

The Fighting 36th
HISTORICAL
Quarterly

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CMH

COVER STORY

**15 from
36th win
the
BIG ONE**



**STORIES
PHOTOS**

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Vol. IX, No. 4 Winter 1989

Published by
36th DIVISION ASSOCIATION

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The Fighting 36th

HISTORICAL
Quarterly

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**THE FIGHTING 36th
HISTORICAL QUARTERLY**

**Think of it as a In Four
320 Page Book – 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.

Stories for the Historical Quarterly should be forwarded to: **HICKS A. TURNER, Editor, Rt. 2 Box 236, Clyde, TX 79510.**

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HOUSTON

Eighth — Post-WWII Reunion

1952

Sept. 5-7

RICE HOTEL - The Landmark downtown Houston was bivouac for our first Bayou City Reunion. Enthusiasm was still running high, but attendance had lagged from the late 1940's.



David Frazier

David M. FrazierPresident

Vice-Presidents:

T. M. Furr141st Inf.

William B. Mobley142nd Inf.

John H. Nobles143rd Inf.

Elmo Bickerstaff144th Inf.

Joe C. AnsleyDiv. Artillery

John M. StaffordSpec-Troops

Thomas BishopSecty/Treas.

Directors at large:

Jack T. Brown and L. S. Teston

Lt. Gen. John A. Hulen of Palacios, TX - Life time president

No figures are available on attendance, but this was a most delightful reunion, in spite of the fact, hotel rates had gone up: Double room for two - \$7.50 to \$10.50, suites \$16-\$24. Registration opened at 9 AM Fri. Sept. 5th. (evening open for meeting and unit C.P.'s). (We found no reunion committee listing). \$14.00 per couple was registration fee.

Ken Dixon, war correspondent with 36th was M/C, and Maj. Gen. H. Miller Ainsworth was guest speaker.

Big attraction this year - was the Sunday Memorial Services aboard USS Battleship TEXAS, included a cruise down the Ship Channel to San Jacinto Battleground, and luncheon under the trees.

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Welcome to the 54th Reunion
and greetings to all our friends
and buddies . . .

143rd INFANTRY ASSOCIATION

We need your address, contact:
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Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

The Big One— The Congressional Medal of Honor

Researched by: Ray Dailey

Written by: Hicks Turner, Quarterly Editor

Worldwarveterans.org



COVER STORY

For
Conspicuous
Gallantry..

Worldwarveterans.org

HE RECEIVED MEDAL OF HONOR



The Heroes



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This decoration, often called the Congressional Medal of Honor, represents the nation's highest award. The President of the United States presents this decoration in the name of Congress. Only members of the armed services who have risked their lives to perform some act of outstanding bravery in the presence of an enemy can receive the Medal of Honor. This decoration calls for gallantry "above and beyond the call of duty."

A total of 3393 Medals of Honor have been awarded from a total of 40 million servicemen who have served the armed forces of the United States during its existence. Statistically, this is one of every 11,789 servicemen or 00.0000848 percent of total who received this award.

During Civil/Indian Wars one-third of all Medals of Honor were awarded. There was no Silver Star or Distinguished Service Cross so you got the big one or none. Therefore, of this period, twelve men were awarded a second Medal of Honor. A nurse and a twelve year old boy were also awarded the big one.

The Medal hangs on a ribbourn worn around the neck. Congress first authorized the Medal for the Navy in 1861 and for the Army in 1862. The present form of the medal, which the Air Force also uses, was created in 1904. It includes the head of Minerva, the Roman Godess of War.

During World War II the ETO ground forces were awarded 179 Medals. This was an average of 1.8 Medals per division. Our 6th corps, which consisted of the following divisions, the 3rd, 34th, 36th, 45th, 15th and 8th, earned 57 of the 179 medals awarded in the ETO. This number represents 32%, making the 6th corps the most decorated CMH Corps in WWII.

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The top ten ETO divisions were 1—3rd Division, with 34; 2—1st Division, with 16; 3—36th Division, with 15; 4—the 34th Division, with 9; 5—the 45th Division, with 8; 6—the 2nd Division, with 6; 7—the 30th Division, with 6; 8—82nd Division, with 6; 9—80th Division, with 4; and 10—the 85th Division, with 4. Of the top ten divisions, six of them fought at Salerno, Cassino and Anzio.

Of the three Infantry Regiments of the 36th Division, the 141st was awarded 3 CMH's, the 142nd was awarded 8 CMH's and the 143rd was awarded 4 CMH's.

Information of all 15 CMH winners follow:

We have the award information of all three winners from the 141st Regiment.



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141st

From Company "E", **Technical Sergeant Morris E. Crain** was awarded the CMH for action on March 13, 1944 at Haguenau, France. He entered service at Paducah, Kentucky, was born at Bandana, Kentucky. He led his platoon against powerful German forces during the struggle to enlarge the bridgehead across the Moder River. With great daring and aggressiveness he spearheaded the platoon in killing 10 enemy soldiers, capturing 12 more and securing its objective near an important road junction. Although heavy concentrations of artillery, mortar, and self-propelled gunfire raked the area, he moved among his men during the day, exhorting them to great efforts and encouraging them to stand firm. He carried ammunition and maintained contact with the company command, exposing himself to deadly enemy fire. At nightfall the enemy barrage became more intense and tanks entered the fray to cover foot troops while they bombarded our positions with grenades and rockets. As buildings were blasted by the Germans, the Americans fell back from house to house. Sergeant Crain deployed another platoon which had been sent to his support and then rushed through murderous tank fire and small arms fire to the foremost house, which was being defended by five of his men. With the enemy attacking from an adjoining room and a tank firing point-blank at the house, he ordered the men to withdraw while he remained in the face of almost certain death to hold the position. Although shells were hitting the walls and bullets were striking all around him, he held his ground and with accurate fire from his sub-machine gun killed three Germans. He was killed when the building was destroyed by the enemy. Sergeant Crain's outstanding valor and intrepid leadership enabled his platoon to organize a new defense, repel the attack and preserve the hard-won bridgehead.

Technical Sergeant James Logan: Also from the 141st Infantry Regiment. Sgt. Logan was awarded the Medal for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at risk of life above and beyond the call of duty in action involving actual conflict on September 9, 1943, in the vicinity of Salerno, Italy. As a rifleman in an infantry company, Sgt. Logan landed with the first wave of the assault echelon on the beaches of the Gulf of Salerno. After his company had advanced 800 yards inland and taken positions along the forward bank of an irrigation canal, the enemy began a serious concentrated counterattack from position along a rock wall which ran parallel with the canal about 200 yards further inland. Voluntarily exposing himself to the fire of a machine-gun located along the rocks, which sprayed the ground so close to him that he was splattered with dirt and rock splinters from the impact of the bullets. Sgt. Logan killed the first three Germans as they came through a gap in the wall. He then attacked the machine-gun. As he dashed across the 200 yards of exposed terrain a withering stream of fire followed his advance. Reaching the wall, he crawled along the base, within easy reach of the enemy crouched along the opposite side, until he reached the gun. Jumping up, he shot the two gunners down, hurdled the wall and seized the gun, swinging it around, he immediately opened fire on the enemy, inflicting further casualties on them as they fled. After smashing the machine gun over the rocks, Sgt. Logan captured an enemy officer and private who were attempting to sneak away. Later in the morning, Sgt. Logan went after a sniper hidden in a house almost 150 yards from the company. Again the sergeant ran a gauntlet of fire to reach his objective. Shooting the lock off the door, Sgt. Logan kicked it in and shot the sniper who had just reached the bottom of the stairs. His action proved a constant inspiration to all the men of his company, and aided materially in insuring the success of the beachhead at Salerno.



T/Sgt. James Logan,



Charles H. Coolidge,

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Technical Sergeant Charles H. Coolidge: Technical Sergeant Charles H. Coolidge of Company M, 141st Inf. was awarded the Medal for conspicuous gallantry during 24-27 October, 1944, east of Belmont sur Buttant, France. Sgt. Coolidge entered service from Signal Mountain, Tennessee. Leading a section of heavy machine guns supported by one platoon of Company K, he took a position near Hill 623 on 24 October, 1944 with the mission of covering the right flank of the Third Battalion and supporting its action. Sgt. Coolidge went forward with a sergeant of Company K to reconnoiter positions for coordinating the fire of the light and heavy machine guns. They ran into an enemy force in the woods estimated to be an infantry company. Sgt. Coolidge, attempting to bluff the Germans by a show of assurance and boldness called upon them to surrender, whereupon the enemy opened fire. With his carbine, Sgt. Coolidge wounded two of them. There being no officer present with the force, Sgt. Coolidge at once assumed command. Many of the men were replacements, recently arrived; this was their first experience under fire. Sgt. Coolidge, unmindful of the enemy fire, walked along the position, calming and encouraging his men and directing their fire. The attack was thrown back. Through October 25th and 26th the enemy launched repeated attacks against the position but each was repulsed due to Sgt. Coolidge's able leadership. On October 27th, German infantry, supported by two tanks, made a determined attack on the position. The area was swept by enemy small arms, machine guns, and tank fire. Sgt. Coolidge armed himself with a bazooka and advanced to within 25 yards of the tanks. His bazooka failed to function and he threw it aside. Securing all the hand grenades he could carry, he crawled forward and inflicted heavy casualties on the advancing enemy. Finally, it became apparent that the enemy, in greatly superior force, supported by tanks, would overrun the position. Sgt. Coolidge, displaying great coolness and courage, directed and conducted an orderly withdrawal, being himself the last to leave the position. As a result of Sgt. Coolidge's heroic and superior leadership, the mission of this combat group was accomplished throughout four days of continuous fighting against numerically superior enemy troops in rain and cold and amid dense woods.





DELAU

142nd Infantry



Sergeant Emile Deleau, Jr. (KIA): From the 142nd Infantry Regiment, eight men were awarded the Medal. From Company A the Medal was awarded to Sgt. Emile Deleau, Jr. for conspicuous gallantry at Oberhoffen, France on 1-2 February, 1945. Sgt. Deleau entered service from Blaine, Ohio. He led a squad in the night attack on Oberhoffen, France, where fierce house-to-house fighting took place. After clearing one building of opposition, he moved his men toward a second house from which heavy machine-gun fire came.

He courageously exposed himself to hostile bullets and, firing his sub-machine gun as he went, advanced steadily toward the enemy position until close enough to hurl grenades through a window, killing three Germans and wrecking their gun. His progress was stopped by heavy rifle and machine gun fire from another house. Sergeant Deleau dashed through the door with his gun blazing. Within, he capture ten Germans. The squad then took up a position for the night and awaited daylight to resume the attack.

At dawn of 2 February, Sgt. Deleau pressed forward with his unit, killing two snipers as he advanced to a point where machine gun fire from a house barred the way. Despite vicious small-arms fire, Sgt. Deleau ran across an open area to reach the rear of the building, where he destroyed one machine gun and killed its two operators with a grenade. He worked to the front of the structure and located a second machine gun. Finding it impossible to toss a grenade into the house from his protected position, he fearlessly moved away from the buiding and was about to hurl his explosive when he was instantly killed by a burst from the gun he sought to knock out.

With magnificent courage and daring aggressiveness, Sgt. Deleau cleared four well-defended houses of Germans, inflicted severe losses on the enemy and at the sacrifice of his own life aided his battalion to reach its objective with a minimum of casualties.

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Lieutenant Edward C. Dahlgren: 142nd. A 29-year old State of Mainer, Second Lieutenant Edward C. Dahlgren, of the 142nd, who rose from buck private to lieutenant in 17 months of combat, has just been awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

On his way back to the United States, via a plane from Paris, the South Portland, Me., resident is the ninth T-Patchman to receive the country's highest medal of valor.

Previous decorations included the Croix de Guerre, Bronze Star and Oak Leaf Cluster, and the Purple Heart. He is also the recipient of five Battle Stars, the Combat Infantry Badge, one Arrow Head and the Good Conduct Medal.

It was on 15 March 1945, less than two years after he entered the service, that he received a battlefield appointment to Second Lieutenant.

Lieutenant Dahlgren won the highest military decoration in the Army for his exploits during bitter action at Oberhoffen, Germany, last February. He was a T/Sgt. with Easy Company at the time and during his action he destroyed two enemy machine guns, killed at least eight Germans, wounded an unknown number, and personally captured 39 of the enemy.

Entering the service on 23 March 1943, Lieutenant Dahlgren went through the usual basic training and in October of the same year, was on his way overseas. On 7 December 1943, he joined Company E of the 142nd as a private.

T-Patchmen, who were there, still talk of that morning on 11 February when Dahlgren went berserk and became a task force in himself in repulsing a Jerry counterattack and reorganized his forces to lead a successful American assault.

But that's getting ahead of the story which reads more like fiction than facts.

The Germans had launched a strong counterattack against the 2nd Battalion's positions and with their initial successes, had surrounded the 2nd platoon of Easy Company. The 2nd platoon was in a bad spot and, after repeated attempts to break out of the trap, the platoon leader phoned for help.

The 3rd platoon was taken out of company reserve in response to the appeal and Dahlgren split his forces into two groups and set out to contact and rescue the encircled men. He spotted an enemy force crossing a field toward the cemetery on his platoon's right. Dashing into a barn, after cautioning his men to wait, the T/Sgt. fired his submachine gun from a window, killing six Germans, wounding several others, and disorganizing the remainder.

Arnold C. Bjorklund: (01287993), Second Lieutenant, Company "I", 142nd Infantry Regiment, 36th Division, United States Army. For extraordinary heroism in action. On 13 September 1943, in the vicinity of Altavilla, Italy, Second Lieutenant Bjorklund led his platoon in an assault on an enemy occupied hill in the face of concentrated machine gun and rifle fire. Moving well out in front in order to encourage his men, he was the first person into the enemy position, which he reached by skillfully advancing up a steep slope with little cover and with severe enemy fire directed at him. Moving forward midway between two hostile machine gun positions, he destroyed both with his carbine fire and hand grenades, thereby permitting the advance of his platoon. His bravery and intrepidity so inspired his men that they were able to overrun the enemy position and seize the high ground. Continuing his advance, Second Lieutenant Bjorklund observing an enemy mortar position on the reverse slope of the hill, worked his way to the flank and succeeded in destroying this last emplacement, thereby allowing the successful advance of his platoon. Second Lieutenant Bjorklund's courage and inexorable determination, as well as his ability to inspire his men and set a superb example for them to follow, exemplify magnificent qualities of leadership. Entered military service from Clinton, Washington.

Private William A. Crawford: Company "I", 142nd, entered service from Pueblo, Colorado. On 13 September, 1943, Company I attacked an enemy held position on Hill 424. The Third Platoon, in which Private Crawford was a squad scout, was attacked as base platoon for the company. After reaching the crest of the hill, the platoon was pinned down by intense enemy machine gun and small arms fire. Locating one of the guns, which was dug in on a terrace on his immediate front, Private Crawford, without orders and on his own initiative, moved over the hill under enemy fire to a point within a few yards of the gun emplacement and single handedly destroyed the machine gun and killed three of the crew with a hand grenade, thus enabling his platoon to continue its advance. When the platoon, after reaching the crest, was once more delayed by enemy fire, Private Crawford again, in the face of intense fire, advanced directly to the front midway between two hostile machine gun nests located on a higher terrace and emplaced in a small ravine. Moving first to the left, with a hand grenade he destroyed one gun emplacement and killed the crew; he then worked his way, under continuous fire, to the other and with one grenade and the use of his rifle, killed one enemy and forced the remainder to flee. Seizing the enemy machine gun, he fired on the withdrawing Germans and facilitated his company's advance.

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Staff Sergeant Homer L. Wise: 142nd, was awarded the Medal for action of 14 June, 1944, at Magliano, Italy. Sgt. Wise was born in Baton Rouge, Louisiana and entered service from Baton Rouge. His citation reads: While his platoon was pinned down by enemy small-arms fire from both flanks, he left his position of comparative safety and assisted in carrying one of his men, who had been seriously wounded and who lay in an exposed position, to a point where he could receive medical attention. The advance of the platoon was resumed but was again stopped by enemy frontal fire. A German officer and two enlisted men, armed with automatic weapons, threatened the right flank. Fearlessly exposing himself, he moved to a position from which he killed all three with his submachine gun. Returning to his squad, he obtained an M-1 rifle and several antitank grenades, then took up a position from which he delivered accurate fire on the enemy holding up the advance. As the battalion moved forward it was again stopped by enemy frontal and flanking fire. He procured an automatic rifle and, advancing ahead of his men, neutralized an enemy machine gun with his fire. When the flanking fire became more intense he ran to a nearby tank and, exposing himself on the turret, restored a jammed machine gun to operating efficiency and used it so effectively that the enemy fire from an adjacent ridge was materially reduced, thus permitting the battalion to occupy its objective.



T/SGT HOMER L. WISE

BELL



Technical Sergeant Bernard P. Bell of Company I 142nd was awarded the Medal for action at Mittelwihr, France, 18 December, 1944. Sgt. Bell was born at Grantsville, West Virginia and entered service at New York, NY.

On the morning of 18 December, 1944, he led a squad against a schoolhouse held by enemy troops. While his men covered him, he dashed toward the building, surprised two guards at the door and took them prisoner without firing a shot. He found that other Germans were in the

cellar. There he threatened with hand grenades, forcing 26 in all to emerge and surrender. His squad then occupied the building and prepared to defend it against powerful enemy action. The next day, the enemy poured artillery and mortar barrages into the position, disrupting communications which Sergeant Bell repeatedly repaired under heavy small-arms fire as he crossed dangerous terrain to keep his company commander informed of the squads position. During the day, several prisoners were taken and other Germans killed when hostile forces were attracted to the schoolhouse by the sound of captured German weapons fired by the Americans. At dawn the next day the enemy prepared to assault the building. A German tank fired round after round into the structure, partially demolishing the upper stories. Despite this heavy fire, Sergeant Bell climbed to the second floor and directed artillery fire which forced the enemy to withdraw. He then adjusted mortar fire on large forces of enemy foot soldiers attempting to reach the American position and, when this force broke and attempted to retire, he directed deadly machine gun and rifle fire into their disorganized ranks. Calling for armored support to blast out the German troops hidden behind a wall, he unhesitatingly exposed himself to heavy small arms fire to stand beside a friendly tank and tell its occupants where to rip holes in walls protecting approaches to the school building. He then trained machine guns on the gaps and mowed down all hostile troops attempting to cross the openings to get closer to the school building. By his intrepidity and bold, aggressive leadership, Sergeant Bell enabled his 8 man squad to drive back approximately 150 of the enemy, killing at least 87 and capturing 42. Personally, he killed more than 20 and captured 33 prisoners.



DAHLGREN



1st Lt. Arnold J. Bjorklund

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Pvt. William A. Crawford,



Pfc. Silvestre S. Herrera, holder, lost both feet from German-laid mines in the Haguenau Forest

PFC Silvestre S. Herrera: Pfc. Herrera of the 142nd Infantry, Company "E", from Phoenix, Arizona, lost both feet from German laid mines in the Haguenau Forest engagement. The 142nd was to capture the town of Mertzwiller. The 2nd Battalion got partially across the Moder River and was hit by intense artillery and forced to withdraw. The 3rd Battalion pressed on through the forest regardless of the dense mine fields and by daylight had gained a foothold in Mertzwiller. While the 2nd Battalion was being reorganized, the 1st Battalion was committed to fight through to join with the 3rd Battalion. As Pfc. Herrera's company sought cover from enemy fire, Herrera dashed toward a German strong-point and pinned down the enemy with grenades and his M-1 rifle. For this action he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor but lost both feet to the explosion of a German mine.

Sergeant Ellis A. Weicht: KIA, Co "F", 142nd Infantry. At St. Hippolyte, France, Sgt. Ellis A. Weicht's action won the CMH, posthumously. Weicht led his squad in clearing the enemy from several houses. The advance was held up by German machine gun fire. Weicht scaled a wall, flanked the position and wiped out the gun with rifle fire. Farther along the street a 20mm gun opened up. As friendly artillery concentrated on the target, Weicht remained in a close position to snipe at the gun crew and force them to abandon their peice. Later, at a German roadblock, he killed three Germans and wounded several others, while the enemy raked him with machine gun fire. Weicht was killed when the enemy turned an anti-tank gun upon him.



143rd Infantry,

PFC Gerald Gordon: of the 111th Medical Battalion, attached to the 143rd Infantry, in the heat of the German attack at Mittelwihr, ripped off the red-cross arm band, grabbed a rifle and tore the German line apart when he saw that the Krauts were about to overrun his company. Reported missing in action, Gordon was found at the end of the war in a hospital in England. His home is in St. Joseph, Missouri.

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Weicht

Weicht was killed when the enemy turned an anti-tank gun upon him.



GORDON

Staff Sergeant Thomas E. McCall: Company F, 143rd Infantry, 36th Infantry Division. Near San Angelo, Italy on 22 January 1944. Entered service at Veedersburg, Ind. and born in Burton, Kansas. For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at risk of life above and beyond the call of duty. On 22 January 1944, Comany F had the mission of crossing the Rapido River in the vicinity of San Angelo, Italy, and attacking the well-prepared German positions to the west.

For the defense of these positions the enemy had prepared a network of machine gun positions covering the terrain to the front with a pattern of withering machine gun fire, and mortar and artillery positions zeroed in on the defilade areas. Sergeant McCall commanded a machine gun section that was to provide added fire support for the riflemen. Under cover of darkness, Company F advanced to the river crossing site and under intense enemy mortar, artillery, and machine gun fire crossed an ice covered bridge which was continually the target for enemy fire.

Many casualties occurred on reaching the west side of the river and reorganization was imperative. Exposing himself to the deadly enemy

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machine gun and small arms fire that swept over the flat terrain, Sergeant McCall, with unusual calmness, encouraged and welded his men into an effective fighting unit. He then led them forward across the muddy, exposed terrain. Skillfully he guided his men through a barbed wire entanglement to reach a road where he personally placed the weapons of his two squads into positions of vantage, covering the battalion's front.

A shell landed near one of the positions, wounding the gunner, killing the assistant gunner, and destroying the weapon. Even though enemy shells were falling dangerously near, Sergeant McCall crawled across the treacherous terrain and rendered first aid to the wounded man, dragging him into a position of cover with the help of another man. The gunners of the second machine gun had been wounded from the fragments of an enemy shell, leaving Sergeant McCall the only remaining member of his machine gun section. Displaying outstanding aggressiveness, he ran forward with the weapon on his hip, reaching a point 30 yards from the enemy, where he fired two bursts of fire into the nest, killing or wounding all of the crew and putting the gun out of action.

A second machine gun now opened fire upon him and he rushed its position, firing his weapon from the hip, killing four of the gun crew. A third machine gun, 50 yards in rear of the first two, was delivering a tremendous volume of fire upon our troops. Sergeant McCall spotted its position and valiantly went toward it in the face of overwhelming enemy fire. He was last seen courageously moving forward on the enemy position, firing his machine gun from his hip. Sergeant McCall's intrepidity and unhesitating willingness to sacrifice his life exemplify the highest traditions of the armed forces.

Technical Sergeant Charles E. Kelly was the first man to be decorated with the CMH for action on the European continent and is one of World War II's most publicized heroes. He was born at and entered the service from Pittsburgh, PA.

On 13 September, 1943, near Altavilla, Italy, Corporal Kelly of Company "L", 143rd Infantry, voluntarily joined a patrol which located and neutralized enemy machine gun positions. After this hazardous duty he volunteered to establish contact with a battalion of United States infantry which was believed to be located on Hill 315, a mile distant. He travelled over a route commanded by enemy observation and under sniper, mortar and artillery fire; and later he returned with the correct information that the enemy occupied Hill 315 in organized positions. Immediately thereafter, Corporal Kelly, again a volunteer patrol member, assisted materially in the destruction of two enemy machine gun nests

under conditions requiring great skill and courage. Having effectively fired his weapon until all the ammunition was exhausted, he secured permission to obtain more at an ammunition dump. Arriving at the dump, which was located near a storehouse on the extreme flank of his regiment's position. Corporal Kelly found that the Germans were attacking ferociously at this point. He obtained his ammunition and was given the mission of protecting the rear of the storehouse. He held his position throughout the night. The following morning the enemy attack was resumed. Corporal Kelly took a position at an open window of the storehouse. One machine gunner had been killed at this position and several other soldiers wounded. Corporal Kelly delivered continuous aimed and effective fire upon the enemy with his automatic rifle until the weapon locked from overheating. Finding another automatic rifle, he again directed effective fire upon the enemy until deliberately loading a firing rocket launcher from the window. He was successful in covering the withdrawal of the unit, and later in joining his own organization. Corporal Kelly's fighting determination and intrepidity in battle exemplify the highest traditions of the armed forces of the United States.



T/Sgt. Charles E. Kelly



Stephen R. Gregg

Stephen R. Gregg: On 27 August, 1944, a then Technical Sergeant of Co "L", 143rd Infantry and later given a battle field promotion to Second Lieutenant, advanced with his platoon up on enemy position in the vicinity of Montelimar, France. The leading scout was fired upon and Lieutenant Gregg immediately put his machine guns into action to cover the advance of the riflemen. The Germans who were at close range, threw hand grenades at the riflemen, killing some and wounding seven.

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Each time a medical aid man attempted to reach the wounded, the Germans fired at him. Realizing the seriousness of the situation, Lieutenant Gregg took one of the light .30 caliber machine guns, and, firing from the hip, started boldly up the hill, with the medical aid man following him. Although the enemy was throwing hand grenades at him, Lieutenant Gregg remained and fired into the enemy position while the medical aid man removed the seven wounded men to safety. When Lieutenant Gregg had expended all his ammunition, he was covered by four Germans who ordered him to surrender. Since the attention of most of the Germans had been diverted by watching this action, friendly riflemen were able to maneuver into firing positions. One, seeing Lieutenant Gregg's situation, opened fire on his captors. The four Germans hit the ground and thereupon Lieutenant Gregg recovered a machine pistol from one of the Germans and managed to escape to his other machine gun positions. He manned a gun, firing at his captors, killed one of them and wounded the other. This action so discouraged the Germans that the platoon was able to continue its advance up the hill to achieve its objective. The following morning, just prior to daybreak, the Germans launched a strong attack, supported by tanks, in an attempt to drive Company L from the hill. As these tanks moved along the valley and their foot troops advanced up the hill, Lieutenant Gregg immediately ordered his mortars into action. During the day, by careful observation, he was able to direct effective fire on the enemy, inflicting heavy casualties. By late afternoon he had directed 600 rounds when his communication to the mortars was knocked out. Without hesitation he started checking his wires, although the area was under heavy enemy small arms and artillery fire. When he was within 100 yards of his mortar position, one of his men informed him that the section had been captured and the Germans were using the mortars to fire on the company. Lieutenant Gregg, with this man and another nearby rifleman started for the gun position where he could see five Germans firing his mortars. He ordered the two men to cover him, crawled up, threw a hand grenade into the position, and then charged it. The hand grenade killed one, injured two, Lieutenant Gregg took the other two as prisoners, and put his mortars back into action.

Lieutenant Gregg was born in New York City, NY and entered the service at Bayonne, NJ.



A Rainy Night In The Briar Patch

By W. O. (Bill) Wade
36th Div. M.P.

This incident took place on or about the third night of the Div. C.P. being in this location north of Rome and just off Highway 1 about 15 miles.

Div. Hq. C.P. was on one side of the Agean Way, a Roman highway of Nero's day and time. This road today looks more like a dry irrigation ditch. From all the traffic over the years it has erroded the road about six feet below ground level.

This was Monsoon Season and it had rained nearly everyday for about three weeks. The mud was very deep and the moon had not been seen for nights on end.

About 2000 or 2030 hours the sound of many aircraft engines could be heard not too far to the north of us. There was one aircraft that sounded like it was in trouble, possibly due to ack/ack shell or shrapnel hitting vital areas of the plane.

Suddenly the screaming of jet and bombs were heard. This woke some of the officers of Div. Hq. who were clothed in all kinds of sleeping attire. When the bombs went off in a field just north of the C.P. and splattered mud everywhere, the rest of Div. Hq. officers came alive very quickly and started looking for a hole to get into. With the overcast sky, it was impossible to see anything. Officers were running in every direction, trying to find a hole by looking for darker spots, which were holes.

I am not aware of where all of the officers ended up, but I do know a whole lot of them made new paths through the sticky briar bushes which lined the Agean Way, including Chief of Staff Clayton P. Carr. Col. Phinney ended up in the water filled garbage pit; a capt., whose name I can't recall, ended up in the used latrine that hadn't been closed.

The rest of the night and into the morning light was quite busy for the two attached medics. They had the job of extracting literally thousands of stickers from several officers' anatomy. From below the rib cage to the feet. Some of the language used during this procedure wasn't the "Gentleman and an officer" type of language.



Col. Louis J. Stahl and the 111th Medical Detachment

By James E. Hodges
President, Houston Chapter

This is a story about Col. Louis J. Stahl and how the 111th Medical Detachment came about. As a young man Louis J. Stahl wanted to be a Doctor. He made up his mind to do just that and in 1916 he graduated from medical school. World War I demanded service from the young medical school graduate and he joined the U.S. Army Medical Services as a 1st Lt. in the Med. Corps. Lt. Stahl saw duty at Marfa, Texas; Leon Springs, Texas and at Camp Stanley, Texas. He was discharged from the service and set up a practice in Gonzales, Texas. Some time during the year of 1922, Louis J. Stahl and another, Dr. William T. Dunning, pushed for the organization of a medical unit in Gonzales, Texas. On November 15, 1922 it was authorized by the Federal Government.

The 111th Med. Det. consisted of four officers at the time. They were Major William T. Dunning, who was the commanding officer and regimental surgeon, and Capt. Louis J. Stahl, Assistant Regimental Surgeon, Lt. Loy J. Lauraine, the Veterinary officer, and Lt. Major P. Rochelle as the Dental Officer. Both Lt. Lauraine and Lt. Rochelle were promoted to Captain in their respective branches of service. Non-commissioned officers were: S/Sgt. Joseph H. Grant, Sgt. Bennie B. Hindman, and Bennie B. Botts.

The 111th Medical Det. was quartered in the Burchard Building, and a short time later they moved to the Randle Rather Building where they remained until 1924. A new building was built and with the other units stationed in Gonzales, they moved into the Remchel Building which was designed to house all of the Texas National Guard Units in Gonzales. Each of the units had their own separate offices and supply rooms.

The 111th Med. Det. attended it's first camp at Camp Mabry, Austin, Texas in July of 1923. Camp Hulen, Palacios, Texas became the camp area for the 36th Infantry Division and the 111th Med. Det. They attended camp there each summer until the Federal mobilization of the Texas National Guard in November 1940, where it was mustered into service and stationed at Camp Bowie, Texas.

The 111th Med. Det. Commanding Officer remained the same until September 1938 and at that time Major W. T. Dunning passed away. Capt. Louis J. Stahl was promoted to Major and placed in command on October 30, 1938. Shortly after the 1940 induction date, there was a flu epidemic in the Gonzales area and the 111th Med. Det. was pressed into service caring for the ill. Due to the efforts of the 111th Med. Det. there were no deaths to the other troops in the area. A temporary infirmary was set up to care for the many patients. The Det. was commended for their service to the troops. After moving to Camp Bowie and serving the 111th Engrs. Regt. as their Med. Det., Major Louis J. Stahl was promoted to the rank of Lt. Col, March 10, 1941. Col. Stahl served as Regimental surgeon until Feb. 1942 when he was transferred to the 64th Med. Det. and later was transferred to Ft. Sam Houston, Texas. Col. Stahl was retired from the service Sept. 10, 1942 and returned to Gonzales, Texas where he practiced medicine.

Information on Col. Stahl was taken from old newspapers of the Gonzales Inquirer. His son, Dr. Marion L. Stahl, M.D., and from Anna Boysen who was a former patient of Dr. Louis J. Stahl in Gonzales, Texas.



Yours in Comradship,
James & Shrimp Hodges, 111th, Engrs.

Company Runner

By Eulalio Estrada

Co. "E"—141st Inf.

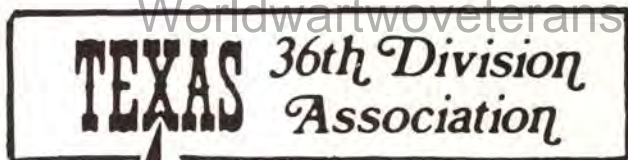
Not everyone in a rifle company is a rifleman. I learned a great deal about infantry tactics and how to use their weapons but when we were to go in at Salerno I was assigned the job of company runner between our company commander and the troops on the firing line.

Upon landing with Company E I helped our 1st Sgt. set up the C.P. The Company Commander advanced with the riflemen. A long stone wall alongside a roadway led off the beach. The sergeant told me he thought the C.O. and the troops were someplace along this wall and I was to find them and tell the C.O. where we had set up the C.P. Always out I decided to go over the wall and look for the company. Upon crawling over the wall I came face to face with a German tank which had a man on a machine gun that was pointed directly at me. I lost no time in getting back over that wall and working my way around the tank to where the gunner on the tank could not see me.

There was a lot of firing and artillery and mortar shells all over. We received a message that 1st Battalion had a lot of wounded and the medics needed help. I was sent to the 1st Bn. area to help with the wounded. As I approached the 1st Bn. C.P. a sniper was firing from a group of trees. I ducked among the trees and this sniper kept firing. Finally a rifleman from 1st Bn. got a bead on him and killed him.

On D-Day plus 3 I got into Altavilla but I did not shoot any of the Germans. I did help clear out some of our wounded.

On November 29th, 1943 we were pinned down by artillery fire at Mt. Rotondo. I was in a foxhole when I was wounded in the legs. Medics gave me first aid then got me to the clearing station. Later, I was evacuated to a hospital and later rotated home, in August, 1944.



SUBSCRIPTIONS:

Renewals, or new subscribers —

LEONARD WILKERSON, P. O. BOX 1049
MALAKOFF, TX 75148



Editor's Note: It was my pleasure to meet Eulalio Estrada at the Houston Reunion this year. He lives in San Antonio, Texas. I made this photo as we chatted in the Engr. J. P.



Salerno Invasion

Submitted by: Margaret Petrillo
Widow of Sgt. Louis J. Petrillo
Co. "L", 143rd Inf. Reg.

SALERNO INVASION

Louis J. Petrillo, Sr.

February 6, 1942

I'm not much for writing but I'll try my best. I joined and trained with the 36th Division in North Africa. When we started from North Africa I was on the USS Funkston, if I remember correctly I was part of the Special Forces. I remember we had a special Mess ticket, they fed us steak and the works,—roughly around 2 or 2:30 a.m. September 9, 1943—approx. 1 hour later 3:30 a.m. we hit the beach. I carried a section of bangular torpedo for the section of the beach we went in. Our Navy put down a heavy barrage which was fine, but when the Germans started firing back, I thought all hell let loose. We took the beach. Of course, we had heavy casualties as you probably know. I don't remember all of the towns and villages we went through but I do remember a town—I think by the name of Altavilla—we were street fighting; we were out of any support. This is the town Commando Kelly killed forty (40) Germans in twenty (20) minutes single-handed. He threw mortar shells like hand grenades. This caused the German armoured to retreat. I remember the Marines and Army Inf. in the Pacific didn't believe it could be done, but they were wrong. Kelly, for this action, received the highest award—Congressional Medal of Honor. Kelly was our B.A.R. Man. Gato was his assistant. Kelly, Gato and myself worked pretty well together. Later action—Gato was killed and I was wounded, we were under heavy artillery barrage. I was hit in the left thigh, which also broke my leg in two places. I wouldn't let anyone help me because things at that time were too hot. I crawled about fifty to seventy yards to a sort of cave, still under heavy fire. In this cave were Italian people, men, women and children. The men covered me with their coats and also forced me to drink wine—lots of wine—which they did because I had lost so much blood and was very weak. They kept me well until our own Medics arrived. They took me to a field Hospital then later flew me to a Hospital in North Africa. About three months later I returned to my outfit (Co. L Inf. 3rd Battalion) just in time to make another invasion—Anzio, (nowhere half as bad as Salerno). I was made Sgt. there.

A little way out of Anzio we started the big drive for Rome. We fought day and night. If I remember right we went 240 miles in 30 days. We captured Rome June 4, 1944 at 4:00 that morning. In some farm before the village of Veletri we were on combat patrol. Lt Wilcox then about 30 yards away—behind a hedge row throwing grenades. I immediately took cover behind this horse trough and started picking off Germans. Killed 4 and wounded 2. Lt. Wilcox told me I would be decorated for the action. Later in action, Lt. Wilcox was killed so I never received any award, of course. At that time I didn't care. I was wounded again—beyond Rome—twice in a day. I was shot through my right arm about 11:00 a.m. while street fighting. I refused to leave until later. That same day, I was shot in my left wrist. This put me out of action for good. Thank God I'm alive.

The Fatalist

by James Gardner Erickson

“E” Co.—141st Inf.

Because of his dangerous occupation, the frontline G.I. sometimes discussed the philosophical issues of survival and extinction. I personally had become a lifetime atheist when I was about twelve years old. The death, destruction and chaos of war only reinforced my disbelief. However, there was one fellow in our squad who I remember only as “The Fatalist”. He often said that “as long as your number wasn't up you would survive. There was nothing to worry about.” I asked him one day that if that was true, how come he dug his holes so deep? I had bettered him in this argument so he became very hostile toward me.

It was June, 1944, and we were dug in on a hill north of Rome. One could see the wheat fields on the gently rolling land for miles, and toward the east stretched the shallow Ombrone River. That morning four wiremen came near where I was dug in. They were laughing and joking like they were taking a walk in the sun. I warned them that the hill was under fire and that they should move fast and get down. At that instant, three eighty-eight shells exploded within a few seconds of each other. My hole was filled with smoke and shrapnel whined all over the place but I was not hurt. Three of the wiremen were killed instantly. In a few minutes some medics came, threw a blanket over the faces of the dead, and rushed the fourth victim away in a stretcher.

I stuck my head up and there was “The Fatalist” looking at me from behind a low stone wall. He remarked, “Erickson, I thought they got you!” The point of this anecdote is that after all of these many long years, I still remember the feeling of profound disappointment in his voice.

General Dave Frazier

By Lem Vannatta
Serv. Co. 143rd Inf.



Worldwartwoveterans.org



Worldwartwoveterans.org

Seems like the weather always has something to do with my coming up with a story. Today it's 100, high humidity here at Arp, Texas. Too hot to sit in the back yard and whittle. This story has been in my mind for almost fifty years. I've never been a hero worshipper but I've seen men I admired and grew to love. Dave Frazier is one of these men. My admiration for him helped mold some character for me. On with the story.

Early in January 1941, Service Co. 143rd sent out a call to regimental for truck drivers. Serv. Co. was full of chiefs and no Indians, no one wanted to be a lowly truck driver. Us guys in the rifle companies who

hated to walk were ready to drive trucks. The day we went to the motor pool (about 100 men) it was drizzling rain, a Sgt. fell us in at attention. A young, red headed well groomed, and neat dressed 2nd Lt. took over. He told us he had over 100 vehicles, dirty and needing to be serviced, for us to fall out and fall back in 10 minutes with a bucket and GI brush. There wasn't 100 buckets and brushes in the regiments, as I was on K.P. back at K Co. I ran back, got a bucket and brush, returned and fell in the formation. When the 10 minutes were up about 30 men had buckets and brushes. The other men had nothing. Lt. Frazier walked down the line, if you had a bucket and brush, he never even looked at you. When he came to a man without a bucket and brush, he would ask in a quiet but firm voice, "Where is your bucket and brush?" The man would start his excuse, the Lt. would reply in the same quiet voice, "You can go on back to your Company, I wanted a bucket and brush, not excuses."

Well, we worked our butts off, built a fine motor pool, trained hard. Lt. Dave was always with us, he made us feel good and proud of our effort. He would fight for us, laugh at our personal trouble with us. They finally gave out a few ratings to truck drivers, he consoled those of us who were left out. The Indians who mobilized with Serv. Co. had our ratings.

Lt. Frazier made 1st Lt. and went off to Infantry School at Ft. Benning. He had us on our way to being good drivers and soldiers, we had more good motor officers, Chum Williamson, Lt. Buster, but to us Lt. Frazier was the guy who started it all.

Lt. Frazier came back from Infantry School and took over a rifle company. We would see them in the parade, etc., before long they were the proudest rifle company in the regiment. It was Captain Dave M. Frazier now. He still knew all of us truck drivers by name and spoke when he saw us. He stopped me one day and asked if I had gotten married yet. He knew I was serious about my wife.

When we moved to Camp Edwards, Mass., Capt. Frazier made Major and returned to Serv. Co. as Reg. S4 officer. We motor pool men were sure proud of our old Lt. He was still one of the boys. He was still highly interested in the transportation section, he kept an eye on us and saw to it we kept our training up. He took all the under fire and forced march training with us.

After Salerno, we lost him again, he went to the 1st Bn. as Bn. Exo. Later he made Lt. Col. Bn. Commander. At the wars end, he was Regt. Exo. He was beat up, tired, and all but was still one of the boys. He still knew all of us. If one of us ever got into trouble, he would stand by us, all he wanted when we went to him was for us to tell him the truth.

The day I left to come home, he drove up to see me off. I'd made the rest O.K. but I had to cry.

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I didn't go to the 143rd. reunion at Waco this year, I was just tired and lazy. General Dave Frazier was there on a stretcher. I have a picture of 17 old Serv. Co. men taken at the 1987 reunion with Gen. Frazier. We all love our old motor pool Lt.



Big Turnout For Men of Service Company, 143rd Infantry at Waco

The 143rd Infantry Regiment always have a big turnout for their annual reunion in Waco — Mid June each year, and here we have men of SERVICE COMPANY 143rd. . .

Photo at left — at center, General Dave Frazier, front row: standing — James Clements, O. W. Admire, Odell Green, Hoot Gibson, Campbell Tullos, L. Burnidett, "Tubby" Edison, J. Higgins.

Back row — Lem Vannatta, A. J. Raymond, Jim Willard, Glen McPherson, Joe Derise, Julian McLeod, J. W. Thomas, David Pratt — and not shown: Johnny Palmer.

Photo sent in by Andy Raymond of Pearland TX, who is your 143rd V/P for the year 1986, and he has our thanks.

144th Infantry Regimental Organization History



By 144th Infantry Association

This regiment was organized as 4th Infantry Regiment, Texas Volunteer Guard in April, 1880, from then existing separate companies as follows: The Lamar Rifles, Dallas, 1875—Fannin Light Guards, Bonham, 1875—Frontier Rifles, Henrietta, 1878—Gate City Guards, Denison, 1877—Johnson City Guard, Cleburne, 1880—Queen City Guards, Dallas, 1880.

The 4th Infantry Regiment, TVG, continued in state service until the Spanish-American War, when it was called into federal service and redesignated as 2nd Infantry, Texas Volunteers, U.S. It did not go overseas and was stationed near Mobile, Alabama, Jacksonville and Miami, Florida 11 May to 9 Nov 1898.

In 1916 it was again called into federal service and was stationed in the Big Bend District of Texas, along the Rio Grande River during the period 17 May 1916 to 24 March 1917.

From 31 March to 17 April 1917 it was reorganized and consolidated with the 6th Regiment Infantry TVG, and on latter date redesignated as 144th Infantry Regiment, 36th Division, Texas National Guard.

On 15 Oct 1917 it was again called into federal service, with 36th Division and was in training at Camp Bowie, Fort Worth, Texas. Thereafter it went to France with 36th Division and it was during this period it earned the honor of carrying on its Regimental Color staff a streamer with the inscription "MEUSE ARGONNE" for its actions in that sector and battle. It was mustered out on 21 June 1919, having been returned to Camp Bowie, Fort Worth with 36th Division prior to that date.

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On 28 June 1921 the first company of the regiment was reorganized as Co A, Longview, Texas. Other units of regiment and the division were reorganized during 1921-1922.

On 24 Nov 1940 the "home stations" were as follows: FORT WORTH—Regtl Hq & Hq Co, Serv Co, Hq Co 1st Bn and Co B; MIDLOTHIAN—The Band; ATHENS—Anti-Tank Co; LONGVIEW—A Co; TERRELL—C Co; TIMPSON—D Co; DALLAS—all of 2nd Bn and Med Det; ATLANTA—Hq Co 3rd Bn; CLARKSVILLE—I Co; WINNSBORO—K Co; DENISON—L Co, and GREENVILLE—M Co.

On 25 Nov 1940 it was called into active service, each company at its respective home station. The regiment assembled in Camp Bowie, Brownwood, Texas, during Dec-Jan 1941 and training was started in late January, the regiment receiving trainees from the Selective Service program during Jan-Feb-Mar.

Intensive simulated combat exercises climaxed the training during maneuvers in the state of Louisiana in August-September, 1941, when the 2nd and 3rd Armies competed with each other. The 144th Inf Regt was commended on its action by CG 3rd Army.

On 9 Dec 1941 the 144th departed Camp Bowie as a result of Pearl Harbor and the declaration of war on 8 Dec. It arrived Ft. Lewis, Wash on 14 Dec 41 in six trains with all T/E equipment and weapons, 88 officers, 1 warrant officer and 1876 enlisted men. RR travel was 2606.9 miles in 4 days 3 hrs, due to "priority movements."

By 19 Dec 1941 battalions and company sections were located at various points in between Orcas Island in Puget Sound and the Oregon-Calif boundary; guarding air bases, airfields, trans-oceanic radio transcvr station, oil & gas facilities and storage points, CAA and FCC radio monitor stations, radio range (Radar), bridges, tunnels, communications, ship building plants, conducting coastal patrols, defense installations and guarding against anti-sabotage.

On 21 Dec Regtl Hq & Hq Co, Band and Serv Co, AT Co, Med Det, Co L and Co M, less some plats and sections moved by night to Portland Army Air Base (PAAB), near Portland, Oregon. One plat of Co L was sent on secret mission and placed under the control of CO U 5th Cavalry. (Later learned it was to guard a Radar station).

On 15 Jan 1942 regt was authorized overstrength of 7% above T/O 7-11 and advised shipments to bring to strength would begin soon. Instructions received to start interviews to obtain candidates for Infantry Officer Schools and other services.

On 1 Mar received order assigning 144th Inf Regt to GHQ Reserve and authority to wear the red, white and blue shoulder patch; regt relieved from 36th Div asgmt.

On 11-12 March received 825 EM direct from Recept Cen at Ft. Snelling, Ft. Douglas, Jefferson Barracks and Ft. Leavenworth. A Tng Bn

was set up at Vancouver Barracks, Wash., across river from PAAB. Other shipments arrived from Repl Tng Cen and were assigned to orgns. Losses to OCS and to other orgns nearly every week.

On 15 April rcvd orders for move to No. Calif. Sec., WDC & 4th Army. Mvmts made on 21 Apr via trucks and rail. On arr relieved units of 17th Inf at various points in the San Francisco-Eureka-Arcata area, from San Francisco to Calif-Oreg boundary. Regtl Hq & Hq Co with other regtl sections located at Santa Rosa, Calif.

On 5 May received ltr fr WD AGO designating San Francisco as permanent station.

During balance of 1942 shipments to OCS, cadres to other units, activations of new organizations and direct transfers to staging area orgns continued.

On November 1026 EM were received direct from Recept Centers in eastern part U.S. and six Tng Cos were set up, 4 at Santa Rosa and 2 at Ft. Cronkhite. Regt was auth overstrength of 25% officers and 15% EM. All orgns inspected by CG & team fr NCS-WDC.

On 26 Dec rcvd info fr NCS-WDC that TAG and CG AGF would issue orders for move to Eastern Defense Command ("duties similar to current assignments").

4 Jan 1943—The CO, 3 staff off and 4 NCOs plus 1 off & 1 NCO each company made departure for the secret destinations. Order received specified T/O 7-11 strength for arrival at destinations. Some off and EM trfd to other units in area, mostly 125th Inf Regt and HD of San Francisco. Lt. Col. Howard assumed comd of the regt.

On 9 Jan all trainees rcvd in Nov assigned to orgns. Info rcvd 107th Cav would relieve regt 11-12 Jan so regt could depart 14 Jan. The departures made from Santa Rosa, Petaluma and San Francisco. (Prior to departure a teleg rcvd fr Col. Sandlin advising Regtl Hq and Hq Sec of units with Band would be at Atlantic Beach, Fla.). RR gave estimate of 7-10 days required for 8 trains to reach destinations due to a variety of routings and sizes of the movements.

The trains arrived at destinations during January 21-23, 1943:—Regtl Hq & Hq Co, Band and regtl sec of Serv, AT and Med Det—Atlantic Beach, Fla.; the 1st Bn at Carolina Beach, N.C., 2nd Bn at Charleston, S.C., 3rd Bn at Miami, Florida. RR travel varied 3343 to 3600 miles due to various routings and destinations.

Patrols were formed from Wrightsville Beach, NC to Key West, Fla., mostly on or near beaches and inlets along the Atlantic Coast. Regt. at T/O 7-11 less 2 EM.

A Prov Patrol Co was formed from Atlantic Beach orgns to cover Dayton, Flagler Beaches at St. Augustine (where German sub had been rptd to have landed sabotage or spy agents prior to arrival of regt.)

18 Feb 1943—Col. Sandlin was rlvd of comd by VO CG Sou Sec and sent to hosp. Lt.-Col. Gaston S. Howard recalled from leave and assumed comd per same source.

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23 Fe—Permanent change of station for regt designated as Combat Team Camp, Atlantic Beach, Florida by ltr TAG 2-20-43.

28 Apr—CG Sou Sec called CO re advisability of regt to furnish cadres for inf regts—he recommended not more than Bn cadre any one month due to the losses in WDC for such and also more than 250 to OCS programs, most being NCOs.

24 May—Physical conditioning tng resumed and Expert Infantry Badge tng started.

14 June—Hope for a new, distinctive shoulder patch for regt given up—the TAG and QMG considered it not feasible. (Two designs were especially made by the Walt Disney artists while regt was in Calif.) (Wish we had picture of them.)

During period 21 Jan 43 to 18 Mar 44 regtl responsibilities included the areas from North Carolina to Florida incl., primarily coastal defense but also protection for defense installations and against sabotage and landing of spies. The regt was in charge of Combat Teams which included FA, CA, Sig, CAAC and Med orgns attached.

The regiment was selected as a special training unit to conduct infantry advanced training for IRTC graduates not yet 19 years of age and to retrain some EM who had received their basic trng in other services.

On March 18th, 1944, movement was made to Camp Van Dorn, Miss., for that purpose. Prior to completion of the first phase priority orders were received to ship 1,700 EM of all grades to Inf Repl Cen for overseas repl. In April 900 were sent to Ft. Ord, Calif. and 800 to Ft. Meade, Md., for immediate overseas shipments. This was about one-half the regtl strength and by end of May other shipments and transfers reduced it to 509 EM total. These and 116 officers then became the "training cadre" to conduct tng for groups of from 500 to 2,000 EM in periods of six to nine weeks, depending upon their grades, ages and repl requisitions received. Early in this period two CAA and one TD Bns arrived and were inactivated and all EM of them were placed in the training groups—all grades included retrained for infantry.

During the CY 1944 there were 60 officers and 9,108 EM shipped, 855 being NCOs. Of the EM there were 2,387 of assigned members shipped, including those which were transferred to other orgns which required additional for their movement overseas, including the following infantry divisions: 69th, 78th, 94th, 97th, 102nd and 103rd.

Some of the Repl EM and some OCS graduates went to the 36th Div in Italy and France, so also did some Off & EM left at Cp Bowie upon departure at regt, due to their being sick in hosp, on leave or at one of the service schools.

On 1 Jan 1945 regt moved to CP Swift, Texas, and on 31 March departed for Camp Rucker, Ala., where it was joined by seven other separate regiments for large-scale training, as an Infantry Advanced Training Center. Some combat experienced Off and EM were received to assist in this.

In the period through August, 1945, more than 6,000 "IARTC" officers and enlisted men were shipped as replacements, mostly to Ft. Meade but also to some orgns here.

In August, 1945, orders were received to inactivate the regiments, the 144th to be disbanded effective 20 Sep 1945. At that time 12 officers and 117 EM remained of those who had departed Calif. with the regt. On 31 Aug 1945 a "farewell" dinner-dance and a cadre party were held, with 89 officers and 117 EM attending the two separate affairs. The 144th Infantry Regiment ceased to exist at 0001 on 20 Sep 45.

WORLD WAR II SUMMARY: Although the regiment, as a unit did not leave the USA and engage in combat, most of its members did—serving in almost every theater of the operations. Several were awarded medals for outstanding service, most have some battle ribbons and others were among the casualties.

Many of those called to active duty 25 Nov 1940, plus others received afterward have the notation "KIA" beside the name. Others have notations such as wounded "at Rapido", or "in Africa", or "Italy," or "France", or "Okinawa", etc. After the reunion on 14 October 1972 there were 364 on the regimental "MEMORIAL LIST", including those who had passed away.

POSTLUDE: The 3rd Bn 144th Inf (Mech) NG is now authorized to wear the insignias and carry the colors of the 144th. The Hq is located at Terrell, Texas.



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See Naples And Die

By **Richard M. Burrage**

Honorary Colonel of the 143rd Inf. Reg.

This piece of military history was sent to Bill Jary a couple of months before his death and became lost along with other history of the 36th. Col. Burrage has been kind enough to send your editor another copy. The article has been thoroughly researched and is too lengthy to run in one issue. It has been divided into three segments to be published in Vol. IX, No. 4 and subsequent issues. It will give our readers an excellent overall picture of the action taken by the 143rd Inf. in its march from Salerno to Naples.

Col. Burrage has done what needs to be done for each unit in order to have a thorough history of the 36th.

The editor has taken the liberty to delete parts of Col. Burrage's article in order to shorten it for publication in the Quarterly. The "Prologue" to his article and sections on the Commandos and Darby's Rangers are deleted in order to make it manageable for this issue.

IN MORE SECLUDED SECTIONS of the city, white-baked Mediterranean villas escaped effects of intensive bombing and shelling.



PREFACE

Many volumes have been written about the grand strategy of Operation Avalanche. This also included difficulties of coalition warfare, the personalities of generals and agreements between the Grand Alliance of the United States, Great Britain and Russia on one side and Germany and Italy on the other.

This article is different. It is not a "Mark Clark bashing piece." It is not ridiculing the techniques of Montgomery and Alexander. Nor is it silent on the virtues of the German Army who opposed the invading force. I do not mount a defense for Major General Fred L. Walker as a general officer or as a person. He needs no defense. His record speaks for itself. It would be most irrational for me to try to render efficiency reports on these general officers. I am not sufficiently aware of the reasons why they acted as they did. I know that if I had been in their positions, my lack of effectiveness would have been most disastrous on our war effort.

I will try to show how the ordinary soldier, at company and battalion level carried out their responsibilities. I hope to show very clearly that in the final analysis, battles are decided by the ordinary soldier, who fights the battle directly to his front, althwhile subjected to the whims of the weather which is always a dominant factor in the battle.

Of the command and unit staff group of 1/143 Inf, LTC Fred L. Walker Jr. and I are the only ones living today. LTC Walker was the Battalion Commander in this operation and I was the Battalion Intelligence Officer. Col. Walker is now enjoying retirement with his family in Sedona, Arizona. After he left the Division he continued to serve in many important assignments both in the United States and in other foreign assignments. I respect Col. Walker and learned much under his leadership. It was an honor to serve under him.

The unit journals of the 1/143 Inf were destroyed in the disastrous enemy shelling we suffered at Guigliano. I did keep a diary as did many others. With the help of Catpain J. Alvin Newell, of Huntsville, Texas, the Battalion Operations Officer, I wrote the after-action report for the 1/143 Inf which is incorporated in the 143d Infantry Regimental after-action reports. I also had access for a short time to the diary of our Battalion Executive Officer, Major James L. Land, of Chester, SC, who was killed in action at Guigliano. I have also discussed these operations with several members of 1/143 Inf at various times. Some of the incidents were confirmed by other officer who were in 1/143 Inf, when I was not an eye-witness. Many thanks to LTC Fred A. Stallings (then CPT), who was the senior aid at that time to Major General Walker. LTC Stallings, of Houston, Texas, has been a friend of mine since he reported for duty to Company I, 143d Infantry, upon our arrival at Camp Bowie, Texas, in

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1940. While Colonel Stallings was usually direct in answering my questions, I never tried to compromise any information which he may have had which was of a privileged nature between a general officer and his personal staff.

The reader should realize that an individual's personal view of a battle is restricted to what he sees and what he hears himself. As in a traffic accident report, eye-witness accounts vary according to their position when the accident occurred. Sometimes exact dates and times may become blurred after forty-five years, but they are usually in the ballpark. I have read many accounts of battles in which I participated and readily realized that in some instances, the story was not based entirely on facts. That is understandable due to the confusion, chaos, and the imponderables of the battlefield.

I have unfortunately omitted many names of valiant soldiers who performed magnificent deeds in these fire-fights in the mountains and on the plains. Too, I have been unable to contact all of the present-day survivors.

Basically, this is the story of a battalion in its baptism of fire and its reactions. A battalion miles away from its Regiment and Division; fighting co-equally with British troops against the same enemy and in adjacent locations—responding directly to the Fifth Army Commander, with no possibility of relief from the front lines, and with supply lines via land and sea as long as seventy miles, utilizing both American and British supply dumps.

NARROW STREETS, battered buildings, and ragged natives, however, were a much more common sight.



I make no judgement of anyone's actions. I simply tell the story as best I can remember, supported by after-action reports and eye-witnesses, and confirmed by more polished historians.

The story is told in three segments: (1) Our landing at Salerno and subsequent amphibious movement to Maiori, (2) Mountain fighting in the Sorrentine Peninsula, and (3) our advance to capture the city of Naples and environs.

HERE COMES THE 1/143 INFANTRY

According to the plans of Operation AVALANCHE, the 1/143 Inf of the 36th Infantry Division, was to land on Beach RED as part of the 143d Infantry Regimental Combat Team at H plus 180 plus time of craft becoming available on D-Day, 9 September 1943. The Battalion was to advance inland to the Regimental reorganizational line; then proceed to an assembly area vicinity of the road junction two and one-half miles northwest of Capaccio, and revert to Division Reserve.

The Commander of our 1/143 was Lieutenant Colonel Fred L. Walker, Jr., the elder son of our Division Commander, Major General Fred L. Walker. LTC Walker was a West Point graduate, as well as the USA Command and General Staff College. I have never found any indication that 1/143 had been placed in Division Reserve because of that relationship. I am sure that if such had been the case, the information would have been "leaked" by someone. Also, it was the practice for the Regimental Commander to nominate which of his battalions he desired to be tasked with that mission. In a reserve posture, it is usually a less hazardous mission as compared to the assault units. However, if the battle turns against us, the reserve unit is committed in a most demanding role. In the instant case, it turned out that the Division Reserve was taken by the Army Commander and committed in their baptism of fire in a mountainous area to protect vital passes and roads which, if fell in the German's hands, would have dealt a mortal blow to the landing force. In addition, whereas the 36th Infantry Division (-) was relieved from the lines on 29 September, the 1/143 Inf was actively engaged with the enemy until 5 October. In addition, we were aligned with British troops whose tactics and methodology differed in a great degree from the US Army.

The landing plan for the 1/143 Inf was on schedule. All of boat waves 1, 2, and 4 loaded into landing craft at 0500 on 9 September 1943. Company B, part of the 3d wave, landed a short time later. As part of LTC Walker's plan, I, as the Battalion Intelligence Officer, along with the Battalion Intelligence Section, loaded at 0100 hours in a separate landing craft from the USS CHASE and landed with the first wave of the 142d Regimental Combat Team. My group landed without incident (in about 6 feet of surf), and pushed inland to locate the assembly area in the vicinity of the railroad station northeast of PAESTUM. I then sent guides back

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to the beach and when the Battalion (-Co B) landed, they were led to the designated area. When I say we landed "without incident" I did not mean to say that we were not receiving hostile artillery and mortar fire. It certainly served to accelerate our movement from the beach.

Upon arrival at our assembly area, LTC Walker sent 1LT Russell J. Darkes, of Lebanon, PA, to Division Headquarters as our Liaison Officer. The Division command post had been established in the vicinity of Vannulo. About one hour later, LTC Walker and Captain Newell, our Operations Officer, were summoned to Division Headquarters. In compliance with the same order, our Battalion Executive Officer, Major James L. Land, started moving the Battalion to the vicinity of Vannulo. Company B had joined the battalion by this time.

While we were near Division Headquarters, we established local security for the Division Headquarters, and manned two observation posts. While we heard accounts of enemy tank attacks, we were never involved in such actions. We were, however, subjected to the same enemy shelling as all other units in the beachhead area.

On 12 September, LTC Walker was ordered to report to Division Headquarters. On arriving, he was told that General Mark Clark had ordered a task force to be formed consisting of our Company A, one tank company, one tank destroyer company, one company of the 540th Shore Engineers, one company of the 36th Combat Engineers and Battery C 133d Field Artillery Battalion. BG William H. Wilbur, the Assistant Division Commander, was to be the Task Force Commander. Major Land was to be the TF Executive Officer, I was to be the TF S3 and 1LT Carlos B. Evans, of Norwalk, CA, was to be the TF Adjutant. It took the command group of the Task Force about an hour to get the group organized and depart for the beach. Our mission was to travel northwest along the coastline in naval craft and locate Maiori. There we were to disembark and locate Colonel William O. Darby, Commander of the 6615th Ranger Force (Prov), better known as "Darby's Rangers." We were to reinforce his three Ranger Battalions who were precariously holding on to the heights on the mountains in the Sorrentine Peninsula, protecting the roads and passes through the mountains from the plains of Naples to the seacoast at Maiori.

Just prior to loading, the order was changed by General Clark. He ordered the entire 1/143 Inf and Battery A 1/33 FA Bn to form the Task Force. LTC Walker assumed command of the Task Force and unit staff officers of 1/143 Inf were to assume their normal assignments. BG Wilbur was to precede the Battalion to Maiori and begin coordination with the Rangers. He handed a road map, scale 1:200,000, to Major Land and departed with LTC Walker, me, 1Lt John J. Klein, of Detroit, MI, as representative of Company D, and 1LT James F. Graham of Dallas, Texas, our Battalion Surgeon.

BG Wilbur and his party boarded a torpedo boat, handed the skipper, a Lieutenant Junior Grade, another map like he had given to Major Land, and told him to take off for Maiori. Being from Waco, Texas, I had never had an opportunity to ship out on such an impressive boat. It was fast! We stayed close to shoreline to permit the boat Captain to identify land features from his road map. I was most impressed by the view of the cliffs along the coast, little realizing that I was going to get a closer look at even higher mountains and cliffs for the next few weeks.

Upon arriving at Maiori, our torpedo boat was able to pull in to the beach and we stepped off without getting our feet wet. We located Colonel Darby in the San Francisco Hotel, which had been taken over as his headquarters. According to a Ranger I questioned later, the hotel had only eight rooms and two baths. (Time has dealt favorably with Maiori evidently. The 1988 Baedeker of Italy shows that Maiori now boasts of ten Class II hotels, with over 1,000 rooms. The San Francisco is now listed as having eight-four rooms and baths.)

Colonel Darby greeted us warmly, hoping that the much needed help had finally arrived. We all sat down at some tables and discussions were started as to where and how 1/143 TF could reinforce the Rangers. Darby's Rangers were reporting directly to Headquarters Fifth Army. In a reinforcing mission, taken away from the Regiment and the Division, we were now working on a co-equal basis with Darby's Rangers, reporting directly to Headquarters Fifth Army. However, reports and other paper work, except for the unit journal, suddenly started to seem to be unimportant. I cannot recall any instance where we were asked for information by the Fifth Army. We had many visitors from the Fifth Army and apparently that sufficed in this instance. As far as our Division and our Regiment were concerned, the 1/143 Inf was somewhere on the map near a town called Maiori, which they had never seen and would not see. As you will see later, the Fifth Army was not hesitant about attaching us to various American or British commands. Sometimes we wondered if our frequent transfer was due to our value or that we were so bad that nobody wanted us. I am sure the first choice is correct.

At no time did Colonel Darby and his staff ever attempt to exercise command over the 1/143 Inf Task Force. As an experienced officer, he made helpful suggestions many times and we learned to listen to him. The staffs worked together without any problem. Our Battalion Commander, LTC Walker, set the example for us in coordinating the cooperating with the Rangers and the Commandos.

After a full discussion of the challenges facing all concerned, it was agreed that 1/143 Inf would be responsible for the Maiori road through Chiunzi Pass to the plains below. We would also be responsible for the ridges alongside the road. The Rangers, consisting of the 1st, 3d, 4th and Cannon Company, supported by the 83d Chemical Battalion (4.2in), and part of the 319th FA Bn would take the area from the ridge on the west

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side of the road, across the mountains further west to Castellammare. Initially, our naval gun fire support was from two British cruisers, HMS BLANKNEY and HMS LOYAL.

These cruisers were laying out in the Gulf of Salerno about 5,000 yards. Our requests for artillery fire were to be coordinated by Captain Richard C. Cowing, of Dallas, Texas, our normal Artillery Liaison Officer. His forward observer would be 1LT Semour Steiglitz, of Washington, D.C., of the 133d FA Bn.

During the balance of the day, the group took a "tactical walk" with Colonel Darby. He located the dominant terrain features in our area. We picked out the location for our command post, assembly areas, and 1LT Klein selected positions for the mortars of Company D. Our Battalion Surgeon, 1LT Graham, coordinated the medical evacuation plan with CPT Emil Schuster, the Medical Officer of the 3d Ranger Battalion who was using the block house in the Chiunzi Pass as an Aid Station. 1LT Graham also coordinated his plans with the 10th Medical Unit (Br) who had set up in the monastery in Maiori. He felt that we were ready to receive the troops.

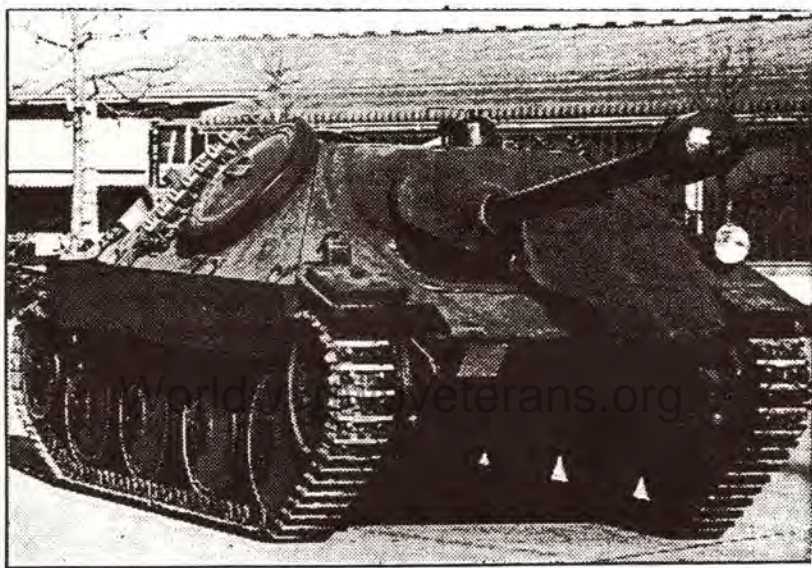
The Battalion loaded on landing craft back at RED Beach and departed about midnight for Maiori. Knowing that re-supply initially would be quite a task, the battalion loaded all possible ammunition and rations on the crafts. The US Navy did an excellent job navigating in dark waters (no running lights) trying to locate Maiori. This excellent job was done in strange waters, at night, and without charts. After several "soundings" en route, the Battalion landed unopposed at 0500 hours on 13 September, in high spirits, not knowing what lay ahead in their baptism of fire. The 1/143 Inf had landed and the force was now complete!

Although 1/143 Inf was now at Maiori, it was due solely to a lack of coordination between General Clark and Vice Admiral Henry Kent Hewitt, USN, Commander of the invasion armada. Hewitt commanded the US ANCON, flagship of the Western Task Force. Clark's headquarters afloat was on the US ANCON. On 10 September (D+1), Clark's first visit to the shore took him to the headquarters of the 36th Infantry Division. Since Dawley's VI US Corps Headquarters was still afloat the first two days, Clark had been dealing directly with Walker. During this phase, Clark and Walker were seeing eye-to-eye on the conduct of the battle. Clark then proceeded to LTG McCreery's Headquarters in the British X Corps area.

According to reports, LTG McCreery minced no words with General Clark. Clark received a full briefing on the X Corps situation. Then McCreery, without trying to belittle the danger, informed that he could not send troops ten miles west to capture Ponte Sele, one of his objectives. He also stressed that the Commandos and Rangers were just barely hanging on to the hill masses on the Sorrentine Peninsula. General Clark

agreed that without more help, this valuable real estate would be retaken by the Germans. Clark sent orders to the US VI Corps to move their left (west) boundary to the left in favor of the British X Corps. Clark also sent orders back to his headquarters on the US ANCON to land his floating reserve, the 179th Regimental Combat Team, at Maiori to reinforce Darby's Rangers and the British Commandos. This would permit the Commandos to slip to the right (east) and make firm contact with the 46th Infantry Division (Br). On his return to the US ANCON, he discovered that in his absence orders had been issued from the Supreme Commander in Algiers that the craft carrying the 179th RCT were urgently needed elsewhere. Admiral Hewitt was advised to land the 179th RCT in the American sector, miles from where General Clark intended them to land. You can imagine the fury of General Clark when he learned that his floating reserve had been landed, without his knowledge or permission, at the other end of the beachhead, causing much confusion among other craft as they moved laterally across the lines of communications. Since he no longer had a floating reserve to support the Rangers and Commandos, he then ordered that a reinforced infantry battalion (1/143 Inf) be sent to Maiori.

NOTE: Col. Burrage's article will be run in subsequent issues.



WAR MACHINE. *This original German tank, a modified Hetzer, was photographed in Switzerland, but is now at Ramstein Air Force Base in Germany. The auxiliary acquired it and now hopes to have it shipped to Camp Mabry in Austin this year for placement in the Museum of the Texas Fighting Man. There it will be restored to its original 1944 configuration.*

Upmost was the Utmost

By Ben Wilson, Jr.
Division Hq.

I have recently returned, along with my wife, Florence, from the France-Germany tour which was sponsored by the 36th Division Association, and conducted by Carl Strom and TM Travel Associates.

This tour brought back many memories of long ago, and one of the highlights was a visit to the sight of the memorial dedicated to the 442 Regiment combat team for their rescue of the famed "lost battalion" of World War II, on that high wooded ridge in France.

As I stood looking at the monument while the tour members were taking pictures, I recalled a subsequent event that took place in which I had a small part and related to the famous relief of this battalion. I have never told this story before and possibly you may recall something of this too.

While those of us who served at Division Headquarters didn't really have many opportunities to become heroes, every now and then an interesting assignment would come along as it did in this instance.

Not long after this occurrence of "Lost Battalion" rescue, General Dahlquist wished to recognize the 442nd combat team. He gave General Stack the charge to come up with something appropriate. It was decided to present the 442nd with a plaque. General Stack called in the G-I, Lt. Col. Robert M. Travis (awards and decorations) and as Special Service officer, I was contacted to assist in procuring the plaque and forming the text of the inscription to be placed thereon.

After the text was agreed upon and approved, I contacted the French Liaison officer to 36th Division Hq. from an adjourning French Unit, and we journeyed back to Besancon where the Special Service Section was publishing the T-Patch under the direction of F. Bill Jary.

After a time we were able to find an engraver who agreed to make the plaque and engrave it. In those day of shortages of materials we were happy to secure the services of a man who was recommended by no less than the mayor of Besancon.

There was a catch though—he could not read, write, nor speak English, and would have to work from the prepared typed text, which he said he could do. In due course the plaque was prepared, inscribed, and was a beautiful work of art. I picked it up and returned it to the Division G-I as the presentation was scheduled and cut and published.

In the text was the phrase "With Utmost Courage", etc. When we checked the original script and the engraving, it has come out "With Upmost Courage". When this was discovered, I was almosted treated to one

of General Stack's thorough reaming outs and those who knew him will recall that he was most capable in this aspect.

Fortunately, the G-1, Bob Travis came to my rescue with a dictionary and it was agreed that the **UTMOST** and **UPMOST** meant about the same under the circumstances, and it also was too late to make a change in the inscribed text.

So the plaque was duly presented to the 442nd Reg. Combat Team, with just a tiny error—that was never noticed. But—let me say, having stood on that ridge forty years later—that “Upmost was the Utmost” for a job more than well done.



Worldwartwoveterans.org



Short Cut to Velletri

By Harvey Reves

Co. B 111th Medics

It was May 30, 1944 and after a couple of false starts in the days before, we began moving into the Alban Hills behind Velletri. We were Medics with the 2nd Battalion, 142nd Infantry. We were part of B Company, 111th Medics. Our C.O. was Captain Bert Marks, a very dedicated doctor and very competent officer. Before beginning our march we were given strict orders to be quiet, no smoking, etc. This operation was for real and we didn't realize we were going to infiltrate behind enemy lines. Our group of Medics were Cpl. Val Pryzgacki, Cpl. Lou Donnatella, Sgt. Travis Jacques and Privates Henry Borkvist, Tony Gomez, Sylvester Gonzales, Milton Eubanks, Frank Brancamp, myself Harvey Reves, and several others that I can't remember.

It was dusk when we started and only distant gunfire could be heard as we moved up the trail. After dark we heard a German plane flying very low and very close as it dropped a flare. I had just stepped onto some railroad tracks right out in the open. It was brighter than daylight and I froze and stopped breathing until that flare went out. It seemed forever and I was expecting to hear bullets flying any second but I lucked out. Later that night Val Pryzgacki heard this voice yell, "Douse that cigarette or I'll blow your head off." It turned out his wristwatch was glowing in the dark. Needless to say he turned the watch over pronto!

We kept moving up the trail and as dawn was breaking, we passed a little farmhouse and a young Italian couple and their small child coming down the trail to greet us and offer us wine as we moved along the trail. I accepted a bottle that turned out to be Anisette. It tasted good at the time and after a few swigs things were looking very rosy; my pack and the litter I was carrying became weightless. I was feeling really good. This was a great war! But that soon wore off and later we stopped for a break and I started to eat the can of pork loaf from my K rations. Oooh, that was all it took. I think I vomited up everything I had ever eaten in my life. Boy, what a lesson—no more Anisette!

We trudged further up the trail until we took another break. I was really getting tired and most of us laid down. We had stopped in a bare rocky area of the trail, no cover that I could see but it felt great to lay down.

Then all Hell broke loose. Mortar shells were exploding all over us and there was no hole to get into! Val Pryzgacki and I were working on one casualty when Val was hit in the leg. Shrapnel was flying everywhere. We took many casualties there. Some dead and many wounded.

Finally we started moving up the trail again and dug in early that night. We slept about 4 hours. Then the captain sent 8 of us out to find a C.P. that had some wounded further up the trail. It was a quiet walk up the trail; lots of greenery, no snipers, a really beautiful area. We eventually reached the far edge of the mountain where the C.P. was. You could see for miles up the valley toward Rome. What a sight! German artillery was blinking in the distance. Down below us where the wounded were, some Jerries were surrendering so we had some of them help us get the wounded up to the trail. We had two litter patients (a Corporal and a Lt.) and three walking wounded. One was a Sergeant, I think, and was carrying a .45 sidearm. That was the only gun in the group.

We started back down the trail to the aid station, eight of us litter bearers (4 on a litter) and the three walking wounded behind us—thirteen of us in all. I was on the lead litter with Borkvist, Eubanks and Brancamp. The other litter with the Corporal on it was tended by Tony Gomez, Sylvester Gonzales and I can't remember the names of the other two men except that one of them was a fairly new replacement. He was quite young and spoke a little German, so it was going pretty smooth. Our patients were doing O.K., great scenery, trail was easy to walk on, no shelling, and we were going down a gently slope.

Then it happened—"BANG"—A single rifle shot and very close. We hit the deck simultaneously. I got behind a big tree on my side of the trail. We left the litter with the Lieutenant on it in the middle of the trail. I don't remember if he complained or not, but I turned to look at Borkvist who was up against the hill on the other side of the trail and he pointed above him indicating he thought the shot came from above us and I should move near him, but it sounded different to me so I peeked around the tree down the hill.

There were about 40 Jerries all spread out coming up the hill and talking loudly back and forth (about then I was ready for some toilet paper). The only word I could make out sounded like NIX. Seemed like they said NIX or NISCT very often whatever they were saying. Then I turned to look at Borkvist and without making a sound indicated to him where the Jerries were. He turned ashen white when he saw my face. So we lay quietly until we could hear their footsteps right upon us. Then it was bedlam for a few seconds. I can only tell you what I observed from my position. I'm sure each of us had a different experience.

The first thing I heard was "Hands Ho!" and this freckle-faced kid who looked to be 14 or 15 years old shoved this Burp Gun in my face and demanded "Pistola! Pistola!.. I said, "no Pistola! no Pistola!" and

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then there were a dozen hands all over me. They took everything except some of my medical equipment and my clothes. I always carried two canteens and extra rations, cigarettes, etc. Boy, they really cleaned me out. While they were going through my pockets I heard this voice from the direction of the other litter yelling, "Italiano! Italiano!" As it turned out, one of the Jerries thought Tony Gomez was an Italian and was going to shoot him. He yelled, "Italiano" and fired a burst at Tony's feet, missing him as Tony Gomez yelled, "No, No, ESPANOL! ESPANOL!". So the Jerry backed off a little as their Lieutenant came forward.

He was the typical German officer (from the movies), still and erect, clean shaven and totally in charge. With our broken German we tried to convince him he should allow us to proceed to the aid station with our wounded, but he didn't seem to understand until the new man remembered a few words of German and spoke to him. The Lieutenant replied with one perfectly spoken word in English, "Impossible!" Then he started giving orders and two young Jerries herded us together and started us down the side of the mountain toward Velletri while the rest of them disappeared on the trail we had been traveling. Never saw any of them again.

It was tough going down the side of the mountain with the wounded, but eventually we made it down to the edge of town. We stopped there near a little farm house and saw a few other Germans moving around and everyone seemed pretty relaxed. No shelling or small arms fire and our two captors were very friendly and showed us pictures of their families, etc. Then this German sergeant came running up with a few other men and that was the first time I started worrying about our safety since we left the original group. This guy was tall, muscular, a big scar on his face, about 30 years old, I think. He had a very unfriendly look in his eyes and his voice and attitude got everyone's attention. Our two guards stiffened immediately and paid strict attention as he rattled off a bunch of dialogue. Then with just a hint of a smile he took off on the double with his men. Boy! I was glad to see him go.

Then our guards steered us into the little farm house. It had two bunks and a dirt floor. We put the two litter patients on the bunks and the rest of us sat on the floor against the walls. The guards sat on chairs in front of the door and they told us (mostly in sign language) that we would be put on trucks and taken to Rome that night. That almost sounded good. Then in the early afternoon a couple of our Mustangs came over and strafed everything in sight. None of us was hit but it was close. We had noticed earlier that a house about a half a mile away had a big Red Cross flag on the roof. So we asked our guards if we could get it and put it in our house. They didn't want to get shot anymore than we did so they went over there with us and we made the switch and we all felt a little safer. There wasn't anyone in the house we took the flag from.

Soon a few more Germans came by and talked to our guards very calmly and left. Then one of the guards motioned to two of us to come outside and we followed him into a cellar near the house. It didn't take long to find out why. When he opened the door to the cellar, the stench was terrible. There were about thirty wounded Germans laying down there and most of them had gangrene. We gathered together what little medical supplies we had and did what we could for them (which wasn't much). It was really pitiful; even though they were the enemy you couldn't help feeling for them. So it wasn't easy to leave them as most were really suffering and their eyes were pleading for help. I'll never forget their faces.

It was getting dark now and we were all huddled in the farm house and we hadn't had any food or water since they captured us. So finally one of the guards brought in a bottle of wine and we passed it around and all had a sip or two and I guess all fell asleep. The last I remembered was the two guards at the door with their rifles and a candle burning between them. The next thing I remember was a big "BOOM!" and as I opened my eyes, red hot sparks, bullets ricocheting off the walls and ceiling, dust and smoke everywhere and a voice from outside saying, "Come out of there you Dirty Bastards", and by this time even though we could hardly see, we were yelling, "Don't Shoot, Don't Shoot. Americans. Americans."

As I came out the door, the first thing I saw was a Tommy gun pointed at me but the guy behind was smiling. There were G.I.'s everywhere. One guy with a Bazooka pointed at us and plenty of rifles. We were lucky they didn't blow us all to Kingdom Come. Several of us were wounded; mine was not serious. As far as I know everyone survived the ordeal except the two guards who were at the door, but I'm not sure about them. Our new replacement who spoke German had his radial nerve severed by a bullet and was eventually sent home.

After we got our wits together, those of us who were able got our group together upon the road. The place was crawling with German prisoners and one of them dropped a grenade near us (I guess it was accidental) and the sparks sent everyone scrambling before it went off. Luckily it was a concussion grenade and no one was hurt, but it sure got everyone's attention. I'm not sure which outfit recaptured us but I think it was 3rd Bn., 143 Inf.

Anyway there was a Major there and we explained to him about our wounded and the German wounded that needed help. So he told us he couldn't spare a guide, but to follow the road back into town and we would find the aid station. So the three of us started off: Eubanks, Brancamp and me, Harvey Reves. What a lonely walk! It was pitch black, rubble, shell holes and quiet, *very* quiet. In fact it was too quiet. It was truly a no man's land. We went on slowly over a bridge for about forty-

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five minutes without seeing anyone and not hearing anything but our own footsteps. Finally we heard a voice say "HALT! What's the password?" Jesus! we didn't know any password but to this day I can't remember what else was said except the guy on guard duty directed us to the aid station and he didn't shoot us. At the aid station we talked to the Captain and he assured us the wounded would be taken care of and so our nightmare was over for the time being and we were the first Americans to enter Velletri via the "Short Cut."

If anyone out there who reads this story recognizes any names or remembers anything about this series of events, I would really like to hear from them. It would be great to hear from any of the wounded who were with us that day. Of the thirteen of us in the group, I have only talked to one of them since 1944 and I have not seen any of them. I talked on the phone with Sylvester Gonzales who lives here in California. He remembered that day very well but he couldn't remember the names of any of the others either. I will be sure and call him if anyone contacts me with any information.



Avellino, Italy; March 1944. Harvey Reves, Big Joe Vodvarka, Val Przygocki, Leo Novitsky and John MacIntosh. All from B Co. 111th Medics.

Observations of a Brigadier

By R.K. Doughty

During those first days of the assault on Salerno when, as the Generals tell it, the 36th Division was being "blooded," many lessons not taught at the Infantry School at Ft. Benning or at the Command and General Staff College at Ft. Leavenworth were being learned the hard way.

At one juncture, the Division had been strung out over a wide defensive area with radio voices from Berlin practically exultant over the next German move that would drive a wedge, it was claimed, between the Sele and Calore Rivers and result in the demise of the 36th.

At that moment, the 141st Headquarters with part of one battalion and the Service Company were alongside the 56th (Black Cat) Division of the British 10th Corps. The rest of the 36th Division was fighting in similar disjointed elements along the front to the south. Unity of command had yet to be appreciated by some high rankers.

On a particularly nice day, when pounding of the British 25-pounders, as some of their artillery was called, had eased off near the shoreline behind us, and the tanks of the Royal Scots Greys, massed hub-to-hub in extension of the artillery positions, were silent, a handsome British Brigadier strolled into the wooded gully where the 141st's command tents were pitched. Someone highballed him and he responded by bringing a riding crop to his garrison cap visor. He was most unassuming and the prototype of a young, reserved and confident general officer.

Shortly he had assembled some of the headquarters' staff around him on a grassy knoll where he sat down and announced that he was with the British 56th to which our cut-up unit was momentarily attached for operations. He had heard, he said, the broadcasts from Berlin and, thinking that they could have had an unsettling effect on our morale, decided to pay us a visit. He asked us to sit down and talk with him, which we did.

We discussed the situation confronting us and he answered a number of questions about hostile reinforcements and capabilities. He suddenly asked for the Regimental Intelligence Officer and I responded.

"Where are your OP's?" he asked.

"We only have one," I said, "and that's in a pigeon loft in a poor position because of the undergrowth and trees of the area."

"Would you mind coming with me?" he asked and there was no doubt in his tone that, though we were in different armies, I had just received a polite order.

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We moved toward our forward positions, going around a fenced plot where a couple of water buffalo, running loose, had given our foragers problems when they tried to "liberate" some beautiful looking muskmelons growing there. As we approached our front line, I cautioned him and he used the cover of trees and boulders well as we moved to a spot from which, beyond an open field, we could see the general lines held by the Germans. On a slight rise at the edge of the field stood a cement silo.

"That's where your OP should be!" he said in a low tone, pointing at the silo.

"It wouldn't last two minutes, there," I replied.

He looked at me for a long moment and then gave me a short order: "Follow me!" We returned to the 141st Hq. where he asked for transportation and shortly he and I were being driven in a jeep over a newly built, but boggy, road that ran past the 25-pounders and tanks to his headquarters. There he did some telephoning and then, putting on the pie-plate helmet the British wore, with its camouflage netting showing signs of hard use, he strode toward the British front lines. He also fastened a web belt and holstered revolver around his waist. It was getting on toward evening at the time and I began to worry some as we passed gun emplacements and then, in tall grass, an outpost line where he engaged in a whispered conversation with someone concealed from my view who had challenged him.

We proceeded through a swale where reeds and high grass concealed all but our heads and shoulders. I had noted an Italian farm house in the distance as we passed the outpost line and shortly, as our route of approach changed in the swampy going, I could make out another silo, beyond a barn. It seemed to me then, that we were very close to the German lines and in all likelihood within small arms range of enemy positions. I was also fairly certain that I had encountered a mad Englishman!

As we neared the barnyard, which was fenced in with split railings, I saw six or eight British soldiers chasing a cow around the enclosure and laughing and shouting to milk her, a procedure she was having no part of, as a well placed kick here, and a tossed horn, there, sent a couple of them sprawling to the great enjoyment, not only of those trying to hold her but also of another contingent of men high in an opening in the silo watching the entertainment.

The Brigadier, who had said nothing to me from the time he'd ordered me to follow him, turned to me with a serious look on his face and said, "Get the idea?" I knew, of course, that he was referring to the location of the OP and nodded. As I turned to look back toward the British lines, I could better understand the Brigadier's timing in making the trip with me to the OP. The sun, low down, shone directly in my eyes and for all practical purposes blinded, from the observation of those Germans who might have threatened our safety, the route we had followed.

I was quite ready to make the return trip at that moment but the Brigadier had only started his "lesson learned in combat." He proceeded to the silo base and started up an iron ladder that was permanently attached to the silo on the enemy's side of the structure! Again, there came that terse, "Follow me!"

He gained the platform at the opening near the top and I started to climb. About halfway up a shell had penetrated the side of the cement silo taking out two feet of one side of the ladder and two of the iron rungs. It had obviously been an armor-piercing shell for it had gone straight through to the interior of the silo so that the main damage had been to the ladder. It simply meant to me that I was the bull's eye on a direct-laying gun target, a thought that spurred me to bridge the ladder's gap with some extra-curricular calisthenics.

Once on the platform, I was introduced to the artillerymen at work there among whom were several radio operators and observers. They were busy bringing fire to bear on distant enemy traffic along one of Mussolini's main highways. As a hit was registered on a vehicle it was greeted with loud shouts and much shoulder slapping. My own inclination was to keep as quiet as hell!

It was a frightening experience and the thought occurred to me that some of the telephoning the Brigadier had done before we left his bailiwick had set up this apparent disregard for life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness to impress a greenhorn. It worked!

At the same time, as the Brigadier talked to me while we sat at the outer edge of the platform built for the observers, it made more sense to do what they were doing in challenging the enemy than to sit, blindly, awaiting hostile moves.

"There is never an excuse for failure to establish proper observation in combat," the Brigadier said as we watched the landscape fade into dusk. "Sometimes it can be used as a means of attracting hostile patrols and either taking them prisoner or killing them," he went on. "We arrange surprises for Jerry every night around this place; he's learning pretty much to leave us alone."

I gathered that the British used special troops to set ambushes around the isolated OP each night and that they had been successful in warding off all efforts by the enemy to dislodge the installation that was giving them so much trouble.

"You shouldn't always take the most advantageous OP site," the Brigadier said, "particularly if there are two other positions that will give you the same or better results, while attracting less attention from Jerry. However, you should put a dummy position in the best spot, assuming there are others available, but don't overdo the dummy paraphernalia. Just put one pretty good sized rock on top of another, or move a log into a strategic position. German observers notice the little signs and, if you fool them, they'll waste a lot of ammunition on dummies. If a dummy

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position gets knocked about by artillery, be sure to replace it during the night to sustain the illusion that it's still in use. Obviously you should keep your active OPs out of range of stray shells aimed at the dummy."

The Brigadier talked of the need to risk the few in OPs to save the many, exactly as patrols are used in combat for the same purpose. "The nearer you can get to the enemy, the better," he added. "Sometimes, hearing them at night is as important as seeing what they're up to during the day."

I had begun to think that we'd be here all night when he started down the ladder. I followed and we were soon on our way back to his front lines. After a sharp challenge, accompanied by the rattle of a rifle bolt at the outpost line and again, at the main line, we reached his headquarters. I ate with the officers of his mess before returning to the 141st's Hq.

That night we put the first two, of eight, teams that eventually occupied the place, into the silo on our front. From a position near its top where there was an opening like that of the one I had visited the evening before, observers could see all approaches to our lines. It was a good lesson for even though the silo stood alone on a rise at the edge of a field it was not targeted by the Germans at any time. This was as much attributable to the discipline of the observation teams as to the obvious German disbelief that green troops would make use of such an exposed structure.

I would hesitate to say how many times during the war the Brigadier's object lesson paid dividends. The most memorable occasion occurred late in the war at Riquewihr, Alsace, in December 1944. There, as we were about to close on the Rhine River, the Alsace Plain flooded. The 36th Division was spread out over a 12 or 13 mile front, running from Selestate parallel to the Ill River south to Ostheim and then, in a semi-circle to the west to Riquewihr. Its position was made extremely vulnerable by the fact that the French Forces had been unable to close in on the Division's right flank.

The 141st Infantry on the right flank was wide open to an enveloping attack which, if successful, would have exposed all other Division units to attack from the rear with no place to maneuver due to the flooding. Meanwhile, because of the high water, the French Corps to which the 36th had been attached, changed its objective from one aimed at the Rhine to one directed toward Colmar. This meant attacking south along the rugged eastern foothills of the Vosges Mountains.

There was considerable difference of opinion in the Intelligence echelons as to the German Army's capabilities and intentions. Several OPs established along the 141st regimental front by the battalions and the I and R Platoon were offering clues that were either not acceptable or were considered unimportant by those above the fighting level, although such evidence was mounting daily. While the more remote headquarters were supporting views that the German Army would shortly pull behind

the Rhine barrier for a final defense of Germany, the reports emanating from the 141st, showed that trucks, heard at night by our OP operators, were entering the Colmar Pocket fully loaded and were leaving fast and empty. It wasn't too difficult, I felt, to reason that the Germans were reinforcing the Colmar positions and would fight hard to hold them.

As things turned out, our attack toward Colmar was nipped in the bud, as the saying goes, by a strong German attack against our extended position. After months and years of combat, as any veteran will tell you, a sixth sense serves as a warning device when the stuff is about to hit the fan. My sixth sense was working overtime simply because I knew the Germans were reinforcing heavily, while higher echelons, to which I was reporting, were marching to different drums. On the night before the Germans struck, I had been asleep for an hour or so, after talking on the telephone with Pfc. Charlie Lane, who was manning one of the OPs on the front. Whereas he had signaled a lot of vehicular activity night after night, I found it a bad omen to learn that there was practically no such activity that night. This could be it! I warned him to be on the qui vive and signed off.

Something had been gnawing at my subconscious sufficiently to waken me. I was in a wine cellar in Riquewihr and I suddenly realized that we had left an important part of our defenses to chance. Even though I had included in a written intelligence estimate to Division that the most likely action to be taken by the German Army against the 141st Infantry was a strike against our right flank, I had not guarded against the possibility of its being a wide and deep envelopment that would hit, without warning, well to the rear of our forward lines.



*Long May
It Wave*



**T-PATCHERS - HONOR
OUR FLAG - WE DON'T
BURN THEM!**



A Quiet Dangerous “Walk in the Sun”

By Roy D. Goad
“D” Co.—143rd Inf.

In September 1944 the 143 RCT was making very good progress in chasing the Germans, after the Montelimar Massacre in the Rhone Valley. The First Bn. was advancing along a road between Port-Sur-Saone and Luxeuil-Les-Bains which was somewhat southwest of Vesoul.

I had been following behind the advance BN CAP in my CO. Co. D jeep with my good friend and driver, John Laza, of Temple, Texas, my runner-messenger Angelo A. Maragliano of Teneffly, N.J. and Alexander J. Wilkins, my SCR 300 operator from Pottsville, Texas.

About 1300 the point rifle company was stopped by an unknown size German road block in an advantageous area on the road and had several buildings of which offered good defensive cover.

After a few minutes, I alerted my following 81mm mortar platoon to set up a section and be prepared to fire in support as needed.

The section leader was sent up the road in order to get a view of the road block. I decided that I'd try to work my way up to the left of the road to a low hill which had tree cover.

This was a bright sun shiny afternoon, very little breeze, birds chirping but was over shadowed by rifle and MG fire.

I took Maragaliano and Wilkins with me with radios including my hand carried Walkie-Talkie. We made our way up the hill through the woods, then toward the road block. We reached the edge of a pasture with high grass but couldn't see the group of houses and the road block.

I told my two men to stay put and watch my back, as I was going to crawl through the knee high grass to a point that I could observe.

I crawled about 75 yards—raised up and saw the buildings which seemed to be a complex of several barns and sheds and large farm house just below me about 150 yards away.

I sat cross legged and by just putting my elbows on my knees, I adjusted my field glasses on the buildings.

I had laid my 30 Cal Carbine rifle across my legs. I started to see several Germans running back and forth between the buildings. I was fast making up my mind the first fire order to send to the 81 mm section.

All of a sudden I was knocked backward on my back with a very hard blow on my stomach. I rolled over and grabbed my carbine, still in great pain and shock. I then noticed that the wooden stock near the bolt of the carbine was completely shattered.

I remained flat on my back and realized that I was shot at by a sniper, the bullet had hit the stock, forcing the carbine against my stomach with great pressure.

I crawled back to the trees where my men were and examined myself again. I had no wounds—no blood. I was still in pain and some shock as I was shaking some.

Evidently some German sniper caught sight of my head above the grass and let go a round. With luck and the Good Lord, I survived this one. If a machine gun had zeroed in on me, I'd probably have been found there later.

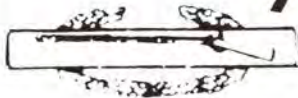
To this day some 45 years later I do not comprehend how this bullet hit my carbine and it or pieces of it or parts of my carbine not injuring me. Also how the bullet ricocheted in which ever direction did not touch me.

By the way, the road block was neutralized very soon after that and the Bn continued on.

This personal experience and close call can be repeated a thousand times by all "T-Patchers"—they can relate to this one well remembered incident in my combat experiences, which was truly a "*Walk and Crawl in the Sun.*"



The Fighting 36th



The Fighting Machine

By Bill Trimpe
"K" Co.—143rd Inf.

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 a squad consisted of five men. Sgt. Paul Blackmer, Pfc. Louis Weiner, Pfc. David Pritchett, 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 overnight. 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, Pritchett and Koch to the home on the right side of the road as the Germans faced us. Paul and I took the left. All 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 me. 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 Pritchett 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.

The effort of Paul Blackmer at Montelinar 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 Montelinar 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 he showed in the battle of Montelinar. It was noncoms like Paul Blackmer of New York who helped make the Texas Division such a great combat unit. It doesn't seem right to me that greatness like Blackmer's goes unrewarded.



Photo courtesy
Lt. Col. Remus
Jones

Regiment Has Hundreds of Decorations



Worldwarveterans.org

Eight men of the 142nd Infantry Regiment have been decorated with the Congressional Medal of Honor. T/Sgt. Bernard P. Bell, Lt. Arnold C. Bjorklund, Pvt. William C. Crawford, Lt. Edward C. Dahlgren, Sgt. Emile DeLeau Jr., Pfc. Silvestre S. Herrera, Sgt. Ellis R. Weicht and S/Sgt. Homer L. Wise have received the highest military honor "For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty." Sgt. Weicht was awarded posthumously.

Sixty-seven Distinguished Service Crosses have been awarded to men of the 142nd, while twenty-six Legion of Merit decorations and six Soldiers Medals have been won.

Thirty-two men have been honored by the French Army with the Croix de Guerre. Five hundred eighty-three have received Silver Stars and one hundred-eight had been awarded posthumously. Fourteen hundred thirty-five men have received Bronze Stars and forty-five have been awarded posthumously.

The 1st and 3rd Battalions hold Presidential citations. Company "C" has the Citation with Oak Leaf Cluster. Service Company was awarded the Meritorious Service Unit Plaque.

The Regiment has been recommended for a citation for its action in the Siegfried Line. At last report, 7th Army had forwarded the recommendation to the War Department for final action.

Worldwarveterans.org

The men of Coleman Company won their citation for the battle of Oberhoffen, France, for "heroism, gallantry and outstanding achievement in combat from 1 to 10 February, 1945." The 1st Battalion was ordered to attack through the 2nd Battalion's positions on the southern edge of Oberhoffen and seize the remainder of the stubbornly defended town. Under the cover of darkness Co. C executed a brilliant flanking maneuver, advanced through fierce enemy resistance, and, in scoring a decisive victory over the German troops, broke the deadlock in this sector.

The Day That Two Silver Stars Were Misplaced

By Joe F. Presnall
Co. "F"—143rd Inf.

After the disaster at San Pietro and the failure of the frontal assault at the Rapido, we were moved north where the river could be crossed by foot—thanks to General Walker.

After we were established and some of the high ground was occupied, a bridge was built by the engineers to supply the forward troops. Our Regimental Headquarters had moved across the river.

Edgar Werneli (from Taylor and now Temple) and I were hauling supplies across the Rapido to the Regimental Staff and Company. That one afternoon, we had a load of water, food, and other goodies in our Jeep and trailer. We always waited until about sundown so the Krauts couldn't see us very well from the monastery (we thought).

We were going along real well until we rounded a curve in the road. I said, "Blackie (Edgar), look what we have gotten ourselves into!" The road was narrow, with ditches on each side. We couldn't turn around. The ditches were full of mule train employees, the road was full of mules, and the Jerries were having a field day with their artillery. All I could think of then was if they couldn't knock out my ½ million candle power light at San Pietro, maybe they couldn't hit us here.

So Blackie and I proceeded to get the mules off the road. After some dodging and hitting the ground when a shell exploded, we continued on with our supplies.

If they had had our man in Headquarters Company by the name of Cowboy Collins, the man with the beady eyes (so Ernie Pyle called him), calling this artillery fire, Blackie and I would have still been over there I am sure.

The mule train had gotten an earlier start than we. I suppose most of them finally got to their destination after dark. We were after dark coming back across the river. I looked up and saw that someone had a small fire burning. I said, "Blackie, stop and let's see who would be so dumb as to build a fire in plain sight of the Germans."

We stopped and I hollered, "Put that fire out!" My answer was, "The bloody Jerries know we are over here. We are just brewing a spot of tea." Blackie and I got away from the fire in a hurry. We told our 1st Sgt. Grady Sandlin about our trip, and he said he would write it up and send it in for an award. According to his write-up, Blackie and I got credit for clearing the road for supplies to continue forward.

After the loss at Salerno, Velletri, San Pietro, and the frontal assault failure across the Rapido, the morale of the GIs was about as low as it could get. So anyone sending in a write-up for an award was immediately approved.

I have lived with this guilt since the winter of 1943, and I just had to tell anyone interested. If everyone had gotten a Silver Star who was deserving in the Infantry, the Hunt Brothers wouldn't have had the money to corner the silver market.

And then I watched the bombing of the monastery, and a thought ran through my mind, "How is the Lord ever going to forgive us of all of our sins?" Maybe Blackie doesn't feel the way I do.



February 1944. American planes start bombing of Monastery in Italy.

Photo courtesy
Lt. Col. Remus Jones

Parley on Castellone

By Joel W. Westbrook



Worldwartwoveterans.org

When it was all over and done with, and Mount Castellone was still ours, (First Battalion, 143rd Infantry Regiment, 36th (Texas) Division. Of course, legally, Castellone belongs to neither side other than by title deeds of successful violence.) I told Lt. Mitchell, B Company Commander, to clear out his dead and wounded, to check his communications, and to resupply his mortar ammunition.

"I'll work out the relief of the 142nd's Second Battalion, but I do want you to put Baker in where they're Easy Company is. For the time being use their same boundaries. Even if you have to short these positions here, put in your strongest platoon over there where they had that heavy 'thirty' shooting between the saddle humps. I'll have Dog put their best heavy team there."

"Yessir, Captain, I see what you mean..see you later, Joel."

Regiment talked to me in the clear on the radio.

At 0630 Greenwich Mean Standard Time, 10 February 1944, I, Battalion Operations Officer, would meet on the crest of Mount Castellone at coordinates 675420, a German Captain, who would be liaison for the removal of their dead. He would not be permitted to come within our position.

Their dead within our position were more than a few. Among them was a major, certainly their battalion commander, who clung to a large rock some 30 to 40 yards down our slope. Beside him was his radio operator.

Our S-2, and all the higher echelon G-2's, would surely assess this fact—becoming a putrescent fact—as evidence that the German attached great tactical importance to Castellone. We knew, you know, that German doctrine was that line officers plan, train, and direct, and are too valuable to use in combat leading. We compared British doctrine that the line officers *lead* in combat—that's all, just lead in combat, while the training is done by the noncommissioned officers, and with the planning and direction by staff. Doubtless this doctrine, of long British tradition,

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in large part accounted for the losing of the best British seed in World War I. However, we knew that American officers were expected to do it all...train and combat lead...“Frightfully expensive for you chaps,” had remarked to me, (on the Rapido River), a lieutenant of Durham Light Infantry.

In that early next morning I met the German captain.

Upon that crest of Castellone (somewhat down his slope as required by the protocol of this particular parley) the German stood as if upon a stage; uniform gray-greenish immaculate—except for his badges of rank and merit and courage—and even, Dear God, a monocle, polished boots. Highly polished boots.

From his tunic he took a silver cigarette case. He offered me a cigarette. I took it, although I did not smoke, and I permitted him to light it for me.

I was in combat coveralls, clean ones that Mitch had loaned to me, and I was shaven by reason of having given up my coffee that morning.

Because neither the German captain nor I had more than marginally each other's language, we parleyed in French about our business at hand.

There was upon his slope very many of his dead piled up in places that had been intersected by the trajectory of the 142nd's heavy machine gun firing through the saddle. (This firing defensively through a saddle we had been taught at the Infantry School, Fort Benning, GA, was the ultimate achievement for a heavy machine gunner...something like “crossing the ‘T’ for a naval person.”)

More than a few brave Germans had broken into our position, and then they had been counterattacked to death or flight or surrender.

They laid around our slope, askew with their weapons, and with their jaws broken, skulls crushed, and with their tunics and trousers, and their insignia and personal paraphernalia stained with yesterday's blood.

Most of all their Kommandant, prone the dead, clutching a large irrelevant cold rock. Beside him his radio operator. The batteries I found to be dead.

Our tired young medics put the dead commander, and his radio operator, and all the other German dead, upon U.S. Army government issue stretchers, and delivered them over the mountain top to their Wehrmacht government issue stretchers.

All of this took all the day, and the wind became colder and colder. However, when I got back to B Co., where I stopped for a little food, I found that Mitch had lined a large cleft in an outcropping with blankets.

So I stayed the night in warmth, and we exchanged our histories of February 10, 1944.

A few days later I was wounded and evacuated back to the General Hospital at Naples. There I was mended so as to be ready in a couple of months for our joining the forces at Anzio for the taking of Rome.



From Salerno to Anzio

Part II

By Wm. D. Broderick
MOUNTING THE ATTACK

It was now approaching the first of December, and we could tell that big things were brewing. One night a Colonel, a major and several captains from the First Special Service Force, a Canadian-American ranger outfit, came up on a reconnaissance. They had been specially trained for mountain warfare, and had all kinds of special equipment. It turned out that they were to go directly over the top of Mt. Camino, on the left flank of the 142nd, which was to go around and over the left edge. Regimental hq. had the bandmembers digging deep foxholes halfway up the mountain for Col. Lynch's headquarters.



Italy, September 1943. German anti-tank guns captured in battle at Salerno.

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Frank and I were making two and three trips a day up the hill, as guides, checking on radio equipment, etc. Just before one trip Frank received a package from home, so he hurriedly stuffed a jar of olives and a can of fruit cocktail in his pocket, and we took off. While we were completing our business, we ate the olives, but when we sat down to tackle the fruit, we were stumped. Neither of us had an opener, a knife, or anything faintly resembling one. At our wits end, we finally took a 30 caliber bullet, (we were both carrying M-1s) and by much prying and pounding, we were able to open a hole in the top large enough to pick out the pieces of fruit one by one. Thus our hunger was appeased.

The afternoon was now drawing to a close, so we started back for the house. While we were on our way down, the artillery started. It rumbled louder and louder, till finally the whole world seemed full of nothing but cannon roars. We couldn't hear ourselves talk. The rolling barrage preparatory to the big attack had begun. Along the ridge of the mountain shell bursts lit up the sky, and to the rear the gun flashes in the lengthening gloom were spotting the air with small brightneses.

When we reached the house, everyone was getting ready to leave. The attack was pushing off early the next morning, and we were all assembling up at the forward CP on the mountain that night. Stratton called regiment and signed out of the net, and then we began to pack up the radio equipment. We were by ourselves, since most of the wire section had already gone on ahead. By now the darkness was complete, and the moon was our only guide. Before I shouldered the 284, I stuffed several rolls of life savers in my pocket to supplement the C-rations.

Since the others hadn't been up the hill before, Frank and I were the guides. Our progress was slow, as we cautiously picked our way around the rocks and through the mud. Our heavy loads forced us to stop often for breaks. As usual, the worst part of our journey began when we reached the sheer climb leading to the CP. We toiled and sweated and swore; once I thought we had lost the way, but eventually we made it. By now it was quite chilly, but we had very few blankets with us. During our cold wait I huddled and shivered under my raincoat and ate life savers as fast as I could chew them up. As morning approached, and the zero hour drew near, we were told that for the time being we would stay where we were and set up the radio; only Frank, who was Capt. Wells, the Bn. CO's operator, would go with the attack. Later when we had taken our objective it was planned to move the whole rear CP, including us, forward.

Now I'll try to give a full picture of the situation, which I wasn't aware of at the time. The British 10th Corps was on our left, between us and the Mediterranean; we in turn, were the left flank of the 36th Division. On the 36th's right was the 45th, and beyond them, the 8th Army. This was the beginning of the offensive in which the 45th took Venafro, and our

143rd Regt. captured San Pietro. Our immediate objective, along with the Canadian-American rangers, was to secure Camino and beyond it, Mt. Longo, a long, low mountain which extended into the valley through which Highway 6 ran. At that time all I knew was that I had been spared making the attack, so I was wearily thankful.



Italy, September 1943. German 150mm self propelled gun knocked out in fighting for Salerno.

We arranged the best foxholes we could on the rocky mountainside, and settled down. Cozby had the radio set up in his hole, just below mine. The line companies had all assembled and moved out along the trail just before dawn. A wire crew was with Capt. Wells, laying line from our position forward to mountain communication, while Frank had a 511 radio with which he was also to keep in contact with us on the 511 we had with us. Unfortunately, his didn't work; and the wire lines were periodically knocked out by shells, so communication was spasmodic. About the middle of the morning we learned that the battalion had taken its objective with few casualties, and the Second Bn. had passed through them. We also heard the bad news that Silva, one of the wiremen, had been killed. Later in the day (time was very vague) Frank came back, alone and breathless. He had had the antenna of his 511 shot off while in a foxhole, and Captain Wells wanted the 284 brought forward in order to maintain communications with Regt; it was impossible

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due to shellfire, to maintain the wire line to regiment. Rowell notified Lt. Donaho, our company commander, while we were packing up the equipment. Besides Rowell, Frank and I, Cozby, Stratton, Bobby Cecil, with his de-coding device (all our messages had to be sent encoded) were along. Frank, who was very nervous now, and no wonder, led off, and we followed. The heavy radio weighted me down, so I kept groaning that they were going too fast, getting madder all the while.

We soon hit the trail below which led around the mountain, and as we neared the spot where the path turned the edge of the mountain, and went around the exposed side we saw equipment scattered all over the ground and a dead man lying to the right of the path. As we rounded the curve, exposing ourselves to observation we heard the rattle of a German burp gun, but at the moment thought nothing of it. A few seconds later there was a terrific deafening crash directly in front of us, we all immediately hit the dirt and hugged the steep side of the mountain. Then suddenly we all turned and scrambled back in the direction we had come. That is, most of us did. A few minutes later, when we had recovered partially from our fright we discovered that Frank and George Schubert, whom we had met on the path (carrying a message from regiment to Captain Wells, telling him to withdraw to his former position and go into reserve) were missing.

Bobby Cecil, who was George's best friend, and I, who was Frank's, took off all our surplus equipment, and decided to try to get back around the corner and reach them. A moment later this proved unnecessary, for suddenly we saw Frank staggering towards us, his face a ghastly mask of blood, and a bandage on his forehead. He was crying out, and behind him trying to stop him, was George Schubert. We immediately stopped Frank, and finding a stretcher among the abandoned equipment, we gently laid him on it. When we ripped off his clothes, we found that he had been hit not only in the head but also in the shoulder, the chest and the leg. Both he and George had been knocked down by the blast of the mortar shell, and Frank's helmet had been blown off. George had bandaged his head, before Frank, half delirious, had got up and begun to run back to us. I wiped the blood from Frank's face while George and Bobby bandaged up his other wounds. Frank was afraid he had been hit in the lungs, since he was breathing heavily, and thought he was dying. I didn't know whether he was or not, though I feared the worst, but I tried to reassure him as best I could, in a broken sort of way. After we had him bandaged up and were ready to carry him to the aid station, he grabbed my hand, smiled weakly, and used his favorite expression, "Its rough all over, Brod."

It was then Schubert told us he had been hit in the shoulder. Bravely and considerately he hadn't even mentioned it till Frank was taken care of. In spite of tragedy, that day showed us two men with real guts. Heroism, though, is something you don't talk about till later, in

retrospect, and then often in a joking way, lest the object of your talk think you are praising him; and this really is the greatest praise of all. Afterwards we used to kid George about how he had been put in for a Silver Star for this incident, and instead some joker sitting on his fanny at regiment wanted to know why he hadn't delivered the message, and threatened a courtmartial. After George was patched up, the others carried Frank to the aid station while Stratton and I stayed to watch the equipment.

While we were waiting, another small group, including an officer, came up and were going around the bend. We warned them that the Krauts had the trail zeroed in, and were using a burp gun as the observer's signal to fire. When they insisted on going, we gave up warning them, but about 30 seconds later they were again by our sides, after another terrific shell burst. Luckily none of them had been hit; they now decided that our advice had been pretty sound, and they would wait for dusk before starting again.

When the others came back we held a council to decide what to do. To go forward before dark was suicide; there was still Schubert's message to be delivered. Our pow-wow was broken up by another mortar shell, this time hitting on our side of the mountain. We scrambled off into a little clearing behind a rock below the trail. Here Rowell decided he would return to the CP, tell Lt. Donaho and Capt. Brown the situation, and then come back to let us know what had been decided. Only a few moments after he left there was another deafening shellburst, very close to us. We were enveloped in a dust cloud, and hit by pieces of flying rock. Once I thought I had been hit, but it was merely one of these rocks. After the air had cleared we called a few times for Rowell, but got no answer. We thought, or at least hoped, that he was clear out of the way before the shell hit. We were all too scared to get up and investigate.

Dusk began to settle and still Rowell hadn't returned, though he had been gone nearly two hours. We decided to go on up to the CP ourselves; since Rowell had left his equipment behind in order to get there and back faster, we had a doubly heavy load. We toiled up the hill; about halfway up, I tossed Rowell's pack aside, it was too clumsy to carry in addition to the radio and my own pack, plus a 511. When we reached the CP we learned that Rowell had not got back, so we feared the worst, though we hadn't been able to find him anyplace along the trail. Lt. Donaho had us return to our old places, and sent a runner on with the message for Captain Wells. Wells, incidentally, was unique in being battalion CO, yet only a captain. Normally he would be a Lt. Colonel, or at least a major. He was a West Pointer, in his twenties, and had come to us from a cavalry reconnaissance squadron. (He was plenty active as Lt. Lowry and I both learned one day on a problem, when I was laying a wire line behind him and Lowry was acting as his S-3.) We settled down and set up the radio



Italy, September 1943. German 88 anti-aircraft gun and troop carrier knocked out during battle of Salerno.

again, just standing by. Most messages from regiment were coming either by wire or runner.

Here is what happened to Rowell, as he told it to us over a month later. He had just gone along the trail after leaving us when the shell hit somewhere behind him. Fragments of the shell hit him in the small of his back, but didn't knock him out. With the help of a soldier he met on the trail, he bandaged the wound and got to the aid station. From there, like George Schubert, and Frank, he was evacuated to the rear.

MEDIC!

After Capt. Wells completed the withdrawal and set up a defensive position, things were quiet for a day or two. First and Second Battalions had gone through us, both securing their objectives, and we were now holding. I discovered that the pack I had thrown away was mine, not Rowell's, and needing my raincoat, I went down to get it the following day. But it wasn't much use to me because when I took it out of the pack I found that it was riddled with shrapnel holes.

During this time I tried to make my boudoir comfortably miserable by stretching a shelter half across the top to exclude the persistent rain, and by insulating the ground with overcoats and blankets left behind by the light traveling, fast moving, hell-catching line companies. That was my one consolation when at times I thought I had reached the limit of my endurance; were I in a rifle company my life would be twice as unbearable.

At any rate, our short term of peaceful existence soon came to an abrupt end. One morning before dawn the Krauts began giving us a hard time with their shelling. They must have had a pretty good idea as to the location of our CP, because they were dropping them practically in our laps. After one close hit, someone below us began to call for help. Dickinson, from message center, a tall husky Texan, had been hit, Bobby Cecil said as he came around looking for help. It's amazing how selfishness can grip a man at times; I dreaded leaving the comparatively comfortable hole, and was tempted to feign sleep, but my conscience drove me out. Some didn't have such active consciences. Bobby rounded up about four of us, and we went down to Dick's hole. He had been hit in the very top part of his right leg practically in the hip. We called up for medics, but there were none at the aid station then; others had also been hit and they were taking care of them. That left it up to us. We got a stretcher and put Dick on it. He wouldn't let us bandage the wound then; he said it hurt too much. So we gave him some sulfa pills and started down the steep incline with the stretcher. That was really a hellish job; the hill was so steep that Dick kept sliding forward on the stretcher, and nearly falling off. Finally we decided we needed more help, so we stopped in a levelled-off place, and tried to lift the stretcher onto a flat rock up off the ground. About that time we heard a commotion above us. Someone was descending the hill as fast as he could come. I went over to investigate. It was Lt. Ashcraft, very much upset. I told him what had happened, and when I asked he gave me his first aid kit. However, when I asked him to help us, he refused and said he would go on down to the aid station for help. It was plain to see that something was wrong with him; his nerves were gone. That was the last we ever saw of him. He reached the trail just as another shell exploded. Besides sending him into hysterics, a flying rock hit him and broke his arm, so he too was a casualty.

We were still tugging with Dickinson. Bobby decided to go down to the aid station himself, with Hooten, while Tony Hernandez went up to call again for help, and get some more men. There was no use trying to move him down that dangerous hill before daybreak anyway. I stayed with Dick, and talked him into letting me put a bandage on the wound. It was a messy job, and an awkward one, because it pained him to move even an inch. We later found that I had bandaged only one of the holes; there was another larger one below it which I didn't see.

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Someone was coming down the hill. Soon I could see that it was a medic with one leg bandaged. His method of descent was half rolling, half-sliding since he couldn't put too much strain on his leg. He watched Dick for me while I got a K-ration box to let Dick urinate. He was from L company, he said. All the other medics were hit besides several more in the company. He was making his way to the aid station as best he could to get some help. I wished him luck and he went on; a man who really deserved a medal, though I doubt if he ever got one. I told Lt. Donaho about him later, but we weren't able to identify him, so it passed over. Eventually dawn came, and with it, more help. We had two medics, including big Slim Pearson, one of the best. Eight of us took turns getting Dick to the aid station after his wounds had been rebandaged. Difficulty was no word to describe what we encountered getting him down. The force of gravity kept him gradually sliding off the litter. Our footing was none too sure, making it slow, tedious, and above all, exhausting work. Finally it was accomplished. We returned wearily to our holes, hoping that the shelling would cease for a while. Several others had been hit, besides Dick, so Captain Wells decided to move the CP, and forestall any possible further casualties.

SWEATING IT OUT

After the advance party had located a new spot, we packed up and moved, the new spot being about a half mile to the left of our present position as we faced the mountain. As far as height went, it was on the same approximate level; however, here it was possible to make the descent more gradually, since the slope wasn't quite so steep. We had to make two or three trips to get all our radio equipment. On one of these trips I noticed a Coleman stove in a box setting alongside a pile of bedrolls which had been left behind by the line companies when they began the attack. At that time these stoves had only been issued to officers, and I was a little hesitant about taking it. When I made up my mind, on the next trip, to get it, it was gone. Someone had anticipated me.

As usual, Cozby had set up the radio in his own personal hole, and was attending to all the communications (not many). Nick and I found a fairly level spot beneath a sheer, slightly overhanging rock, and proceeded to make it as livable as we could. Since the space wasn't quite wide enough for both of us to lie in comfortable, we experienced a little discomfort in sleeping. Then too, Nick wasn't the ideal bed companion. He had plenty of troubles, or so he thought, and insisted on telling me all of them. I had already heard most of them, since we had been on guard together several times in the wee small hours back in the apple orchard, but that didn't bother him. He thought that the world was against him, that this was a hell of a life (here I agreed with him) and the sooner he got out of it the better. One morning as he was in the midst of his woes both of us happened to look up, and on top of the rock stood two shaggy mountain goats regarding Nick with sad eyes.

The night was clear and cloudless as I stood on the pathway and watched the ghostly white moon slowly rise over the top of a high mountain directly across the valley from me. Then it was hard to think of war and death; instead one's thoughts turned instinctively to home, to romance, to anything but the life we were leading. And then the reverie would be broken by the staccato crackle of the artillery radio as the operator called in on his hourly check.

The ration haul I mentioned was a back breaker. The terrain made it impossible for jeeps to come any closer than a couple of miles away. The Army had begun requisitioning Italian mules, but as yet there weren't nearly enough of them, and even if there were, there were some trails which not even they could maneuver on. This threw the burden again on the broad backs of the privates. And what a burden! Each morning when we didn't succeed in escaping the eagle eye of 1st Sgt. Williams (which didn't happen very often), we started off with our empty packs down the hill to the ration dump, which was a conservative three miles away. On arriving we would each gather in either a case of C or K rations, (weight 45 pounds) or else a 5 gallon can of water (weight 52 pounds). Then we would carefully strap these onto our packs and start the long uphill climb. One time we carried 2 5 gallon cans of water apiece, one in each hand, up to the CP. It was an effective way to build muscles, if nothing else, and it gave us a healthy respect for the preservation of water. Unanimously we gave up shaving, except when ordered. One consolation we had was the regular arrival of mail, and the opportunity to do a little writing ourselves. Our Christmas packages were arriving daily, but were being held in the rear for us until we were relieved. One thing we were never disappointed in all our time at the front was the mail service. It may have been a little slow or late but it was steady. Whenever possible, it was sent up regularly with the rations. Only once did we lose any, when a mail-bag laden mule fell off a cliff in February 1944, and most of that was recovered shortly afterwards.

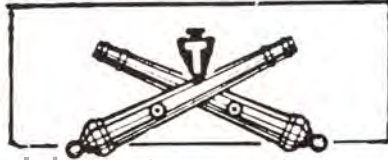
Cecil, Hooten and I whiled away part of the time by playing cards, and holding bull sessions. In one of our earlier sessions, before Rowell was hit, both he and Cecil had bet me 25 dollars that the war would be over on July 4, 1944—which at that time seemed a long ways off. Later I'll tell you how that bet prospered. One of the main topics of discussion was the latest rumor. Usually these rumors were along the lines of our being relieved and being sent elsewhere. Thus at different times during our eleven months in Italy we heard: that we would be under Eisenhower in 60 days; that boats were waiting in Naples harbor; that we would go to India; that we would invade Yugoslavia; that we would invade Corsica; that we would go Sicily or back to North Africa for reorganization—always something different.

Ernie Pyle was in Italy at this time and won our undying gratitude when he suggested some form of combat pay for the Infantry, whose life he depicted so vividly.



Recollections of the Past

By Samuel P. Armitage
131st F.A.



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Having spent many years with the 26th Infantry Division and with the outbreaks of war, I applied for OCS in 1942. In January 1943 I graduated with Class 47 from the Field Artillery School at Fort Sill and was assigned to the 36th Infantry Division at Camp Edwards in Massachusetts. This was a break for me as my home was in Massachusetts. I became a member of Service Battery 131st Field Artillery and was assigned the duty of Battalion Motor Officer. In April 1943 the Division was alerted for duty overseas. We shipped out of New York on the Brazil which was a sister ship to the Argentina. These ships had been commandeered for movement of troops overseas. We went south along the United States east coast and then crossed to the coast of Africa and then on to the Mediterranean, landing at Oran, eleven days later. We made camp at Magenta and then moved to Rabat where we set up in a cork forest. This move was made to prevent any ideas that the Spanish or Germans might have about French Morocco. We travelled through many cities including Tlemson, Oudja, Fez, Mebnes and Sidi Bel Abbas. The French Foreign Legion had headquarters here. There was much battle training taking place. General William H. Wilbur was in charge of this training. We advanced with rolling artillery fire, used live grenades. We crawled under barbed wire with machine guns firing overhead. One interesting problem had us crawling along a hedge toward a ditch. As we reached the edge of the ditch we were in front of a target and a soldier with a rifle took aim at the target and fired. By that time we had dropped into the ditch and started running while small explosive charges were thrown into the ditch causing a cloud of dust, dirt and stones as we ran. There were some troops who were injured but this was serious business!

I had a touch of Malaria about this time. I was treated with Atobrine, a substitute for Quinine which was in short supply. I could not tolerate the Atobrine so I had to be given Quinine. I recovered to live another day.

General George Patton had a gathering of Officers and key personnel of the division prior to the invasion of Sicily. In his usual gruff way he explained his ideas toward attacking the enemy. He stated that he wanted guts on both ends of your rifle, "Your guts on one end and German guts on the bayonet end." He decided to use the 45th Division to attack and invade Sicily. Just prior to 9 September we started loading equipment for the trip to Italy. On the morning of the 9th of September I went over the side of the troop ship and down a rope ladder to drop into a LCVP. It was quite a thrill in the early light of day! We circled the ship until all the landing craft were loaded and then headed for shore. Landed waist deep in water and struggled onto the beach where I met Major Lasseter and as the guns came ashore each one in a Duck, they were hastily put into firing position and as I was now the Battalion Ammunition Officer I was able to get together with Sgt. Lattimore, my ammunition sgt and we directed the ammo trucks to the gun positions as each truck came ashore. The Germans had excellent observation on the beach but we were lucky and survived. My luck at landing was good, however my bedroll with all my gear was in a disabled truck back in North Africa. Slowly but surely we moved inland away from the beach. Capt. Kershner, CO of Battery A, a friend of mine while we were at Camp Edwards, was killed by a sniper on the road to Naples. Progress was slow moving north to Naples and beyond. Christmas was spent in the town of Venafro on Route 7 north of Naples. The Battalion Commander, Lt. Col. Taylor had a great desire to be right up front where the action was taking place. One time when I spoke to him about a road under fire over which I had to move a convoy of ammunition trucks, he informed me that I was getting paid to be shot at! After the Rapido River fiasco the Division moved into position for the battle to take Cassino. In the bivouac area I soon decided that it was not safe to sleep above ground as I found a hole in my pillow caused by a piece of shrapnel. It did not take me long to dig a hole and cover it with ammunition boxes banked up with dirt. The battle for San Pietro was bloody and costly and the experiences of a regiment of the 143rd Infantry was filmed by John Huston, the movie director. In the area where we were bivouacked in front of Mt. Cassino there were many mules and much skinnners. These mules were used to carry supplies to the troops in the hills. During the air raid on the Monastery at Cassino by the US Air Force some bombs were released prematurely and landed in our area. Many mules and personnel were killed. I managed to jump into a "slit trench" or latrine which was messy but at least safe for the moment. The British who lost some trucks and equipment made a sign which said "American precision bombing" with a large arrow pointing in the direction of the target.

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While on a trip to pick up ammunition we spotted four German soldiers on a back road. We captured a Lieutenant, a Sergeant and a couple of Privates. As we were not returning to our area until the next morning, we found a farm and had the farmers lock them up in his pig pen and shed. The next morning we turned them in at a prisoner collection area. Ernie Pyle spent time with the 36th Division while we were in the Mignano and Venefro area. He was later killed in the Pacific war area.

At times a shower unit was brought into our area. This consisted of a trailer truck equipped with shower heads. We were given a short time to get wet, soap up and rinse off. Clean clothes were supplied. At other times we took advantage of whatever facilities were available to aid us in keeping clean. Keeping the artillery battalion supplied with ammunition meant many hours of work and miles traveled, mostly during the night to avoid enemy observation. At one time we were forced to travel along a railroad bed and hand carry the shells up over an embankment to a gun battery that had been cut off from road communications. In the early hours each morning the Germans made a practice of directing Nebelwefer rockets at us. There were six barreled rocket launchers and they made a sharp screaming sound. We called them "Screaming Memies." The Division moved to Minturno in early May to break through the Gustav line of defense. With this accomplished we moved back to Qualiano to get ready for a move to Anzio. One day while in this area we could hear a dog barking and this continued for some time so Lieutenant Kenneth Larsen and I went looking for the source of this racket. We found a large dog standing on its hind legs in a small ornamental well, which was half filled with water. We pulled him out and he ran off without so much as a thank you. We were now on the road to Rome. We entered the city on the fifth of June and the next day, June 6, allied troops hit the beaches at Normandy. We went as far north as Piombino and then pulled out of the line and returned to Salerno to prepare for the invasion of Southern France. At this time I was given a one week leave to go to a rest area at Sorrento, so my driver, Pvt. Turchetta and I headed in our jeep to the Grand Hotel with its soft beds and hot showers. While here I visited the Isle of Capri and Mt. Vesuvius which had erupted in March 1944. Also spent time in Naples and a visit to Pompeii. Second of August we headed for the beaches of Southern France. A landing was made on green beach on the Riviera. As our LST hit the shore a German plane dropped a bomb on an LST beside our ship. It was loaded with ammunition and there were a lot of shells exploding and flying around. A smoke screen was set up and, at the time, one of my men was in an ambulance in the tank deck of our ship with an appendicitis attack. As soon as the ship was beached we managed to get him ashore where he was transferred to a medical unit. US Forces quickly headed north on Route Napoleon. At Montelimar we had outrun the

Germans nineteenth Army and as they tried to advance north they were destroyed by our artillery and air force. Mr. Billy Watson, a warrant officer and I travelled together, he with his supply trucks and I with the ammunition trucks. Colonel Taylor wanted us up ahead with the firing batteries. We carried our own kitchen unit, which consisted of a large gasoline fired stove and oven, in a one ton trailer and this was set up whenever and wherever possible. I had a Mexican American named Gilbert MacDonald for a cook and he ignored all enemy activity while he prepared all meals for the men of the ammunition and supply sections. It was here at Montelimar that I lost my first man to enemy action. Pvt. Thomas Posey was hit while unloading ammunition. I was not able to find out if he survived. The Division headed north toward the Vosges mountains and we reached the town of LeBoulay. Mr. Watson and I, after placing the ammunition and supply trucks in secure areas and seeing that the men found shelter in the local buildings, went to a house and requested a "chamber a' coucher," a room for sleeping. This house turned out to be the home of George and Marie Nourdin and their children, Michele 3 yrs old, and "Jo Jo" (George) 1½ years old. They were of course fearful, having heard that Americans were not to be trusted, but under the circumstances there was little that they could do. We moved our bed rolls into a vacant room and with the battery kitchen in the area we were able to share our food with the family. We were in this area for some time and one night, Mr. Nourdin with a little French, some English and signs, indicated that he had to go for a "sage femme" (midwife) as his wife was about to have a baby and he wanted us to protect his children while he was gone. By the end of the next day a boy was born. I was asked to act as parrain (godfather) and plans were made to go to the next town with the father and an aunt who acted as godmother. I borrowed Captain Snodgrass', the battery commander, command car, which we enclosed with side curtains, as it was cold and in October.

In November the war had moved on and we had our Thanksgiving dinner in Laval. With Christmas just around the corner, I wrote home for gifts to be given to the Nourdin family and when Christmas arrived I received permission from Colonel Taylor to return to LeBoulay to visit the family.

Having travelled through the St. Marie Pass in the Vosges mountains we arrived in Alsace and on to Strasbourg. Sgt. Lattimore, Pvt. Turchetta and I found a house in Hunawihr where we had sleeping quarters. Christmas 1944 was spent in Sarribourg. The Division was now out of combat for work on equipment and to bring in troop replacements but on 3 January the Germans launched an attack, "The Battle of the Bulge" and the entire Division moved out. It was bitter cold and an open jeep was not very comfortable. With the increase in the forward movement of the Allied Forces I was transferred to the Air O.P. Lt. Ernest

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Sample was the pilot and quite often I flew with Capt. McMurray especially when we were looking for a new landing field.

With the end of the war in May 1945, the Division moved from Austria to Germany in the vicinity of Augsburg. I was assigned the task of taking a train load of 1300 displaced natives of Yugoslavia from Munich to Salsburg where they were turned over to the British. During the trip we had a problem with two groups. One group were supporters of Mikhailovich and the other group supported Joseph Broz, known as Tito. We were able to maintain some degree of calm and order until we reached Austria and were able to turn our problems over to the British.

In October the Division headed across Germany and France to an assembly area near Le Harve. Eventually the troops were loaded on a ship for a trip to the good old U.S.A. We arrived at Norfolk, VA and then transferred by train to Fort Devens for a long awaited family reunion.



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Mess Sgt. Lawrence Wing Battery C 132nd Artillery

By A.F. Amil Kohutek

Remember the Chow in Brownwood in the early days? We were fed for 43 cents per day per person. This included three full meals per man, seven days a week. That is less than 15 cents per meal. The man in charge of this gruesome detail was Mess Sgt. Lawrence Wingo, twenty-five years old, red-headed product of Weatherford, Texas. Never weighed more than 140 pounds soaking wet. It is not known what Wingo did as a civilian before he was ensnared in the drag net when the Battery mobilized. He may have been a used-car lot owner—in the back room a table, four chairs, 4 cuspidors (spittoons) never emptied or cleaned, served as a poker room. As a result Wingo was never seen on the streets. If he were, he had the looks of a river boat gambler. A Mess Sgt. prior to mobilization was not needed, two hours training once a week, and a couple weeks in summer camp. The first cook sufficed the fact that Wingo personally knew the Col., the Captain, and a 1st Lt. was sufficient to make him the official Mess Sgt. When the Battery moved to Camp Bowie, the fate of men like Provasak, Prinka, Heifrin, Kincaid, Joe Williams, Jug Williams, Leon Johnson, Big Boy Tirey, and others rested in the warm hands of Sgt. Wingo. Training 12 hours a day made a lot of food disappear.

Every morning at roll call, Sgt. Wingo sat on a porch railing with a piece of paper, short stub of a cedar penny pencil, counting noses. From this he, and he alone, determined how well we ate that day. Officer not included—they had their own mess. Accordingly, the enlisted men mess, and sometimes it was a mess, was called Garrison allowance. To do this the Mess Sgt. had to think big. A number of less fortunate asked if Sgt. Wingo could think. Sgt. Wingo would order from the commissary based on this allowance—100 lbs. of coffee, 2 crates of eggs, 1 crate of oranges, 1 crate of lettuce, and sacks of potatoes. Allowing for replacements coming in unannounced, or men transferred out, some temporary to hospitals or detached service, this number had to even out. Sometimes it was like at home on the farm. If company suddenly arrived, water was

added to the soup. Now Wingo would have had himself some kind of problem if he had overspent his allowance, and the week was not up. The gambler Wingo was—he never overspent. However, some water thinning was noted. This may explain why Wingo always tried to start a crap game one day before payday.

When the Battery was stationed in Camp Edwards, Mass. some dietitian in Washington decided that every red-blooded American training for war needs to eat Lamb every Thursday (the word Lamb is a dignified word for Goat).

It would be only if he sold it as a Lamb. The problem with this Washington dietitian he did not know that he was dealing with a bunch of Texans. For them a lamb is still a goat—the smell of the Thursday Goat remained, sometime stuck to pots and stale Massachusetts air until the next Thursday. The troops suspected that the cooks were making chili out of leftover goats. Inspectors soon caught some cooks disposing this in garbage cans. This was called greyhound waste. Then the cooks, under the light of the pale moon, buried goats in the sand dunes of Cape Cod.



<h1 style="margin: 0;">AUSTIN</h1> <h2 style="margin: 0;">Nineteenth — Post-WWII Reunion</h2>	<h1 style="margin: 0;">1963</h1> <h2 style="margin: 0;">Aug. 30-1st</h2>
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COMMODORE PERRY HOTEL headquarters for our third visit to Austin. This was a very new hotel then, but slightly too small for our group (years later it was converted to an office building).

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WAR WOUNDED _____ WW1 _____ WW2 _____ KOREA _____ VIETNAM _____ OTHER _____

DATE OF BIRTH _____ VA CLAIM # _____ SSN _____

NEXT OF KIN _____ ADDRESS _____ STATE _____

APPLICANT SIGNED UP BY _____ DATE _____

EVIDENCE OF THE AWARD OF THE PURPLE HEART MUST BE SUBMITTED
 (DDFM, 53-56 GENERAL ORDERS, ETC.)
 (FOR EXCEPTION - SEE BACK SIDE)

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IF YOU HAVE A PURPLE HEART

Show your support of the 36th Division's
 Chapter 3636

MILITARY ORDER OF THE PURPLE HEART

This is the **only** organization formed exclusively for combat wounded veterans. It is America's **oldest** military award, first issued by George Washington on August 7, 1782

The Military Order of the Purple Heart, Chartered by Congress, strives to represent **all** veterans in its programs and annual appearances before Congress.

Your \$15 annual dues give you membership in this exclusive veterans organization, plus the bi-monthly **Purple Heart Magazine** which is edited in Texas.

Chapter 3636 meets once a year at Convention time.

Our share of National dues is used in support of Veterans Administration Hospitals and other programs in Texas.

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FIFTEEN T-PATCHERS WON THE C.M.H. in World War II



1. Edward C. Dahlgren
2. Arnold Bjorklund
3. Homer L. Wise
4. Charles H. Coolidge
5. Emil Deleau KIA
6. Thomas E. McCall
7. Chas. Commando Kelly
8. James M. Logan
9. Stephen R. Gregg
10. Morris E. Crain KIA



11. Bell
12. Weicht
13. Gordon
14. Herrera
15. Crawford

