salt tablets; halazone tablets; sulfadiozine tablets; insect repellent; and insect powder. Staff Sergeant Harry V. Scott, Jr. was our Supply Sgt. at the time and 1st Lt. Jack J. Forman, the Supply Officer.

SALERNO/PAESTUM, ITALY PHASE: (1st Lt. Charles A. Wingo, C.O.)

Operation "Avalanche"—9 September 1943

The 36th Signal Company was divided into five (5) groups for the "over-the-beach" landing operations and establishment of the 36th Division Communications system ashore. 1st Lt. Charles A. Wingo (Commanding Officer) was in charge of group 29; 1st Lt. Edward P. Fogg and 1st Lt. Hiram M. Hicks, Jr., group 30, 1st Lt. Paul I. Wells and Lt. Nathan Harris, group 31; Lt. Robert D. Seaman and 1st Lt. Jack J. Forman, group 32; and 1st Lt. John S. Mercaldo and WOJG John M Grasshoff, group 33. Groups were scheduled to leave ship in that order but the group which was not concerned with communication operations and installation left the ship in the first Signal Company group due to an error on the part of the TQM.

On the night of 8-9 September an announcement was made over the ship PA system that Italy had surrendered. This had the effect of causing most of the invasion force personnel to assume the landing would be unopposed. This of course, proved to be far different when the first waves hit the beach and found strong German defense forces awaiting them.

The primary organization of communications elements of the Signal Company for this operation was comprised of: Message Center Section; Radio Section; Telephone & Teletype Section; and Wire Construction Platoon. These elements were led by: 1st Lt. John S. Mercaldo; 1st Lt. Joseph D. Alston, Jr.; 1st Lt. Paul I. Wells; 1st Lt. Edward P. Fogg and Hiram M. Hicks, Jr.

Signal Company motor vehicle availability was very confused during the first day/night ashore (9-10 Sep 1943). Due to a scarcity of proper type vessels at the port of embarkation in Africa we were faced with a situation where entire wire construction team personnel would be put ashore without anything to work with. The Telephone & Teletype Section had no vehicle at all and was forced to land and hand-carry all telephones, switchboards, wire and tools necessary to establish a Division Command Post communications facility. normally this would have taken a 2½ ton truck to haul all desired equipment and supplies to adequately establish such a facility. The 2½ DUWKS with Radio Sets, SCR-499 were unloaded well off-shore to come ashore under their own power.

The first 36th Division Headquarters Command Post was located in a tobacco processing warehouse just inland from the beaches (East of Highway 18 at Casa Vannulo). Our 36th Signal Company bivouac was located in the same vicinity.

SALERNO BEACH HEAD BUILD-UP/CONSOLIDATION PHASE:

Telephone & Teletype Section: (Initial action experiences)

1st Lt. Paul I. Wells of Denison, Texas came ashore with approximately thirty (30) Enlisted Men carrying the minimum essential equipment necessary to establish a Division Command Post telephone switching central together with field telephones and field wire. Lt. Wells was commissioned a 2nd Lt. shortly before mobilization of the National Guard in November 1940. He had been a member of the 36th Signal Company since 1928.

Equipment brought ashore consisted of: two (2) telephone switchboards, BD-72; two (2) telephone switchboards, BD-71; 15 telephones, EE-8; 1½ miles of field wire, W-110; telegraph sets, TG-5; and axles, RL-27. Personnel and all above mentioned equipment was brought ashore in a British Navy Landing Craft Assault (LCA).

The Section was landed on "RED" beach, about 2½ miles northwest of Paestum, Italy on the afternoon of 9 September 1943 at approximately 1700 Hours. (32.9-04.3)

Immediately after landing and dewaterproofing of equipment, the Section marched south along the beach road to a position generally southwest of Paestum, Italy and then on a route which led into highway 18 and Paestum. This route was taken because all areas behind the

beaches and to the north of Paestum were still savagely defended by the Germans. This was no place for a "human pack train" to travel.

On arrival at the 36th Division Command Post (86.1-05.1) at approximately 2200 Hours, the Section installed a telephone switchboard and associated local field telephones in the Division Headquarters. Switchboards, BD-72 were utilized for this mission. Circuits from the 531st Engineer Shore Regiment, previously connected to the 142nd RCT Headquarters switchboard, were taken over and trunks to the 141st, 142nd and 143rd RCT's and the Division Artillery were connected shortly thereafter. For a brief period of time the Section also provided telephone service to elements of the 6th Army Corps Command Post (Tactical).

A forward Division Command Post facility was installed on 13 September 1943 utilizing the switchboards, BD-71 & BD-72. This CP was located near the road junction (Apaccio-Roccadaspide) (88.1-05.9). Seven Enlisted Men of the Section were assigned to this mission and remained in position until about 17 September 1943 when the main Division CP was moved to this location.

On 15 September 1943 a forward telephone switching central was installed on the reverse slope of hillside at (89.7-10.1) for the purpose of switching circuits to the 142nd and 143rd RCT CP's and to the CP's of BG O'Daniel, BG Wilbur and COL Forsythe. The switch was nicknamed "88 switch" because of the number of German Artillery rounds falling in the immediate area of the switch. This switch was operational until 21 September 1943 at which time the trunk circuits were spliced through to a new Division CP location.

On or about 17 September 1943, a new 36th Division CP communications facility was installed about one mile north of the road junction (Capaccio-Roccadspide) (88.0-07.8). At this time the Division CP located near road junction (Capaccio-Roccadspide) (88.1-05.9) was closed and section personnel/equipment moved to the new Division CP. At this time Teletype communication means was established with Headquarters 5th Army direct and 6th Army Corps Headquarters through 5th Army.

On or about 18-19 September 1943, the Section was tasked to install a telephone switchboard and associated field telephones at a forward Division CP in "Alta Villa", Italy. BG O'Daniel was to be the Officer in charge of this CP. It was intended to be a tactical echelon type CP. The T&T Section detail left the main CP area about 1200 Hours with a ¾ ton 4x4 truck loaded with equipment and personnel to accomplish the mission. The detail was composed of: 1st Lt. Paul I. Wells, Pvt. Norman H. Wootton, Pvt. Eugene Helms and Pvt. Rayford L. Dunn. As it proceeded forward, it passed through the Infantry line positions on the hill mass of Mount Chirico/Cappa Santa. From this point forward it was to be over a road of unknown condition since the Infantry troops advised that they had checked and cleared land mines only a few hundred yards in

front of their present front line positions. The route then followed a road which passed over a small stream (''La Cosa Creek''). The bridge over the stream had been destroyed forcing the detail to ford the stream.

From the stream onward towards the village of ''Alta Villa'' there was no sign of any friendly troops. Many bodies were observed along the road and nearby fields which had not been retrieved by the graves registration details. Just as the base of the hill mass upon which ''Alta Villa'' was located, was approached one live U.S. Soldier was seen standing under a tree a few hundred yards off the road. When he was questioned, he advised that he was a member of the 636th TD Bn Recon Company and that he was told to wait for the return of two (2) of his Company's half track vehicles which had proceeded into ''Alta Villa'' some two hours previously and nothing fruther had been heard from them since that time. Since there seemed nothing of further value to be gained by questioning the soldier, the detail proceeded to make its final approach into''Alta Villa''. When the village was finally reached, we discovered the two half track vehicles and crews previously mentioned. Here again, with the exception of the two halftracks and crews, we found no other friendly troops or civilians still alive. Space was cleared for installation of the forward Division CP and equipment was installed. Clearing of the space involved removal of several bodies of soldiers and civilians killed in an earlier action. The situation was apparently still confused since the Signal Company detail never had any further contact with the main 36th Division CP until near mid-night. No field wire circuits were ever installed to the forward Div CP and no Radio or Message Center ever joined us. The Telephone & Teletype Section detail remained on site until about 2200-2300 Hours and having heard anything or received any further orders decided to drop back and try to regain some measure of contact with the main Div CP for further instructions. Before we departed ''Alta Villa'', and shortly before nightfall, the CO 636th TD Bn visited his two half track crews. He ordered the Lt. in charge to use his own judgement, he could stand and fight or fall back as conditions dictated. The Signal Company detail personnel were listening to this briefing with much attention and when it was over a discussion was had within the Signal detail concerning night time security measures to be taken. One member of the detail (''Pvt. Eugene Helms'') volunteered to stand guard for the rest of the detail. His position was that he just wanted to be sure the guard mission was well accomplished. As we departed ''Alta Villa'', as mentioned above, our vehicle engine was started and let run only briefly in order to get it underway on the very steep downgrade road leading to the rear. Once started, we ran it all the way down to the base of the mountain with engine off and, of course blacked out. The area was so quiet a pin dropped could be heard. As we reached and destroyed bridge over ''La Cosa'' creek, a noise was heard.

The weapons carrier was stopped and the source of the noise was challenged. It proved to be the head of the 142nd RCT which had been ordered to occupy the area. On our challenge, the point man of the RCT came forward to be recognized and gave us the pass word. After giving the pass word he seemed to have second thoughts and reminded that we were really the ones obligated to give them the pass word since we were coming from the direction of the enemy. We jokingly informed him that they couldn't just come stumbling into the area occupied by the Signal Company without proper recognition. To shorten the story, the forward Div CP was never established in "Alta Villa". In lieu of that, we installed a small telephone switchboard adjacent to the 142nd RCT CP for BG O'Daniel to use while the RCT was in this area. The 142nd RCT CP was established in the valley just below "Alta Villa."

On 21 September 1943, the 36th Division CP was again moved to the near vicinity of "Alta Villa", Italy (93.0-13.6). Telephone and Teletype central office equipment was installed in a normal and standard manner (perhaps for the first time since we landed in Italy). A teletype tributary was installed at this time to the Radio Section area for radio message traffic to/from the division Message Center.

On 22 September 1943, the old division CP located about one mile north of road junction (Capaccio-Roccadspide) (88.0-07.8) and the communications facility at the 36th Division Rear Echelon Headquarters located at (86.1-05.1) were removed and all Telephone & Teletype Section personnel/equipment brought to the new 36th Division CP area near "Alta Villa," Italy.

RADIO SECTION INITIAL ACTION EXPERIENCE:

The Radio Section Leader was 1st Lt. Joseph D. Alston, Jr. who has been a member of the 36th Signal Company since 4 February 1942 and came to the Company from the Headquarters Company, 141st Infantry Regiment.

Lt. Alston debarked from the ship "Marnix" at 0800 hours, 9 September 1943 and went ashore in a landing craft assault (LCA) with Captain Lawrence W. Bengel and other members of the 74th Signal Company (Special). The move to shore was somewhat confused due to the various stages of combat.

An attempt was made to land on "Yellow" beach but shore control advised against it. The beach was under a heavy aircraft bombing attack. A landing was eventually made on "Green" beach. I, Lt. Alston, left Captain Begnel's party and proceeded inland in search of the 36th Division Command Post. I walked up the beach road past some artillery that was firing from the woods to my right. The artillery had just destroyed a German tank by direct fire. At this point the German artillery shells started hitting in the woods and not having anything but my helmet to crawl into, I got the hell out of there. After the barrage was over, I con-

tinued on up the beach road until I hit the main road. I went over and inspected the German tank that our guns had knocked out and there I found Sergeant Joe H. Miller of my section. We proceeded on down the main road to Paestum, Italy railroad station to find it was being used as an Infantry battalion Command Post. This was approximately 1300 hours, 9 September 1943. We located the 36th Division Command Post very quickly after leaving the railroad station. On arrival there, it was discovered that none of the Radio section had as yet arrived at the Division CP. I got a ride with Captain Stallings back to the beach to look for my Section radio vehicles. But met with no success until I saw Captain Wells, CO 36th Recon Troop, who said he knew where some of the Radio Section vehicles were. With his assistance, I finally found one radio recon car (½ ton, 4x4). This radio set (SCR-193) was put in the Recon Troop net by direction of the Commanding General. Later on another radio recon car (SCR-193) showed up and the Division Command Net was activated. A radio jeep (SCR-193) was released to me and then put in the 6th Army Corps Command Net to operate with Headquarters, 6th Army Corps afloat. By late afternoon another radio recon car (SCR-193) came ashore and was put in the 5th Army Command Net. The first night (9-10 September 1943) passed with the line-up: Radio recon car (SCR-193) in Division Command Net; Radio Recon car (SCR-193) in Division Recon Net; Radio Recon car (SCR-193) in 5th Army Command Net; and a jeep (SCR-193) in 6th Army Corps Command Net.

About 0900 hours, 10 September 1943, DUKW mounted SCR-499 arrived at the 36th Division Command Post and replaced the radio recon car (SCR-193) in the 5th Army Command Net. At this point a radio CP was activated about 500 yards on the flank of the Division CP. All radios were centrally located with a telephone installed in the Radio CP. After this radio CP was activated a Division Administrative Net was organized. At this time another DUKW mounted radio set SCR-499 arrived and was turned over to the 6th Army Corps along with the DUKW (SCR-499) operating in the 5th Army Command Net. On 13 September 1943, a new 36th Division CP was located forward and a radio set was sent there to operate in the 36th Division Command Net. The radio CP was relocated to a position about ½ mile from the 36th Division Rear Echelon Headquarters CP. This was necessitated because a military cemetery was established in the old radio area. At this time three stations were operating in the rear echelon area: Division Command Net; Division Recon Net; and Division Administrative Net.

The 36th Division General Officer's Net was activated utilizing four jeeps (SCR-193) radio sets. This net remained operational throughout the period of combat in the initial landing area and until after all fighting ceased in the Salerno, Italy area.

On 21 September 1943 the Radio Section's two radio sets, SCR-299 came ashore. One was put in the 6th Army Corps Command Net. At this time the Division Recon and Division Administrative Nets were closed.

Corporal Clarence D. Smith, radio operator of set number 5, under control of LTC Edward Harris told the following story concerning his experiences on "D" Day:

"On the night of 9-10 September 1943, at 0100 hours I went over the side of the ship (Charles Carroll) into a landing craft. This was a big thing for me. I was to be with the first American troops to invade the European continent. My Radio Set, SCR-193 was operating in the Liaison Officer's Net. Colonel Harris and I landed on "Yellow" beach at 0430 hours, 10 September 1943. I set to work at once to de-waterproof my radio set and this took about an hour. I reported into the net at 0630 Hrs. to Sergeant Joe H. Miller who was our Net control station. After reporting into the net, I switched over to the "voice mode" and sent this message: "Naval gunfire on hill 14 and 15." Sgt. Miller was not with General Walker (CG 36th Div) at this time and had no way to send the message back to the Navy ships. Sgt. Miller had the Coxswain of his landing craft to pull alongside the craft the CG was in and handed him the message. Since Sgt. Miller had no means available to him at the moment to retransmit the message to the Navy ship. So, after I received permission, I switched over to the frequency of 4200 KHZ, which was the Naval Ship frequency. I tried to report into their net several times but without success. I then made out an "F" (Fox) message (An "F" message is one that is sent twice when there is answer expected from the intended receiving station) and sent it twice. The message was the same as the first one, "Naval gunfire on hills 14 and 15." About five minutes later we received our answer in naval gunfire. I received a message from Sgt. Miller who was asking for directions to the Division Command Post at 1030 hours. Again at 1800 hours, I received a long message for General Lange who was nearby. The only other radio set that I made contact with was the one operated by Corporal Earl Drigans."

Corporal Drigans, operator of radio set number 6 had this story to tell:

"We landed on "Green Beach" under heavy fire in the first wave due to some mix-up. At about 0400-0500 hours (9 September 1943). Immediately after landing on the beach our jeep became stuck in the sand. The driver and I stayed with the vehicle and tried to get it operating while the rest of the group took cover. We could not get the jeep extracted from the sand. So, we took cover also. After a short interval, I returned to the jeep. Radio set number three with Private Robert Tannahill operating went dead on the beach. So, he assisted me in getting my radio in working order. Later on Major Brady and I rode up and down the area trying to get the various units together and to learn what progress our forces were making. Sgt. Joe H. Miller notified all radio stations in the

net that radio set number two (2) would act as net control station since his jeep and radio set was destroyed by a land mine. While cruising around the area we noticed that enemy tanks were advancing and we tried to locate our artillery and tanks. I tried to get a message through to NCS (Net Control Station) both via voice and CW modes. I made contact with NCS via voice and Sergeant William Henderson delivered the message to the artillery. The rest of the time was spent around the CP."

Corporal Edward Hoffman, operator of radio set number four (4) and under control of LTC Reese had this story to tell:

"I left the ship (USS Samuel Chase) in the company of LTC Reese and Private Karydakis, the driver, in jeep number four, at approximately 1030 hours (9 September 1943). We arrived on "Red Beach" at 1145 hours (9 September 1943) and began de-waterproofing the radio set (SCR-193). This took about 15 minutes. We then called Net Control Station on CW and voice but did not make contact. I did hear set number two (2) just prior to arriving at the Division Command Post. I then changed tuning units and called (FGL) which to the best of knowledge was the (USS Samuel Chase) and I made contact with the ship about one hour later and sent my messages."

Sergeant Joe Miller's story as told by others is quoted as follows:

"Sergeant Joe H. Miller left the ship "USS Samuel Chase" at 0600 hours (9 September 1943). While on a landing craft, the Net Control Station (operated by Sgt. Miller), received a message from Corporal Clarence D. Smith requesting naval gunfire on hills 14 and 15. Sgt. Miller landed on "Red Beach" at 0700 hours (9 September 1943). Shells were falling around them. So, the driver stopped the vehicle just off the beach and both fell to the ground. A shell burst nearby and a fragment hit the driver and killed him instantly. Sgt. Miller got back into the vehicle and began to drive away when he ran onto a land mine which wrecked the vehicle and radio set completely. He saw jeep number two (2) with radio set, SCR-193 landing. He contacted the number two jeep/radio set and reported to General Lange what had happened. He then sent a message over radio set number two (2) telling the other member of the radio net that radio set two (2) would act as Net Control Station. Sergeant Miller sufered an injury to his left ear when the jeep he was driving was destroyed. The explosion/concussion ruptured his ear drum causing him to be hospitalized. Sgt. Miller was assigned to duty as radio operator for the Commanding General (CG 36th Inf Div—MG Fred L. Walker). Jeep and radio set number one (1) was utilized for this mission. Leonard Ray of the Division Headquarters Company was the driver, who was killed. At the time of the landing General Walker was not in the jeep."

Sergeant Edward C. Wheeler had this story to tell:

"On 15 September 1943, Sergeant Wheeler was in the Signal Company bivouac area when the usual second or third air raid of the day began at

about 1800 hours. Of course everybody ran to their fox holes or slit trenches. When asked what he was doing when he received the wound through his leg, he replied that he was laying flay on his belly eating dirt when the fragments came down upon him."

Two men of the Radio Section were decorated for action in the initial beach-head phase: Sergeant Joe H. Miller, ASN 38051619—Silver Star and Purple Heart medals. Sergeant Edward C. Wheeler, ASN 32280770—Purple Heart medal.

Radio Section Biographical Information:

"1st Lt. Joseph D. Alston, Jr. of San Antonio, Texas was assigned as Radio Officer at the time of the Salerno, Italy invasion. He had been a member of the 36th Signal Company since 4 February 1942. He was originally a member of Headquarters Company, 141st Infantry Regiment.

"Sergeant Joe H. Miller is from El Campo, Texas. He joined the 36th Signal Company in January 1941 at Camp Bowie, Texas.

"Sergeant Edward C. Wheeler is from Buffalo, New York. He joined the 36th Signal Company at Camp Edwards, Mass.

"Corporal Clarence D. Smith is from Beaver, PA. He joined the 36th Signal Company at Camp Edwards, Mass."

Message Center Section Initial Action Report:

This report is given by 1st Lt. John S. Mercaldo and Technical Sergeant David D. Bruton.

"On 9 September 1943, D-Day, at 0100 hours, a DUKW was lifted over the side bearing a team of the Message Center Section personnel whose duty was to land, establish and maintain communications until the remainder of the Section arrived ashore. After attempting several landings on "Blue Beach", the team consisting of: Corporal Fred San Roman and Privates John P. Yore; James E. Kenney; and William C. Jacobs were signaled to change course and land on "Red Beach." Upon landing they asked directions to Paestum, Italy (the initial Signal Company assembly area), and were told that enemy tanks prohibited traffic in that direction for the time being. After parking their vehicle they found that, in landing, the radio transmitter was damaged and therefore communications could not be established as planned.

At 0100 hours the same day, another Message Center Team was lifted over the side in a second DUKW. This team consisted of: T/Sgt David S. Bruton; Sgt. Virgil L. White; and Private Jack D. Yarcho. This team attempted to land on "Green Beach." As they drove upon the beach two half-track vehicles that had landed approximately two hundred yards down the beach were fired on and blown to pieces. The Message Center team crossed the beach and following instructions located and arrived at the Paestum, Italy railroad station just as the leading elements of the Infantry arrived for the second time, having previously withdrawn temporarily. The Radio Team aboard the DUKW went into operation but

was unable to contact any station in the Army Net, but continued to monitor and call throughout the night.

Lt. Mercaldo and the remainder of the Message Center Section arrived on "Red Beach" at 1500 hours (9 September 1943) D-Day under light artillery fire. While enroute to the Division Command Post the Section was forced to take cover from enemy aircraft strafing the beach road. Upon arriving at the Division CP Lt. Mercaldo established a Message Center with Staff Sergeant James H. Clay as Chief; Corporals Robert W. Parent; Richard J. Keplinger; and Raymon S. McCray as clerks. Corporal Albert A. Westmoreland and Private First Class Curtis R. Ashinhurst were the Motor Messengers. Radio messages were sent and received during the night (9-10 September 1943). On the morning of 10 September 1943 Technical Sergeant David S. Bruton and Corporal Fred San Roman reported to the Division CP with their teams. S/Sgt. Clay was relieved by Sergeant Stanley M. Wilt and regular and normal operations were resumed. Message Center operated without a single mishap or complaint from any of the General's Staff throughout the operation. On numerous occasions when all electrical communications were out, motor messengers risked their lives going through enemy fire to make delivery of messages. Outstanding in delivering messages were Private John W. Williams and PFC Curtis R. Ashinhurst. These motor messengers never once returned with messages once they were dispatched.

On D-Day plus 4, when the 143rd RCT CP was under fire an urgent message was dispatched with PFC Ashinhurst destined for that Headquarters. The road to the 143rd RCT was under fire. On the first attempt he was forced to take cover because the road was being shelled each time a vehicle started down it. After waiting a short time he again started down the road driving furiously. The message was delivered. On the same day Private Williams underwent the same condition to make delivery of another message as shells were landing on either side and slightly to the rear on the road. He arrived at, and delivered to the 143rd RCT a second urgent message.

When the forward Division Command Post was established, Lt. Mercaldo took the forward echelon and Lt. Robert D. Seaman was now in charge of the rear echelon.

A second forward Division CP was established with Lt. Mercaldo in charge of the Message Center at this location. T/Sgt. Bruton was left in charge of the (new intermediate) Div CP Message Center. Lt. Seaman remained at the Division Rear Echelon. All Message Centers were in continuous operation with communications running smoothly. The Advance Division Command Post was under enemy fire until the installation ws called back to the former location."

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION ON MESSAGE CENTER SECTION

"1st Lt. John S. Mercaldo is from Philadelphia, PA. He joined the

36th Signal Company at Camp Edwards, Mass. in the Fall of 1942. He was a former member of the 108th Field Artillery, Pennsylvania National Guard."

"Technical Sergeant David S. Bruton is a native of Denison, Texas. He was mobilized for active duty with the 36th Signal Company on 27 November 1940."

"Sergeant Virgil L. White is a native of Denison, Texas. He was mobilized for active duty with the 36th Signal Company on 27 November 1940."

CONSTRUCTION PLATOON INITIAL ACTION REPORT:

1st Lt. Edward P. Fogg was Platoon Leader. He told the following story:

"The installation and maintenance of a Division Field Wire system in an amphibious operation similar to this one deviated sharply from any SOP (Standard Operating Procedure) laid down for land operations from the standpoint of equipment and vehicles with which to install field wire. The Construction Platoon was loaded on ship minus three detachments (Regimental wire teams). These detachments hit the beach earlier than the balance of the platoon and during the battle operated closer to the front than most of the Division wiremen. A narrative can best be begun by relating the work of each team in order.

The wire team attached to the 142nd Inf RCT landed at 0535 hours (9 September 1943) on "D" Day on "Blue Beach". Staff Sergeant Ernie C. Coffey led his men off the boat under machine gun fire and headed for the protection of the drainage ditches some few yards inland from the beach. Here they were mixed up in a tank attack occuring that morning but managed to escape casualty. The team joined with Headquarters Company, 142nd Infantry late on "D" Day and installed the first wire on "D" plus 1. When the Signal Company sent them a wire laying jeep from the beach, they managed to keep regiment tied in with the Division wire system at all times from then on. They encountered no small arms fire after leaving the beach area, but were usually operating under spasmodic enemy artillery fire. On one occasion when laying wire in the vicinity of Albanella, Italy, they were forced to lay wire across country to get protection from a rise in the ground. The terrain was crisscrossed with deep drainage ditches which made progress of a jeep quite difficult. Here they were aided a great deal by several Italian civilians who procured picks and shovels and built little bridges across the ditches permitting the jeeps to go forward.

The team attached to the 143rd Infantry Regiment under Staff Sergeant Manson S. Bearden landed at 0730 hours (9 September 1943) on "Red Beach" under heavy artillery fire. The team joined the 1st Battalion, 142nd Inf. Regiment for the balance of "D" Day.

(More of the Signal Company history will be run in future issues. Thanks to Paul Wells.)

Audie L. Murphy American Soldier

A V.F.W. Post in Dallas, Texas is called Audie L. Murphy Memorial Post 1837 in honor of a Texan and the most decorated soldier of World War II.

He earned 33 awards, citations and decorations to include the Congressional Medal of Honor, awarded to him on 26 January 1945.

Audie Murphy served with the 3rd Infantry Division and later with the 36th Infantry Division. Audie joined the 36th Division in 1950 and served in the 141st Infantry and Division Headquarters as an aid to Gen. Ainsworth.

Audie Murphy once said "If he had to fight again, he wanted to be with a Texas unit."

Audie Leon Murphy was a legend in his own time—war hero, movie actor, writer of country-western songs and poet. His biography reads more like fiction than fact. He lived only forty-six years, but he made a lasting imprint upon American History.

Audie was born on a sharecropper farm in North Texas on June 20, 1924. As a boy he chopped cotton for $1 a day and was noted for his feats of derring-do and for his accuracy with a gun. He had only five years of schooling and was orphaned at sixteen.

A MONTAGE OF MILITARY AWARDS, CITATIONS, AND DECORATIONS WON BY AUDIE MURPHY

The hub of the montage is a hand wrought plaque presented to the City of Greenville, Texas, by the 3rd Infantry Division to commemorate Audie Murphy Day, February 22, 1973. The insignias of units assigned and attached to the 3rd Division are arranged around the perimeter of the plaque.

After being refused enlistment in both the Marines and the Paratroopers for being to small (5'5") and underweight (110 lbs.), he enlisted in the U.S. Army a few days after his eighteenth birthday. After basic training at Camp Wolters, Texas, and advance training at Fort Meade, Maryland, Audie was sent overseas. He was assigned to the famous 15th Infantry Regiment of the 3rd Infantry Division and fought in North Africa, Sicily, Italy, France,and Germany. He earned a battlefield commission for his courage and leadership ability. Audie spent some 400 days in the front lines and earned thirty-three military awards, citations and decorations, including every medal for valor that America gives as well as three French and one Belgian medal. Lieutenant Audie Murphy was the highest decorated soldier in American History.

Discharged from the Army on September 21, 1945, Audie went to Hollywood at the invitation of movie star James Cagney. He remained in California for the rest of his life and was closely associated with the movie industry, both as an actor and as a producer. He acted in forty-four films, starring in thirty-nine of them. His best known film was "To Hell and Back," adapted from the best-selling book of his war experiences by the same name. Most of his movies, however, were westerns. Audie Murphy was voted the most popular western actor in America in 1955 by the motion picture exhibitors.

Audie wrote the lyrics to sixteen country-western songs, the most popular of which was "Shutters and Boards," written with Scott Turner in 1962. This song was recorded by over thirty popular singers, including Jerry Wallace, Dean Martin and Porter Waggoner. He was an accomplished poet; unfortunately however, only a few of his poems have survived.

In 1950 Audie joined the 36th Infantry Division ("T-Patchers") of the Texas National Guards and served with it until 1966. He was a Mason and a Shriner and belonged to several veterans organizations. Audie Murphy was killed in a plane crash on a mountain top near Roanoake, Virginia, on May 28, 1971. Fittingly, his body was recovered two days later, on Memorial Day.

Here, written for the first time is the story of Audie Murphy with all of its heartaches, laughs, WWII exploits, and patriotism. Audie could very well be the last American war hero. He was the greatest combat soldier in the two hundred year history of the United States.

One-Man War Hero

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

Old World New World

by Sgt. Jamers E. Farmer
Army Correspondent
6th Army Group

36th Infantry Division

REST CAMP

BAINS-LES-BAINS

PASS

GOOD ONLY IN BAINS-LES-BAINS

Rank and Name Sgt. James E. Farmer
Serial No. 35168035
Organization PRO 6th A.G.
Hotel Villa
Room No.
Date: From 19 Jan 1945
To 21 Jan 1945

THEODORE J. NYKIEL
CAPT., INFANTRY
DIV. P. X. OFFICER

Signed
Officer In Charge

Author's Note: You will see a story I wrote—passed by the censor under date of December 11, 1944—on the 36th Division at a rest camp. Censorship forbade giving the name of the French Village, but I am certain it was Bain-Les-Bain.

Also enclosed you will see a copy of my pass to the camp. The latter is dated after the date of the censor's action. Why, I cannot reconstruct in my mind. Whatever, the pass states a "most hearty welcome" to the fighting men of the 36th Infantry Division. And, my story is about those men.

I was with G-2, Headquarters, 36th Division, in Italy. After the Salerno invasion, I was enlisted man head of a press (for public relations) unit set up by the division. Before the division's entry into Rome, I was transferred for duty as an Army Correspondent with the Sixth Army Group in France. Then followed my reunion with the 36th at the rest camp and at other points at the front when my news scouting took me to various Texas Division Units.

WELCOME!
to YOUR Rest Camp

The Commanding General and the Rest Camp staff extend their most hearty welcome to you fighting men of the 36th Infantry Division upon your entering the town of Bains Les Bains for your much deserved rest period.

The people of Bains Les Bains are very honored to have us here, and we the honored men of the 36th Division will show our appreciation by taking good care of their property and all the facilities within the camp.

We, the Rest Camp staff are here to serve you and make your stay as pleasant as possible. With your cooperation we are quite sure that our efforts will not be wasted and your rest period will be something to remember.

REST CAMP STAFF.

ITINERARY

ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS

MESS TIME :

Hotel Kelly

Breakfast	0730 to 0830 Hours
Dinner	1200 to 1300 Hours
Supper	1730 to 1830 Hours

MOVIE SCHEDULE :

Theater (CASSINO)

Every Afternoon and Evening
1400 Hours
1900 Hours

Change of features at each afternoon and evening.

CLOTHING EXCHANGE :
Hotel Kelly

Open 24 hours during your first two days at the Rest Camp.

After receiving your change of clothing, you will find showers and a beautiful hot natural springs pool. Please shower and wash off all soap before entering the pool.

PUBLIC BATHS :
Bath House

1300 to 1730 each day except Sunday.

Tickets for private baths are available at your hotel desk.

DANCES :
Hotel Kelly

At least one (1) Dance will be sponsored by the Rest Camp staff during your stay. Girls will be admitted by invitations issued by the Rest Camp Headquarters only.

POST OFFICE :
Hotel Kelly

Open for your convenience at the Reading and Writing Room of the hotel.

MEDICAL SCHEDULE :
Hotel Kelly

Medical Aid Station — open all hours each day.
Dental Clinic — 0900 to 1200 Hours
1300 to 1700 Hours
Foot Clinic — 0900 to 1200 Hours
1300 to 1700 Hours
Sick Call — every morning at 0900 Hours.
PRO Station — Open 24 Hours each day.

MILITARY POLICE :

Our Division MP's are stationed at the Rest Camp for your own protection. Call upon them when in doubt personally, or by telephoning Rest Camp Headquarters.

Have this pass with you at all times - Read your bulletin board each day.

REST CAMP HEADQUARTERS.

P. X. SCHEDULE :
Hotel Kelly

0900 to 1130 Hours
1300 to 1700 Hours

Ration cards are available from your hotel managers only.

Under NO condition will sales be made without your ration card.

Highly rationed items will be sold to the fortunate guests whose names will be drawn out of the lucky box by a Red Cross girl.

MUSIC SCHEDULE :

The division band will furnish musical entertainment during noon and evening meals. They will also entertain, before movie time, during the evening Snack Bar hours, at the Hotel Vosges Cafe, and at all Rest Camp dances. During your stay, selected band concerts will be played and dates and hours for such occasions will be announced in the Daily Bulletins.

CAFE VOSGES :
Hotel Vosges

1400 to 1700 Hours
1900 to 2200 Hours

This is the only authorized Rest Camp Cafe. All other Cafes and civilian private establishments are Off Limits. Guests of the Rest Center and civilians patronizing such establishments will be interned by both civilian and Military Police.

All Beer at the CAFE VOSGES is FREE (On the house) — T'is yours — drink all you desire.

AMERICAN RED CROSS :
Hotel Kelly

The Snack Bar, the Hotel Lounge, and the Reading and Writing Room is operated by the A.R.C. Miss Kay Mc Donald and Miss « Candy » White will always be available to furnish the answers to any questions you may have. The A.R.C. Field Director is available to take of your more serious problems.

CHAPLAINS

Catholic, Protestant and Jewish services will be held. Daily bulletins will carry all necessary information. Hotel Kelly is the Chaplains' headquarters.

Seventh Army Front, France—Combat men of the U.S. Seventh Army are now jokingly referring to the United States as "the Old World" and the world they know as the frontlines of Europe as "the New World."

Living conditions on the front are so much a part of them they've almost forgotten the comforts and pleasures they enjoyed one to three years ago in America. Even the temporary comforts they enjoy during two-day rest periods not far behind the front, cause them to feel that they are in a different world.

I visited a small French village where the 36th Infantry Division had set up an elaborate rest camp. Truck loads of combat men, weary from almost 80 straight days in battle, drove into town. The men wore beards of several days growth. Their clothes were dirty and splattered with mud.

But a quick, almost miraculous transformation took place.

In a few minutes time, these combat men were coming out of French hot spring water paths clean and refreshed and wearing new clothes. They were bedded down on feather mattresses with clean, white sheets. They were fed like kings. During afternoons and nights they saw the latest movies from the States, heard the division's two dance orchestras in jam sessions, and made souvenir-buying tours through the town.

After 48 hours at the rest camp, they left as fresh, rejuvenated soldiers to go back into the line, back to their "world."

A visitor to the front, too, senses the frontlines and the rear areas as two separate worlds. The front is a world owned and ruled over by the men who live and fight there. These men inwardly resent the comparative comforts of the rear areas. As soon as a combat man learns that you're an "outsider", he asks "what is a correspondent doing way up here?"

A combat man curses the weather and curses the enemy, but he has a feeling of deep pride in the hard job that is his lot. He feels pain and misery and strain and anxiety, but he realizes that these are only necessary incidentals to the important job he's doing.

That pride is shown in the high respect combat men have for any other soldier who wears the Combat Infantryman's Badge, the Medal of Honor, the Distinguished Service Cross, the Silver Star or the Purple Heart. Even though they may not know the man, they know that he has lived in their "world" somewhere along the front.

But the force that keeps them in their front-line "world" is the cause for which they're fighting: to see a just peace once more in Europe and the Pacific so they can return to their homes and loved ones, to "the Old World" as they knew it.

Salerno Beachhead D Day Plus 10 Hrs.

by W. O. "Bill" Wade
1203 W. Tucker Blvd.
Arlington, TX 76013
36 Div. M.P. Plat.

Time: Sept. 9, 1943

My first assignment upon European soil was traffic control at the intersection of Hwy 6 and the Div. C.P. Road, which was the tobacco warehouse. My shift of duty was 1200 to 1400 hrs. which was pulled without any incident.

After completing my shift, I decided to go down Hiway 6 about 200 yards to a small stream that I saw as I was going to the Div. C.P. from the beach head. It looked so refreshing, and I was so sweaty and sticky from the "purified" salt water used on the ship for bathing. I knew I was going to enjoy this bath.

There was a fairly deep pool just below where the rushing water drops off the bridge culvert. The pool was shaded on the northwest and southeast sides by willow trees, making the pool an ideal place to take a bath. So I shed my clothes, placed them on the bank, with my clean clothes beside them.

I started into the pool from the north (shallow) end. I rushed into the water until the water was above my knees. But I suddenly stopped because the temperature of that water became a reality to me all of a sudden. That water was *liquid ice* from the runoff of snow that fell in the mountains on the night of the 7th.

I began splashing a little water up on my body and using my soap real quickly. I was doing a good job until I heard sounds that meant aircraft were strafing and dropping small bombs.

All of a sudden this bathing wasn't such a good idea. Cold water or not, I made a *very* quick dip down in the icy water and rinsed some of the soap off.

Just about the time I came up out of that water, I saw one of the three F.W. fighters flying at tree top level and about 150 feet high south of me. I looked up at the plane and the pilot was looking at me, and he smiled as he banked his plane toward me, the other two followed behind the first one.

All this time I was trying to make myself a little less a high standing strafing target. Down I'd go to just below my waist and stay down for about two seconds, and up I'd come. That went on for about five attempts and I quit. I looked like a toy monkey on a string. That water was just too cold for certain parts of my body. I just waded out of that liquid ice, dried the water and soap off, put on my clean uniform and got out of there very quickly.

Never did get to test that water again and see if the temperature was any warmer.

Memories of WWII Not All Bad

by Fla. B. Hall
143rd Infantry

Early December, 1944 in France, the push was on to reach the Rhine River. The 143rd Second Battalion C.P. had been set up in the newly captured Ribeauville area. This is where the 143rd Service Co. was replenishing the supply dump. During this time Co. F., 143rd Kitchen was not in full operation, so once again, I was called upon by the Service Co, along with other (rear Echelon) to lend a hand in this build up.

While waiting along a wooded road for the troops and tanks to clear out a German road block, a Service Co. Second Lieutenant (cannot remember his name) and I noticed some German marks (money) across the ditch. As we advanced we ran up on a German payroll tent. There were folding tables inside with piles of money on each table, also on the ground inside and outside the tent. The Germans had probably made a hasty withdrawal, leaving the payroll tent intact. The Lieutenant and I emptied two sand bags from the floor of his Jeep (protection from land mines), and we stuffed them with the German money. I hid my bag in the trailer that stayed with Co. F Kitchen.

A few days before Christmas, 1944, the Second Battalion had been deployed along the banks of the Rhine River, some were in the Lauterbronn area. Co. F was dug in at a 90 degree turn in the river. S/Sgt. Herman P. Heil of the heavy weapons told me that Co. F was so far up in the bend of the river that they were getting incoming mortar and artillery shells from the rear, as well as the front. Co. F Kitchen had been set up to cook Christmas turkey near by in the yard of two old ladies, who used the front room of their home as a store (nothing to sell in it). There was a keg of wine discovered in the basement. After the news had leaked out among the 143rd Service Co. men, I knew that we were in trouble. On Christmas morning, 1944, I took my bag of German money out of the trailer and dumped all of it on the floor of the empty store. Then I said to

the two ladies, "Merry Christmas." They thanked me and said, "We have never seen that much money before." I told them that it was for the keg of wine, that was then about empty.

On January 3, 1945, the Second Battalion 143rd along with other units of the 36th Division were pulled out from the Rhine area to help contain the German offensive that had ripped into the allied lines in Belgium, and the Bitche area.

After the Kitchen truck had pulled out, Mess Sergeant Bob Nowell told me that he had turned my name in to our C.O., Captain Joe Dine for his consideration to be rotated on a thirty day furlough. Bob also said that Captain Dine had two other names, and that he could only select two. "I went ape." I was petrified all day.

Just before dark, we pulled into the yard of an old empty school house. There we fed Co. F and spent the night. Captain Dine and First Sergeant Harry McGee from Lenoir, North Carolina bedded down on the floor of a school room. I told the Sergeant that I wanted to be easily located in case Captain Dine selected me as one of the three. So, I rolled my blanket out in that room also. It was snowing the following morning. Captain Dine said to me, "Sergeant Hall, this is your lucky day. You are one of the well deserving soldiers I have selected for a thirty day furlough." He stated that it would begin after I had arrived in Fort Bragg, North Carolina. He shook my hand and said, "Have a good time, but don't forget to come back."

Well, with a bit of persuasion from the Army, I did go back. May 8, 1945 I was on a box car in Nancy, France about one hundred miles short of my outfit. We were loaded aboard trucks, and we were carried to a displaced prison camp nearby. There was a road leading out of Nancy, on which a lot of Army vehicles traveled. Some were 36th Division trucks. Two days later I finally stopped a Regimental Headquarters Co. 143rd 2½ ton truck. I asked the driver if he would deliver a message to Captain Nathan A. Hughes (Hughes got his early training in Co. F). The driver did not know Hughes, so I asked him to give my note to his C.O. to give to him. The following day, Captain Hughes sent the same truck driver in a Jeep to pick me up. When we arrived, I went to Captain Hughes office to thank him. As I was leaving, he said to me, "Let me check your service record to see if you have enough points to head back home." He told me that I had seventy-three. Captain Hughes dictated something to his secretary to add to my record that gave me five more points. Then he said, "Hall, that will put you in the next group leaving for the States." I hitched a ride on the ration truck on to Co. F 143.

On arrival, I found that my old buddy Lt. Elma Ward had been promoted to the rank of Captain and that he was our Compound Commander. Captain Ward told me that the kitchen was in good hands and to just hang around.

After a few weeks back in Co. F 143, I was transferred to the 63rd Division who were preparing to leave Europe for the States. I landed up in the Division Headquarters Co. Before being assigned to the kitchen, I had noticed that there wasn't nearly enough food being served on the chow line. Just barely enough for a small portion per man, and never any seconds. My first day in the kitchen I saw why. When the ration truck pulled up to the rear of the building, only the Mess Sergeant and a cook would be on hand to check the rations in. The following day, I observed carefully from a rear window. About one half of the rations were being loaded on a civilian pick-up truck that quickly drove off.

The next day I walked in the First Sergeant's office and asked to speak to the Company Commander whose office was in the next room. The Sergeant told me that I would have to relay my message through him. The C.O. overheard our conversation, came to the door and told me to come on in. I told him what was going on in the kitchen, and what I had witnessed from a rear window the day before. By now I had noticed that the C.O.'s rank was Major. He told me to continue on cooking as nothing was happening and that he would have it checked out. That afternoon the First Sergeant brought two KP's in the kitchen. He told the Mess Sergeant to put them to work cleaning pots for a week. He said that they had been A.W.O.L. and that this was his way of punishment. The following day military police came in and arrested the Mess Sergeant and a First Cook. They were charged with stealing. The two KP's turned out to be undercover officers from Division Intelligence.

A few days later, the First Sergeant told me to go to the C.O.'s office after I had finished serving noon chow. When I arrived, the Major took my service record off his desk and told me that he had looked it over, and that I should be proud of my achievements with the 36th Division. He thanked me for reporting the food theft to him. As we talked on, he told me that he was a tobacco buyer, and lived in Greensboro, North Carolina. When I told him that I was raised on a tobacco farm nearby, we seemed to hit it off. He asked me if I had ever been hand grenade fishing. He told me that he had found a large hole of water about ten miles up a mountain road full of nice sized fish. We got our fishing tackle together (three or four hand grenades), and took off. Our first cast in the hole brought about a dozen fish to the surface. All we had to do then, was wade around and pick them up. After two or three more casts, we had about forty nice sized fish, as best as I can remember.

We then went further on up the road to a small mountain village. We found the natives very friendly and a great demand for our wares. We made a few trades with our fish, and enjoyed the afternoon.

On the way back down the mountain the Major told me that the 63rd Division had opened a Cooking and Backing School. I told him that I knew about it, and had visited in the school before being assigned to the

Co. Kitchen. The Major also told me that the 63rd Division was scheduled to leave from the states to Japan, and that there were a shortage of cooks all through the Division for the Japan tours.

A day or two later, the Major gave me my last job assignment before leaving the European theatre. He told me that he wanted me to travel around in the area and collect surplus food and flour from kitchens to be used in the cooking school. A discription and purpose of the job, along with authority for me to solicit and collect surplus food to be used in the school was drawn up. This was typed and signed by a school officer. Transportation (a Jeep) was supplied by the motor pool.

What I remember most about this job was how well American soldiers were respected by the natives, and seeing a lot of the countryside in that section of Germany.

The middle of November, 1945 the 63rd Division was on its way to the United States. The first leg of our journey was traveling two days and one night to LaHavre, France. Then, across the English Channel to Southampton, England. There we boarded the Queen Mary. I was told that there were fourteen thousand aboard.

We sailed out of Southampton on Sunday, November 25th. About two hours out, the Captain announced on the loudspeaker these words: "Welcome aboard, and enjoy your trip across the Atlantic. God willing, we will dock at Pier 37 (Not too sure of the pier number) in New York on Friday, November 30th at elevent twenty-three o'clock." I did not believe the time could be calculated that close. I was wrong.

I traveled from New York to Fort Bragg by train, where I was discharged from the U.S. Army on Wednesday, October 3, 1945, after three years and seven months of service.

After a period of 45 years without any intention of recording this story, I am sorry I do not remember more of the details. I especially regret not remembering the name of my 63rd Division C.O. with whom I served my last 60 days.

Autobiography of the Yankee Clipper

By Ray Daily

I was born in Washington, D.C. on 23 December 1923, graduated from high school and went to work in the U.S. Government and was drafted in March 1943. Took basic at Camp Wheeler, Ga. I never got home till after the war.

We landed in Casa Blanca in July 1943 and took 40 across Africa. Join the 36th in the line in late September 1943. My group had the honor of being the first replacements to join the 36th. I was assigned to the S-2 Section of 1st Bn Hq Co 142nd. At the end of the war there were only three of us left.

It was in France that I got my Silver Star, Bronze Star and Purple Heart. In Southern France some people at Div./Corp. got the idea to put the S-2's in jeeps 20 miles ahead of the line company, that is how I got my Silver Star when four of us attacked a town. I went with the Div all the way and went home in July 1945, had a lot of points.

After the war I went to school then back to Government, most of my time was spent at the Pentagon. At the old age of 49 I retired with 32 years in government. I was with a small super secret office called the Defense Intellignece Agency.

Have been married 37 years, 3 children, 9 grandchildren. I live five miles from Pentagon/Arlington Cem. and 20 miles from Bull Run.

My first trip to Texas was your 1987 Ft. Worth. I have the greatest hobby in the world, "Video taping World War II".

Yankee Clipper

HEADQUARTERS 36TH INFANTRY DIVISION
APO #36, U. S. Army

AG 200.6 1 February 1945

SUBJECT: Award of Silver Star

TO : Private First Class RAYMOND E. DAILY, 33455555,
Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion,
142d Infantry Regiment, APO #36, U. S. Army

Under the provisions of Army Regulations 600-45, you are awarded a Silver Star for gallantry in action.

CITATION

RAYMOND E. DAILY, 33455555, Private First Class, Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 142d Infantry Regiment, for gallantry in action on 11 September 1944 in France. When over 75 enemy soldiers were spotted preparing a road block on a nearby hill, Private First Class Daily and several companions, members of the Intelligence Section, volunteered to advance under supporting fire from tanks, tank destroyers and machine guns in an attack on the hostile force. They drove to within 200 yards of the road block in two jeeps and then, dismounting, ran to the top of a hill over which the enemy had withdrawn. Reaching the crest of the hill, they opened fire against hostile troops on a sunken road below them. As approximately 60 enemy soldiers fled down the road into a nearby town, Private First Class Daily and his comrades followed them, courageously advancing under heavy antitank fire to the outskirts of town. Pressing their advantage, they began clearing the buildings of hostile resistance. When they had exhausted their supply of ammunition, they seized weapons abandoned by the enemy and continued fighting from house to house. Moving dauntlessly forward in the face of direct fire, they completely routed the hostile force and successfully cleared the town. The gallant action of Private First Class Daily and his companions reflects great credit upon themselves and the Armed Forces of the United States. Entered the Service from Washington, D. C.

HEADQUARTERS 36TH DIVISION
OFFICIAL
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JOHN E. DAHLQUIST
Major General, U. S. Army
Commanding

A "Spin-Off" Story

by Kenneth F. Sidenblad
Co. "F" 111th Engrs (c)
2nd Bn. 111th Engr. Regt.

My family moved from Morris, Minnesota to Texas in 1938. We set up our home in Houston, Texas in the Houston Heights. I was nineteen years old when my brother Clifford and I joined Company "F" of the 111th Engrs. The National Guard of Texas had provided an armoury in the old Salvation Army building on Washington Ave. and we were on the top floor. Everyone met once a week to get the dollar that was paid every three months. The money was not too much, but the $12 came in handy when we got it. The equipment that was issued to us was not the best, it must have been some that the Army didn't use anymore. It wasn't too long till we moved the Armoury to Harvard and 11th St. The building was the former Reagan Masonic Lodge. Our training consisted of tieing knots, rigging, and bridge building. Sgt's Crossman and Crums were the Platoon Sgts. Sgt. Belote was the Horse Sgt. even though we had no horses. The company officers were Capt. Merl W. Obenour, 1st Lt. Felter, and 2nd Lt. Menon W. Whitsit. Sgt. Fred Seydler was the 1st Sgt. I was in the first platoon and my squad leader was Cpl. Buck Langston. The war in Europe was heating up and Germany had invaded Poland. That was in September 1939. It was 14 months later that we were mobilized on Nov. 22, 1940 and we were billited at the armoury on 11th and Harvard St. It was close to Thanksgiving and dinner was cooked there at the armoury. Something was wrong with the food because many of the men got food poisoning and had a bad case of the "GI's". Shortly after December 1 we left and traveled by truck from Houston to Camp Mabry in Austin. The weather was cold and it had been raining when we left Camp Mabry for our trip to Camp Bowie in Brownwood, Texas. The cooks served box lunches on the way and we would stop every now and then to stretch our legs. We arrived in Camp Bowie late in the afternoon and mud was everywhere. It didn't take us long to unload and get our

tents assigned. The next morning everyone was slipping and sliding in the mud to get to Reville. The Camp was not finished when we moved in and a lot of work had to be done. The ground was just all mud, and they brought many truck loads of pea gravel in and everyone pitched in and got it spread. Some of the men went to the Quartermaster to get some lumber for making some board walkways. It seems like there were work details every time you turned around. Soon, everything began to fall in place and what seemed an impossible task now looked pretty good. Some of the men were sent to the outlying area to get some rocks that were brought back and placed around the Mess Hall and walkways. The Army had dumped the Specialist ratings and brought the T-Rating into being. I was promoted to T-4 (Corporal stripes with a T) and assigned to the Supply Room with Sgt. Cecil Nixon. We had a big job of ordering new clothes for everyone in the Co. The Army TO had been changed and it meant more equipment. We spent a full year of intensive training, in the field and on the largest Army maneuver ever attempted. There were 500,000 men involved in the Louisiana Maneuver of 1941, July, August, and September. General Birkhead was relieved of his command in September and General Fred Walker took over when we were just outside of DeRidder, LA. The Division moved back to Camp Bowie in late September and started more training. Our year of duty was just about over and then the Army added another six months to it. About a month after we got back from the maneuvers, they started taking Cadre for new units to be formed. Ten men were picked on Wed. and sent out on Saturday to the 46th Engrs.

At this time is where the SPIN OFF came about. Our Regiment and the whole 36th Div. was slimmed down. They did away completely with the 2nd Bn of our Regiment. Many of us were shipped to a new unit called the 176th Engrs. General Service. The Division left the Post in February and were sent to Camp Blanding, Fla. The rest of us, myself, James Hodges, William Mausbach, Jake Yarter, Capt. Childress, 1st Lt. Blotky, and many others were moved to East side of the camp and set up out tents there for the 176th. We were brought up to strength from men left from the division. There were not many weeks to pass till we were ordered to get packed. Finally on May 15, 1942 we got our orders to get ready. Everyone did whatever we had to do to load the flat cars and then on the 18th of May the Captain told us we would leave the next day. Our train did leave on the 19th and it was a long ride to Washington state and Camp Murry. It was raining when we got there on the 25 of May. While we were at Camp Murry, we got everything ready to leave by boat. June 16, 1942 we left for Seattle, Washington and got everyone and everything loaded on the "W. L. Thompson". Our trip from Seattle to Alaska was up the straights and then on June 25, 1942 we arrived in Valdez, Alaska. The boat had to be unloaded and we started doing that part of it on the 26th. Mausbach and his platoon left for Big Delta, and I went with them. We left from Big Delta and were flown into Northway by plane. We were part of the spin off from the 176th because we were now by ourselves in Northway. Getting our equipment up there was a major undertaking. Everything had to be dissassembled to get it on the plane. When we arrived, we found a civilian contractor there working on the airstrip. Much of our duties were to build H-type barracks and quonset huts. Our first winter, the temperature got modern and the Alcan Highway came through. Company "F" was to reassemble in Fairbanks and another spin off took place, six more of us were to be transferred and we were to be the Post Engineers. We did many odd jobs during this period of time and the Alaskan Defense Command came in and we were transferred to the Army Air Corps. We spent some time at a base between Fairbanks and Nome and our orders came thorugh and they sent me to Memphis, Tex. as Post Engineer and I stayed there until the war was over and I took my discharge in Ellington Army air base. I have always thought of myself to be a part of "F" Co. 111th Engrs. and the 36th Inf. Division.

Kreigsgefangener 3074

by Clarence Ferguson

(PRISONER OF WAR)

Kriegsgefangenen-Offz.-Lager 64
(Oflag 64)

Datum: 16.8.1944

Ungültig — Ungültig

als Legitimation für den öffentlichen Verkehr.

Gültig NUR im Kriegsgefangenen-Lager.

g 64

Der Kgf. hat diese Erkennungskarte und die Erkennungsmarke des Lagers stets bei sich zu führen. Bei Kontrolle sind beide vorzuzeigen. Verlust ist sofort zu melden.

The P. o. W. has always to carry with him this identification card and his tag. On control both have to be presented. The loss of the card or tag has to be reported immediately.

Name Ferguson, Clarence

Dienstgrad Hptm.

Erkennungs-Nr. 03074 / 64

Fingerabdruck d. r. Z. F.

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Clarence Ferguson was inducted as a 2nd Lieutenant into the Army of the United States when his unit, Company B, 143rd Infantry, 36th Infantry Division was mobilized and ordered to active duty on October 25, 1940. He served as a platoon leader, company executive officer, company commander, and battalion operations officer prior to his capture by the Germans at Persano, Italy on September 13, 1943. He was returned to active duty at the end of 1945 with the rank of Major.

Mr. Ferguson was born on Feburary 18, 1911 at La Salle, Texas, a rural community in eastern Limestone County, to P.F. and Lula Blair Ferguson. He attended the public school at La Salle and Groesbeck, is a graduate of John Tarleton College and attended the University of Denver.

In 1946 he was elected to County Judge of Limestone County, Texas where he served until 1952 when he was appointed as Judge of the 77th Judicial District of Texas, by Governor Allen Shivers. He continuously served in that capacity until he went on active retirement in 1978. He was Juvenile Judge for Limestone County both as County and District Judge.

He and his wife, Josephine Hart, live in Groesbeck, Texas. They have two children and six grandchildren.

Judge Ferguson's book, ***Kriegsgefangener****, is available through order to Julian Phillips, 36th Infantry Association, 11017 Pandora Dr., Houston, Texas at $16.50 per copy.*

CHAPTER X

The battle raged on. We were being squeezed tighter and tighter. The sun was getting low, and the enemy stepped up his attack to finish us before dark. It would be a close call, and I kept wondering if night would provide any relief. We had not been able to communicate with the rear forces for some time, nor had we heard from Major Buldain or Captain Andrews since they had left on their mission. There was little likelihood we would hear from division or corps this late in the day, and within a short time any help would be too late. No messengers had come within the past three hours.

It was almost sunset now. Outside our area the firing had diminished considerably; and ours was principally rifle fire to our left and rear. My tank was still there, and the machine gunners were still making sure I stayed in my hole. They had reduced the volume of fire, but not sufficiently to allow me to get out and cover the twenty feet of open space to the next cover.

The Germans had some English-speaking soldiers among their foremost riflemen. Every few minutes one of them would call out, "Come on boys, give up; we got you." The first time I heard it, I was shocked; but afterwards, I felt it might be a ruse. And that once we had surrendered, we would be killed. Colonel Jones evidently felt the same way, but at short intervals the callers kept inviting our men not to resist further. Finally, Colonel Jones announced loudly enough for everyone to hear that further resistance was useless. he ordered everyone to surrender.

"Remove your helmet and come out with your hands over your head," he instructed. To the Germans he called in a loud voice, "We surrender!"

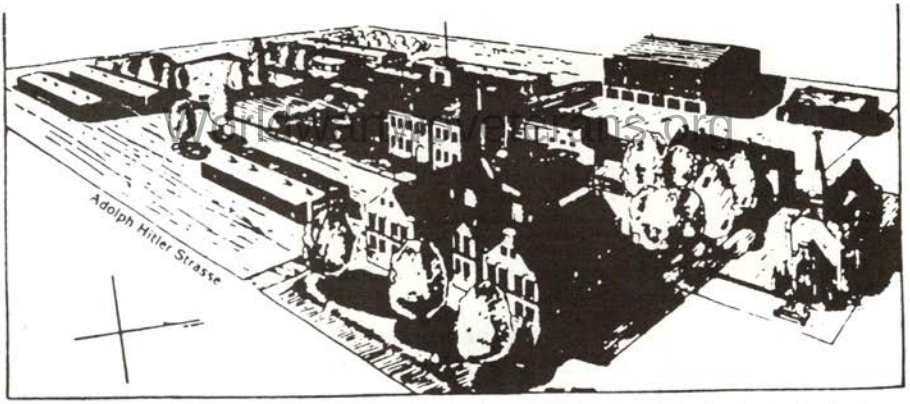
I struggled from my grave to be confronted by a German soldier with bayonet fixed and pointed directly at me. His first words were, "Pour vous le guerre se fini." (For you the war is over). I thought it strange at the time, but later learned the same statement was made individually to each man captured that day. It was the standard greeting made by every German soldier to his captive.

All firing stopped. German soldiers who were all around us rushed in and took over. While my original captor held gun and bayonet on me, another soldier approached, "Your weapon?" he asked.

I had left it under the dirt. And although I knew what he said, I pretended not to understand. Again he gutterly demanded my weapon. Again I feigned lack of communication. He jerked me around, unshapped my cartridge belt, jerked the suspenders off my shoulders and threw it on the ground. He searched me and showed annoyance at not finding a weapon. In this search he saw my wrist watch, removed it from my arm, and indicated he wanted it. I nodded in assent. Just as he finished, another German soldier rushed up to me and thrust the point of his bayonet into the pit of my stomach. It penetrated my clothing sufficiently for my skin to feel the cold steel. In excited, broken English he muttered angrily, "You kill my buddy?" My perplexity registered on him when I asked, "Where?"

"There," he said, pointing not far away to where his friend lay dead. I made no admission, and soon he left me to shock someone else in his unorthodox interrogation.

Feeling the surrender had been completed and that I was ready to join the group nearby, I reached down for my cartridge belt to which was attached my canteen and first-aid kit. My captor had looked away at the time; and when he turned his attention again to me, I had thrown the suspenders over my shoulders and was reaching down for my helmet. Again he grabbed the suspenders of my belt and tugged. This time I resisted. I had a right to have them. His next tug allowed no room for doubt that whatever I thought or said, whether understood or not, was



Prisoner James Bicker's drawing of Oflag 64. The drawing does not show the barbed wire fence surrounding the camp.

overruled. He stripped them off, threw them on the ground in disgust and for good measure kicked my helmet out of reach. It might have been the penalty for my not producing my weapon. I don't know. But others were allowed to keep both their cartidge belts and carry their helmets in their hand.

We were assembled in a small group and marched eastward toward enemy territory. The sun had set, but the twilight afforded a lasting view of the area where men gallantly fought against impossible odds. And all because of an illconceived order eminating from an inexperienced high command.

As we moved trance-like through the area we had attempted to defend, the feriocity of the struggle was painfully apparent. The carnage was almost beyond comprehension. The fading evening light obliterated from sight some of the blood and softened the expressions of agony in the faces of those as they met death. We saw no wounded, leaving us with the conclusion that in taking prisoners, this unit was sure that all would be ambulatory. Later one of our men pointed out a German lieutenant, whom he saw killing the wounded during the attack. There were dead men everywhere. Some had only parts of a body; others were in grotesque and unusual positions. But some looked as if they were comfortably sleeping. I saw one who was sitting in his trench with his back against the bank. He was erect and appeared as if he could be enjoying a smoke. But the ashen gray of his countenance left no doubt that he was dead. Even the battle-hardened guard, who goaded us forward, showed discomfort by shaking his head as he observed the carnage. With every step we made, we were prodded into further depths of despair.

During this movement I noted that my original captor was not a member of the guard detail. Also, everyone except me had their helmet. It was a part of my uniform that I had become accustomed to wearing all these years, and I felt unduly exposed as I walked along bareheaded. I especially wanted one in the event we had an air attack. At the time we were moving along a narrow road. Within minutes we came upon a soldier lying on the shoulder of the roadway. We would pass near him. His helmet had fallen off and was just in front of his face, which was turned toward us as we marched by. As I came along side, I reached down and picked up his helmet. As I did, I mentally whispered to him, "Old fellow, you'll have no further need of this. May I borrow it?"

Out of the recess of eternity an answer came, clear and impressive, "No, I'll not need it any more; you take it."

It was now growing dark; and although we were still in the general area, the guards moved us off the road into an open space. It was level and treeless with a fence around it and was formerly used as a pasture for horses and cattle. One old horse was near the road. There was a small barn near the entranceway to the property which showed evidence of recently having housed both cattle and horses. Two or three inches of

matured manure covered the dirt floor. When we arrived, we found several seriously wounded soldiers together with our battalion surgeon in the barn.

The surgeon had been painfully wounded but was caring for them as well as he could. Before the guards stopped us, he told us that the attackers had entirely destroyed his aid station along with his equipment. They had then loaded these wounded into a truck and dumped them in this cow shed. His captors refused to allow him to bring bandages or medical supplies. After learning this, the guards intervened and moved us away.

The night was filled with much suffering and discomfort for the men. It was painful to realize that their suffering would have to be tolerated without the use of any kind of pain-relieving medicines. One of the men badly needed more clothing to keep him warm. I gave him my field jacket. The wounded needed more personal attention than the medic could give, but when he made this request of the guards, they simply said "it is verboten" and turned away. The less seriously wounded would have to assist the others as best they could. It was unbelievable that we had been captured, and it was disparagingly depressive that we were denied the right to help these suffering men in whatever way we could. We were on the threshold of the knowledge of atrocities this enemy would practice.

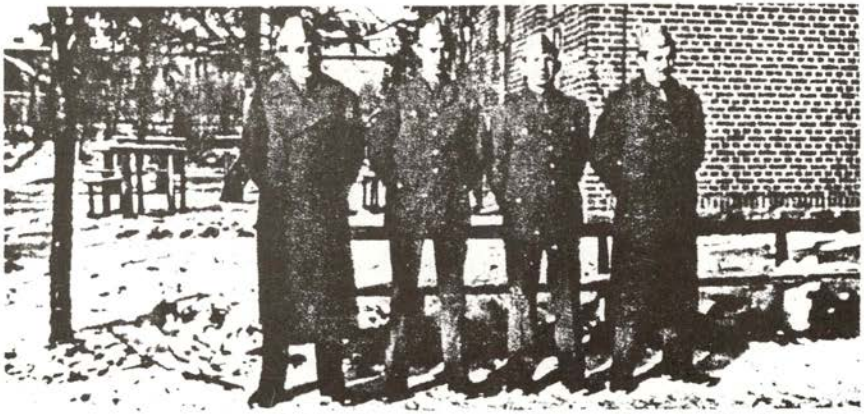
We were compressed into a small area and restricted in our individual movement to within a few feet of where we stood or sat. The guards were nervous, and we knew that they would begin shooting with little provocation. In all probability, they were inexperienced in guarding prisoners and likely had never seen Americans at close range before. Anyway they were not communicative in the least.

Included in this group are some of the officers captured at Salerno—Front row-L to R-unknown, Capt. Ferguson, Lieut. Cal Jones, unknown, unknown Second row-L to R-Lieut. Brant, unknown, Lieut. Koggen, Lieut. Young Third row-L to R-unknown, Lieut. Williamson, Capt. Bond, Lieut. Carlisle Fourth row-L to R-unknown, unknown, Lieut. Livingston, Lieut. Vaden, Capt. Robinson

As soon as we were settled, orders were whispered for each of us to check his pockets for anything that would be of benefit to the enemy in a shake down search that was sure to come. Some found such material and destroyed it in various ways. I was sure I had none; but to my consternation, I found a V-mail letter from my wife Josephine in my shirt pocket. It had to be destroyed too. I could dig a hole in the ground and bury it; in fact, I did take the knife that Captain Steffen gave me and started very cautiously to dig under my feet. I soon abandoned that idea because fresh-dug dirt would be glaring evidence that something had been buried there. Furthermore the searcher would look for the instrument used to dig the hole. I felt I might have a more urgent need for the knife in the future, and I wanted to keep it as long as I could.

Very carefully I roughed up the small hole to make it appear that it had been dug with my hands. I still had the letter, which was a reproduction of the original Josephine had written. The thought of tearing it into small shreds occured to me; but when this was attempted, it resisted shredding. The film on which it had been developed was a very tough cellulose. All of these efforts were attempted in the purview of alert guards, who were checking our every move suspectly. Finally, I tore the letter into as small pieces as I could, put it into my mouth, and swallowed it. It was less than palatable, but its existence and content were effectively concealed.

For some time there was a lull in the battle. But during the night it became apparent that our forces realized our position had fallen, and the enemy was attempting to exploit the break-through. Our artillery began a concert of saturation fire into the positions we had formerly occupied. This was done in an attempt to seal off the salient caused by our defeat. The seriousness of the situation had so alerted higher command—a thing we could not seem to do—that even naval units near the shore were pouring salvo after salvo into the breach. It is a disconsolate feeling to realize that your own forces, even though unmindful, are directing fire at you. Thinking all the time it is falling on enemy positions. It is a sardonic knowledge to be able to identify the calibre and source of origin of the projectiles seeking your destruction. For years we had been taught the characteristics of weaponry with regard to volicity, trajectory, range, and destructivity; and now we became the recipients of their deadly capabilities rather than the benefactors. The only exception was the naval firepower. We did not know its capabilities or effectiveness although we could identify it by the sound of its projectiles in flight. A frightening sound is caused by the vacuum at the base of the projectile as it moves through the atmosphere at rifle speed. It sounds like a mortally wounded monster, sucking enormous gulps of breath through a raggedly torn gullet. It is very demoralizing, but the consequences of impact are not astounding. In fact, the arc of destruction at the point of contact was much less than that of our larger caliber howitzers.



L to R-Lieut. Jean Carlisle, Capt. James Bond, Capt. Clarence Ferguson, Lieut. Brant

All night long our forces fired into the area, and just at dawn eight P-38 fighters dropped over the tree tops to rain on us the full imput of their weaponry. Maching gun and cannon alike, mounted on wing and fuselage, delivered their total fire capabilities on the area without selection as to foe or friend. Only one pass was made. It is probable that we were recognized, thus eliminating another sweep; but its result left additional wounded, and the old horse lay dead on the sparse clumps of grass near the barn.

Immediately after the aerial attack, the guards began moving us toward their rear areas. The wounded were left at the barn. We marched eastward along the road moving toward the higher mountain elevations. About 1030 hours a German version of our jeep came speeding down the road. As he came to the head of our column, the driver slammed on his brakes and in typical gutteral harshness ordered Colonel Jones and myself into the vehicle. Jones got into the seat by the driver, and as I was attempting to adjust a place in the back to sit, the driver raced away, throwing a rooster tail of gravel behind him. I was not fully ready, and he almost threw me over the spare tire, mounted on the trunk.

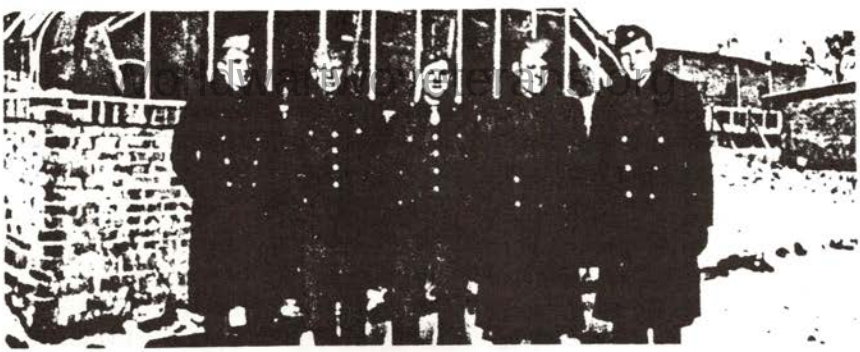
I have never experienced a more hectic ride than the one that followed. We did the switch backs on this mountainous road at a speed of sixty miles an hour or more, and on each curve a spray of gravel arched away from the direction of travel. Not a word was said during the entire trip. In a small camouflaged motor pool near the summit of the mountain, we screeched to a halt. The driver dismounted and waved for us to get out and follow him.

We moved along an old trail to a large, well-organized German headquarters. Well situated on a narrow plateau, the location provided an excellent view of the area where furious fighting was still taking place. However, it was far enough away from the battle that even the sound of heavy artillery could not be heard. Several high-ranking officers were

moving within the area. Enlisted personnel were manning the communications and other departments much like our division and corps headquarters. The one difference was that most of their officers wore what we would call dress uniforms. We later found this to be a custom in their army. No one seemed to be in any hurry, and business was being transacted in a leisurely manner. We were never to know the reason for the breakneck speed used in getting us here.

We were delivered to a young, good-looking, well-dressed Oberst (Colonel), whom I presumed to be the ranking intelligence officer. He spoke excellent English. Introductions were as formal as they would have been in the center of a football field at the opening of an important game. The Oberst extended his hand in a cordial handshake. Had we eaten? When we replied in the negative but that we were not hungry, he barked orders to soldiers nearby, who immediately brought snacks of cheese, wurst, and crackers. he apologized for not having coffee. We still politely refused to eat; and though he expressed mild concern, he was obviously impressed that we did not take this as a friendly meeting.

I was assigned to another officer who was also proficient in American speech. He and I walked to a wooded place where a picnic table stook under the trees. We sat on benches facing one another. His approach to the interrogation was adroitly and expertly done, evidencing outstanding training. He inquired into my well-being and depicted the fierce battle of the preceeding day as a contest in which each of us had been no more than spirited adversaries. He even indulged in a deceptive ruse by admitting the losses on his side were extremely heavy, while at the same time complimenting our soldiers as being the best his unit had ever faced. However, he was perturbed about the accuracy of our small arms fire. More than fifty percent of their casualties, of which ninety percent would not survive, had been shot in the head. He asked if we had specifically trained our men to shoot at their heads. I made no answer. In feigned civility he inquired how long we had been overseas and how long we had been here. Again, I said nothing. He attempted to discuss weather and other trifles all without response on my part.



At the South end of the greenhouse.—Ferguson and Lieut. John Kreech (center) with other officers

I was determined not to cooperate. My training in the practicing of law helped me in this kind of interrogation. I would not fall into his trap, and graudally he sensed I would not be fooled. A discussion of even the most commonplace things might reveal valuable military information to a well-trained analyst. And I had no doubts about this man's ability. I had no intention of revealing any information whatsoever. Furthermore, I had no desire to engage in conversation with anyone at this time. The shock of being capture had left me uncommunicative and angry. I am sure he sensed that I began to have respect for his technique in the interrogation. Even though I was uncooperative as anyone could possibly be, he never lost his politeness and calmness. Never once was there any threat of violence toward me.

Finally I said, "Captain, I am a prisoner of war and under the terms of the Geneva Convention, I am required to give only my name, rank, and serial number. And that's all you get from me."

With a slight grin, he replied, "Now I understand why your men will give only their name, rank and serial number in asnwer to every question we ask. Even when asked the most simple question, they refuse to answer. I only wish our soldiers would do the same. We receive information that ours tell everything when you question them. Your men are well trained, and you are to be congratulated."

With that the interrogation was over. We walked back to the central headquarters. Soon Colonel Jones joined us. The guard was waiting and with only a sign from his commander, he indicated for us to start walking down the road. We had gone about a mile when we came to an old rock barn. He unlocked a door and placed us in a compartment used for hay storage. The door banged shut behind us.

The enclosure had no windows, and it took time for our eyes to adjust to the darkness. Once we could see, we found a man sitting along the wall opposite the door. He was not one of our soldiers, and although we had seen few men in British battle dress, we knew that this man wore the uniform of an English officer. We were hesitant in introducing ourselves. But when we did, he responded. He was Jack Frost, a lieutenant in His Majesty's Service. Even after the introductions, we were reticent in our conversation. The barn might be bugged. We talked only in generalities even among ourselves and we were especially careful in any conversation with our new acquaintance. He mght be a German intelligence operative dressed as an English officer.

It was soon apparent that he also was not interested in talking to us, and the three of us spent an uncommunicative three or four hours before the guard took us back along the road to where we intercepted our column. Lieutenant Frost was ordered to go with us. Once we were away from the barn and when he saw that we were authentic American officers, he readily discussed his unit's particpation in the landing and the circumstances of his capture. He had thought we were "plants" and was

as suspect of us as we were of him. For many days he shared our hardships with much the same attitudes and responses that we did. Days later he was taken from us. We were sorry to see this Englishman with the unusual name leave.

Comrades bid a sad farewell to Capt. Richard Torrence

His escort

As we look back and say goodbye.

About The Book

KRIEGSGEFANGENER

Clarence Ferguson

From aboard the Elizabeth Stanton came the soldiers of the 2nd Battalion of the 143rd Infantry. They came from many walks of life to land successfully on the beach of Salerno, Italy. During the fierce battle when the Germans were counterattacking the beach head, many soldiers were killed—those who were not were taken prisoner.

Beginning with their capture, it became a day to day struggle to survive. Along with the cold, hunger and disease, these men had to cope with the mental anguish of being prisoners of war. Hitler had ordered that all prisoners of war be executed before the war ended. The men realized that their being alive when the war ended was very remote, so they set themselves to use their imagination and wit to harass their captors at every opportunity.

Many tried to escape physically. There was another type of escape, though, it was only through their imagination. During their captivity, they became welded together in an unswervable bond of comradeship which will remain forever.

Heartbreak and depression were ever with them but sometimes you had to look hard to find it. Atrocities were minimized by diversionary activities, though sometimes it was impossible to do so. These pages record some of the success they accomplished.

Our Freedoms Are Not Free

by Sam F. Kibbey

Folks, I want to tell you
Our freedoms are not free
Since the foundation of this Nation
There's been a cost to Liberty
And while this is such a grand land
I think we all agree
Despite all our abundancy
Our freedoms are not free

From the cold of Valley Forge
To the heat of Viet Nam
From Salerno's stormy beach hold
To the in-fighting beyond Inchon
From the sands of Iwo Jima
To miraculous Normandy
Our minds recall as sparrows fall
"Others paid the price for Me."

America, I love you I would give my life for you
I am proud I was chosen to serve you
Overseas in World War II
Looking back to those days
So vividly I see
That though we were gloriously victorious
Our freedoms are not free

Our lives we live in phases
Death is the final phase
We proudly praise our patriots
Now asleep in hallowed graves
The faith of our founding fathers
Is with us constantly
Through trials and tribulations
Through pain and agony
Any way you slice it
Our freedoms are not free

Our minds recall as sparrows fall
"Others paid the price for me!"

S.F.K.
August 30, 1989

A Day of Forgiving

by Wendell C. Phillippi, MG (Ret.)
143rd Inf. — 2nd & 3rd Bn's.

Phillippi is former managing editor of THE INDIANAPOLIS NEWS and retired Army major general. He commanded the 38th Infantry Division, Indiana National Guard, at the time of the Cuban Crisis in 1962.

A T-Patcher writes: He was invited by the city of Frejus, France, recently to help them observe and celebrate the 45th anniversary of the landing and liberation on the Riviera during World War II.

The Riviera invasion was a double whammy for the earlier landing at Normandy which somehow has become the only known invasion in Europe. It was called Operation Dragoon. While Winston Churchill opposed it to the bitter end and complained to President Roosevelt, crafty FDR said to him: Let Ike do whatever he has to do to win the war, Winnie. So you might say Churchill was dragooned into the operation.

Strangely enough when it took place Churchill was offshore to observe the operation which was more successful than ever anticipated.

The forces drove 300 miles in 30 days and linked with the big push from Normandy supplying muchly-needed additional troops and bringing in supplies over the ports of Toulon and Marseilles for the drive up north and the entire war effort.

His regiment, the 143rd, 36th (Texas) Division landed at H-Hour plus one on D-Day on Green Beach at nearby San Raphael and moved west to liberate Frejus in a lightning two-day operation.

An old soldier who had grown out of his uniforms he bought a new white Army uniform (first one) replete with medals. His waist on D-Day was 28 and now is 38.

Little did he know that the French would honor him in such spectacular fashion. It was his fifth visit to France. His earlier ones had been rewarding, but he always came away with the feeling that the French (a distant people) would just as soon he had stayed at home—except for the little money he spent as a tourist.

But this time at the airport he was met by hostess Josette, who fell into his arms at their first meeting with kissing on both cheeks which continued during his 15-day stay. A police commissioner's car sped him the 40 miles from Nice airport to Frejus at speeds hitting 100 mph (not kilometers) and more with a siren honking (not allowed by private cars) and much weaving and dodging. The 500 mile race back home at 125 seemed like child's play by comparison. It was a hairy beginning to a wonderful vacation.

The day of the ceremony (August 15, 45 years after the landing) he was picked up by the mayor, Francois Leotard, a rising young French politician (one to watch apparently) and escorted to his place of honor where the citizens had erected a monument to his regiment only one year after the end of the war.

While he had made a sentimental journey to the monument alone with only his wife 20 years before, this time there were dozens of flags flying, a band playing, thousands of people swarming the site and many, many beautiful, large flowering wreaths to be laid in honor of the gallant men who fought and died there. And to thank those living for their part in the liberation. There were many celebs including French political leaders, veterans of World War II, Algiers and Vietnam and the underground resisters who were there on D-Day and of Britain, Wales and many nations and colonies. Also a cold, snippy American counsel general with floppy hat who could hardly give the American the time of day.

It was a tearful reunion with people he had never known before. As he stood at attention with his cane as a support, he recalled vividly the events of that day—remembering that his battalion commander had been riddled with machine gun bullets across his chest and one of his best rifle company sergeants was killed...Why them not me, he thought? They were killed from coastal emplacements for the defense of the seaport (invade by Caesar and Napoleon) at nearby Frejus. His outfit had outfoxed the German enemy by flanking the position—something he had seldom experienced in the long, muddy, ugly campaign in Italy where he had landed at Salerno on September 9, 1943, on D-Day as part of the first invasion of the continent of Europe.

The band played the Star Spangled Banner, the British Anthem, then the Marseillaise followed by the sounding of taps.

It was a hot day and sweat poured from his body to camouflage the tears. His heart beat faster and his thanks went out to the men who were lost there and to their families.

All day the people of France thanked him for his role (minor as it was) in the liberation of their country from the Nazi yoke and for America's help also in World War I.

It was a day of forgiving. It was also an invigorating, emotional, w r e n c h ing, experience.

We had always admired the French for their art, development of chemistry, fashions, wine, entertainment and many other things. But this day their hearts opened up and offered a love like he had never felt before and filled his mind and body with love in return. God bless the French people. They care and they remember. Viva la France.

The Soldiers Who Never Grow Old

By Julian (Duney) Philips

The first time I set eyes on Italy was in the fall of 1943, during WWII. Naples had just fallen to the American 5th Army. The Americans had turned north to capture Caserta.

The Bay of Naples was as blue as the sky as the LCI eased toward the sandy shore. As I looked south, I could see the city of Sorrento, nestled in the hills across the bay. Just off the end of the peninsula was an island and I knew it had to be the Isle of Capri.

As a child I had sung the song, "On the Isle of Capri," never dreaming that one day I might get to see it.

I glanced to the northeast at a tremendous mountain which was only a few miles off the beach. This had to be vesuvius, the mountain that erupted in 79 AD covering Pompeii and the surrounding towns with volcanic ash. About 2000 people perished.

I was sent to the 5th Army Replacement Depot, awaiting an assignment to one of the combat divisions. My first day there I put in a request to be sent to the 3rd or the 36th Divisions. I wanted to go to the 3rd because my older brother was commanding officer of Co. F of the 7th Infantry Regiment. If I couldn't be assigned to the 3rd I wanted to go to the 36th because it was home to me and I knew I would find many of my friends still there.

While I was in the Replacement Depot, I went into Naples and the surrounding areas on many sightseeing trips. I wanted to see all of the places I had read about and in doing so I saw many beautiful things.

When I found my brother had been badly wounded and was being shipped home, I went to the 36th Infantry Division and asked Col. Robert M. Ives, the Division G-1, If he could get me assigned to the division.

The 36th Division was off the line, in training and receiving replacements to fill in for the loss of men and officers during the battle of Salerno.

I arrived in the Co. G area to the smiling faces of my home town friends. When the hand shaking, back slapping and greetings were over I noticed a bit of sadness on some of the faces of the men. I learned there had been an accident that day on the firing range. T/Sgt. Casiano Benijam, from Brooklyn, N.Y. was killed while demonstrating the method of firing a bazooka. A faulty round exploded in the tube, blowing his left arm off. He died in the arms of Capt. James Wharton. Sgt. Benijam had been assigned to Co. G 143rd Inf. while we were stationed at Camp Blanding, Fla. He was one of the many replacements the Division received to bring it up to combat readiness. He was an outstanding recruit and a very likeable person.

We lost many more of our young men during the month of September 1943 on the Invasion of Salerno and our push toward Naples.

Our war in Italy, during 1943-44, was ugly and dirty. The memory of those who were wounded or killed would never leave our minds. They were so young as we led them into battle. These young Americans will never grow old. We will always picture them in our minds as they were when they fell.

During the Italian Campaign, as our brave soldiers fell in combat, they were buried in a number of cemeteries throughout Italy. We have visited many of these cemeteries, standing in silence, remembering our good times together. I recall Capt. Milton Steppen, Henry Waskow, Lt. Buster, Mitchell Woods, Casiano Benijam, Will Durant, Ralph Spanner, Ernest West and Raymond Chargin Elk. The list of names could go on and on as I reminisce about those days so long ago.

We were saddened by the loss of others, they were our Prisoners of War. They would spend their time in stockades, fighting another kind of battle. The battle of survival, homesickness, deprivation, and loneliness. Most had been captured while on patrol searching out the enemy.

For the last forty three years, my family and friends keep asking, "Duney, why do you keep going back to Italy? You've been there time and time again." Most of the time I answer their question by saying, "I really don't know." Down deep in my heart I know why I keep going back. I go to show my wife the beauty I've seen there, to visit the battle fields where we lost good friends, to see the beautiful mountains, valleys and historic monuments. I go to visit the cemetery at Natturno where so many of our 36ers are still buried. We place a red carnation on as many graves as we can and say a silent prayer of thanks that we were spared.

On Feb. 15, 1944, I witnessed the bombing of the Abbey of Monte Cassino. I was on Mt. Casselone overlooking the Liri Valley. In just a few minutes the magnificent historic Benedictine Abbey was destroyed by the American Air Force.

From the monastery one can look to the southwest and see the small village of San Angelo where the 36th Division encountered some of the fiercest fighting of the Italian Campaign. Anyone who was there on the 20-22 January 1944, will never forget what happened. I go back to walk

beside the swift Rapido River and wonder how any of us managed to survive that fiasco. I remember how the trees along the river were cut to create a field of fire. It worked like a charm, because the German machine guns cut the 141st and 143rd to pieces as we tried to cross the river. None of us thought those trees would survive, but to my surprise they are still there and thriving.

Directly south, in the valley was Mt. Lungo. It was captured by the 2nd Battalion, 142nd Infantry, led by Lt. Col. Sam Graham in an unbelievable attack.

Just to the left of Mt. Lungo is Mt. Summucro. On the south side of Summucro is the little village of San Pietro where the 36th Division fought another costly battle.

The 141st and 143rd Infantry fought with distinction on Mt. Summucro. They took C. Morello and was in San Vittore before being relieved by units of the 34th Division.

The soldiers of the Texas Division who gave the supreme sacrifice south of Monte Cassino were young Americans, who would never grow old.

On Sept. 9, 1943, the landing crafts approached the beaches of Paestum, Italy carrying the 36th Division into battle. A German shell found it's target. It exploded sending hundreds of pieces of shrapnel into the men of this Texas Division, wounding and killing many. As men died, others screamed for aid men to help ease their pain. Their blood soaked into the sandy beaches and was soon washed back into the sea.

A few minutes later, Lt. Hauck, from Brooklyn, N.Y. looked over his shoulder and yelled to his men, "follow me." He only took three steps on the beach of Paestum when the German 88 shell exploded to his front, snuffing out the life of this proud young American. Lt. Hauck was dead as his body slumped to the sandy Italian beach. He would never grow old.

I have just returned from Italy where I walked over the soil where Lt. Hauck had been killed. There is nothing to show that the Lt. was ever there, only a peaceful beach and beyond that a very blue sea.

When I moved off the beach I saw the tremendous columns of the Greek Temple of Neptune that has been standing for over three thousand years. I stood and gazed upon those three thousand year old columns and I marveled at the architecture of the Temple and surrounding areas. I wondered how it had withstood the elements of nature so long. There is a feeling of serenity as I walked among these ruins and I began to understand why I returned to Italy.

There is so much to see in Italy and I never get tired of returning. The statues, paintings, old ruins, churches, the Coliseum, pantheon, the Vatican and St. Peters Square are there for all to explore and enjoy.

Then there are places we as 36ers hold dear, Paestum, Altavilla,

Lungo, Hill 1205, Summucro, San Pietro, Rapido River, Mt. Castellone, Anzio and Velettri. The list could go on and on. I never get tired of returning to these places where I spent two years of my youth defending my country.

When I left Italy to go to France in Aug. 1944, I left a torn and beaten country. Many of the lovely old olive trees had been destroyed by American and German Artillery, leaving only jagged stumps. Many of those stumps survived and are now gnarled and slightly bent, but still producing olives.

There were large pot holes throughout the valley where artillery duels had taken place. During these duels many of our young soldiers were maimed or killed by shrapnel from the exploding shells. Time stopped for these men who gave so much, so we could enjoy the freedom we have today. They will never grow old.

In early summer of 1988, I visited the quarries north of Florence, Italy to purchase a block of granite for a monument at Paestum. This block of granite was shaped and inscribed with this message to all 36ers.

This monument was erected in humble tribute
to the men of the 36th Infantry Division
United States of America
who lost their lives in the liberation of Italy
beginning on these beaches Sept. 9, 1943.

This monument should stand for hundreds of years, telling future generations that the famous 36th Division landed on these beaches during WWII.

The next time someone asks, "Duney, why do you keep going back to Italy?" I will answer them by saying, "I still have many young friends buried there who will never grow old."

On The Road To Bergzabern With Company "L", 143rd Inf. Reg.

by Rex Harrison, Jr.

At this time I had switched to the 2nd Platoon, T/Sgt. Hayden R. Pierson from Bay City, Michigan and 1st Lt. James W. Bridges from Emmet, Arkansas.

Now why in the world would any sane Medico switch Platoons? Simple, Lt. Bridges, Son of a Methodist minister, a lover of Bourbon, had agreed to give me his Gin and Cigar Ration each month to do so.

Our movement to contact formation had the 2nd Platoon on the hills to the left of the road. The 3rd Platoon T/Sgt. Bert D. Hogge from Brooklyn, NY and 2nd Lt. Guenther P. Juwig from Portage, Wisconsin on the right of the road. The 1st Platoon T/Sgt. (later 1st Sgt.) William N. Tanner from Voth, Texas and 1st Lt. Francis E. Donovan from Norfolk, Massachusetts following the road. Accompanying the 1st Platoon was 1st Lt. (later Captain) Samuel T. Jackson, Jr. from Poteet (the strawberry capital of the world) Texas, Commanding Company "L", 143rd Infantry Regiment. Also with the 1st Platoon were several tanks, how many I don't remember, although it was more than two and less than five.

Movement through the hills in the stygian (WEBSTER a. Extremely dark b. Having gloomy or forbidding aspect) night was extremely slow. Fallen trees, gullies, ambush fear was having its effect on us.

Suddenly the right formation (3rd Platoon) began to receive automatic small arms fire, 2nd Lt. Juwig being up with the scouts was pinned down and lost control of his Platoon. T/Sgt. Hogge immediately shifted his reserve squad to his left and counter-attacked. Incoming fire ceased as soon as the squad and the tanks commenced firing. No trace of any enemy soldiers was found.

Lt. Jackson correctly assumed that the fire-fight was over. The Second and Third Platoons were ordered to assemble on the road. He ordered the 2nd Platoon to point, confronted Juwig and among the various expressions used by him was "He was out of position," "he couldn't lead on his belly," "you can't control from in front" to put it bluntly, Sam was wound up and dangerous.

Lt. Bridges cranked up the 2nd Platoon and we started down the road. First Squad on the right, Second Squad on the left, Third Squad split on

each side. Bridges and I followed the First Squad.

Sam contacted Bridges and informed him that we were behind schedule and for him to get his Platoon moving and do it damn quick.

Bridges and I (to protect my Gin) went forward. Bridges became Number One Scout; I was now the Number Two.

Suddenly, with a roar like an express train, a round hit the lead tank in the turrent just above the cannon. Panic (WEBSTER a sudden unreasoning terror often accompanied by mass flight) ensued. Those tanks following the one just damaged went into immediate reverse and started for the French border. Second Platoon couldn't move that fast, but I think that we were close. Bridges and I stopped in a culvert about twenty-five yards from the tank.

From the vicinity of the tank, a voice began calling in English for s o m e one to please help him as he was hurt and couldn't see where he was going. He added that he was afraid to leave the tank and also that it might "torch" at any moment.

At least we had a survivor. I started forward toward the tank. Damn slow, as I just knew that a German tank was dug in just a few yards from the downed tank. After some careful stepping I reached the tank; the young soldier was sitting outside the vehicle with his head between his legs and sobbing to himself. My first question was where do you hurt? The second was, can you walk? The front of his face was blackened from the exploding shell, he said that he could walk and was the only one alive. I asked him to please stop crying and sobbing to keep the survivor notice from the enemy. He then quieted. I wrapped his face and we moved from the area.

On the way back, I informed Lt. Bridges that I thought that the way was clear as we hadn't received any more fire. He sent T/Sgt. Pierson and a patrol forward who verified that the march could be continued. I also notified Lt. Jackson that Lt. Bridges had started moving to contact once more.

The Tanker and I moved down the road until we came to a building with a second story level with the road. A plank led from the road to the second story of the building. A soldier told me that I couldn't leave my patient there; I led him out of earshot of the wounded man and asked him to call the Battalion Aid Station and report a wounded soldier was in the building who had suffered possible head injuries and appeared to be blinded. He agreed to do so (of course before he agreed I had asked to speak to the Senior Officer present).

I quickly caught up with Lt. Bridges. As we entered Bergzabern, a soldier came up to me and asked if we had any extra bazooka rounds as he had just knocked out a tank from down the road (pointing toward the one we had just marched on). At least three dead, one possibly blinded for life and all but one stupid Son-of-a-*** who couldn't see the big White Star on the side of the tank. I hope he reads this.

The Fighting Machine

by William R. Trimpe
Co. K, 143rd Infantry

(Bill Trimpe is a native of Covington, Kentucky but has lived across the Ohio River in Cincinnati for several years. He and his wife "Irish" have many friends in the 36th Division Association. Bill was overseas at 18. He was a Rifle Platoon Sgt. He won the Silver Star. Trimpe has long lauded the heroics of Paul Blackmer at Montelimar.)

We liberated Grenoble on August 23, 1944. Several days later we were ordered to take a rifle squad on a contact patrol. At this time our squad consisted of five men. Sgt. Paul Blackmer, Pfc. Louis Weiner, Pfc. David Pritcet, Pfc. Richard Koch, and myself made up the squad. We were to go with the Intelligence and Recon Platoon led by Major Mark Adams to make contact with the enemy. If we didn't make contact we were to go to a certain intersection of Highway 7, which was the main North-South road parallel to the Rhone River. We went farther than we were supposed to go. We were caught in a little town where the Germans had perfect observation upon our field point. The Jerries blanketed us mostly with anti-tank guns. We stayed over night. The next day, August 28th, we spotted the German observer and with one lucky shot we left town without a shot fired from the German anti-tank gun. Major Adams put the five of us in a little town behind our lines and told us to rest. We would join our Company the next day. One of our tanks was parked in the middle of the road in this little town (I can't remember the name) manned by one person. I don't recall his name but he was wounded in the leg early in the morning of the 29th. A Panzer Division hit us in the rear. As I recollect, Sgt. Paul Blackmer was pulling his two hour guard duty. He yelled "HALT" and the answer came back in German. All hell broke loose. Then we fired as fast as we could. Paul had a Thompson sub-machine gun with two clips taped together; he had four clips in all. When one clip emptied, out it came. He would turn the clip around and start firing again. The rest of us had M-1's. All of us fired so many times our barrels warped. In this little town, under a garage, was a cold storage tunnel. Someone had stacked ammo, grenades, cigarettes and candy by the case. So we had plenty of ammo, including Paul's sub-machine gun ammo. When it started to get light, Paul moved Weiner, Pritchet and Kock to the home on the right side of the road as the Germans faced us.

Paul and I took the left. Paul and I were on the same side as the ammo and supplies. We had by this time knocked out a German Half Track that had an 88 mounted on it. The Germans had knocked out our tank. We had at least 50 Germans wounded or dead on the road near the road and around the half track. At this time there was a 35 foot drop from the road to the back of the houses. Koch got hit sometime in the morning but the rest of us were O.K.

About 10 a.m. Paul said he was going on the other side to check on the fellows. Some time later, the Germans were coming down the road in force. Seeing my situation was hopeless I went in the barn where the tank driver was lying wounded. I told him our position. Also, I was hiding in the barn. We wished each other good luck. The Germans poured in the barn but didn't harm the tank driver and didn't spot us. They didn't take the wounded man because of his leg wound. Two hours went by before the forward advanced troops of the 3rd Division came into the barn. Paul Blackmer, Louis Weiner and David Pritchet were captured. Koch died of his wounds.

There was a jeep hidden in one of the barns in town. The Germans didn't find it or take it. Since I didn't drive back then, I had one of the 3rd Division guys drive the wounded tank man and myself to the nearest aid station. On the way back, we passed 10,000 German soldiers who had surrendered. That's right, 10,000!

Paul Blackmer was a Fighting Machine. Without his leadership we would certainly have been killed. I feel certain because of Paul's leadership of us in stopping the Germans early that morning it made it possible for the capture of so many Germans.

Paul D Blackmer was born in the town of Pierrepent, New York on August 4th, 1924.

Paul entered the U.S. Army on April 21st, 1943. He took infantry training at Camp Wheeler, Georgia. Joined the 36th Division near San Pietro, Italy in December 1943.

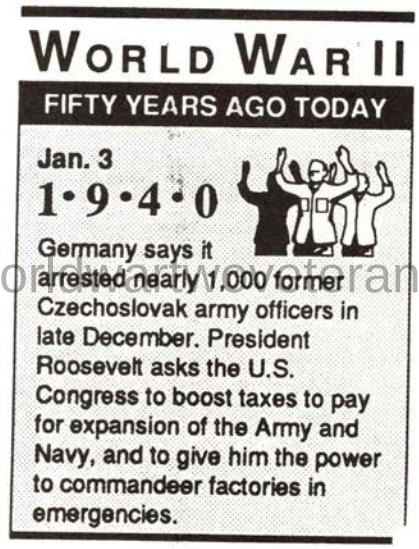
Paul was a BAR man in the assault wave during the infamous Rapido River Crossing near Cassino, Italy. He later participated in the invasion of Southern France as leader of the first squad to hit the beach near Toulon. Further action in France included the entry into Grenoble on August 23rd.

He was captured by troops of the 27th German Panzer Division on the 29th of August 1944 in Montelimar, France. After being moved to Lyon, he was transported by boxcar to Stalag 12A in Limberg, Germany. Forced to perform slave labor at Limberg for several days. He was then boxcarred to Stalag 3C in Altarewitz, via Berlin.

Stalag 3C (Alterewitz) was liberated by Russian forces about the first of March, 1945. Paul was taken by the Russians to Odessa, Russia. He stayed in Odessa approximately one week and was then shipped by British transport to Naples, Italy. Paul was returned to the United States, arriving April 20th, 1945. After a 90 day convalescent leave, and two weeks debriefing at Lake Placid, New York, he was assigned to Ft. Benning, Georgia as Provost Sergeant. He remained there until his discharge as a Tech-Sergeant on November 2nd, 1945. Paul is not only a gutsy guy, he is a great guy! A winner all the way!

Paul presently lives at 37 Riverside Dr., 7F, Canton, New York 13617, with his wife Alice.

The effort of Paul Blackmer at Montelimar was above and beyond the call of duty. I believe Paul was decorated for courageous action in the Italian Campaign. As far as I know, his unselfish and dedicated action at Montelimar was never recognized. It's been forty-five years ago now and I believe it's about time to appropriately recognize Paul Blackmer, the fighting machine of Company K, 143rd Infantry, 36th Division, and the courage showed in the battle of Montelimar. It was non-coms like Paul Blackmer of New York who made the Texas Division such a great combat unit. It doesn't seem right to me that greatness like Blackmer's goes unrewarded. Don't you agree?



V-MAIL

(CENSOR'S STAMP)

To
The Ex-Band Members
of the 141st Infantry Regiment
Band, 36th Division (1940-1945)
% Historical Quarterly
Hicks A. Turner Editor
Rt 2 Box 236
Clyde, Tx 79510

From:
Ramon and Maria Narvaez, Jr.
(Sender's name)
3609 Lazy Spring
(Street address)
Houston, Texas 77080

Dec. 17, 1989
(Date)

To my old buddies of World War II, 141st Infantry Regiment Band. 36th Division. I hope this V-letter will bring old memories of the Camps Bowie, Blanding, Edwards, the Louisana and North Caroline (Watermelons) Manuevers. The SS Brazil, North Africa, the mountains (Atabrine) Casa Blanc the worms at the Cork Forest, Rabot, Arzew and Oran. The first two beautifu moonlight nights aboard the Jefferson on our way to Italy. The Baptism of Fire at Salerno Beach (Paestum) Italy on Sept. 9,1943, the apple orchard at Naples, the pink house, San Pietro (and the piano), II Corps, the R.W. Emer and back to Africa. The peanuts sandwichs at the Canteen, the British Ship Samaria that fed us mutton on the way back to Italy, Rome and our last stop at Ponte Egola. Then Pisa and the B-17 that flew to Dakar, C-54 to Natal, t gooney bird to San Juan and Miami and our last train ride to Fort Sam Houst and home (The rupture duck). Nice free trip, four years and nine months.

Well good ole buddies God bless you all and say a prayer to our faller buddies.---Oh yes before I forget. Remember that beautiful Italian girl I t at Ponte Egola, well we got married. Forty six years has gone by since this V-mail was issued near San Pietro, 1943 Christmas eve and Christmas Day was cold and wet. No fan fare. To day 1989 Maria and I wish you all and the 36 Division a "MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR" Sam & Maria Merry X

Ramon and Maria Narvaez, Jr.
3609 Lazy Spring Houston Tx 77

My Most Terrible Experiences in WWII

by David Arvizu
143rd Infantry

PREFACE

In November 1988, Michael C. Wales and I met at his hotel room in Colorado Springs. He was visiting Colorado Springs on business. We reminisced about our experiences in WWII as members of B-143, and in particular about the action in the following article.

Michael had just returned from the hospital and rejoined the company the night of 26 November after dark and took over the 2nd platoon without a platoon sergeant, and 18 men whom he had never seen before. By the evening of 27 November he was commanding Company B as the senior officer in the company.

Michael and I exchanged memories about the incident and when he returned home he mailed me a copy of a postcard he picked up at the building we made the assault on in November, 1944. I hope the copy I am sending will reproduce in the Quarterly.

The enclosed photo was taken in October, 1973 just before my retirement from the Army at Fort Carson, Colorado.

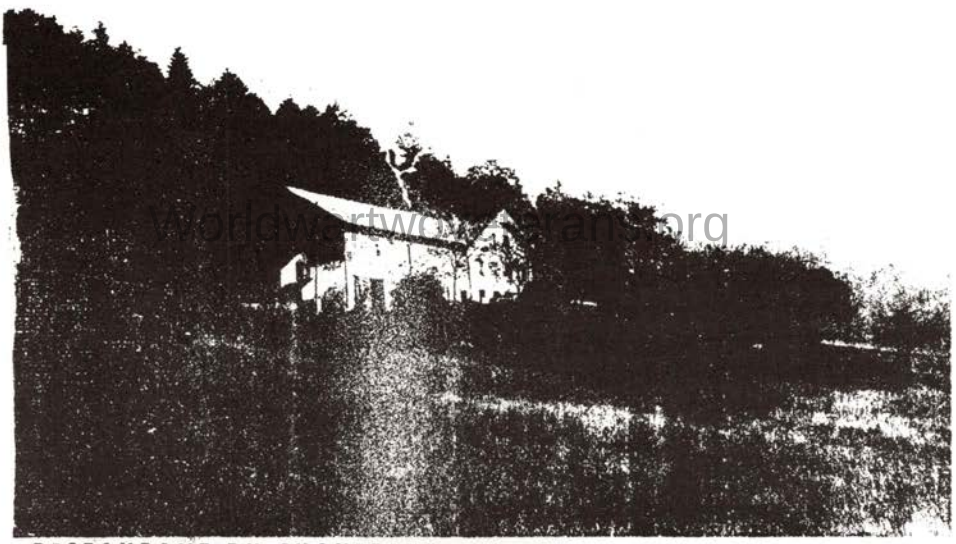
Quite a long time ago while I was still on active duty someone asked me "What was the most terrible experience you had in WWII?" Without hesitation I answered "The day of 27 November 1944 when two of my best friends were killed."

For many of us who served as combat infantrymen in WWII, we remember many "bad" experiences, but there is usually one that was really terrible. Sometimes it was something that happened to us personally such as: being severely wounded; captured and subsequent misery in a POW camp; or total collapse-mental and physical or what is sometimes called "combat fatigue." As for just being frightened, fatigued, or physically miserable due to combat duty was mostly accepted as a condition of infantry combat.

For me the 27th of November 1944 is a day that will remain in my memory as the most terrible experience of WWII as long as I live.

Company B 143rd Inf. Regt. on the morning of 27 November was deployed on the line of departure, platoons abreast along a fence line at the bottom of a ridge. This ridge was in the vicinity of Sur le Haute and Eschery at a point near the highest crest of the Vosges Mountains. On signal the company was to attack uphill to the top of the ridge some 500 yards away. Previous information indicated that the enemy had defenses along the treeline near the top of the ridge, however, exactly where and in what strength was not known.

The weather was cold and there was a dense fog that made it difficult to see beyond 20-30 yards in any direction. Our CO, Cpt. Chambers, kept checking with his platoon leaders to insure that every unit knew when to begin the assault, and remind everyone that we were to assault in



RESTAURANT DU CHAUFFOUR - Ste-MARIE-AUX-MINES-ECHERY

a line of skirmishers and that no one would stop until we reached the crest of the ridge. For many of us who had been with the company for a long time this was an unusual formation for an attack. I as well as many others had never seen this formation in combat, though it had been used in training exercises. Perhaps the dense foggy conditions on this particular morning was the reason that someone, at whatever level of command had decided to use this particular formation.

Upon receiving the signal to move forward, all elements of Co B moved slowly uphill. The terrain appeared to be an open pasture and wth the heavy fog initially favored the assault. Cpt. Chambers was in the center of the line with the first platoon. The company had moved forward about half the distance to the top of the ridge when suddenly THE DENSE FOG WAS NOT THERE! Apparently the blanket of fog only extended up to a certain elevation and we had just reached that point. Our mortars had been firing on the suspected enemy positions and they were probably anticipating an attack. Suddenly the enemy opened fire with machine guns and riflemen emplaced along a line of trees just below the ridgeline. We were caught out in the open in bright sunlight in a vulnerable formation. and no cover. Cpt. Chambers gave the signal for all units to advance forward and all elements responded moving forward swiftly. (I was reminded at this time of a similar assault by the Nisei of the 442nd Inf. Regt. at Bruyers. They were actually running forward during the attack firing from the hip).

We had rushed forward about 100 yards when I saw Capt. Chambers get hit by a bullet at about the junction of his left shoulder and neck. He turned and took a few steps back. When the men close to him saw this movement they hesitate and some of them started to turn back. Realizing what was happening when he turned back, Capt Chambers pulled a handkerchief out of his jacket pocket, put it over the wound and rushed forward again. As we moved forward to within 100 yards of the defense line I could see some of the enemy to the left of a large building running to the right and behind the building. The building appeared to be a large ski lodge and seemed to be the center of the enemy defense line, with defensive emplacements extending to the left and right along the tree line. My 1st squad veered to the left of the lodge and rushed the emplacements on the left side of the lodge. Bob Cassidy's squad rushed directly at the machine gun firing from the lodge. I could see that they were receiving heavy fire and hand grenades were being thrown at them. Suddenly I saw heavy fire and hand grenades were being thrown at them. Suddenly I saw Bob stumble and fall. He had been hit by the machine gun and hand grenades about ten yards right in front of the lodge. I could see that other men around him had also been hit.

By this time my 1st squad had reached the enemy defense positions and we were fortunate that they had been abandoned, but the enemy had formed a defense about twenty yards to our right and about twenty five

yards directly behind the lodge. Our squad immediately took cover behind some large pine trees and began to fire at the enemy behind the lodge. Joe Brocato my assistant squad leader and I took cover behind a large pine tree and began taking turns firing at the enemy at the rear of the lodge.

Moments later the Germans inside the lodge came running out the back door and joined the group that we had been firing at. One who appeared to be the leader began firing a machine pistol at us. Joe Brocato returned the fire and wounded him. Heavy fire was still coming at us and I took a turn at firing back using a full clip. I pulled back behind the tree and Joe took the firing position and was about to fire when he suddenly slumped down. I pulled him behind cover of the tree and called to him "Are you OK? Where are you hit?" He did not answer or move. I opened his shirt and undershirt but could see no blood or wound in front. Then I yelled for the medic and turned Joe over and saw where a bullet had come out of his back below the left shoulder blade. I could see he was not breathing and turned him to check his chest again. At this time I saw a very small bullet wound just underneath his left nipple. I yelled for the medic again and called to Joe but he showed no sign of life and just lay still where I had placed him on his side. I then realized he was dead. One single bullet had killed him, probably going right through his heart with no external bleeding at all in front.

I was in a state of shock! An unbelievable anger came over me. By this time the rest of the company had routed the enemy and captured those that were directly behind the lodge, and were in the process of disarming them. I rushed to where the Germans were being disarmed completely berserk, and determined to shoot the one that I thought killed Joe. Some of the men in the 1st platoon held me, took my rifle away and led me a short distance away where I sat down and leaned against a tree.

The company cleared the area and began to move forward and to the right following a trail. The medics stayed behind to take care of the wounded. I asked about Bob Cassidy and was told that he too had been killed. I do not remember how long I sat there but when I looked around me the medics were still there and the company had moved on. I got up and began walking in the direction the company had taken.

After walking about 1000 yards I sat down on a tree stump. I was still in a state of mental shock. I thought about what had happened to Bob and Joe, then started crying. Joe and Bob had been closer to me than anyone since I joined the company in Italy. They had patiently taught me all those little details that keep an infantryman alive in combat. Joe had been with the company longer than I and should have been given command of the 1st squad instead of me. Yet he was content to be my assistance squad leader. I also recalled how he would generously share the contents of the packages he got from home with the squad. I felt a sense of guilt thinking that maybe if I had done something differently Joe would still be alive.

A sense of loneliness came over me and I felt that I couldn't go on anymore. I thought to myself that maybe if I just sat there the war would pass me by and that would end all the grief and misery. I heard the thump of mortar rounds falling close by and did not move. I do not remember how long I sat there. A mortar round fell close by and a piece of shrapnel hit me in the left leg going through the upper part of the boot and into the flesh about one-half inch. This woke me up mentally. I removed the hot piece of shrapnel and pulled off the boot. Then I put a bandage on the wound, and put the boot back on noticing that there was almost no bleeding.

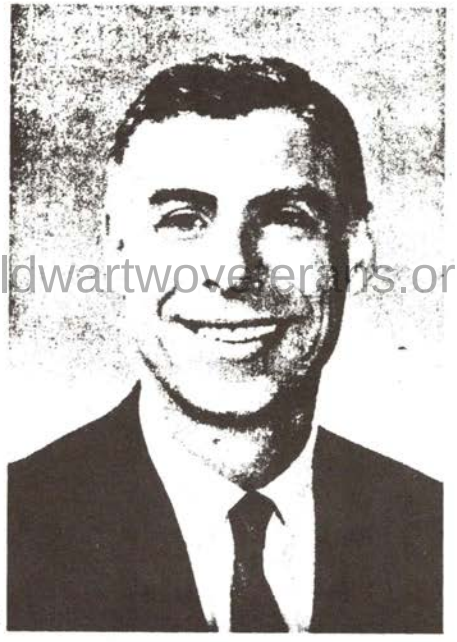
I got up and began walking in the direction the company had taken. As I walked along I began to get over the state of shock I had experienced and tried to get control of myself. I made up my mind that I owed it to Joe and Bob not to be a quitter and to carry on and do my job. Quite a while later I caught up with the tail end of the company and then joined my platoon. I was glad that the men sensed what I had been going through and did not ask where I had been or what I had been doing. I spent a restless night in a sleeping bag but by morning was ready to lead my squad again.

Throughout the years of my military career, especially on the 4th of July or Memorial Day, as I saluted the flag I would recall Bob Cassidy and Joe Brocato and in my mind I could see their faces superimposed on the flag. They represented in every way the combat infantryman of WWII-loyal to country, comrades, and devotion to duty.

Silver Star

David Arvizu -

MacGibbon's Mule Barn



by William D. MacGibbon

This is the first of William D. MacGibbon's MULE BARN. You will meet other men of this famed platoon in subsequent issues.

The Editor

In commemoration of 40 years in creative selling and advertising, we have published the attached account. Written 42 years ago, it recalls some of the more printable experiences of my platoon in the Fighting 36th (Texas) infantry Division. We are pleased to share them with our friends, many of whom, I'm sure, had similar experiences. Hats off to the past...coats off to the future!

the I and R Platoon, 143rd Infantry

Introduction

After a war is over, there are few things that stick in one's memory more than the incidents concerning those men with whom he lived, fought and worked. Constantly I find my thoughts wandering back to the dusty plains of Salerno Bay, the rain and excitement of France and the green rolling fields and beauty of Germany. There I see a group of soldiers huddled in an O.P. (observation post), some cleaning their weapons and equipment, some sleeping and others cooking "10 in 1" rations on a Coleman stove. These are the men of the I and R (Intelligence and Reconnaissance) platoon of the 143rd Infantry Regiment, 36th (Texas) Division.

Feeling that I should write down just for the record, the outstanding events that linger in my mind—and quickly fading—I started searching for a title for such an account. I soon came to the conclusion that recalling the activities of one member of the platoon would supply me with a name. That soldier was "Cowboy Collins," one of my Texas sergeants. So I tried to remember the many incidents in which "Cowboy" was involved.

I remember that it was S.O.P. (Standard Operating Procedure) for my platoon to have a base for their operations, either a barn, a house, a cellar, or a jeep. And whenever it was possible they would run a wire to the regimental C.P. (Command Post) so that they could be reached immediately when needed. Invariably when I called this base and Collins was there, he would answer the phone, drawling, "MacGibbon's Mule Barn, Collins talkin'."

Come on inside the "Mule Barn," I want you to meet my platoon.

going to the 36th Division

This account, for me, really begins at Camp Patrick Henry, Virginia, the Port of Embarkation where I shipped out as a replacement second lieutenant. Those narrow gold bars seemed much narrower as I entered Patrick Henry to go overseas for the finals. When I arrived at this camp, I was informed that I would be there for a long time. "This is a slow moving place," I was told. But in a few days I found myself lugging almost everything I owned but a foot locker aboard a troop ship; and I was on my way overseas.

When the ship cleared the harbor we were informed that our destination was Italy. The trip on the peaceful South Atlantic was a lazy one, lots of time lying on deck, smoking Dutch Master cigars (much to the disgust of those near the rail) or sitting below playing chess and listening

to war tales by pilots just returning to Italy after a 30-day leave in the U.S. But it wasn't long before we sneaked through the Straits of Gibralter (affectionately called "Gib" by us world-travelers) and moved calmly into the serene Mediterranean. What a cruise this was! We feasted our eyes on the coast of North Africa where Oran and many other chalk-white, romantic-looking cities were nestled among the blue-pink hills. This was the lull before the storm—so we enjoyed every minute of it.

When we floated into Naples Harbor we were itching (literally) to get off the ship. After a few hours Vesuvius and the town of Naples were old stuff to us and we would rather wait below. It was dark before we unloaded. About 1800 (6 p.m.) we piled off the ship, burdened with our heavy barracks bags, through the dark eerie alleys of death and filth so characterstic of war-torn cities, and into "bite-size" boxcars. Although our tiny boxcar was loaded, in true army style, we always had room for "just one more;" so we packed in a few more men. That night we spent singing, some G.I. had a banjo, and squirming, trying to get comfortable...wondering where we were going. Next morning we rolled out of the cars, looking and feeling like sacks of potatoes, onto trucks and bounced along for about 15 miles to a replacement depot near Caserta. This camp was a dairy farm formerly owned by some Italian count.

Wondering what to expect, the "permanent party" (G.I.s on duty there) at the Repell-Depell (G.I. for Replacement Depot) assured me that I would probably be here for at least two weeks. So settling down to "sweat it out," I decided to get my clothes washed. Several of us hiked up a hill to a quaint Italian village, one of the few untouched by the ravages of war. Along the road beside us trudged young and old Italian women, their heads burdened with huge baskets of grain and manure. As the manure seeped through the weaving, brown stains ran down their foreheads and along their cheeks. It was interesting, but not very appealing.

I told the Italian woman who was going to wash my clothes, "Take your time, I'll be back this time next week." But when I returned to camp, I was informed that I was shipping out at 10 in the morning, So, in the dusk of evening, I hurried back up the hill, grabbed my clothes, thanked the woman, returned to camp and started packing.

Next morning we climbed into waiting trucks and were told we were heading for the 36th Infantry Division, the Texas outfit, one of the toughest. Well, I knew now sure as hell that I would be dead next week at this time, the way I was being shoved forward. Not knowing what to expect and raring to get going (a peculiar habit of American soldiers), we had a great time enjoying the green Italian countryside and romatic homes on the hillsides, as we rode south through Naples and Salerno into the dusty flats of Paestum. We found that the 36th Division was nowhere near the front but that the majority of them were down at the Gulf of

Salerno, on ships, practicing amphibious landings. So I relaxed in the feeling that I would probably live a few more weeks at any rate.

and then—the 143rd Infantry

As a clerk divided the names on the list of replacements to the division, all officers from the M's on went to the 143rd Infantry. When I arrived at the C.P. (Command Post), the regiment was on ships, but I found a place to sleep on the second floor of an old dirty farmhouse that was wild with mosquitoes. Spent the evening with Lt. Joe Presnall, exec. of the regimental headquarters company, who said that they needed an I and R platoon leader. That sounded good to me as I had some experience with the I and R platoon in the States.

That night I read General Walker's "Farewell Message" to the division (facing page). Even though very lonely and uncertain, I was glad to be assigned to such a good outfit.

Next day we were called up before the regimental commander, Colonel Adams for a welcome. He was a gruff-looking man with a heavy moustache. He told us about the regiment's outstanding combat record in Italy so far and said that we would get recognition for all our good work but God help us if we didn't do our jobs. Then the S-1 (adjutant) Captain Boyd lined us up and asked if we had any preference for company. Immediately, I remembered the advice of a sergeant I had in R.O.T.C., "Don't volunteer for anything in the army. Let them tell you what to do." Well it seemed to me that things were going to be pretty rough anyway, volunteer or not, so I raised my hand and said, "I would like to have the I and R platoon." I got it. At least I was assigned to the headquarters company and told to supervise the I and R platoon's training.

I hurried down to the company area and met Sergeant Stansell, the acting platoon sergeant. The platoon sergeant, Sgt. Stokes, was in North Africa going to intelligence school. I told Stansell the first thing I wanted to do was to learn the names of the men in the platoon and have them get to know me. So Stansell assembled the platoon one hot afternoon. This small group (about 20 men) fell out in the dusty field in front of their tents. As usual there was one straggler—not in uniform, his dark-skinned upper half uncovered and he sported a heavy moustache. Stansell yelled, "Hurry up, Collins." That was my first introduction to "Cowboy Collins," who was then a private but everyone called him "Sergeant Collins." As I got the story he would get busted back to private when the regiment was out of the line, but in combat he was so good that he soon became sergeant again. So everyone just kept calling him "Sergeant Collins" because if he wasn't that now—they knew he would be soon.

As I inspected their rifles, they gave me their names. It sounded like a foreign army—names that I had never heard before: Teixera, Mikulenka, Scharenburg, Halpern, Le Moullec, Soileau, Veenstra, etc.

Then we went to the motor pool, in the shade of an old Italian farm building, and met Johns (later to be my driver), Gegetski, Grenda, McCurdy, Pankake and Pierce. Each man was working on his jeep giving it the once over after the landing problems. We then moved to the C.P. (Command Post) and met Ferrara, Bloch, Green and West. They were the C.P. group, that is, the group that did the map and office work for the S-2, regimental intelligence officer.

In order to learn more about these men, the next day Stansell had them come individually and visit me in the shade of the supply tent. The initial meeting meant more to cement me with these men than I had hoped. I got to know them and they began to know me. I learned what fighting skills they had, some of their war experiences, what they did in civilian life, and what their plans were after the war. Marley told me how he was B.A.R. man (fired the Browning automatic rifle) with L Company at Altavilla after the landing at Salerno, firing out of the same window as Commando Kelly; someone told me how Stansell got a Silver Star in the mountains last winter; they all agreed that he was a "goin' Jessie" (a word used in the regiment to signify that a person is an outstanding fighter); how Cowboy Collins was written up in *Time Magazine* as the "eagle-eyed sergeant from Texas;" how Halpern had completed law school in New York and how terrific he and Hutton were at the Rapido River; how Le Moullec was a cook on the French liner *Normandy* and got stuck in the United State and joined the U.S. Army; and how Mikulenka's mother was fattening up some chickens for him when he returned to the States.

Well, after this meeting we trained in Italy, my men trying to teach me everything they knew, as we trained night and day for the invasion. Where this invasion was, was anyone's guess. "Axis Sally" told us one night that we were going to land at Southern France. She also told us that we could put back our T-patches (the division insignia) because they (the Germans) knew that we were training in the Bay of Salerno. She also sent her regards to "One Blanket Adams," as she so fondly called our regimental commander because he allowed each man to carry only one blanket.

Then on the beautiful clear morning of August 15, 1944, we invaded Southern France. I was supposed to report to the officer's pool at Service Company to be used as a replacement. I never located Service Company (tongue in my cheek) but did locate the I and R platoon near St. Raphael and attached myself to them. I stayed with that platoon until the winter of 1945 when I was sent to the First Battalion as S-2 and Major Webster, the regimental S-2 wrote a letter to my wife, an excerpt of which is below:

Feb. 26

Dear Mrs. MacGibbon:

It seems peculiar to call you Mrs. MacGibbon—I know your husband so well I feel that I should know you. Bill worked for me for about four months and I got to know you that way. The reason I am writing is that Bill has left his old job and is now with a Bn. of the Regt. and rather than beat around the bush I'll say what I have to say. Your husband did a hell of a fine job as the I and R platoon leader. He went to his new job with a very high recommendation from the regimental commander. And his platoon was just about heart-broken to see him leave. That in itself is a real mark of a leader..."

Well, there was a big lump in my throat as John shook hands with me at the First Battalion C.P. in Hagenau, France, and then left me. But I've gotten all wound up here, sorry. I want you to meet these men—my I and R platoon.

the I and R Platoon, 143rd Infantry, through France, Germany and Austria

This is PANKAKE. When I attached myself to the I and R platoon in San Raphael, I rode in Pankake's jeep, until he was captured. He was a very quiet fellow, never laughing aloud just smiling, but always game to try anything.

Pankake, at home, after the war.

The platoon had a busy day outside Digne, France, trying to find a place for the regiment to cross the Durance River, as we followed Task Force Butler on the sunny afternoon of August 20, 1944. We were the point for the regiment. There was not much actual danger, except from snipers in the mountains. And most of the Germans we ran into were ready to surrender because their officers and noncoms had told them to stay here and hold a line while the officers and noncoms went back and prepared other defensive positions. They felt that they were being fooled, so they didn't feel like fighting.

When we reached the river, all the armored units in front of us were crossing on one railroad bridge—the going was slow and bumpy over the ties, so we started looking for another place for the regiment to cross. Up the river all the bridges were blown so we started south. We were stopped by an hysterical Frenchman as we entered the town of Le Mees. He was shouting, "Boche armor." We questioned him and he said that German tanks were approaching their village from the south and probably entering the village by now. So we continued winding through the streets of the town, feeling that we should check this report and at least give the regiment some flank security. As we drove through the streets, Pankake and I strained our necks around every corner, our hearts in our throats, hoping we would see the Krauts before they spotted us. I turned to Pankake, there was no expression on his face, as usual.

Fortunately, like so many reports from natives, the Frenchman was wrong. We didn't run into any Krauts. But we continued our reconnaissance cautiously, to the south to find a bridge.

These two men are SHARENBURG and WILKINSON. I never really got to know them. They were captured along with Pankake. Both seemed very alert, good natured and hard workers.

As we headed south to find a crossing over the Durance River for the regiment, Wilkinson stopped his jeep and Scharenburg pointed his .50 caliber machine gun towards the fields. We saw two persons crouching in a ditch. Thinking they were German soldiers, we dismounted and kept our rifles and sub-machine guns ready as we moved towards the figures. As we neared a young French couple, making love in the field this bright afternoon, rose—frightened—and sheepishly walked up the road to the nearby village. Having disturbed their love-making we climbed back into our jeeps—also slightly embarrassed. Finally at La Brillanne we found a large concrete bridge intact. We hurried back and got the head of our column and lead the regiment across the bridge. We used lots of precious gasoline but sure saved the regiment some precious time.

This is MCCURDY. In Marsanne I was given the job of guiding the companies of the Third Battalion to the regimental positions near Condillac. Pankake was out with an O.P. group, John's jeep, hidden behind a building where he thought it was safe, was knocked out by a couple of Jerry shells, so I had to use McCurdy and his jeep.

We led one group who were loaded in QM (Quartermaster) trucks with Negro drivers. We started unloading where we thought there was no danger of the Jerries seeing us. But a German SP (self-propelled mount with an .88 in the nose) spotted us and opened fire. Two Negro truck drivers, standing near me, looked at each other and rolled their eyes. One said, "Is that artillery I hears?" the other quickly replied, "Yes, suh. We better git this valuable equipment out of heah." With that, they jumped into their trucks; and the string of trucks were turned around and disappeard towards Marsanne in a cloud of dust.

Later McCurdy and I led several truckloads of G.I.s to Condillace and were returing to Marsanne, when an SP spotted us. All the way back he fired at us, and kept just enough behind the jeep to keep us hurrying. It was all McCurdy could do to keep the jeep upright when we hit some of the shell holes in the road.

One lone G.I. lay dead along the road. After a day in the hot Southern France sun he became quite smelly and the S-1 tried to raise hell with the G.R.O. (Graves Registration Officer) of the regiment because the man was not picked up. In trying to locate the G.R.O. it was found that he too was dead, having been killed in Romans the day before by direct tank fire.

Part of the I & R platoon on the Salerno Plain: Front row: Williams, Gegetski, Smith, Pierce, Marley; Back row: McCurdy, Nelson, Teixeria and Veenstra.

This is TEIXERIA. He was on O.P. 3 with Scharenburg, Pankake and Wilkinson. This O.P. was in the K Company positions on Magnron Ridge east and above Highway No. 7, which is the Marseilles-Lyon highway along the Rhone River.

One night just after I arrived in the regimental C.P., which was in the eleventh century chateau near Condillac, the S-2 and his men laid down to get some rest. So I took over the radio and started receiving radio reports from the O.P.'s Teixeria, the radio operator on O.P. 3, kept sending in reports that the fighting was getting awfully close to their positions. Suddenly in a quiet voice, without using code, Teixeria reported, "O.P. 3, closing down, the Jerries are right in our position." This was the last we heard from O.P. 3 as the Germans took over the ridge.

A few days later when we had a couple hours' rest and the fighting had moved further north, Nelson asked to go back to locate our O.P. group. He returned at dusk with tears in his eyes. He had looked at all the dead on the hill but couldn't find any of our men. Later we learned from the G.R.O. that Teixeria was killed. As the others weren't found; we hoped that they were safe.

Four Point Two Chemical Mortar (In Retrospect)

by Joel W. Westbrook

Here are some coincidences centering around 4.2 chemical mortar ammunition.

These shells spewed forth phosphate smoke. Accurately. Inflicted severe respiratory injury, and disabling skin and eye burning.

In France in early 1945 we ran out of ammunition. By "we" I mean every Seventh Army combat unit. We were told that there had been a drastic supply break down.

Because of this ammunition shortage, all echelons (Army, Corps, Division), imposed strict restraints on using all ammunition except for 8 inch howeitzer (not suitable, really, for support of infantry attack, or defense.) And except for 4.2 chemical mortar ammunition.

Our 4.2 Chemical Warfare battalion was corps troops. Attached to our regiment was a 4.2 company, and then a platoon to our Second Battalion.

This platoon suffered a muzzle burst explosion, killing and wounding a few 4.2 platoon soldiers, and some of our own Second Battalion troops.

Almost immediately then Corps froze all 4.2 usage.

We were left then dangerously vulnerable.

Just about then I drew a 72 hour leave to Paris.

When I returned I was directed to report to the regimental commander. He wanted me (uniquely with a law degree) to draft charges against the 4.2 Chemical Warfare company commander.

The Colonel said he had ordered the 4.2 commander to a position to support our First Battalion's counter-attack against the 10th SS Panzer Division's penetration of our position near Strasbourgh. The 4.2 captain refused to comply with the Colonel's order, saying that his men would become too exposed there.

Down to our regiment came the Corps Chemical Warfare officer who had been designated by Corps as Investigating Officer for this courtmartial charge.

He almost whispered to me that the 4.2. company commander's father was a powerful influential man, and that we should be very cautious about pressing these charges.

When I reported this advice of caution to my regimental commander, he exploded that he didn't give a good g-d d-amn who the captain's father was, "He disobeyed my order!"

The captain was convicted and sentenced to dismissal and twenty years.

This sentence was commuted by Supreme European Commander, General Eisenhower.

The next year as a civilian observer I say through some hearings of the U.S. House Military Affairs Committee, Andrew Jackson May, Democrat, Kentucky, Chairman.

Within the coming year I read of indictment and conviction of Congressman May. His offense: accepting bribes from a maker of 4.2 mortar ammunition. That's right...father of the disobedient captain.

"I Was There, and You Are My Buddy"

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

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

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

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

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

Oran Stovall

Houses of Italy

By Sgt. Newton H. Fulbright

Editor's Note: TSgt. Newton Fulbright was in Co M, 143rd Inf., captured and escaped. He returned to the company and stayed to the end of this war. He became a newspaper reporter and worked at this for several years. Truman E. Moore of Co M, 143rd sent in this article and info on Fulbright. Moore says he has Fulbright's typewriter and will place it with the 143rd collection.

They are dark and dingy but GIs at the Cassino front won't forget how comfortable life was behind their thick walls when the German shells were thundering outside.

With the fifth Army in Italy—The house on the east bank of the Rapido River was a very fine house for a CP. Like all Italian houses, it was built entirely of stone: there was no wood in its construction at all. It was two-storied, and there were many rooms. A room on the ground floor of a strong two-story house, on the side that is as far from Jerry as you can get, always makes a fine company or battalion CP.

There were barrels of *vino* in this house. The men drank the *vino* and slept in the beds and cooked in the large, smoky, messy fireplace, and lived as well as can be expected on the Italian front.

Looking back over the whole Italian campaign, especially the "40 days and 40 nights" on the Rapido River and the high cold hills above Cassino and the celebrated Abbey, I feel that the big, dingy and terribly dirty old houses of Italy have had an epic meaning in the lives of us all.

After I was captured by the Germans at Altavilla, I learned from them how to appreciate a good house. And there is something about a house—aside from its massive stone walls, tile roof and thick braced concrete floors above your head—that is spiritual, emotionally embracing and warm.

Sitting on a bed roll with two or three massive *vino* barrels in an opposite corner, I have enjoyed with our men a particular joviality and comradeship, a sort of high security, while German shells thundered a few short yards away.

"The Tedeschi is a madman," someone may say. "Listen at that—like a mad ol' man coming in the house an' kicking the dogs off the porch an' smashing cooking pots and glass bottles all over the kitchen."

We made a costly attempt to cross the Rapido on Jan. 21. After that we stayed in our houses, and the Jerry stayed in his on the smoothly sloping west side of the river. Occasionally someone at an OP would call down to us in Company M and report that the Jerry had been spotted in a house across the river. Then our mortars out in the yard would get busy. Sgt. Quentin D. Barrington of Hubbard, Tex., or Sgt. Hubert (Cowboy Slim) Simons of Rosenthal, Tex., would drop a dozen or two HE Heavies through the roof, and the OP would report the Jerry running away and diving into dugouts.

That would make the Jerry sling a few back at us. We would receive a barrage of Screaming Mimis, or a tank would open up across the river and throw a few fast ones at one of our houses.

"I don't like this," Cpl. Harlan Copeland of Waco, Tex., a member of Cowboy Slim's mortar section, would protest. "Tear down one of the Tedeschi houses and he comes right back and wants to tear one of yours down! Somebody's gonna get hurt if this keeps up."

I remember, in particular, the excitement we had one afternoon.

I had just returned from our 1st Battalion area, up the river toward Cassino, and was standing in the road near our house, looking at a pile of mortar ammunition. The ammunition had come up during the night. Someone who didn't know what he was doing had piled it against a strawstack. A shell could set the strawstack on fire and blow up the whole dump.

I had turned away and taken a few steps when a heavy German shell—the "north of Rome" kind—crashed with a great shattering of earth and flame a few yards in front of me in the yard of the house where Cowboy Slim had his mortars. Instinctively I ducked and turned back toward the strawstack, but at that moment another shell struck it. I jumped up; there were some slit trenches in the field to the left, but just then a shell landed there, too.

"To hell with it!" I yelled, running as fast as I could. I headed for the house, about 70 yards away, where our company CP was located. As I crossed the road a shell crashed into the roof of a shed attached to Cowboy Slim's house. Something as big as a stove cap sailed by my head.

Inside the CP 1st Lt. Robert Hand, company executive officer from Seattle, Wash., stood with a wad of chicken feathers in his hand. Everyone laughed as I came dashing in.

"Barrington and I were preparing supper," said the lieutenant, holding up the chicken feathers, "when they caught us outside."

I looked back, and the strawstack was blazing like a bonfire at a college football rally.

It took a few minutes before the first shell in the mortar ammunition dump went off. Shells burst sporadically after that, sending blazing brands and sparks flying through the air. When the big explosion came about 30 minutes later, it flattened me against the wall.

I stood up, spitting dirt and dust. The others were looking at me anxiously out of blinking, dust-rimmed eyes. I went out in the yard and looked up at the roof of the house. Nothing but a railway gun dropping one in the upper story could have made such a noise. But the house seemed to be as sound as ever. A charred brand, still smoking, was driven into the wall. A shelter half a few feet away, covering a small pile of ammunition was on fire.

One of the men ran up and yanked the shelter half off the ammunition. I looked toward the road where the blazing strawstack had been. In its place I saw a crater wide enough to hold a heavy truck. A shed that had stood near the stack was now only a pile of scattered stones.

Telephones began ringing, battalion from regiment, regiment from division. What had happened?

We made a check and reported back: 400 rounds of HE Heavies blown up and one man with a tooth knocked out.

Cpl. Copeland was the casualty. As he dove for safety through a hole in the side of the house, he made the mistake of turning to look back. The next man crashed through, struck Copeland in the mouth with his helmet, and out went the tooth.

An hour later an old grandmother, two other women, two little girls and two little boys came up the road to fill their bottles from the *vino* barrels. The grandmother, whom we called "Mama", saw the chicken feathers first thing and made a dive for the CP.

"Tedeschi!" I shouted. "Tedeschi—boom-boom!"

"Tedeschi, hell!" the old woman shouted back, shaking her head and waving her arms. Her meaning was unmistakable. "The damn Americanos! Americanos!" We rocked with laughter.

And I shall always remember another house, the one we had high up on Mount Cairo with a deep, narrow canyon separating us from the Germans in their houses a few yards higher up the steep, terraced hillside.

This was a three-story house, constructed entirely from flinty mountain stone; the walls were nearly three feet thick, and the floors above were of heavy concrete, supported by iron beams. The forward company CP was located in a tight little room on the ground floor, with a fireplace and one high, narrow window.

It looked out over an abrupt cliff; the tiny blasted roofs of the village of Cairo lay far below, and beyond this, smoke from shells and belching muzzles of many British and American heavy guns, was the picturelike valley of the Rapido. The yard was encircled by a thick stone wall, waist

high. There was a well of clear, clean water at one corner of the house. There were many rooms inside, safe rooms, and at the edge of the yard was another strawstack where the men could get clean straw for their beds.

I had found this place one morning after we had moved into the area in the night to relieve an American battalion that had been holding here for some time. Company K, with possibly 25 men in three houses across the canyon, was trying to hold terrain formerly defended by a complete battalion. The nine machine gunners of our 1st Platoon were with them. I entered the house with the idea of bringing up our 2nd Platton to help them out. And this was such a strong house, sitting so ideally on a protruding hump of rock 50 yards above the canyon, that I immediately fell in love with it.

Inside I found an old Italian lying in bed—a virtual bag of bones in a tangle of dirty, ragged quilts and blankets.

In a thin voice he wailed: "I dunno—I'm no good for anything. I'm a sick man."

"You speak English?" I asked.

"I work in Jersey, New York—in New Haven many years," he said.

Later in the afternoon—assisted by Pfc. Henry Hohensee, a Ganado (Tex.) boy known as the Dutchman and as Eighth Corps, who has a Purple Heart and three Oak Leaf Clusters to his credit—I succeeded in opening up and wiring in the forward CP. Cpl. R. L. Scott of Blue Ridge, Tex., returned to bring up the 10 men who then composed our 2nd Platoon.

That night the Dutchman built a roaring fire in the fireplace, and we hung a blanket over the window. The men gathered around and had a roaring bull session until midnight. Two men stood guard in the upper story; the machine guns were trained on the Jerry across the draw.

Early in the evening Cpl. Scott helped the Dutchman brew up a canteen cup of bouillon for the old man in the next room. "They say it's good, else they wouldn't put it in the K rations," said the Dutchman.

The following day was quiet. The Jerry threw rounds intermittently in the draw where the battalion before us had lost 60 men. But he would never get any of us that way—we had learned long ago to keep out of draws.

In the afternoon we heard that the battalion had been suddenly ordered to withdraw to the valley again. The order, as finally acted on by Company K, called for us to withdraw from the houses immediately after dark. We were to proceed by way of a donkey trail that intersected the Terelle road several hundred feet down the almost-vertical face of the mountain.

Company K began the withdrawal shortly after dark, but as the men filed up the draw toward our house, the Germans opened a phony attack against the French, on the ridge above Terelle, over against the right horizon.

The withdrawal was held up at our house; after we left there would be no one in this sector at all. But a phony attack is nothing but sound and fury, with little or no displacement of troops; as the Jerry on the hillside above remained inactive, Company K continued its withdrawal by way of the trail.

Our 2nd Platoon had been designated to withdraw with their weapons by way of the Terelle road. They had scarcely left the house to begin the climb up the terraced slope behind us when German shells began falling all over the place. We ducked inside as three crashed in the yard. Shell fragments leaping across the yawning canyon struck fire from the rocks like a whole battalion of attacking Jerries. The Dutchman and I were alone in the house. Our telephones had been ripped out, so we were isolated. Some 30 minutes later, when the Jerry artillery shifted toward the Terelle road, we ducked out the back door and scurried down the donkey trail to safety.

As we caught up with Company K, which was taking a break where the trail entered the main road, someone drove up in a jeep with an order for them to return to their positions at once.

"We'll blow for a moment," I said to the Dutchman as the company prepared to move out. I threw my roll down and sat on it. Since one cold wet night in November, I've carried a standard roll of six blankets inside two shelter halves. It's plenty heavy but it's always convenient once we reach a stopping place.

We reached the top of the hill ahead of Company K, only to find that the counterattack had played out. A few artillery shells were still falling on the hill, but we were going down again as scheduled.

"Eighth Corps," I said, "to hell with the road!" We were too tired to follow the road anyway. We just slid vertically down the mountain. We knew that the road, winding about in the perambulating style of all mountain roads, would pick us up again. A rain had started to fall, and we sat at the side of the road until the battalion went by, then slid down the next turn.

At one of the turns we met Cpl. Scott, sloshing along with a wet roll slung over his shoulder. Just as we were doing, he was thinking of the wonderfully warm house we had just left, the roaring fire singing in the fireplace and the gallon can of coffee simmering on the coals. "Dutch," he said, "the old man will die. Nobody to take care of him."

Toward morning the Dutchman and I crawled into the one good room of a blasted house on the slope above the village of Cairo and went to sleep.

The Night That Has Never Ended

by Clayton E. Grinage
111th Engineer Bn.

Someone, in his ever-present authoritarian superior knowledge of what it takes to win a war, was again dicing with the lives of those who had no choices, life or death was all the same to these who had decided similar events in every battle, we as Allies, had waged in every theatre in this War, dubbed WWII! We had arrived, after countless debacles of dubious distinction, Salerno, Cassino, Anzio and now those ending in other more unfamiliar souls, like Oberhausen, Pffaffenhausen, and scores of "berns" and Stadts. I cannot recall, nor am I sure that I ever knew the name of this village where we were sentenced to death, as sure as I am that there WAS a Seigfried Line, far longer, but certainly no less full of tombstones in our future than the Gustav, or Adolf Hitler lines had been, some months before in another world, but with the same unfeeling, ill-advised commanders. We were never, it seemed, destined to win, rather follow orders, and I do not include our immediate Commander, General Walker, who very likely had more "smarts" than all the others combined, with the possible exception of two, or at best 3 others, all above in chain of command? "Smarts," of the stinging, recriminatory kind he surely had more than he deserved! I was not a member of this proud group of Texans at the time, and could still view the situation from the relative safety of wherever I was, but the trials and tribulations of the Texas soldier, as told in Stars and Stripes, and the stateside papers, was very obviously a drill in useless deaths, by determined Generals, guided by vacillating superiors, often Junior in service to those who, like Clark before them were more interested in personal glory than getting to the end of the War. The 34th, 36th & 45th, as well as the 3rd, I knew had many Texans, all of whom suffered severely in the Italian Campaign, and for very little of strategic or tactical value, as far as ending the War. Our whole effort seemed to me, at the time, and reinforced by much study remains a British pawn, whose suffering in the Battle of Britain cannot be denied, but not by their TROOPS! Africa may be an exception, but it is a doubtful one!

To get back to the beginning, which was an order to push thru the Dragon's Teeth, which were, in fact, impregnable as defenses go! Enfilading fire, marked and ranged fire points, mines in depth, not only 2, 3, or 4 deep in same holes, but side to side, hanging on every conceivable (or inconceivable) device and cement embrasures on cement, steel reinforced pill-boxes, whole mountains completely hollowed out, filled with

guns of every description, from 6.25mm, to possibly 100 times that caliber! Everything but gas, and we were never sure that it would not be unleashed as well. When Roosevelt said some years earlier, that "we had nothing to fear, but fear itself," he could not have known how well it applied to us! Myself and Pfc. Balog, who was the first "partner" I had when we took on a mine-sweeping job right after Christmas in Strasbourg, just a few months ago, drew the first "volunteer" shift, and also our 50 lb. backpacks of Tetratol, waited, hunched against a wall (inside) for several hours waiting for the "go-ahead", where we would get further details? This went on for hours, every rumor we ever heard was floating around, as to destination, probably results (death), success, reasons, (I heard the complete tales of the entire 5th Army, in detail, as well as the 7th while in France, depending on the time in the line of the respective soothsayer). We were very literally scared to death, not really believing it was our turn to get Medals of Honor, which we certainly believed was the very least we could be decorated with, and maybe if we were lucky, a purple heart pass to stateside? This same scenario was to be repeated for at least the next 3 nights, each getting further under our skins, to our nerves, and even causing "shakes" we attributed to not getting enough rest from our squatting position every nite. Now, we were not only scared, but totally aware of it, which was even worse! We had hysterics, often breaking into laughter when it was as "funny as a broken arm" smoking one cigarette after the other, often lighting one from the last, we went through two packs in less than 4 hours, together, Balog even accepting Old Golds, which I was the only one addicted to that least of all revered brands. There may have been others who went through these same tension-filled episodes, it may have been longer, and the partners changed from time to time, but I recall only the uncertainty of living past the next order, and after all these years it has yet to be revealed what we would have gained. In the end, Patton outflanked the whole line, and very little mopping up was necessary, and he remains one of those I feel could have saved us much lost time, many lost lives, and certainly changed the course of events during the ensuing cold war, even the problems today may never have been necessary. It is easy to see, after 40 years, of course, but history could have told any of us the same thing at the time, if we had looked as hard for peaceful endings, as we had fought so fiercely for mere territory. And for whom? Certainly not for ourselves, as we now hold nothing anywhere that we gained during WWII!

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FIGHTING 36TH

TAPS

by Dr. M. C. McGowen
Baird, Texas

TAPS, the melody known to more Americans than any other was composed by a non-musician Union general during the Civil War named Daniel Butterfield. The Union was taking a great loss in battle at Gaines Mill near Richmond, Virginia, June 26, 1862 when Gen. Butterfield, though wounded, rallied his men and held. He was later awarded the Medal of Honor. After the battle his men were exhausted, low in morale and in need of inspiration. One night, when the situation was lowest, the General whistled and hummed some notes and finally called in his bugler, Oliver W. Norton, who put the notes in the bugle and with changes soon had the seven notes down perfect, wrote them on the back of an envelope and played them at dusk the next day. The effect was magical. It was soon being used throughout the Army of the Potomac. TAPS was officially adopted by the Army in 1874 and by 1900 all military units, and France adopted the call during WWII. General Butterfield retired to his home across the Hudson River from West Point where he heard TAPS each evening until his death in 1901. (Ed. note: Does anyone know what the word TAPS means and origin?)

The Raider Patch
U.S. Marine Raiders, Sept. 1989

There are several versions but here is my favorite:

Day is done, gone the sun,
From the lake, from the hills,
from the sky.
All is well,
Safely rest,
God is nigh.