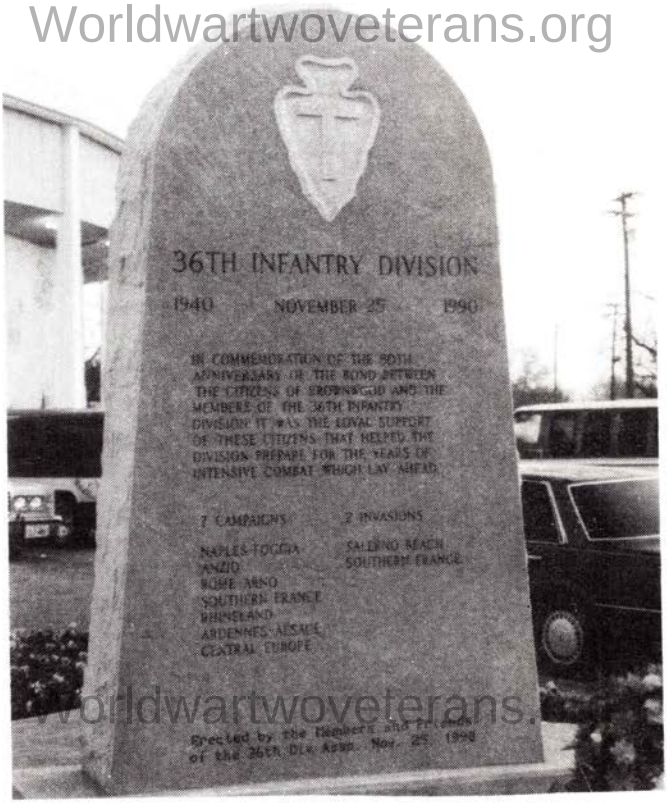
The Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly



Photograph Courtesy of Richard M. Burrage

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The Fighting 36th HISTORICAL Quarterly

THE FIGHTING 36th HISTORICAL QUARTERLY

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

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

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

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36th DIVISION ASSOCIATION

HISTORICAL QUARTERLY

VOLUME XI (1991)

Book 4 of Volume X (1990) was mailed within Nov. 24 & 25.

This finishes 10 years of publication and 3200 pages of history by the men who lived it now has been published where it otherwise would not exist. These ten Volumes help perpetuate the history of the 36th Infantry Division in WW II. If only we had started this project sooner.

If you have not already renewed for Volume XI (1991), now is the time to do so. The cost is $15.00 per year with a book to be mailed each 3 months. If you did not renew and receive Volume X (1990), the complete Volume (4 books) is still available. Until February, the cost will be $15.00 for the Volume. **On February 1st shipping and handling cost of $1.25 will be added for Volume X (1990).**

The Historical Quarterly makes an excellent gift for a buddy, family member, your library and school libraries. They will carry the stories of the 36th into the future.

There is still a great need for your personal stories so please write them now. The stories of our friends who make the TAPS Column without writing their story are forever lost to the world we live in. The number staggers the mind.

Write your stories now - just tell it as it happened - and forward it to: Hicks A. Turner, Editor, Rt. 2, Box 236, Clyde, TX 79510.

1991 ANNUAL DUES

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Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly
VOL XI, No. 1 SPRING 1991

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Brownwood Bulletin

Brownwood-Early, Texas 76801 44 Pages, Five Sections Volume 91, No. 36

36th Division captures hearts of B'wood

By HARRIETTE GRAVES
Bulletin Features Editor

Photos for this article courtesy of:
Salazar Mazzara, 111th Engr. Bn.

Members of the 36th Infantry Division who swept through Nazi-occupied Europe during World War II, invaded Brownwood again this weekend, capturing anew the hearts of the city's residents who first welcomed them here half a century ago.

Highlighting a reunion held to observe the 50th anniversary of the mobilization of the 36th Division at Camp Bowie was the unveiling Saturday of a monument at the Brownwood Coliseum. The unveiling was carried out by representatives of the major regiments and battalions of the division, known as T-Patchers because of their uniforms' identifying arrowhead patch bearing a "T" for Texas. The arrowhead stands for Oklahoma.

The ceremony drew over 1,000 spectators, most of them the men and family members of the famed Army division.

The sounding of "Taps"; the keynote address by retired Major General Willie Scott, a former member of the 36th Division who later became adjutant general of the Texas National Guard; and comments from Walter S. "Rusty" Pope, president of the 36th Infantry Division Association, were key elements of the ceremony.

The monument, which stands at the coliseum, commemorates the bond between Brownwood and World War II's 36th Division which mobilized at Camp Bowie in 1940.

The ceremony was shared by a crowd including former members of the 36th Division, dignitaries from the Texas National Guard, and many who were in Brownwood when the 36th Division came here in 1940.

As wording on the monument became readable with the lifting of covering, was the immediate sounds of clicking cameras from news media and individuals across the coliseum lot.

In part the monument reads, *"In commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the bond between the citizens of Brownwood and the members of the 36th Infantry Division. It was the loyal support of these citizens that helped the division prepare for the years of intensive combat which lay ahead."*

The $15,000, 10-foot tall gray monument was paid for by donations from approximately 300 members of 36th Division, with other donations and civic leaders and organizations in Central Texas.

A wreath was placed at the monument honoring those who died in the line of duty.

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

To My Friend, Marshall Zapata, KIA

by Bob von Toussaint
Company C, 141st Infantry

I saw him lying in the sand, his rifle by his side, he was covered with blood and his face and eyes showed he had not died an easy death. He wore a gold ring with a topaz stone on his left hand, his helmet was within reach and his right arm was extended as if he were reaching for his rifle, a trickle of blood had covered his lips. He had died on the beaches of Salerno, September 9, 1943.

Marshall Zapata was "my friend." We had grown up together during the hard years of the depression and our friendship had always remained the same to the day he died. I've visited his grave at Nettuno Cemetery in Italy, many times and I make it a "must" to do so as often as possible. Here the white crosses stand row after row.

It was in 1986, one bright, sunny morning, I was walking through those rows of crosses, toward Marshall's grave. One could almost see the sea from the sloping ground and one could smell the flowers and the air was cool and crisp. Winter was near.

My thoughts raced as I placed my hand upon his cross and read his name. Mentally I was saying, "I've come back again, my friend, and this time I shall bring you news of your family and afterwards we shall pray." And then, "I told your Mom about it," I said, "and told her not to cry."

My thoughts raced on, mentally talking to Marshall. "I gave her your cap and told her what a fine man you were and that you loved her. Your sisters have grown up and your brother said he misses you. The old neighborhood has changed a bit and the old gang is gone. That old lot where we played ball is still the same, the kids still come there and the corner store is closed." I wanted to tell him so many things, to share with him the years since he died. My lips did not move but my mind spoke.

I told him I'd fulfilled his promise to see his sweetheart and that he would not be coming back. And, as I sat among the white croses, the rays of the sun casting reflections, out in the distance the sky, the sea and the land met. My thoughts reminded me of that September morning on the Salerno beach where my friend fell and died.

It was then I heard footsteps behind me and I knew it was the cemetery

caretaker. I lowered my head to utter a prayer. The caretaker passed me by, then he turned and asked me who it was that had died. I told him it was my friend and emphasized the words "my friend." I suppose my voice was rather loud and as I arose he said, "I'm sorry to have disturbed you but I was looking for my brother. It's time to go." I assured him his brother was somewhere about and that I would help find him, thinking he was looking for his brother's grave.

I asked him his brother's name as we were approaching a large monument that has these words inscribed, "Nettuno Cemetery-Graves of American Soldiers Killed in WWII." A yound lad with a big grin sat by the monument. He asked me about America and said he would like to visit America. "I've got an uncle in New York who is a tailor," he said. He told me about others who had left sunny Italy after the war. His brother listened and finally told the boy that it was time to go. I asked him his name and with a broad grin and his arms outstretched, he replied, "Marshall." To my surprise I heard the name, my friend's name was Marshall, also.

I must have dropped into deep thought because when I looked about me they had disappeared. Finally, I could make them out walking among the rows of crosses. I made my way toward the entrance and as I reached higher ground I looked down among the rows upon rows of white marble crosses and the rays of the sun cast a brilliant glow like that of a diamond and it seemed to be saying:

"As the sun rises
and darkness is met,
There stand white croses,
Lest we never, ever forget."

Editors Note: Bob von Toussaint wrote the following poem, dedicated to his friend, Marshall, and requested it be printed following this story.

"White Crosses at Nettuno Cemetery"
In memory of Sgt. Marshall Zapata
White crosses of marble stand
Like a garden of stone.
To those who gave their lives,
They stand not alone.

It was on the beaches of Salerno
Where blood ran free and red
and there's not words
To express valor
Where wounded died and bled,
and as the sun rises-
and darkness is met,
There stand white crosses
Lest we never, ever forget.

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

Celebrating Mourning 50 Years Later

by Dick Dougherty

Rochester Times Union

Right after I was reminded August is the 50th anniversary of the beginning of World War II, a letter came from Ray Grossman of Oceanside, California.

Ray, like myself, was a lieutenant and field artillery forward observer with the 131st Field Artillery of the 36th Infantry Division in Europe.

I had forgotten Ray, but he remembered me all these years and wondered what had happened to me. Then came the line that caused me to stare off into space: "I always thought you had a bright future if you survived."

It reminded me that there once was a time when survival seemed a remote possibility, dependent entirely on the end of the war or getting a "million dollar wound." Luck had worked all this time and surely it must be running out at an alarming rate.

A mention of my name in a list of membership renewals in the division association's newsletter caught his eye and he wrote to wish me well and supplied some unembellished personal history to help jog my recollection of him.

"I did not have good luck with Battery C," he wrote. "I joined in December (1943) and shortly thereafter was wounded near San Pietro. The same shell killed my radioman and many others."

But the time Ray returned in March the fighting had so depleted the forward observer teams that the surviving radiomen and drivers were split up and assigned temporarily as observers. When the division went into Southern France, Ray's team was wiped out, but he survived.

There is something eerie about this. Ray made me feel as if I'd risen from the dead after half a century, and from his point of view, I had.

It was an understandable mistake. There were 3,974 dead in the 36th and an additional 4,317 missing, most presumed dead. There were 19,052 wounded.

If that is not vivid enough for you, consider that there were about 15,000 men in a World War II infantry division, but the division roster lists 37,000 names. That gives you an idea of the euphemistic meaning of the word "replacement."

In other words, it took a lot of "replacements," about 17,000 of them, to keep the 36th going during the carnage. Replacements replaced the dead, missing and badly wounded. "Ordinary" wounded were patched up and sent back into combat.

All this recollection fits nicely with an article in this month's Atlanatic magazine, by Paul Fussel, a professor of English literature at the University of Pennsylvania who was in the hard-hit 103rd Infantry Division.

In the introduction to his 50th anniversary article, he writes: "With our fears focused on nuclear destruction, we tend to be less mindful of just what 'conventional' war between modern industrial powers is like."

Then, in nauseatingly accurate detail, he tells us. But I won't.

I sent the article along to Ray along with a long reply, asking the questions that still eat at me today:

When he thinks of all those guys, after all the years have passed, does he still sometimes feel ashamed to be alive?

Does he still sometimes brood over the question: Why us and not them?

And does he ever think about all the German soldiers, and the German, French and Italian civilians, men, women and children, who got blown apart by our shells just because they were in the wrong place at the wrong time?

I Hope not. Seeing the truth too vividly can drive you mad.

36th Infantry Division

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

The Moselle River Crossing

by Louis Prince
Battery C. 443rd AAA Am. Sp.

After the landings in Southern France, at Green Beach, our gun crew, the first platoon of Battery C, 443rd AAA started to move swiftly in the Rhone province of France, against the Germans. As we reached Remiremont, the enemy had a strong defense, at the Moselle River, and we were assigned to protect the 111 combat engineers, so they could build a bridge across the river. We were to support them against the Luftwaffe.

As we were leaving for our assignment and coming down a winding road, you could see the intense artillery fire from the enemy. Jack Wetzel, the halftrack driver turned his head to me and said "Prince, I hate to go down there.," I guess he sensed that something was going to happen to him and us. Well I said we have to do our job and Wetzel always did, he never backed out of anything.

We no longer got there, and took position along the river, when Wetzel got hit in the left arm, with a bad cut from a piece of shrapnel. I had to put a tourniquet on him to stop the bleeding. As the barrage kept on, one shell hit so close to me, that it picked me up in the air, I was dazed for a few seconds.

Then I looked to see if I had any part of my body missing, but no just a hunk of my left combat boot off and all I had was a nose bleed and spit blood, apparently from a concussion.

Then the German fighter planes came, the gunner Charles Zimmer, opened fire on them and kept them from doing a successful job with one of them shot down. Once the bridge was completed, equipment started to cross for the next mission.

Standing in reverence,
Brownwood Reunion and Dedication
November, 1990

Photo by Salazar Mazzara
111th Engr. Bn.

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

The Liri Valley "Landmine Caper"

by Frederick L. Young
Second Lieutenant, Infantry
First Battalion Pioneer Officer and Platoon Leader,
143rd Infantry Regiment

WHEN AND WHERE

The time frame is late November and early December 1943 and the area is Monte Rotondo, south of Cassino, Italy. The unit is the First Battalion, 143rd Infantry Regiment, 36th Infantry Division, U.S. Forces. This is an overview of a small unit harassing action, a mining caper deep into the enemy rear.

THE MINING CAPER

This involved a rifle platoon officer and rifle squad patrol, and the battalion pioneer officer and one pioneer minelayer, Sergeant (then Pfc) William L. Bender, the pioneers carrying four U.S. antitank landmines, and the combined rifle/pioneer patrol leaving from Company A of the above unit in the lines just east of Monte Rotondo, the patrol missions being to penetrate through the enemy screening outpost line that "hugged" the First Battalion, pass through their main outpost line, penetrate back to the main line of resistance, and possibly to their service area, mine a road, then return through the several phases of the emeny forward defenses, and finally, to cut any communication lines on the return phase of the "mining caper."

A NOTE FROM YOUNG'S PIONEERS

"Courtesy of Young's Pioneers, we'll call again," read the note that was printed carefully, then rolled in considerable wax paper from a cookie package and made as waterproof as possible. The note was to be left under one of the four U.S. antitank mines, which would probably be found the next day by the Germans in what certainly would be considered their "rear area."

ASSEMBLY

The two young officers, the sergeant squadleader and his rifle squad, and the pioneer-sapper assembled at dusk. A final briefing was conducted for all assembled, perhaps a dozen in total strength. The patrol then passed out of Company A's main area, then through their outpost line into enemy territory. What was to follow revealed how easy it was to move about very close to the enemy at night **without being detected**, even when carrying heavy, bulky landmines.

AN ENEMY MACHINE GUN

Hardly into "no man's land" a hundred yards, an enemy machine gun opened fire at perhaps 150 yards to the left, apparently firing across Company A's front. The patrol was prone and just waited for perhaps ten minutes. The firing continued several times a minute, a short interval of firing, then a pause. He couldn't be firing at us; he just couldn't be firing at our patrol! There was no noise about us and no movement on our part. This was apparently an attempt to discourage anyone from coming toward the German outpost lines, to confuse our patrols and to cause them to return fire or to return to the U.S. lines.

MOVING IN "GERMAN" TERRITORY

Up we went, part of us moving, part remaining and covering, then closing, then extending again, listening at each closing for a minute or two before extending again. We soon found a deep stream bed which was shown on the map in a "map recon" the day before. Part of the patrol moved in the stream bed and part on top, so we could shift either way as required if fired on. This gave us flexibility of response. Had we been discovered, it was unlikely that the enemy would have both the stream bed and the higher ground on the banks covered, permitting us to shift as seemed most appropriate. We continued to move in the stream bed for perhaps a half hour.

ANOTHER OUTPOST LINE

One hour passed and back, back, back, back we went ever deeper into enemy territory. We had passed through what seemed to be another outpost line easily, having picked up coughing on one flank. After going through that outpost line, we then waited ten to fifteen minutes until we were reasonably sure of where everyone was around us for a considerable distance. The noise discipline of the enemy certainly left much to be desired. Then it was up and back, back again. At that point, probably three hours or more had passed. This was, indeed, a very slow process.

WELL INTO THE GERMAN REAR

Finally we had penetrated back to where the Germans were in buildings and seemed to have no noise discipline whatsoever. They were smoking, talking, joking while some were handling their arms, acting as though the nearest enemy forces were many miles away. This was certainly a surprise that they were quite loud and exhibited such very poor noise discipline. We had to be at least back among the forward sections of their main line of resistance. U.S. artillery fire, presumably preregistered interdictory fire, had been falling only a few hundred yards ahead of us for some time. Obviously it served no purpose to put the landmines on a road being regularly shelled. We saw no point in taking the patrol into the zone beaten by artillery fire. That could have resulted in possible casualties among our patrol.

SELECTING THE TARGET

After a quick conference between the two lieutenants, the decision was made to penetrate another hundred or more yards, moving toward a very prominent building and toward a surfaced road to our left. Just as we neared the building, out came a group of Germans. They paused just outside, several smoking and

a number speaking in loud voices, making it easy to understand their conversations. A sergeant must have been in charge of the group as one of his men addressed him as, "Herr Feldwebel." I don't recall that we had any fully qualified German-speaking members on the patrol. My knowledge was **very modest** gained from my grandmother who spoke fluent German and excellent French. She had lived with our family for a number of years up to my early teens and often spoke in one of these languages. I just never advertised my German ancestry on my mother's side of the family. I knew the German military rank structure well.

We just stayed in place waiting--after all, we had no place to be except back to our lines before dawn. Shortly, the sergeant reprimanded them for making so much moise (Larm) and reminded them that die Amerikaner could hear them, then ordered them sternly to cease the loud chatter. Der Herr Feldwebel would have probably been in a state of shock if he had known how very correct he was, that "die Amerikaner" could hear them easily and were deployed in the darkness less than fifty yards watching them. It would have been so very easy to have opened fire and probably killed or wounded the lot, though that would have certainly brought down a lot of "hornets" on us from other enemy units in the area.

WON'T THEY EVER GO?

After what seemed to be an eternity, he finally organized his patrol and issued his orders quietly. **Great balls of fire!** Here they came moving generally toward us, then they turned slightly to their left and passed down a hedgerow. We lay quietly, not the slightest movement, but ready. I lay on a phosphorus grenade, the cotter pin almost out. They were now less noisy than before as they moved out, but still made enough noise to be heard perhaps 150 to 200 yards away. One grenadier passed so close to the hedgerow on the opposite side that I could have reached through and tripped him. They moved off, disappeared, and then were gradually out of ear shot. We gave them more than enough time to get out of the area, then listened carefully during the pauses in the intermittent artillery shelling to try to locate any other "unwelcome company" in our vicinity.

LET'S PLANT THOSE MINES!!

There was now no more noise coming from the large building. Our rifle unit now prepared to give us covering fire if necessary. The four mines carried by the two pioneers were quickly and quietly armed. Those "spider" covers could make a lot of noise and had to be installed correctly if the mines were to function. The two pioneers moved silently to the road, then put the four mines about equally divided in spacings across it. Out came the note, "Courtesy of Young's Pioneers, we'll call again," and it was placed under one of the mines. If one mine would be exploded, the German Himmelfahrtskommandos (minelifters) would still find the other mines the next day. That was what we wanted. The artillery fire continued to come at irregular intervals in light salvos on what must have been a road junction ahead.

LOOK AT ALL THOSE COMMUNICATION WIRES!

What a pleasant surprise!!! There was a **mass** of at least a dozen field wires on the berm of the road we had just mined. We had come prepared for that

possibility and out came the cutters, with all of the lines being cut. I considered trapping the wires with my one fragmentation grenade and a long string which I had brought, but decided against it. Some German wiremen were certainly going to have their work cut out for them that night after our "snipping" party.

HOME WE GO!

We had achieved both missions. It was now time to start the return back to our lines, now well after midnight. We had to expect the Germans to effect some reliefs of their outposts during the long hours of darkness. Certainly we didn't want to be discovered as we returned, or to stumble on to one of their reliefs **by accident**, then get into a fight with a larger enemy force well back in their rear areas, greatly reducing our chances or returning to our lines. This meant a slow return in the same manner as we had come; expanding, then contracting and closing, always ready to engage. The return trip was now moving along. Several more times we crossed field communication wire which was promptly cut.

FRIEND OR FOE?

When we were more than half way back to our lines, the rifle patrol leader suddenly signaled a halt; we had **almost overtaken** a large enemy relief party of perhaps as many as twenty-five ahead of us, deployed and kneeling, all facing our lines. **That was close!** There were no other U.S. patrols scheduled for our zone of operations that we knew of. This patrol had to be an enemy unit. Also, it was much too large to be one of ours.

WHY NOT FOLLOW THEM?

Soon the large patrol or relief was up and moving. We simply followed at a distance of perhaps a hundred plus yards. The enemy patrol seemed to move gradually to the right, more toward where the machine gun had been firing earlier in small bursts at irregular intervals. We finally halted and let the large patrol move away from us. Next we moved very slowly, gradually left, not wishing to disturb any of their other outposts, easing to the left to intersect the same stream bed and to use it to guide on so we would come back to our lines very close to where we had left them; back to where we were expected to reenter. An occasional check of the compass kept us going in the right direction. It is so very easy to lose direction in the darkness and wander about all night and go right into the **WRONG** area where the enemy could be waiting. The large patrol finally disappeared toward the machine gun that fired irregularly. The artillery shelling had continued generally in the area not far from where we had left the four landmines, but now it seemed to slacken off in amount and frequency.

SHOULD WE BOOBY-TRAP THEIR WIRE?

We crossed enemy field wire several more times, cutting it each time and pulling a small section away some distance. Again, I was very tempted to leave that fragmentation grenade in a trap along the enemy wire to get some wireman as he came out to repair the break. Again, I finally decided against it because we did not know the patrol plan for the entire regiment. If one of our patrols had gotten lost or strayed into the wrong sector, the granade could have killed or wounded one or more of our own people.

OUR OUTPOST CHALLENGES

It must have been between three and four in the morning as we approached our Company A outpost line. The patrol leader halted and deployed the patrol for all around protection as I went forward the last hundred plus yards to contact our outpost who promptly challenged me. "Bring them in, Lt. Young; we have been expecting you." Back I went for the patrol which then returned to our lines safely with no losses. We had cut many wires on the return and had left the landmines well in the German rear. We had moved all around the enemy, **really right under their noses.** The enemy gunner was still firing short bursts from his MG42 and must have gone through a great many rounds in the time we had passed into his "shooting gallery zone" and then back out of it, into the safety of our lines. Said the young outpost, "Lt. Young, did you leave the mines?" "Sure did," was my reply. That little caper soon became common knowledge and spread across the battalion, Lt. Young and his people were laying mines well behind the German line.

SHOULD WE TRY IT AGAIN?

I now believed we could go on another escorted patrol, combined by a larger rifle patrol with perhaps a dozen pioneers, giving us a twenty-four mine capacity. The other officer and I discussed a possible return caper for some nights later and started our planning for the return.

BRIEFING THE COMPANY COMMANDER

Reporting to my company commander, Captain Richard M. Burrage, I covered what had happened in detail. He really chuckled when he learned we had followed a large German patrol some distance on the way back to our lines. Puffing on his pipe as he often did, Captain Burrage said, "I'll bet someone is going to be in a lot of hot water when they establish who was in that building near your mine-laying and wire-cutting party...What is this I hear that you two (the other lieutenant and I) are cooking up a larger party so you can lay more mines? Is this true that you are taking mines and explosives next time, and plan to blow up one of those buildings they are using while they are in it...?" This was true. We had discussed that additional option, planning to use a long delay fuse with a special waterproof igniter device. In the plan, we would have left some easily-found message identifying us, confirming that we **DID** "call again." It was, however, not to be. A few days later the entire battalion would be relieved and relocated. Much bigger projects were in store for us that we didn't even yet know about.

PIONEERS, TAKE A BREAK!

After taking leave of and thanking our very efficient rifle escort, Bender and I had departed Company A for our Headquarters Company "camping site." The rifle patrol had done an outstanding job in providing security and in escorting us to and from the "mine caper." We were very tired and soaked to the skin. It had rained part of the night and was quite foggy much of the time it was not raining. The longer we had walked, the **heavier** those two landmines (we each carried) seemed to become. Those carrying handles had gradually cut into the flesh of the fingers. The next thing for us was to get some hot food, remove the wet boots and clothing, try to get cleaned up a bit, and then get some sleep. We were ready for a **break.** Each of us had a

pair of very sore, stiff '' paws.'' My right leg with the shell fragment in it from Chiunzi Pass was screaming at me.

OPINIONS OF OTHER EXPERIENCED PATROL LEADERS

Some days later, I discussed this ease of movement about the Germans with T/Sgt. William F. Parrott of Company A. He was of the same opinion-take your time, listen, move carefully, and you can move about ''right under their noses.'' He thought it was capital, leaving the landmines and a note under one stating ''we would call again.'' T/Sgt. Parrott was a fine soldier and had seen more than his share of patrols. One of my friends in Company A was 2nd Lt. Melvin F. Wiggins. He had made a night patrol deep into ''German territory,'' going all the way back to the town of Venafro, also moving completely about and through the enemy defenses, then returning safely. His views were the same as T/Sgt. Parrott's, usually no problem in penetrating their defenses and coming back safely. Lt. Wiggins and I would soon have a rendezvous with destiny, together, on a ''big caper,'' climbing Monte Sammucro, he and his outstanding platoon acting as the advance guard for the attack force, and one squad of my pioneers and I taking care of any landmine problems, the next time **looking for them, not laying them...**

DURCH DIE DEUTSCHEN AUGEN GESEHEN

Seen through German eyes (Durch die Deutschen Augen gesehan), this could be something to be concerned about. Some patrol activity on the part of any of the Allied Forces could and should be expected. In this case, the patrol of riflemen and pioneer-sappers had penetrated far beyond what would normally be expected, much deeper into ''German territory'' than was usually the case. They had eluded all of their outposts and had passed through or about their forward defenses. They had not only carried landmines and put these across a service road, but had done this very near a large structure occupied by a German unit. The audacity of those ''Lausbuben aus dem Texas Regiment,'' leaving a note under one of the mines, a note carefully protected in wax paper, stating who they were and that they would ''call again.'' To top that off, they had cut many field wires not only near the landmines, but in other areas, thus knocking out communications with a number of forward defense units. Was this really something to be joked about? What if those verdammt Amerikaner started mining and/or boobytrapping different sections of the service area road net each night, and what if they would bring considerably more than just four mines? Mein Gott, if they could pass in and then pass out, back into their lines without detection, then was any area in the German sector really secure..? Any commander would have a right to be concerned since the ''caper'' had been carried out **right under the noses of his troops...**

REALLY UNHAPPY

Wouldn't the German commander have been triply ''unglueklish'' (unhappy) to have known that those U.S. Lausbuben ''Himmelfahrtskommandos und Grenadiern'' had simply tagged along a considerable distance behind his forces, ''escorted'' unknowingly by a larger German patrol moving toward the U.S. lines?

GERMAN TRAINING FOR NIGHT OPERATIONS

What about German training of its soldiers (Grenadieren) and non-commissioned officers (Uteroffizieren) in night movements, scouting and patrolling, noise discipline, and the changing of the reliefs on duty in the forward battle zones, especially those "hugging" the deployed American units? Certainly das Deutche Herr oder die Wehrmacht had an enviable reputation for thoroughness of training in all facets of functioning in the field, for producing rigidly disciplined, highly motivated individual soldiers, ably led by young officers and corps of highly trained non-commissioned officers. This patrol action just covered seemed to reveal, though, some very large gaps in the nightime efficiency of the enemy forces opposite Company A. I know of no comparable mining action behind our lines carried out by enemy forces in our entire regimental zone.

Now, let's move on to a much larger action about two weeks later. Again Company A and the pioneers would be together, moving a reinforced rifle company **right up under the German noses up Monte Sammucro** on December 7 and 8, 1943. My friend, Lt. Wiggins, would command the advance guard. One squad of my pioneers led by Sergeant Jay E. Wilson and I would accompany the lead elements, the riflemen looking for the enemy, and we pioneers looking for the landmines. That "caper" would develop into a terrible battle with very heavy losses on both the American and German sides, all for the occupation of Monte Acmmucro, a piece of rocky craig real estate that would become soaked in American and German blood, and some of my blood! As it would turn out, the first casualties of the impending battle for a mountaintop would be me, then Sergeant Wilson and one of my best minelifters, Sergeant (then Pfc) Michael J. Owsianiak; all of the battalion pioneers. In the next chapter, let's review how the infantry rifle battalion pioneers were organized, what their diversified missions were, and what some of their combat and combat support contributions were, not only in the Monte Sammucro operation, but in all of the Italian Campaigns of 1943 to 1944.

THE EXACT DAY OF THE CAPER

I cannot fix the exact day of the landmine caper, but place it plus or minus about 25 November 1943, based on other documents of where we were at that point in the Italian Campaign.

I can visualize the other officer and sergeant-squadleader on the caper, but could not establish their names even after many phone calls.

Sergeant William Bender could not be located. My last contact with him was about 1956, he and his famly then living in New York. Efforts to trace him were fruitless. I wanted him to proof the draft of the caper. Captain Richard M. Burrage, my company commander at that time, is still living and remembers the event. CMSgt. Leonard E. Rice, then corporal assistant-squadleader, remembers Bender pointing out the building to him when the battalion later moved forward. CMSgt. Rice would later write: "We had pulled off to the left side uphill for a truck that had stopped. While waiting for the convoy to

restart, Cpl. Bender pointed to an area below the road and said that was where the German motor pool was located that you and he had mined a few weeks earlier. You must have been about **three miles** behind the German lines.'' He told me about the note you put under one of the mines. CMSgt. Rice is still living.

VALUABLE EXPERIENCE AND PREPARATION FOR MONTE SAMMUCRO

Certainly for me and for my friend, 2nd Lt. Wiggins, my participation in the landmine caper and his patrol all the way behind the Kraut lines to Vanafro, these experiences would be very valuable practice for the ''Monte Sammucro Caper'' that we would soon be engaged in, **again right under the Kraut noses...**

Enjoying the Brownwood Reunion:
Jack Best, Port Arthur, Texas, Mary Mazzara and Salazar Mazzara of Bridge City, Texas.

Division Engineer History

by James E. Hodges

The history of the 111th Enginers is very long and varied and dates back to the late Spring of 1916. The 1st Battalion was commanded by the late Richard E. Dunbar, Major. The 2nd Battalion was commanded by the late Major Frank B. King. The organization began intensive training in Camp Bowie, Ft. Worth, Texas. shortly after it was called into Federal Service on August 5, 1917 and left for duty in France. On arrival at Brest, the Regiment was sent to the 13th training area with Headquarters at Bar-Sur Aube. The Regiment was ordered into the lines Corps Engineers for the 1st Corps on Sept. 9, 1918. Their main objective was to repair roads, bridges, and placing fills across trenches so the Artillery could follow closely behind the Infantry. The Regiment saw quite a bit of action and at one time was so close to the enemy that they took a building with the enemy food still on the table. The 111th Engineers continued on into Southern France after the war and was returned to the States to Camp Bowie, Texas where in May 1919 it was mustered out of the Federal Service.

In 1922 the Regiment was reorganized under the command of Colonel Richard B. Dunbar, and Col. John Landsdale as Executive Officer. The 1st Battalion was commanded by Major Floyd E. Martin, and Major Eugene S. Coghill commanding the 2nd Battalion. The Units of the 111th Engineers Regiment were, Headquarters and Service Company, Port Arthur, Texas, Band Section, Port Arthur, Texas, Medical Detachment, Gonzales, Texas, Company A, Port Arthur, Texas, Company B, Bowie, Texas, Company C, Greenville, Texas, Company D, Port Arthur, Texas, Company E, Victoria, Texas, and Company F, Houston, Texas. (In 1920, Major General John A. Hulen was assigned as Commander of the 36th Infantry Division and remained in this job until he was relieved in Lousisana in Sept. 1941 by General Fred L. Walker.)

President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued the Executive order #8594, dated November 16, 1940, which called into Federal Service many of the National Guard Divisions of which the 36th Infantry Division was one of them. The 111th Engineers Regiment was one of the units of the 36th Division and was called into service November 25, 1940. Camp Bowie in Brownwood, Texas was to be the new home of the 36th, and by Dec. 14, 1940 the 111th Engineers was in their new home just inside of the Main Gate of Camp Bowie, Texas. After one year of intensive training, the 111th was ordered to Louisiana for the largest peace time maneuvers to ever take place. By 2 Oct. they were ordered back to Camp Bowie in 1941. Feb. 1, 1942 the Division was streamlined into the Triangular Division. One Battalion of the 111th Engineers Regiment was disbanded and most of the men were sent as cadre to form other units of the Army. Things were happening very quickly, and the Engineers were ordered to Camp Blanding, Fla. with the 36th Division and left for that post on Feb. 19, 1942. The maneuvers of North Carolina saw the Engineers again active in Division work. (July 9, 1942) Camp Edwards, Mass. would be their new station and they arrived there Aug. 17, 1942. This did not last long because they were ordered to leave for NY Port of Embarkation and left NY on April 2, 1943 for North Africa, arriving April 13, 1943. After further training with the Division, they were to take part in the invasion of Salerno, Italy on Sept. 9, 1943. They saw action all through the Italian campaign, and were sent to Southern France Aug. 15, 1944. The Engineers entered Germany March 23, 1945, and into Austria May 7, 1945. After the war in Europe was over, the Engineers were sent to Hampton Roads Port of embarkation and were deactivated at Camp Patrick Henry, Virginia Dec. 15, 1945. Oran C. Stovall Commanded the 111th Engineers Bn. from Sept. 1943 and was relieved of command Jan. 1, 1945. Col. Stovall was the oldest Division Engineer in point of service in the 7th Army. Col. Stovall was transferred to the 343rd Engineers and reviewed the 111th Engineers Bn. for the last time at 1400 hours on Jan. 1, 1945.

Over the River and Through The Woods

by Jack Clover

Hq. Company, 2nd Battalion, 143rd Infantry

This is a reprint of Jack Clover's story that was printed in Vol. I, No. 4, 1981 Quarterly. Jack died December 14, 1981 and had contributed 5 stories of his experiences which have been featured in the **Quarterly**.

The **Quarterly** *will begin printing stories from earlier Volumes inasmuch as many isues of these are no longer available.* The Editor

The big prize was ahead. After months of fighting, slugging, dying, butchering, freezing, dodging screaming meemies, Rome was in sight. Yes, Rome was in sight the hard way via Cassino and Anzio. The Cassino-Rapido was a definite mistake by some stubborn people. Anzio made sense providing we had put all our efforts there to cut Italy clear to the Adriatic instead of the feeble attempt at a shallow meaningless beachhead. But this is a whole different ballgame to be argued for years with never a concluding answer.

As we scooted up highway 7 following the Cistern breakout at Anzio, May 25, 1944, we gradually overtook and relieved the 1st Armored Division amongst the heavy grape vineyards, sometimes eight feet tall along the highway. The most we encountered at this point were a few snipers but it always seemed incongruous to me to see beautiful, large, juicy grapes and fertile strawberry patches somehow mixed up in this horrible war.

This was not one of our particularly good days. As we neared Velletri and occupied the right flank of Highway 7, flanked on our left by the 34th Infantry Division, we were suddenly strafed by our own planes. The damage was maybe not of great significance but unnerving as hell. The day ended with us taking up positions to the right of Highway 7 and pulling up every vehicle

on the line with a 50 calibre mount. These were used with great success during the Anzio breakout as a solid wall of 50 calibre fire from every known vehicle forms a solid base of fire instead of sitting in the rear wasting away.

The evening brought the usual probing and jabbing patrol activity readying for the Velletri push the next day. Velletry was a fooler. We were not told much about it but being the last major step prior to Rome it was a veritable arsenal of a "junior" Cassino. Jerry was not willing to give it up easily because the prize that lay just beyond it was "an open City" and a lot of open ground beyond that where our air power could grind them to bits.

Our attack bit into the krauts the next morning as we set our sights toward Velletri. The foliage was thick and jungle-like. There seemed to be vineyards by the dozens masking off any reasonable vision. Snipers abounded due to the heavy terrain, and Burp Pistols were ideal as they dashed in and spread rapid fire all over hell and back.

The rifle company's attack combined with the heavy concentration of 50 calibre machine gun fire was moving forward. Progress was being made and about noon all systems seemed to be "go."

At this point, however, a promising attack turned into a black disaster. In some fashion a Jerry speaking perfect English tapped our artillery lines and called our own fire down on our rifle companies. Companies E and F were hit particularly hard especially our key officers. All was mayhem for awhile and our time table disrupted badly. All the while our A&P platoon had been supplying our forward dump with as much ammo as we could possibly carry. The next gambit came totally unexpectedly.

As we were taking a break and I was about to attack a bountiful box of K rations, hoping my Cracker Jacks prize wasn't cheese, Sgt. Conlogue came up and kicked me on the foot. "Clover, get your squad together fast. E and F Companies are cut off and need a radio and all the MI and 30 calibre machine gun ammo they can get. Throw in some grenades too! An E Company runner will be here soon to show you the way if it's still open." This news was about as welcome as a Dear John letter and yet these are the vagaries of war. Our squad rebounded quickly and we were soon loaded with as much ammo as we could carry and yet remian mobile as we figured on some rough times.

The E Company runner arrived breathlessly and decided we should move out quickly before the ring became any tighter. After fully checking our gear our runner selected a narrow path between a high type of hedgerow abuted on the left by a giant vineyard seven to eight feet tall loaded with grapes. There was also sporadic rifle and MG-42 fire all over the area indicating the fluid situation. As we progresed awkwardly down the makeshift path, perhaps 100 yards, we saw a farm house in the distance bordering the edge of the grape arbor to our left oblique. This seemed like an ideal spot for Jerry to be hiding and sure enough we were right.

In an instant we suddenly heard the throbbing, churning sound of a large motorized vehicle coming from that direction seemingly headed for us. Up to this point a casual mortar or "88" would drop near but only on a harrassing basis almost as a zeroing-in measure.

As the engine of this giant monster revved up like a love sick Rhinocerous we realized that on the opposite side of our hedgerow was apparently one of our scout cars. We could now hear the two-way radio which was guiding two Sherman tanks our way to help. They were edging up a draw to our right but very carefully as most tankers did.

The sum total of the situation now revealed we were pinned down in a vineyard with some sort of Jerry motorized vehicle about to attack us at point blank range with a deadly 88. The foliage was so thick we couldn't determine what it was but the usual "tank clank" didn't seem to be there. As the monster's motors revved and came towards us he let go his first salvo from about a 50-yard range. The tempo of the other fire intensified as we had been discovered now for sure. I was as flat on the plowed ground as I could get, and as I looked over at "Preacher" Bynum I knew he was thinking the same thing I was: "Wish we could get the hell out of here, even Alabama."

The monster roared closer and let go an 88 that landed right in front of us. We were showered with plowed earth and stinging shrapnel that did not break the skin. I could still hear our scout car and tankers talking, but the help would not arrive soon enough. Thoughts ran crazily through my mind. Here we are trapped in a damned vineyard and can't even fight back. So far none of our boys had been hit but we were lucky. Here we lay in a dusty, dirty vineyard with the next shell headed right on top of us. I lay shaking saying, "Please, God, if you'll just let me out of this one I'll be your friend for life." "The Preacher's" ashen face told me he was going through the same thing in his Alabama style.

Quickly the monster barked again from a very short range and this was it. The shell landed to the left of Bynum but with an earthly "clunk." It was a dud bouncing over our heads skipping across the field like a flat stone on water. With a thud it buried itself in something at the rear, after destroying many grapes.

I still lay there shaking thinking, hell, I'm no hero—no Commando Kelly. I don't want to die in this God-damned peasant field without a chance to fire a shot. I just want to do my gig in the army and get out. What the hell, we have no bazookas or tank tools and besides my clothes are full of lice from the haymow the previous night. A huge roar again reverberated from the Jerry mystery vehicle and Bynum and I looked at each other for what we figured was the last time. But could our ears be fooling us? After all his rooting and pawing around he was backing out! To this day we don't know why unless word had come the Shermans were near!

What a relief! All we had to contend with now was a casual mortar drop in or a distant Burp pistol. We gathered ourselves together sweating profusely in the hot Italian sun and found no casualties. Our next objective was through the vineyard about 100 yards to an open wheat field. The field covered about 75 yards of open territory being amply covered with a squad of Jerries with Karbiner rifles. (No match for the great MI). We could detect no machine gun or miscellaneous fire except an occasional mortar "clump."

After a fast pow-wow we decided to send our dozen men across at about 50 yard intervals and run like hell. The less target the better. The wheat was about three to four feet high with absolutely no other cover. The E Company runner let off and we shoved the men out as the previous man seemed well on his way. So far so good. No one was hit! I came last and took off like a bullet. Most of the rifle fire was aimed low and cut V-shaped wedges through the wheat as they zipped by. A couple of times I heard the "popcorn" crack in my ear knowing they were getting the range just as I hit the heavy woods on the other side.

Luckily the remaining trek to the Companies was extra thick foliage affording ample protection and our guide really knew his stuff. It was at this point I realized what physical conditioning meant in terms of an all-terrain venture loaded to the gills with heavy ammo. We eventually found E and F Companies dug in around and holed up in a couple of two-story stone houses holding for dear life. I learned that Lt. King, one of my friends in E. Company, had been hit for which I was very sorry.

We delivered our merchandise which we felt would get them over the hump and proceeded to head back through the ring of fire. A Lieutenant from one of the Companies decided to lead us back to our Company area as he was being transferred. This went over like a lead balloon as we felt he would have his own ideas, and he did!

As we neared the wheat field he said: "Now boys, here's where we cross slowly so not to attract undue attention." Oh brother, but we said: "Lieutenant, it leaves you too much of a target against the light-colored wheat." "Never mind, I'll go first and show you!" After taking stock of the situation he started forward in his squatting style. He had gotten about 50 feet when the krautheads cut loose. All of a sudden he got the message and a blinding flash took off that would have rivaled Jesse Owens in the Olympics.

At even a terrible time like this we laughed like hell and followed our own proven method on the return. I never knew the Lieutenant's name nor do I now know what happened to him. We did hear he was a washed-out paratrooper who perhaps couldn't separate the esteemed training manual from the real war.

After dodging a various assortment of krauthead weapons, we arrived back at our rear supply dump exhausted. The Cracker Jacks surprise K-ration looked even better to me so we all decided to eat before the next assignment.

We had just settled down to a round of delicious army rations when up rushed an army newspaper reporter. "Say, men I understand you just returned from breaking through the German lines to save the line Companies who were cut off." I replied, "Yes, I guess that's true." He immediately pounced on this with, "How does it feel to head into almost instant death with the Germans all around you?" One of our boys who had just discovered the ever popular Spam in his K-ration said: "Well, sir, it's something like 'Over the river and through the woods to grandmother's house we go' at Thanksgiving time." Another repeated, "Yes, it's like 'Over the river and through the woods."

With much consternation the reporter sat back, rifled through his book of notes and scratched his head. He then stood up mumbling something like, "Yes, I think I know what you mean," and soon he and his Jeep were off in a trail of dust. And I could almost swear I heard a trailing, "Hi-ho Silver."

Laugh, Clown, Laugh

by George "Wrong-Way" Kerrigan

Company A, 142nd Infantry

On January 16, 1960, **The Chicago's American**, ran Louella Parson's copyrighted column telling about receiving a letter from George Kerrigan, who wrote:

A HUMOROUS letter from George Kerrigan of Chicago, who writes:

"I nearly fainted when I read your story of a play called 'Under The Yum Yum Tree.' While I was in combat in Italy in 1944, my squad found a phonograph with some American records made in 1915. We played the phonograph at every stop, and in every battle in Italy.

"Now, Miss Parsons, our No. 1 hit record was "Under the Yum Yum Tree." I sang it constantly and also drew a picture of a tree on a board and labeled it the Yum Yum tree.

"I carried it all over Italy and hung it on a tree, or stuck it near my fox hole. As a result I was called 'Yum Yum.'

"So maybe, you will understand now why I was pleasantly shocked to hear that lovable name again. I hope my buddies from the 36th infantry division also read your column. God bless you, and all the luck and success to 'Under the Yum Yum Tree."

Are you listening, Producer Freddie Brisson?

LAUGH CLOWN LAUGH

While in Italy, from October 15, 1943 to August 12, 1944, I had the greatest bunch of clowns in the United States Army, when it came to gags we were second to none. Of course there were times when we did our share of praying. There were Skipper Brant, Shorty Loughran, Al Dallegro, Werner Loeb, George Richards, Sam Katzman, Barfield, William Murray, Diodato Riiz, Earl Parrish, Stabile, Emile Deleau 'C.M.H.", Rocky Robinson, Chester Grove, Butch Hawkins, Happy Adams, Joe Werbicke-to name a few.

We wore the craziest outfits you ever saw. In a deserted farm house we found a portable phonograph with some American records. A lot of people in that area had been in America and returned to Italy before WWII, so they had old American records, the best was "Under The Yum Yum Tree." Also,

please don't tell my wife; well, we carried that victrola until we got on the boat for the southern France invasion. We also got a lot of old Italian fedoras, and wore those too. By this time we had Willie Markum as Co. Commander, and if you fought for Willie, you almost ran your own show. So one guy carried the record player until he got tired then he put it down and the next man picked it up. Of course we sang our favorite song. I made a sign to hang wherever we stopped. On it was a tree and below was "The Yum Yum Tree." They even called me "Yum Yum" and someone had an army tie and with a pen drew three stripes on it, and I wore it.

So we sang and danced, accompanied by the phonograph, and a few times we cranked it up at night in a battle and ran back behind a big tree. Believe it or not, no one ever got hurt (while we played the music). A few times Jerry even pulled out, as they probably figured that we had an army up there, and had music. Of course we had a few barrages, some critics said that our own artillery was trying to stop us (I doubt it).

Well, one day we were resting on the side of a road and going into our act when a Lt. Colonel came over and said, "Who in hell is in charge of this motley-looking crew?" So I stepped forward and the first thing that caught his eye was my tie, then my fedora. He ranted and raved and would not let me get a word in, so I said "OK, men put your helmets back on," and I walked away. He didn't like that but walked away fuming up a storm. When he was out of sight we started to put our fedoras back on when another Lt. Colonel came up to me (I had never seen either one before or after that incident). And he said, "What outfit is this and what's your name, Sergeant?" By this time I was boiling and said, "Sir, I have the best fighting group of men in the 36th division, and we just had our asses chewed out for our dress, so I don't need any more." He then said, "Calm down, Sergeant, I want to say that I was over there (and he pointed) admiring the show your gang was putting on when that other officer walked up and raised hell. It would not be right for me to critcize him in front of enlisted men, but I'll tell you that when I see him alone he will get it from me. It takes guts to sing and dance, not to mention wear those outfits up front. I wish you and your gang were in my outfit." We were all shocked and of course as happy as hell with the compliments. He shook my hand. And as he walked away everyone asked (as in the Lone Ranger series), "Who in hell is that man?" But this is not fiction but the truth.

Sixteen years after this incident I saw a piece in Louella Parson's column telling of a new play by a "Freddie Brisson" called "Under the Yum Yum Tree." So I wrote to her and she published my letter on January 26, 1960. A copy is enclosed.

Open Arms Texas Style

by Dewey W. Mann

Company B, 142nd Infantry

Company B, 142nd of the 36th Division made Oberhoffen, France, its home twice in February, 1944. WWII having relieved units two times there, it seems that this was the only place that this ever happened while I served as Company Commander.

Several incidents at Oberhoffen come to mind. Initially, when we entered the town, the Company CP was established in the same place where the unit we were relieving had theirs. It was an abandoned hospital well identified by a huge Red Cross sign. The second time we entred the town it was thought to use the same location as the CP, but it had been completely destroyed by direct hits. There was nothing but rubble. You shuddered with despair as no one could have survived through such devastation.

A cow was killed by rifle fire from some of our men, who mistook it to be the enemy attacking at night. Thinking it unwise to see such good beef go to waste, our cooks proceeded to butcher. However, this butchering action attracted enemy fire. To overcome this, a rope was attached to the cow, and it was dragged by a jeep to a safer place, and the work was done unmolested. The meat was then approved by the Regimental Surgeon and served to the men. Sgt. John Boyer aided in distributing the beef sandwiches. They made for a good supplement to our C-rations.

Victor Davidson was stationed in a house when enemy shell explosions set it ablaze. He and others with him were in a dilemma-fire was at their rear and their only avenue of escape was in the face of attacking Tiger tanks. However, the attack was repulsed and they survived. Victor relates the story as follows:

"I remember the time in Oberhoffen when Joe LoBresti was walking in front of an open door wearing a stovetop hat that he had found in the house where we were stationed at the time. A German shot through the hat and Joe hit the floor so fast that he left the hat in mid-air. This was the same house that the Germans set afire while Govas, Biacco, and I were still inside. Joe had just make it across the road, dodging tracer bullets, and was up on the peak of the roof shooting rifle grenades at the Germans as they tried to get out of the

tank. At the same time he was directing our anti-tank gunners located behind his house to shoot right through the house to hit the German tank. This made them move their tank ahead and it was knocked out. This enabled us to leave the burning house and get across the road. That same evening, Dewey ordered us back to a barn outpost where we stayed until the Germans burned that, too."

As said, the Germans attacked with tanks. An order was misunderstood, and some of the men began falling back. They were leaving the area with alacrity and determination. I saw the tanks when the attack started. I knew that they had to cross a street intersection, or turn up the street which would put them in the rear of the Company. One of our tanks was stationed facing the street intersection. I raced back to tell the tank commander of the situation. I said, "A German tank will be at that point directly in front of you immediately. His side will be exposed to you as he passes the corner of that building. Just sight your gun there and you cannot miss." The tank commander elected not to heed my suggestion, and instantly proceeded to move his tank behind a building further back. While he was turning his tank the German tank appeared, but did not turn up the street. But, here I was standing in the middle of the road, waiting for a German tank with nothing but a carbine. I shuddered at the thought of being on the **actual** front line. I always figured that the real front line was where the soldier and the enemy were face to face. As a Captain I generally had someone between the enemy and me. I considered this quite an advantage. While in the road, I noticed some of our men passing me, yelling, "We were told to fall back because of tanks." Sgt. Gilbert Gonzales had a bazooka and positioned himself at a vantage point to combat the oncoming tanks. He told some of his squad to fall back behind the house. He did not mean for them to go so far. The word spread and others began falling back. I yelled to those near me that they must get back into position. They understood, and complied. Then, I looked behind me and saw K.O. Pitner with his arms spread out, blocking the path of some of the men. He was telling them to stop, they did. Upon viewing the sight of K.O., I could only say to myself, "Boy, he's my man." This fiery Texan was transferred into Company B as 1st Sgt. back in the States. He was the right hand man of the Company Commander. He was the true buffer to blunt the so many problems that are generated by some two hundred individual fighting riflemen. He diminished the pressure. This 1st. Sgt. was so instrumental in the training and preparation of raw recruits for baptism of combat and battle at the invation of Italy at Salerno, 9 Sept., 1943. The same man who had received a German hand grenade (potato masher) in his foxhole, and simply picked it up, and threw it back. He had won the respect of all, and at this critical time with his arms outspread, was still winning respect. He is not a Sgt. now, but a 1st. Lt., and second in command of the Company. He was given a battlefield commission.

The enemy attack was repulsed. Company B men thoroughly discouraged the German infantrymen who accompanied the tanks. None of the German tanks turned up the street as I had anticipated. The tank attached to us inflicted

damage on theirs. Maybe, the tank commander was right in moving his tank, but I do wonder what would have happened if that first German tank had turned up our street. I do know that K.O. Pitner with his outstretched open arms was a sight for sore eyes. Whether it was Texas style or not, I'm not sure, but he is from Snyder, Texas, which should be proof enough. I also know that his action is still a picturesque sight and vivid memory that has endured in my mind over forty years. K.O. Pitner was seriously wounded during this operation. He stands today as a well decorated veteran who bestowed great credit to his Company B unit and the 36th Division.

BROWNWOOD 1946

First — Post-WWII Reunion **Jan. 19-21**

HOTEL BROWNWOOD — Site of the first Post-War Reunion. This hotel was a familiar place for all who had served at Camp Bowie (weekends, etc).

This was a unique gathering of the clan. A new charter had been drawn up in Oct. 1945 in Austin and signed by these men:

H. Miller Ainsworth, Wm. H. Martin, Fred L. Walker, Carl L. Phinney, August Waskow, Richard Dunbar and Claude V. Birkhead.

The patriotic citizens of Brownwood were proud of the 36th great record in WWII. So, it was only appropriate, the initial meeting should be at home base — Brownwood!

Miller Ainsworth*

Newspaper headlines around the state — "36th Demands Rapido Probe. The fat was in the fire. All the great generals of our division, both WWI and WWII were in attendance. Probably no other event, since had created so much publicity.

Former commanders in WWII — Walker and Dahlquist, Birkhead and dozens of other great officials attended this Saturday - Monday reunion. Registration started at 10 AM Sat. Jan. 19th. Mayor of Brownwood, Wendell Mayes gave the official welcome at the first business session. A giant parade was held at Memorial Hall at 3:30.

And two, not one Dance was held — Roof ballroom of Hotel Brownwood and Officers Club at Camp Bowie. Open Houses were held by the American Legion and VFW.

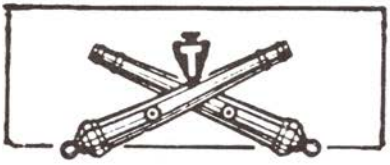
Memorial Service was held at 10 AM Sunday, and at 3:00 PM, Gov. Coke Stevenson dedicated the '36th Division State Park.' The reunion was concluded after two business meetings on Mon. Jan. 21st.

Association President, H. Miller Ainsworth announced that FORT WORTH would host a giant reunion, in observance of our date of the SALERNO landing in Italy . . . Sept. 9th. This would set the pattern of all future reunions.

Footnote: The dates of this reunion — were selected to match the date of the RAPIDO CROSSING — Jan. 20, 1944. News coverage on this reunion was so great, that the Dallas Morning News, printed a special booklet, listing names and addresses of all who attended, and mailed one to each delegate. (Those were the good 'ole days).

Getting Ready

by R. L. Jones



CAMP HULEN, TEXAS—I joined Battery "D", 132nd Field Artillery in Corsicana, Texas in Feb. 1931. It was a horse-drawn French 75mm Gun Battery. Almost all of our camps were held each summer at Camp Hulen. Artillery wise it was terrible. The artillery range was miles of flat land covered with two feet of tall saw grass. Artillery Officers like to have some hills so they can see the area where the targets are located.

I was 16 when I joined the unit. My good friend, Lynn Kirkland was 14 when he joined, but he was big for his age and his big brother, A. V. Kirkland, (Big Kirk), was the 1st Sgt. As a private we were paid $1.00 a drill We met each Tuesday night and received a $12.00 check every three months. Although we met 13 times, we understood we would not be paid for one. $12.00 today doesn't seem like much money, but then we could buy a big juicy hamburger, a cold drink, a big candy bar, or a package of gum for 5 cents. It cost 10 cents to go to the movies and popcorn was 5 cents. The Great Depression was still on and jobs were scarce.

The weather at Hulen was generally very pleasant with a nice breeze blowing in off the bay. One time the wind did shift around out of the north and mosquitoes came in big black clouds. We did have a hurricane in 1931 but we secured things, and it didn't amount to much. The only permanent type buildings we had in the Battery area was the mess hall, the latrine and the stable (Picket line). The quarters were tents set up on concrete slabs.

Going to camp with horses was quite an operation. We had to load horses, horse feed, guns, casons, wagons, water, equipment and men on the train. The men rode in coaches, and sack lunches were provided. For many this was their vacation and their first train ride.

Swimming in the bay was a big pasttime activity on weekends. When certain conditions existed, though, large schools of jelly fish would drift into the swimming area. It didn't take us long to know that it was better to forget about swimming then. A few brave souls would still venture out but after a few stings, out they would come.

1934 Pvt. Remus L. Jones (Lt. Col., Retired) and Sgt. Morris Lee Baker (Col. Retired) show off their new Artillery boots. Btry. D, 132 F.A.

One year our horses were quarantined because of hoof and mouth disease. Several were destroyed and we couldn't take the others to Palacios. After we got to camp, the other units had to loan us their spare horses. 1st Sgt. Kirkland got a detail together and we went to a big gathering several blocks from our area. Lt. Col. John Garner, Capt. Randolph Robinson, 1st Sgt. Kirkland from our Bn. and a large group of men and horses from other units went.

Sgt. Kirkland told us that each one of us was to get two horses and lead them, NOT RIDE THEM, back to the picket line. Well, everything went along fine until the very end. The last two men who left were Pvt. Wednesday and me. Wednesday wasn't his real name as he was crosseyed and the men nicknamed him Wednesday saying he was born in the middle of the week looking both ways for the sun to rise. There were two horses left and Wednesday told me he would take them. He got the two and when he got back by me he stopped and said: "I was raised on a farm and I know all about horses. Give me a boost on one of them and I'll ride him back to our unit." Well I helped him up and he barely got on when the horse gave a big buck and threw Wednesday out flat of his back. The horses continued to buck and tore out across a field. We all almost died laughing. Well, not quite all. Capt. Robinson's face turned as red as his hair and Sgt. Kirkland looked like he was going to bust a gut.

Some of the horses we got were really wild. One in particular was so wild the 1st Sgt. wouldn't let anyone water him. The horse would rear up and paw you. Sgt. Kirkland would take a pitch fork and hold the horse off when leading him to water.

Sgt. Kirkland told us that when walking behind a horse to always stay close to him and if he kicked, it wouldn't hurt you. Well one day I was walking behind the horses, and I saw one of them look back and cock his ears. I thought he probably was going to try to kick me so I would just walk close to him and it wouldn't matter. Well he did kick; his hoof hit just above my kneecap. A knot as big as a goose egg jumped up and I could hardly walk. I told Sgt. Kirkland what happened and he said, "You are lucky. If you had been out further, it would have probably broken your leg." That ended my walking close to their rear ends.

Once during our camp at Palacios we liked to go to the Blue Lantern for a fish dinner. They served a big trout that hung over both ends of a platter, with fries, bread, drinks and dessert for $1.00. I wonder if it's still there?

There is an old saying in the Army, "Never Volunteer". One day Sgt. Kirkland announced, "I need 4 volunteers for pilot training." Four young men jumped at the chance. Then he said, "There are 4 pitch forks and a pile of manure at the stables. Pile it in a wagon."

Sgt. Bus Miller still gripes about the volunteer job he turned down. The 1st Sgt. announced, "A beer company is going to give us a free fishing trip out in the bay. They are also providing hot dogs and beer. Give me

your name if you want to go." A bunch went. I didn't get to go as I had guard duty. Bus said there has to be a catch. I talked to some of the men after they got back from fishing. Bill Prewitt said it was terrible. He said he got seasick and he just laid on the deck and moaned. Some of the other men came by and tied a rope around his neck and said they were going to hang him. Bill said, "I was so sick I hoped they would hang me." Sgt. Hue Gordon went with them and he said it was really a great outing.

Sgt. Bus Miller and some of his men took one of our men down to the horse trough one day. Seems he hadn't bathed in quite some time. They pitched him in the water trough and proceeded to scrub him with GI soap and brush. In the middle of the bath Gen. Birkhead came riding by on his white horse and asked Bus what was going on. Bus told him, and he said "Well that is well and good but when you finish, don't forget to wash out the trough as horses don't like to drink dirty water."

One of our men was said to be so far back in the sticks that when they first put a tie on him he stood by a post for 2 days as he thought he was tied up. One of my men in the wire section had a big boil on his neck. I told him to go to the medics and he said, "Oh no, I don't have any money." He couldn't believe the government would feed, clothe, house, doctor and then pay him also.

One day we took all of our cots out of the tents and set them out to sun and air out. At retreat time we heard the bugler play the Call to Colors which meant the band was going to play the national anthem and the flag was to be lowered. If you are in an open area, you have to stand at attention, face the music and salute, holding it until the music stops. Well when the Call to Colors started, all of us, except one, dashed for cover. The one left out was a man we called Birdnuts. Birdnuts just continued to sit on his cot and listen to the music. When it was over, I asked Birdnuts if he heard the music and he said he did. I then asked him if he knew what song they were playing and he said, "It sounded like Home on the Range to me." From then on when they played the Call to Colors, we would say, "Better get under cover as they are getting ready to play Home on the Range."

MOTORIZATION

When the Department of the Army decided to give the National Guard trucks and take away their horses, it broke the hearts of the old-timers. Some just sat down and cried. Personally, I was rather glad to see them go. The Infantrymen used to say "You powder horses' a--es". This we really couldn't deny. When we had horses, we had to get up at 5 a.m., go feed and water them, then eat breakfast. When we got in from the range, again the horses had to be fed, groomed, harness saddle-soaped, then eat. Sometimes this would be after 10 p.m. The trucks didn't kick or bite either.

We still had the old French 75mm guns. The wooden spoke wheels were replaced with steel wheels and rubber tires. The first year we went

to camp with them, Capt. Robinson made arrangements for a police escort through Houston. The main highway went right through the middle of town. The police were on motorcycles, they headed out with sirens on and red lights flashing. Every truck was loaded down and pulling a trailer or gun, except the maintenance truck. Anyway, we went through Houston at 40 plus miles per hour. Good thing no one got in front of us as it took a city block to stop with those old mechanical brakes. Coming back from camp, Capt. Robinson said, "No police escort this time." We were driving slow but one driver was watching the girls (he later admitted) and ran into the gunbarrel of the truck that had stopped for a red light. The next truck couldn't stop in time and ran into his cannon. Here we had two trucks with busted radiators. They were able to patch one and the other truck had to be towed home by the wrecker.

When we went to camp, we left real early one morning. Some of the men had no way to get in early, so they spent the night at the armory. There was a fruit stand in the next block and the owner had a lot of watermelons stacked along the front and a stalk of bananas tied to a shed that extended over the walk. Instead of taking them in at night, he set up a cot under the bananas and slept there. Late that night, after the man had gone to sleep, some of our young champions decided they could steal some of his watermelons. They succeeded in carrying off all his melons and one of them was standing on the cot, taking the bananas down when the man woke up. He went over and told Capt. Robinson about it and before long there was a string of soldiers carrying watermelons back to the store. Poor things had been so busy carrying melons they did not even have time to eat one.

Part of our uniform then were some crummy-looking canvas leggins that had a leather strip on the inside. Capt. Robinson said we could wear boots if we all agreed to buy them. A company would sell them to us for $7.00 a pair and we could wait until pay day to pay for them. We all agreed. When we got to camp wearing these good looking boots, we got a lot of salutes from enlisted men of other units as they had been taught that officers wear boots, so when you see them, salute.

CAMP BOWIE, TEXAS

On the 25th of November, 1940, we got notice that we were mobilized.

I was now a Sgt. and the pay $60.00 a month. We kept training at the armory, but our trip to Camp Bowie at Brownwood was put off for several months as our area was not ready. Later on when we did get there, the area was a mess. There had been a lot of rain and the lumber trucks got stuck and were pulled in by tractors. Our mess halls were really a mess as the carpenters had walked on the lumber and there were muddy prints all over the walls and ceilings.

A group of our Sgt's were sent to Dodd Field in San Antonio to learn how to be Sgts. The Army selected some of the toughest RA Sgts as

instructors. One of the RA Sgts stood out in front of our Sgts and told one of them, "If I had a Sgt. in my outfit as ugly as you and a bulldog, I'd put you in back and put the bulldog out in front of my men." One day after it had been raining, the RA Sgt. had us fall out in our galoshes. He then stood in the middle of the field and had us doubletime until everyone fell exhausted.

After we got back to Brownwood, we were assigned to a reception center. When a train load of recruits came in, we would meet them, each Sgt. taking a group of about 25 men. We then got them fed and took them around to various processing points. One group would be getting medical examinations, another clothing, another records, etc. and eventually each man would be processed through all sections, but not in the same order. Some sections took longer but generally it worked out very good. When we were waiting for another section to clear we would give them training in military courtesy, military ranks, insignias, etc. I was listening to one of the Sgts just ahead of me telling his men not to spit when in ranks. About that time one spit. The Sgt. grabbed him by the collar and said "Dammit, didn't I just tell you not to spit in ranks." The kid said, "Me no speaky English." The Sgt. told him, "By God you learn it by tomorrow." Incidentally, when we received our commissions, we were given a discharge one day and sworn in as an officer the next. When this Sgt. got his discharge, he went home. The next group of Sgts. were not given their discharges until after they were commissioned.

My older brother, Joe C. Jones, was living in Dallas when the draft started. He was driving a van fom Dallas to Houston. He had served 3 years in HQ's Btry 36th Div Art in Corsicana and was helping to support mother and was 38 years old. He had talked to me about volunteering and getting in the unit he wanted. He said he preferred the QM because of his driving experience and next the artillery. I told him to just hold tight, at his age he might never be drafted. Well the first draft list that came up and the second man selected was him. He called me one day and said they were sending them to San Antonio. The next day when I met the train, here comes my brother Joe, stepping off. I said, "What are you doing in Brownwood?" He said, "What are you doing in San Antonio?" They were never told where they were going. I asked him if he wanted artillery and he said he still wanted QM and took his chances on an assignment. After he got located in a unit, he called me and said he was assigned as the supply Sgt. for Co. "C", 141st Inf. and he loved it. He served in this position until the end of the war. He stayed in the army after WWII and served in Spain, Korea, and in Japan as Gen. MacArthur's Sgt. Major.

COMMISSION

I was commissioned a 2nd Lt. Feb. 28, 1941 and was assigned to Battery "A", 132nd F.A. Bn. Capt. Sam Hueberger from Paris, TX was

the commander. When a new Lt. comes into an outfit, he gets the Motor Officer's job and all the other ones the other officers don't want, such as the Mess, Safety, Supply, etc. Everyone loved Capt. Hueberger but liquor was killing him. He had high blood pressure and his face was red most of the time. A van was brought into the area that was set up to take pictures and make ID cards. The van had no windows and wasn't air conditioned. It was more like an oven. When they took Capt. Sam's picture, he was looking up at the ceiling and sweat was dripping down on his shirt. Later on when we would be sitting around shooting the bull, we would ask Capt. Sam to pass his ID card around and everyone would get a big laugh, Capt. Sam would laugh too. He could not pass his physical to go with us overseas and was later assigned as a Provost Marshal at an Air Force Base and died there while on duty.

As Mess Officer I checked the kitchen early one Sunday morning. There were no cooks on duty. I woke the 1st Sgt. up and he finally got some people working. When I told Capt. Hueberger about it, he said, "Lt. don't you know that the cooks all get drunk on pay day and don't show up the next morning?" Well, no I didn't know it that time but I did the next pay day.

Our mess hall kept getting bad marks for dirty walls and ceiling. We tried everything, except paint, to remove the dirty footprints the carpenters left when they were building it. It was impossible to get paint. I talked to some of the Sgts and they said to burn it. This we did and it worked beautifully.

"A" Battery had a good bunch of NCOs. When an enlisted man gets a commission, they transfer him to another outfit so the NCOs will not fraternize with him. I knew "A" Battery's NCOs about as well as I knew the NCOs in my old "D" Battery. In my estimation "A" Battery generally had some of the best NCOs of any outfit I was ever in. Before we went overseas, our Bn. received a lot of orders to send men with certain ranks and MOS's to other units but "A" Battery managed to keep the majority of theirs throughout the war.

LOUISIANA MANEUVERS

The Battery Commander had one of those old big C&R (Command and Reconnaissance) cars. Sgt. Kirby usually drove Capt. Sam around. They came in late one night. Everyone had to drive with blackout lights on and that was next to nothing. While coming in Kirby ran over a soldier sleeping in the grass. They were lucky that the ground was soft and only the front wheels passed over him. They stopped and the man slid out from under the car and said to Capt. Sam, "You old son of a bitch, why don't you watch where you are going?" Capt. Sam said this was the first time in his life that he was glad to be called an SOB as he knew the man was OK.

When our unit started back in convoy to Brownwood, Capt. Sam and Sgt. Kirby slipped off and went to Paris, TX. Col. John Stewart

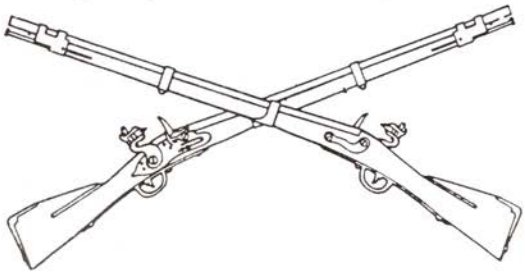
was our Bn. Commander then and he kept checking the convoy and each time, he asked me about Capt. Hueberger. I kept telling him I expected him any minute. Later on when they caught up with us, I asked Sgt. Kirby where in the world they had been. He said they were in Paris and heard over the radio that "Capt. Hueberger and Sgt. Kirby were in Paris visiting after they had completed Louisiana maneuvers." He figured they had better be getting back.

CAMP BLANDING, FLORIDA

In Feb. 1942 we went by convoy to Camp Blanding. I was then assigned to Battary "B", 132nd F.A. Bn. While there all men were supposed to be able to swim at least 100 yards. For most of us that was nothing but my brother, Joe, couldn't swim a lick. They told him if he didn't learn, he couldn't go overseas with us. Well he never did learn to swim but he, nor anyone else, got left behind because they couldn't swim.

While there we got the new 105mm Howitzers. The artillery range there was terrible. Long flat land filled with a bunch of pine trees. A tall observation tower was built out of lumber. Another Battery had the honor of firing the first round. The Gunner Corporal usually pulls the lanyard to fire the gun but the Chief of Section said "I'll pull the lanyard to fire the first round." This he did. Only problem during his haste to pull the lanyard, he accidently set the elevation way short of that given. All of the officers in the tower were looking out with their field glasses for a big explosion way out in front but the shell exploded just behind the tower. Boy this caused excitement.

Pay for 2nd Lt's. started out at $125.00 a month so we were all anxious to get promoted. Each battery was authorized a Captain, a 1st Lt. and 2 2nd Lt's. A 2nd Lt. could not be promoted until there was an opening for 1st Lt. Sgt. Hue Gordon, in old "D" Battery got his commission after I did but went to a new division and was promoted to Capt. before our 2nd Lt's could even make 1st Lt. They later changed the regulations that a 2nd Lt. could be promoted to 1st Lt. after serving so much time in grade, regardless of openings.



The Joke That Backfired

by George Kerrigan
Company A, 142nd Infantry

THE JOKE THAT BACKFIRED

After being taken off the lines at the end of November, 1944, I was sent to the Seventh Army N.P. Hospital in north east France. I was put in a ward on the top floor of an old five-story building. It was more like a rest camp for battle fatigue cases. We also had a special building for Germans, (all wounded) as the enclosed photo shows. Opposite our building was a chapel, also a P.X., so after being on the front lines a spell, it was heaven. Of course, we had a few bad cases and there were padded cells there also, as I found out later.

We got along with the German wounded, as I always figured when a man was wounded or taken prisoner he was to be treated fairly (as long as he was acting properly). I always hoped our prisoners of the Germans were treated the same way. (I met a real hero about 500 miles to the rear who was torturing a German prisoner. I made him stop and said, "If you hate these bums as you say, why not volunteer for the front and you can have a hell of a time killing them. We are running short of heroes up there)."

In my ward on the top floor we had a mixed bag of patients and as I was a clown, I got along with them all. And of course the nurses and attendants. Now one fellow who took a liking to me was a former Chaplain's assistant, whom I called Reverend. He used to drive the Protestant Minister in their Jeep and also played the organ, among other things. He was a real gentleman. How he took a liking to me, I'll never know. He was always writing to his wife and telling her how he was coming along after his nervous breakdown at the front. Of course he told her about our "hospital" and he asked me to take a picture of the place as he had a camera. So I said sure, and why not look out the window and I would go downstairs and take it from below to show how high we were. He thought that was great, so down I went. Now the top floor had a ledge about three feet wide outside the window and as I looked up all I could see was his hand waving, so I kept yelling up to him to move

out more where I could see him. Then I went upstairs and told him to stand out on the wide ledge and hold on to the window. He was shakey but agreed. So I got him in position and made sure he was okay then ran down to take the picture. As I was yelling up to hold it while I focused the camera, who came along from the P.X. but our nurse. When she saw me she said, ''What are you doing now Kerrigan?'' Always the clown, I said ''The Reverend is going to jump.'' I yelled up-''Hold it, Rev.'', then looked up and before I could say a word she flew into the building and I snapped the picture just as the Reverend disappeared from sight.

Well, I went back up and the nurse was waiting for me. She said, ''Kerrigan, I always said you were a nut but I have to say that you saved that man's life. You were great to hold him so I could go up and grab him before he jumped. I could kiss you. You are a real hero.'' I said, ''I was only kidding; he wasn't going to jump, I was only taking his picture. By the way where is he?'' She said, ''In one of the cells, of course.'' As I tried to explain the joke to her she shrugged me off and said, ''I know how close you two are, but he went over the edge.'' So I headed for the isolation cells and then I heard the Reverend yelling up a storm. There was an attendant outside the cell and he said, ''Stay away.'' There was a square wire mesh window six by six on the door. I asked where the head doctor was located and went promptly there. I asked if I could talk on the level with him and he said, sure. I asked him to listen till I was finished and he did. But as the nurse said, you are looking out for your buddy. He asked if I heard my buddy yelling and kicking the door back there and I said sure, but Doc, I asked, ''how would you act if someone dragged you in while you were getting your picture taken?'' And after all he had a previous nervous breakdown while on the front lines. I could see he was thinking, so I asked if I could talk to the Rev., as I was sure I could calm him down. He agreed and brought me to the attendant and told him to let me talk to the Rev. through the window. Well the Rev. got all excited when he saw me and was crying like hell, telling me to explain what he was doing out on the window ledge when they grabbd him. So I told him that only if he calmed down would I be able to get inside to talk to him. So after fifteen minutes he was just sobbing. So I got the doctor and after he looked through the window he told the attendant to let me in and lock the door again. When inside I told him that if he wanted to get out of there, he had to be perfectly calm. After all they thought that he was really going to jump, and you have to say yourself that it sure looked possible. So I talked like a Dutch Uncle for an hour and in the end had him laughing about something crazy. Then I asked the attendant to call the doctor to look him over. Then I told the Rev., ''This is your chance to show them that you are really cool, calm and collected. Forget the past, and don't let me down.''

When the doctor looked in and saw us talking, he had the door opened, told me to wait outside while he went in. After twenty minutes he told the attendant to call our nurse. While we were waiting I asked the doctor on the side to please ask the nurse and also himself to keep the real story secret from the

Reverend. Not for my sake but for the Reverend's sake. She then took me on the side and said, "You are the crazy son of a bitch that should be locked up in solitary." I had to agree.

Well, I spent the rest of the night listening to the Rev. telling me how great I was. Thank God he never knew.

MY LAST DAY AT THE FRONT

A few weeks after I returned from the hospital, (P.H.) my Company A-142 was clearing the Jerries out of a bunch of houses along the top of a high hill in the St. Marie area of north east France, late Nov., 1944. John Wheatley and myself were checking the top house when we were straddled with a load of mortar shells, and also machine gun fire was directed at us. One shell landed near me and I was sent sailing down hill and into the house knocking me unconcious. At the same time Wheatley was shot in the right thigh. When I finally came to, John came over to me, (He had thought that I was dead). By that time the Jerries were down below and sending up machine gun and mortar fire at anything that moved up our way. John said he was hit in the leg but it wasn't too bad. So I said, "Lay down out of sight," as they were shooting elsewhere at the time, and we were out of sight from below; then John said his leg was starting to get numb, so I looked up above and saw a level trail about 50 yards away, (we came along there earlier) and it was not far from the crest of the hill and our troops were down below there. So I told John to get up there and hit the dirt trail and lay there. Any machine gun fire would come up hill and go over his body, (I hoped). I then helped him up and gave him a shove; he got about three quarters of the way up when he was spotted and then the machine gun left another target and swung around and fired at John. Then he hit the deck and I was hoping he was not hit again, so all I could do was wait until they found other targets which they did. Then I took off and as I got near the level trail I saw John laying there and dove down along side of him (on the far side where the chances of getting hit were slimmer). They fired up at me also with the machine gun but thank God the mortars were busy elsewhere. John was still alive but panting like hell, so I said when things get quiet throw your arm around my neck and we will make the last 50 feet or so on level ground and then its all down hill, to our friendly troops, (I hoped). Ten minutes later he threw his right arm over my shoulder and we got up and hobbled the last stretch. But this time we were not noticed. Then I got John on my back and we took plenty of time sliding and falling down hill, and in the distance I could see friendly troops. After what we had just been through I called it a breeze. When we hit the bottom there was an aid station nearby, so I took John in and had a rest for myself before taking off to look for Company A-142. The doctor said "you look worse than your buddy; stay here for awhile." But I said no thanks and took off.

I then woke up in a bed and looked around me. There was another bed in the room with a guy in it, his head all wrapped up but for the eyes. He saw me moving and said "how do you feel, Kerrigan?" I said, "who are you and where am I?" He said, "Roger —— (from another platoon of A Company).

He said that I was found unconscious laying in the street. They took me to an aid station-probably the same one where I took Wheatley and he was there at the same time (he was hit in the face). He told them who I was and then they took us to a French house and up on the second floor.

I must have been kept under medication as I don't remember much more there. Then I was sent to the seventh Army N.P. Hospital and after a week of medication and rest, I was called in to see the head doctor. He was a fine looking man (compared to some I had the misfortune to meet). He shook my hand and said, "Sergeant Kerrigan, on behalf of the United States Government, I want to thank you for the wonderful service you gave and the fighting you did for the past fourteen months or so." I stopped him right there and said, "Doc, I appreciate all the bull ——, but you don't know me from the man in the moon and I could be the biggest bum and coward in the U.S. Army." But he said "you are wrong there, Kerrigan, we had a few men that passed through here that knew you and told us that you did a good job, so you did your share and there will be no more combat. God Bless You." I'll never forget his kind words; I knew now that I would survive the war.

STREET SCENE - BROWNWOOD 1941

Photograph Courtesy of Pat & Sam Coursey
Brownwood, Texas

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

Medals Stir Memories of Battlefront

by Paul Sunyak

Herald-Standard Staff Writer

Ralph James Carolla
141st. Infantry

Ralph Carolla was inducted into the U.S. Army on June 12, 1943, almost four months after his 18th birthday. On November 24, 1943, after 5 months of basic training at Camp Wheeler in Macon, Georgia, he left the United States by ship. Landing in Casablanca, Morocco, he immediately departed by train for Algeria. Upon arrival, he boarded a British ship as part of a replacement unit bound for Salerno, Italy. Arriving on the Italian mainland, he was placed into the 36th Division of the 5th Army, 141st Infantry Regiment, 2nd Battalion, Headquarters Company, Pioneer Platoon. His duties included driving a truck which carried ammunition, supplies, and the wounded and dead to and from the front; sweeping mine fields; and demolishing bridges as well as directly fighting with the enemy at the front line.

Carolla was wounded in the left leg by mortar shell shrapnel on January 20, 1944, near Toedice, Italy, prior to the battle of Rapido River. Spending the next month in a field hospital, he was placed in a small tent adjacent to the hospital since his wound was less severe and space was needed for more serious injuries from the fighting at Rapido River. The casualties were so great at Rapido River that while at the field hospital, he donated blood from one arm while receiving blood plasma in the other.

Rejoining his outfit in early March of 1944, he participated in the liberation of Rome and the remainder of the Italian campaign which ended in July 1944.

Included in the amphibious invasion of Southern France on D-Day, Carolla landed at Blue Beach near Cannes on August 14, 1944. Fighting throughout France, he participated in the rescue of the "Lost Battalion" at the Batle of the Bulge.

After 133 days in contact with enemy—a combat record—his unit was assigned to a rest area 30 miles behind the lines at the end of December 1944; the Germans, however, launched a major offensive at midnight on New Year's Eve and his unit was immediately sent back into action on January 1, 1945. At approximately 3 p.m. on January 20, 1945, near Montbronn, France, he was wounded for a second time by shrapnel from a mortar shell. After being found by medics, he was taken by litter then jeep to a battalion aid station, a quarter mile behind the lines. He later was taken to the 111th field hospital. Stays in two more hospitals in France followed, until he departed from Marseilles on March 28, 1945 on board the hospital ship **USS Acadia**. *Landing in Charleston, South Carolina, on April 12, he took his first plane trip enroute to New England General Hospital in Atlantic City, New Jersey. He remained there for recovery and rehabilitation for one year until his medical discharge on April 20, 1946.*

March 5, 1990

Mr. Bert D. Carlton
Editor, The T-Patcher Newsletter
806 Aransas Drive
Euless, Texas 76039

Dear Mr. Carlton,

I am writing you in regard to the passing of my father, Ralph J. Carolla, on January 3, 1990. I have forwarded a letter to Mr. Leonard Wilkerson concerning this matter.

My father was a member of the 36th Division, 141st Infantry Regiment, 2nd Batallion, Headquarters Company, Pioneer Platoon. He was evaluated to be 145% disabled by the Veterans Administration.

I am writing to you concerning an article which appeared in our local newspaper 2 years ago. I thought it would make an interesting story for your readers.

After the article appeared I had it; the medals; and after some research, a brief history of my father's and the 36th Division's involvement in the war; placed into a frame which hangs proudly in our family living room.

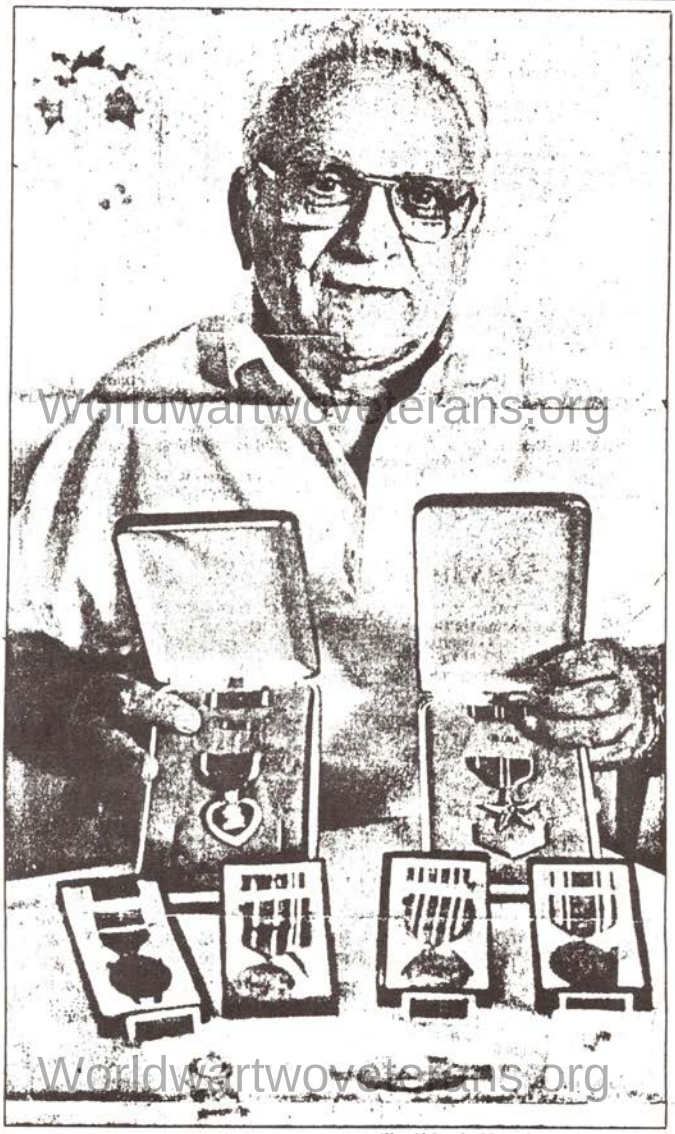
I have included a copy of the article and the history which I compiled, as well as a photo of the finished wall hanging. If you do decide to print an article about my father, please mail 6 issues (which contain the article) along with an invoice, to me so that I may be able to give my family members each a copy. (See address below)

Thank you for your consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions. I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

Mark Carolla
205 Greenfield Avenue
East Pittsburgh, PA 15112

(412) 829-7321 - Home
(412) 372-4181 - Work



(Herald-Standard Photo by Charles Rosendale)

Four decades after World War II ended, Ralph Carolla of Uniontown received a mysterious package in the mail — a box holding 11 medals, badges and emblems.

The 36th Division

The roots of the 36th Infantry Division were comprised of the Texas National Guardsman, which was mobilized into the Army of the United States on November 25, 1940, at Camp Bowie, Texas. Although filled to division combat strength with reinforcements from all across the nation, the 36th was primarily comprised of Texans.

After training extensively in the Carolinas, Massachusetts and Virginia, the 36th departed Fort Dix, New Jersey, on April 2, 1943, bound for Oran, Algeria.

Upon landing, troops of the 36th were stationed in Magenta, Tlemcen, and Arzew in Algeria and Casablanca in Morocco and held in combat reserve.

Now attached to the 5th Army, the 36th's direct involvement in the war came on September 9th, 1943, with the invasion of Salerno, Italy. Under the command of Major General Fred L. Walker, the 36th became the first American division to invade the European mainland.

For the next eight and one half months, the 36th, hampered by inclement weather and adverse terrain, fought throughout Italy. From battles at Salerno and San Pietro, to the heavy losses sustained at Rapido River and Cassino, the 36th distinguished itself in battle. Next came a major victory at Velletri and the liberation of Rome in June of 1944. The fighting continued 125 miles north of Rome until June 26 when the 36th was relieved to return to the Salerno area to practice for the invasion of France.

Now under the command of Major General John E. Dahlquist, the 36th launched its second major amphibious assault on the French Riviera on August 14, 1944. Establishing itself on the beaches of St. Raphael and Cannes, the 36th engaged in a highly mobilized form of action on its way to the first French objective of Grenoble.

Through Montelimar and onto Lyons and the Vosges, the 36th began chasing a retreating German Army. Reaching Strasbourg on the Rhine River by December of 1944, the 36th set an endurance record of continuous combat of 133 days.

The fighting intensified as the war moved closer to Germany. During the following five months, the 36th fought at the Moder River, Oberhoffen and at the Siegfried Line. As the 36th moved into Austria, the war ended on May 5, 1945.

The 36th acted as an Army of Occupation for the next six months, until in December of 1945, the first troops left Marseilles, France, for home.

In nineteen months of combat, five major campaigns and two amphibious assaults, the 36th Infantry Division had expended the maximum heroism and hardship. The 36th captured 175,806 enemy soldiers, received fifteen Congressional Medals of Honor, ten Presidential Unit Citations, and numerous other battle awards. At the same time its casualty list—the third highest of any American division—numbered 27,343 of whom 3,974 were killed, 19,052 wounded and 4,317 missing in action.

Ralph James Carolla
141st. Infantry

Jan. 20 is not Ralph Carolla's lucky day. Consider the facts:

Jan. 20, 1944—18-year-old Carolla, a conscript in the United States Army, is shot in the leg as his infantry unit battles the Germans in heavy World War II fighting at Cassino, Italy.

While hospitalized, Carolla donates whole blood from one arm while receiving plasma in the other. Such was the severity of fighting at Cassion, where both sides declared a 12-hour truce to remove the dead and seriously wounded.

Jan. 20, 1945—Back with his unit after a brief rehabilitaiton, Carolla is wounded a second time, one year to the day after his first injury. A veteran of front-line fighting through Italy and France—including the historic Battle of the Bulge—Corolla is felled at the French-German border.

A shell lands behind him as he and another soldier enter a house.

Lifted into the air by the explosion, which kills the other soldier, Carolla suffers a litany of wounds.

His right leg is blown off at the knee, his left leg is broken, hig right arm is mangled, his skull is fractured and his back and abdomen are punctured by shrapnel.

"I remember going up in the air—and praying a lot," says Carolla.

After 30 days in a coma, Carolla awakes to what becomes a lifelong rehabilitation. Discharged in April 1946, a year after returning from Europe, he undergoes at least two dozen war-related surgeries. Using the method of calculation devised by the Veterans Administration, he is 140 percent disabled.

When Carolla, now 63 and retired, picked up the pieces of his life after his Army discharge, he didn't care much about gathering war honors.

He married the former Mary Elizabeth Novak and set about the busy task of having and raising five children. Ralph, born in Bitner and raised in Oliver, had only the Purple Heart from his first, and comparatively minor, wounding to show for his war effort.

That picture changed drastically in early June when, 43 years after the war in Europe ended, a mystery package arrived at Ralph's old address at the Oliver post office.

The postmistress, knowing the family's whereabouts, contacted Carolla's wife. She picked up the package and took it home. When Ralph opened it, he found a cache of 11 medals, badges and emblems—including a second Purple Heart and the Bronze Star.

"We had no notification of any kind," says Mary. "When he opened the package, he was surprised."

Says Ralph, a reluctant publicity seeker, "I knew I was entitled to them, but I never thought about going after them. We were too busy raising a family for me to say, 'I wonder where my medals are."

The list is impressive: the American Campaign Medal, the European-African-Middle East Campaign Medal (with four bronze stars), the Combat Infantryman Badge, the World War II Victory Medal, the Honorable Service Lapel Button, the Presidential Unit Emblem, the Meritorious Unit Emblem, the Expert Badge (with rifle bar) and the Army of Occupation Medal (with Ger-

many clip).

The last medal is mot baffling, since Ralph never made it inside Germany and did not serve with the Army of Occupation in any working capacity. As best he figures, he got the medal because his outfit—the Texan-laden 141st Infantry of the 36th Division—did go inside Germany.

His peers, as a unit, were also collectively awarded the French Croix de Guerre by that grateful government. But the honored veteran has mixed feelings about his war and those that have followed.

"War is definitely unnecessary; it solves nothing," says Ralph, who had endured decades of physical and emotional agony as a result of his experiences. "I always felt that I was cheated, that it was in vain. I didn't see how the war was worth it, considering what we gave back.

"I was 18 years old and I had a 'nothing could happen to me' attitude. I thought those things only happen to someone else. I saw a lot of guys die. But at the time this happened (to me), I just prayed that I would live."

Ralph especially bristles when he recalls a pep talk given the fighting men by an American general. The general said, "Men are expendable—equipment is not," which soured Ralph on the priorities of the military.

"That's a heck of a feeling; to know that you're expendable but a truck is not," he says. "If they want to have wars, they should put all the military leaders in the field and let **them** fight it out."

Memorial Day, he says, is just another shopping day or paid holiday to most, while the Veterans Administration too often cannot meet the immediate medical needs of veterans because of backlogs and computer malfunction.

But then there's the matter of that pesky day, Jan. 20. Ralph, who retired as a PennDOT permit inspector in 1980, was again injured on that day this year. While the Carollas were vacationing in Florida, a woman ran a red light and crashed her vehicle into their Cadillac.

The Caddy was demolished—and Ralph had to undergo surgery for a torn rotator cuff in his shoulder. He had the surgery four weeks ago in a Pittsburgh hospital and is recuperating nicely.

There will be no medals for that injury. But that's OK, because Ralph has plenty to go around.

The Mission

by Dan S. Ray

36th Recon Troops

The day started out as a routine mission. We had been on many since the landing at southern France. It was always hurry, hurry, but as everybody knew their job and did it like clockwork, we figured that we had a better chance of a successful mission even though we knew that we had to go all of the way to Germany if we didn't find out where the Germans were hiding in ambush for us.

That is what a mission or reconnaissance is all about. We were called the eyes and ears of the army. Our Lieutenant was Edward Morales, one of the most compassionate leaders we had had since the start of the war. He had respect for all of the men, regardless of rating or rank. Our sergeant was Elmer Goodson, A Texan all of the way and a cowboy to boot. Both of these men were respected by all of the men under their command. Forrest John rode shotgun on the lieutenant's jeep and we had one jeep between our armored car and the lieutenant. It had a driver and two men in it.

My armored car had Gordon Finders as driver. I was radio operator. Phillip Joanisse was the assistant radio operator and assistant gunner. Alvin Diener was the gunner and the toughest and best man that I ever called my friend. He should have been awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor many times over for his heroic deeds.

We had a 37mm cannon and one 30 caliber and one 50 caliber machine gun mounted on the gun turret. We had liberated this 50 caliber from a B-24 bomber that had been shot down near us in Italy. It fired faster than our regular 50's and we liked it for that reason.

We moved out of the area where we had spent the night, which was on the right side or northeast slope of the mountain ridge near the village of Rault, France, which was located in the pass at the top of the mountain ridge at about 6,000 ft. above sea level.

We would move a short distance and stop and use our binoculars to see if we could spot anything in front of us, even though nothing was spotted that looked like the enemy. It took the greater part of the morning to reach Rault. When we arrived at the village all hell broke loose. The good kind. Girls swarmed all over the vehicles, hugging, kissing and giving us drinks of all description. They had flowers for the occasion which not too many of us noticed at first. We stayed there as long as we thought acceptable under the circumstsance, about one half hour. We would surely have gotten into trouble if we had stayed there longer.

Our little convoy pulled out of the village and went through the pass and descended down the left side of the mountain ridge. We hugged the inside

of the mountain road as we had been trained to do, in order to not be seen from the valley below. We stopped several times and searched the road in front of us and into the valley below. We did not find any sign of the Germans. When we reached the bottom of the mountain where the road flattened out, the Germans were there waiting for us.

They opened up with a 20mm anti-aircraft gun and I really think the first shot hit Lt. Morales in the right chest and the projectile exited his body. He slumped in the seat. I just knew he was dead and I had the feeling of anger at seeing this. I remember seeing Sgt. Goodson and Joe Kirkpatrick running through a hail of gunfire to get the lieutenant out of his jeep which had been knocked out of action. The other jeep managed to get turned around on the narrow road and it all seemed like clockwork as everyone got into it and passed us going back up the mountain road in the direction of Rault.

Finders managed to get our armored car turned around and we followed the jeep up the mountain road. The armored car could not go over 15 MPH up the steep road, so we got further and further behind. I reported the whole episode to headquarters and found myself literally crying at the loss of Lt. Morales, because I thought he was dead.

As we neared the halfway mark back up the mountain, my grief turned to anger and I told Finders to stop. I then explained to him that we were going to go against our training and we would engage the enemy on our own terms. I had him pull over to the edge of the road just far enough to be able to see over the rim with the 37mm gun. When we were in position I told Joanisse to get out and get up in my position and I instructed Diener to move over to the other side of the gun turret and act as my assistant gunner.

I wanted to do the aiming and avenge the death of Lt. Morales. The first shot I fired hit the lieutenant's jeep in the transmission area. The Germans had crawled all over the jeep, getting the personal belongings of the lieutenant and I don't have to tell you what happened to them. It looked like a John Wayne movie scene. Diener and I fired every round that was in the turret and there was nothing moving at the road block when we finished.

I was very proud of the three men with me, Alvin Diener, Phillip Joanisse and Gordon Finders. I reported the action to our captain and he seemed pleased that we had done a halfway decent job on this mission. I also found out that we were far in advance of other division troops.

In 1987, I learned that Lt. Morales was not dead and that he was living in San Antonio, Texas, on the same street he had lived on before going into the service. I called and it was difficult to keep the tears from my eyes. He sounded great and when I saw him at the 1988 Reunion, I found he was the same nice guy that he was back then.

I say Joe Kirkpatrick, too, and a number of other fellows from the outfit. When I come to a curve in a road I still get the shakes. It seemed that Lt. Morales had been blaming himself all these years for leading us into the roadblock. We assured him that was not the case and he appeared pleased to learn we had knocked out the road block after he was wounded.

Diener is dead; I'm unable to find anything on Finders; Joanisse has retired from a railroad career and Forrest John is married and enjoying life.

Lt. Edward B. Morales was wounded August 21, 1944. Sgt. Elmer Goodson was wounded September 10, 1944. Tech. 5 Dan S. Ray was wounded September 14, 1944 and Forrest John was wounded September 24, 1944.

ROBERT M. IVES, Maj. Gen. Retired, age 91 of Houston, TX, died of a heart attack on September 13, 1990. He was preceded in death by his beloved wife, Donna, in January 1988. They now rest side by side at Memorial Oaks Cemetery in Houston.

Gen. Ives was a veteran of both WW I and WW II and retired as Asst. Division Commander of the 36th in the early 1950's. His wartime assignment as Asst. Chief of Staff G-1 affected the lives and welfare of every member of the Division. He will always be remembered as a true gentleman with a great love for his family, his Country, and his compassion for his fellow man.

Gen. Ives was active in local civic organizations in addition to his participation to American affairs. He joined Wilson Stationery and Printing Co. in 1946, retiring as a V.P. and General Manager in 1981. He was a Past President of the Houston Rotary Club, served as Chairman of the Houston Military Affairs Committee, as Past President of the Paul Carrington Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution, Chairman of the Houston Crime Commission, a Director of the Boy Scouts of America, and a Director of the American Automobile Association.

A large crowd representing the many organizations he was connected with during many years of civic and military service attended his funeral. LTG Thomas S. Bishop of Austin was among them.

The photograph above was taken when he was the Asst. Division Commander, the best remembered phase of his life after WW II. Selected by family members, it was submitted through BG Richard M. Burrage who also forwarded the obituary from The Houston Post dated Sept. 16, 1990.

For more about General Ives, see page 12 of the February 1990 T-Patcher Newsletter. It concerns the award of the first "Medal for Excellence presented to the General by the Houston Military Affairs Committee at its final meeting in 1989.

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

Kreigsgefangener 3074

by Clarence Ferguson

(PRISONER OF WAR)

Special Permission granted by the Author to the Editor of the **36th Division Historical Quarterly** *to print this material in this issue.*

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

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

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

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

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

Chapter X of Judge Ferguson's book was reprinted in the **Quarterly** *in Vol. X., No. 1, Spring, 1990. The editor hopes you enjoy his Chapter XVII.*

Chapter XVII

We saw eastern Germany and western Poland as a cow being sent to market would see it. As usual we were unimportant cargo, and we spent a lot of time on sidings to allow other trains to pass. However, we were not crowded; and although we had little food, the constant change of scenery diverted our minds from hunger. As we traveled eastward the countryside was occupied by intermittent industrial complexes and farmland. It was remote from the battle front and had no targets worthy of massive air attacks. Every inch of soil was used in production of products used by humans and animals. Even the forests were pruned and spaced to induce better growth.

It was late in the year, but there was still some harvesting in progress. There was a notable absence of able-bodied men and boys. Old men, women, and girls were in the fields. Sometimes we saw prisoners-of-war and slave laborers doing work. But there was no idleness anywhere.

There was also an inordinate amount of mechanized farm equipment. Although horses were predominately the power producers, it was remarkable how many tractors and the like were there. But the striking feature about the tractors was their age. We saw some that were twenty-five years old. They had been well-kept and appeared to run perfectly. In our country, we had long ago dispensed with metal lug wheels and replaced them with rubber tires. Not so here. The old lugs, glistened by the abrasive soil, showed constant use.

As we moved farther away from the cities, the distances between villages became greater. We were approaching what the Germans called the Hinterlands—nearing the 1939 Polish border before the German invasion. The Nazis had removed all evidence of the Polish border. Whatever could be destroyed, had been in an effort to erase it from the memory of its people. Even the names of towns had been changed to German names, and any use of the former one was prohibited under severe penalties. The guards were particularly careful not to refer to it as Poland but rather as Germany's hinterland. Maps were redrawn and published emphasizing these changes. But Poland was Poland as it had been for many years; and when we crossed its border, there was no mistaking where we were.

In the early afternoon we arrived at the little village of Alterburgund, one of the new German names. Its Polish name was Schubin, and it was located near the Bromberg Canal about 130 kilometers northwest of Warsaw. This was our destination. We had spent these past days in cramped quarters, hunger always with us. But now it was good to be able to walk and move around. The weather was cold but not unbearable.

The village of Schubin was surrounded by farmland with a very short growing season. It was indeed a hinterland. With no soldiers around, the surroundings gave one the feeling of an isolated rural atmosphere, far away from war. The dress and appearance of the inhabitants were strange to us, but adaptation would take little time or effort.

Within the past years our constant movement had introduced us to many different peoples of varied ethnic background, and these would provide new experiences in our ever-changing situation. We did not know how much we

would be allowed to associate with the natives but merely observing their demeanor and customs would be a part of our day-to-day existence. However, we would take a more than common interest in them, always evaluating how all or any one of them could assist us in our efforts to contribute to the prosecution of the war. This was an occupied country, and in these people was great potential in underground communication and subversive activities. We would soon learn that our people were already tapping this rich source.

One of the most striking characteristics of this place was the absence of any motor vehicles. There were even very few horses and wagons, and the only vehicles present, even in moderate numbers, were bicycles. There was one at the train station, probably belonging to the stationmaster, and we also observed two or three adults riding to or returning from work. It was apparent that there were no bicycles for enjoyment or for children, and those who did not have one moved on foot.

Formed in a column and ordered forward, we marched for about a mile to a large barbed-wire entanglement which we immediately recognized as a Prisoner-of-War camp. We were halted before large double gates. Our guard commander conferred with the guards and immediately the gates swung open. We marched into a holding area where we were turned over to the permanent camp personnel. A German captain stood before us. This was our permanent camp, OFLAG 64. We were urged to cooperate in the processing so that we could be released as soon as possible into the main area. A large group of officers, already residents here, had gathered at the fence surrounding this enclosure and encouraged us to do what we were told.

First, we surrendered all our gear. Some of us had acquired blankets along the way and were reluctant to give them up. It was explained that we would be issued all of these things within the camp; and because of this assurance, we were not adamant in resisting the search. When it came time to surrender the helmet I had borrowed from the dead soldier, I was disinclined to do it. I felt I was being parted from an unfortunate friend whose memory would fade, leaving him alone in this far away country. It was a unique feeling but one I made no effort to suppress. Since this helmet would be forcefully taken unless peaceably relinquished, I had an imaginary discussion with its benefactor; and with a great deal of inner emotion, I turned it over to one of the soldiers. Casually, he threw it into the heap of other confiscated materials. Somehow I had expected him to treat it more gently; but of course, he did not know, and besides, this is war where gentleness is a stranger. I silently said goodby to my friend.

We were stripped naked and searched. And although I had contraband American money, I successfully secreted it from my searchers. We were allowed to keep some of our personal belongings. After being carefully examined, our wallets and the photographs of our families were returned.

Personal pictures proved to be not only a source of strength in times of extreme depression, but also a means of distraction. I used three pictures of my wife and son on this occasion. During all previous searches, I had been able by one way or another to keep the knife that Captain Steffen had given me,

However, the search here was thorough and we were losing some things that we had been able to carry through other shakedowns. I was very careful to keep it as inconspicuous as possible but made no attempt to secret it entirely. I piled it together with my razor, shaving cream and other junk in my pockets.

If you could engage your searcher in conversation, it would distract him and you could slip something through. Just as he was begining to examine these things, I made out as though he had misplaced one of my pictures. Really I had palmed it and moved it away from the other two, and now I feigned being disturbed. It worked. By the time we had found it and discussed my family, his examination of the pile containing my knife was cursory. I had already been allowed to put my trousers on, and I quickly pocketed my knife. Once finished, we were allowed to leave the small compound and join the ever-increasing number of men outside the main section of the camp.

We first met Captain Tony Lumpkin, who assigned us to Barracks 2b. Within a short time we would be issued food parcels. Others in the group introduced themselves, and we visited with whoever wanted to talk. Among the first was Lieutenant Amon G. Carter, Jr., son of the editor of the Fort Worth Star Telegram. He asked for our names and home addresses, explaining that he would immediately send the list to his father, who would notify our families that we were alive and well. This was a kindness we appreciated for up until this time we had no assurance that our loved ones had been notified. We were to later learn that Amon Carter, Sr. was tireless in his distribution of information to our families. His interest in us continued until we were finally released two years later.

On arriving at our assigned barracks each of us was given a bunk with two blankets and a wood-shaving onion sack mattress. We also received an American Red Cross food parcel with eleven pounds of delicious food. We had our evening meal at the dining hall where we got a taste of the German ration. We were now settled in a POW camp near the Baltic Sea, south of the once-free city of Danzig. Here we would attempt to adjust to our fate in this war.

Officeren Lager No. 64 was designed by the German Army for the detention of American officers. From all appearances Germany's Armed Forces had, long before the advent of Hitler, included in their planning the proper handling of Prisoners-of-War and had followed the spirit along with the specifications of the Geneva Convention, which had convened after World War I. There is no doubt Germany had been castigated by the community of nations for its inhumane treatment of prisoners captured in this first war. Its planners had come up with the idea that each of the services would plan a facility and control the operation of the prisoners of that branch of the service in future wars. That was the reason that some of the camps were designated as Luftwaf, Stalags and the such. The true soldiers, sailors, and airmen of Germany had a high respect for their corresponding service in the armed forces of each nation. It bespeaks itself by the fact that military courtesy was practiced without regard to nationality. A German soldier saluted an American officer, without regard to his being a prisoner.

Hitler resented this influence of the strong miliary tradition on the German people. He despised the recognition German soldiers gave captured soldiers, especially Americans. And because of this, there were instances of extreme inhuman and inexcusable atrocities experienced by both prisoners of war and non-military internees during this period of history.

But at this time, the reverses of the Axis Powers had not been such that had been a complete takeover by the Nazi party. Oflag 64, as it was called, was still operated within the provisions of the Geneva Convention and was under the command of the regulars of the German Army. Its commander was an old Prusion Oberst, Wilhelm Schneider, with 42 years of service in that army. He spoke in no language but his native tongue and stood as ramrod-stiff as a wooden soldier. At the time of our arrival, he gave the Weirmach salute and permitted none under his command to publicly give the Heil Hitler genuflection. Under the proper circumstances he would make known that he was not a Nazi, and that he did not endorse its philosophy of politics. He dismissed its military officers as amateurs who were promoted as a reward for their support. Every inch of him was a soldier, and he was charged with the responsibilty of assuring we would not escape. He had a hard assignment with his rag-tag units of misfits; but at no time did he doubt his ability to control these foul-ups. Although he gave the impression as being tough, he exhibited a trait of stability. In spite of his advanced age, we found him to be a soldier who not only maintained discipline within his ranks but also commanded respect in ours.

This camp was a confiscated Polish boys school, containing some thirty acres of land on rather steep, rolling terrain. This road had been converted into a street leading into the little town of Schubin from the west. Although there had been barracks on the original site, the old buildings consisted of a large three-story Polish manorhouse. There was a parade courtyard between it and a big barn built on an elevated shelf due north. At the west end of the parade ground on terrain elevated slightly above the street was a building used as class rooms. It, too, was three stories and had a pretty entrance. There was a sidewalk at its front with flower beds between the walk and the buildings. We used this as a hospital, shower bath, Chaplain's quarters, doctors' quarters, and barber shop. Behind and north of the hospital was an old but well-preserved greenhouse. The two hundred feet that separated the buildings contained what evidently had been the vegetable garden for the school. Berry vines were growing on one side while the other had been left for vegetables.

Farther west from the hospital was a small building which gave no indication of its previous use. A large English walnut grew nearby and on its west side was a small stand of hazlenut bushes. Directly west was barracks No. 2, which was a long rectangular building wide enough for bunks extending perpendicular to the long walls. It had a washroom dividing it in half with an entrance at each end. Each room on either end of the washroom would house about fifty people. All the bunks were double decked except one near the entrance, which was the bunk for the barracks commander. The divisions

were listed as Barracks 2a and 2b. The group captured with me was assigned to Barracks 2b.

Immediately east of our barracks was a building designated as Barracks No. 1. It was unoccupied. The officers already here had made a crude auditorium in that part, and at times used it as both a theater and meeting hall. One night each week a program was given. Later 1b was made into a kind of recreation room where indoor games were played. Our equipment was rather limited but by improvising, it was remarkable what intelligent, industrious men could provide.

North of Barracks 2a and 2b was a terraced area adequate for playing softball and other kinds of ground games. It was used extensively for that purpose during the time the weather would permit. By abbreviating the field, some of the men organized football teams; however, it was principally used for baseball and exercise.

In a section north of the baseball field, extending east behind the hothouse and barn, were barracks duplicating Nos. 1 and 2. But because of the sharp rise in the ground they were terraced. There was a large number of them, but since ther were never enough prisoners to need them, we were not permitted to go up there.

The camp was lighted, especially the perimeter, so that the barbed wire barrier was totally illiminated and could be observed at all times. Elevated guard towers, manned by soldiers with machine guns, rifles, and swivel-mounted search lights, were placed at strategic locations with good obvervation of the entire area. Additional guards patrolled the fence between the guard towers. Less brilliant lighting was throughout the inside area, making it possible to observe at all times. A loud-speaker system was in every barracks and at various locations within the camp. It was connected with the command center across the road from the entrance. Instructions were given over this public address system. It was also used to broadcast music, propaganda speeches and news-not an independent press, but what they called "news."

The big house, as we called the manor building, had already been filled with our men captured in North Africa and Sicily. However, one room had been set aside as the headquarters for the Senior American Officer. It was located alongside a large dining room and kitchen. A stairway was on each end of the building with entrances from both the outside and inside hallways. These stairwells extended into the attic, and one could enter at one end, ascent to the attic, walk across it, and descend at the other end of the building. There were small rooms and cubbyholes in the attic, making it ideal for storage and the secreting of contraband. Some of the spaces were large enough for a group of men to work undetected.

The German ration, which as prescribed by the Geneva Convention was to be the same as that issued to the soldier in the field, was drawn by our mess personnel and prepared in the kitchen in the big house. It was served in the large dining room on bare wooden tables. Each table was numbered, and each of us was assigned to a mess group that occupied one of the tables. Our in-

dividual mess gear—a plate, knife, fork, spoon, and cup—was issued, kept, and maintained by us personally.

The Germans always cheated on the ration by taking advantage of technicalities in the issue. One of the most glaring examples was the issue of meat. Every soldier in the field was to be issued a certain amount of meat. The Germans would calculate the amount we were entitled to and would deliver it in the form of horse heads, hog heads, lower leg bones, or any portion of the animal containing all bone. We never received any meat that could be used for anything other than soup. Since the issue of meat was very small, even our soup bones were few and far between. When we did receive one, we would take the horse or pig head, place it in a large container of water and cook it until the soup was flavored. When it was removed from the soup, it was hung on the wall and used over and over until nothing but bare bone was left. Once I became excited to find what looked like a piece of meat in my murky soup. I saved it until the very last; and when I was ready, I turned it over to find it was the eyeball of a pig. After that I never had any hope that chewable portions of meat would ever be served.

The vegetable and bread ration were the same. They, too, were issued by weight. Half of the potatoes were rotten, and the bread was the oldest in their warehouses. Much of the issue was dried cabbage leaves that had been baled and was dated as far back as 1936. It had been dehydrated and stored and was now being used for food. Needless to say, cabbage dehydrated and cooked became a mixture of tough fiber in what looked and smelled like swamp water. It was not very palatable.

All of these issued at this time in late 1943 and '44 were an attempt to satisfy the protecting power and the non-waring nation that Germany was strictly complying with the terms of the Geneva Convention. At the time we were not seriously affected because the Red Cross parcels were adequate to sustain us. However, later, the Germans made no effort to comply with the minimum rations. When the issuance of food parcels became sporadic, we began suffering seriously from nutritional deficiencies.

A few days after we arrived, I became a registered Prisoner-of-War—Kriegsgefangener 3074. A metal tag stamped with this number was given to me. I was ordered to wear it around my neck at all times. I was "mugged" in the universal way all prisoners are photographed with my number superimposed in front. Later an identification card would be given me containing my picture and pertinent instructions.

The Italian Landing

Submitted by M/S Sgt. Joseph Larocca
155th Field Artillery, 36th Division

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN: I do not remember how the copy of this letter came into my possession. I have treasured it for almost 50 years and have tried to locate the writer who I think was a Junior Warrant Officer in A-B-C Battery of the 155th Field Artillery Battalion. If the writer is still living or anyone knows who he is, please let me know so that I may give him credit for this great account of the landing in Italy, Sept. 8, 9, 10, 1943.

Sgt. Larocca
514 Travis
Webster, Texas 77598

dear dad,
Dear Folks,

They have decided to let us tell a little bit more intimately about the war in Italy.

The purpose of this long letter is duofold:

1. To provide you with an eyewitness account of the first American landing in Europe during World War II,

2. From my own files, since I kept no continuity in the few notes and observations I put to paper at that time.

Naturally the perspective of this short account is distored by the patent limitations of the focus utilized. In other words, my impressions only cover a small phase of a large amphibious action in which I was fortunate enough to participate. The reading public, incidently, should keep this fact in mind when stories relayed back by regular do not seem to fit together in a harmonious pattern.

To begin. A little over two months ago we were bivouaced on the African shore of Mare Nostrum (the Mediterranean Sea) in a location which overlooked the placid, sunlit, blue waters. We were fully aware then that our days before entering combat were rapidly drawing to a close. Thus we frequently peered out across this beautiful sea and gave ourselves to musing where or when.

Finally, in the first days of September, with our guns tested and ready, all battle equipment issued, we boarded a ship in the troop-carrying service at an undisclosed North African port. Part of our group was assigned to an English craft of a design uniquely adaptable to beach oeprations. While we sweated away a day or two waiting for this portion of the immense armada to muster, speculation ran rife about the identity of our ultimate destination. My personal "arm chair strategy" dictated a heavy assault on Corsica as the logical possibility. Rather than admit bad Generalship on my part, I shall merely add that it was my constitutional contrariness cropping out, for almost everyone else favored the mainland of France or Italy.

This controversy was resolved shortly after sailing. Overlays were exhibited and every man familiarized with the contents. The landing beach, divided into many tactical sectors each identified by a color, was located in the Gulf of Salerno. An apprehensive glance at a large scale map revealed that this would put us on land about "knee deep" in Italy. Since we had every expectation of getting there "firstest with the mostest men" this revelation was not overly disturbing.

The next few days were comparatively uneventful. The daylight hours were languidly warm and seemed to slip away. We lounged at the rail or lay upon the hatches for the most part with our shirts off, while as usual, groups gathered here and there to wager the remainder of their stipendary emoluments on the fall of the pasteboards or the skittering of the ivory cubes. At night a sharp breeze sprung up that made sleeping no trial. Naturally all the ships were jammed to capacity with men and material. Many of us slept in hammocks suspended between booms over a deck piled high with ammunition. One place did as well as another for it was stacked in every free corner. Despite these confining conditions, morale was high and tempers were held very even for literally and figuratively we were all in the same boat. Apparent everywhere was the quiet determined spirit to do the job with courage that would reflect credit upon the Army and in turn your own organization.

We enjoyed the company of the seamen. They received us cordially and often invited us to their messes when at the command "Stand Easy" everyone off watch repaired below for tea and biscuits, while at first most of the boys were derisive about the traditional amenity, it was to be noted a day or two later that there were few refusals to the request to come below for a spot of tea and some crumpets. A few of the crew had been in London during the great hours; their tales were matter of fact rather than deliberately harrowing. Too, there was little of the overbearing patronizing, thought to be a typical trait. At our being novices at a game which they had been playing for some years, I think sincerely that they appreciated our presence, and they thought us as much as comrads in arms had we been empire troops. They were men who had seen through the perils and problems we were about to face; and they were unshaken

by them. In the makeup of the British character there is nothing more admirable than the refusal to be anything but obdurately calm in the face of danger. Many of the men had served on other ships when convoy runs in the North Atlantic were suicidal and a minority of the ships came to port safely.

That we made the crossing to Italy without incident is surprising. The Germans did no harassing above or below the water. This to all of us was ominously unsatisfactory, for in April we had negotiated the Atlantic unmolested...our singular good fortune might be compared to the sands in an hour glass except that we had no device to measure the inexorable moment when it would run out. Meanwhile the time for action approached. We heard the radio report of the British landing on the Toe of Italy. A touch of chagrin went with the reception of this cheerful news, for now we could not be the first allied troops to set foot on European soil.

On the eighth of September, our zero hour was announced. The Infantry was to attack in the early hours of the next morning. Detachments of light artillery were to follow in close support. These initial operations were presumably to be preceeded by the landing of paratroopers and rangers. Gradually crept upon us the realization that in a matter of hours we would be co-makers in current history, that we would be the headlines in New York, El Paso, Sacramento and Cleveland. Inescapably we were now firmly under the finger of destiny.

The radio's announcement from Algiers was stunning. General Eisenhower's words, though marred and distored by static and interference, were caught and held in these breathless instants by the crowd assembled around the public address system. Italy had capitulated, an electrifically spontaneous roar of approval, of frenzied jubilation, rocked the ship. Hilarious high spirits soard uncontained, but it was a moment soon lost.

One doubt was immediately dispelled by the receipt of orders to proceed in every detail according to plan. We still did not know whether our presence was suspected or a total surprise. The latter possibility seemed highly unlikely considering our proximity to shore on several occasions and the vastness of the area over which the convoy had spread. Then too, we wondered that the armistice had been concluded almost coincidently with our departure from North Africa.

Darkness fell, but speculation on the answers to the various questions this development proposed continued.

About nine o'clock we had our first view of warfare. It was not a stark, naked, ugly glimpse by any stretch of the imagination. We saw planes and ships in action with the detachment of a movie audience. The cinema critics might even criticize the sequence as underplayed. One does not forget his first air raid. At this time our ship was riding at anchor perhaps fifteen miles from shore. The Jerry had come in force with obvious in-

tent to bomb the beach and the ships closest to land. The protective patter of fire thrown up by the foresection of the convoy filled the heavens. High, incredibly high, in the sky ack-ack shells twinkled and burst like distant stars. The night was cloudless, all details for the setting of this pyrotechnic display were artistically perfect. To enhance the advantage of attack under the light of a swelling pale yellow moon, the lead planes rained down clusters of flares. Methodically, our attackers lit the water, as though by day details of near ships stuck out with minute exactness, our exposure was photographic. The crew cursed, sent unprintable comments skyward, for these flares are a dread to ships, rendering each a potential target.

Here the novice fares best, he does not know what to fear. Still one conclusion remained after the high drone of the junkers faded and the guns were stilled. He knew who we were, and since he found us swiftly and surely along the irregular coast line, he knew where our landing would be attempted.

One slept fretfully and feverishly until the smaller hours of the morning. A huge fire burned atop a mountain at the extreme edge of the beach head. We conjectured that this was the work of bombers or a signal fire lit by our paratroopers who should now be dropping behind enemy lines. During the night we saw the flashes and heard the rumble of heavy naval gunfire shelling targets farther to the north.

At the appointed hour, the light artillery pieces we had transported were put overside and loaded aboard amphibious trucks. They were to follow, I have already pointed out, in the wake of the first infantry units ashore. This unloading was accomplished by the crane crew with very commendable speed and efficiency. No sooner were these crafts bombing in the inky waters alongside then they were herded together by a pilot boat and headed in toward their shore positions. To those of us who watched came a growing tension. In another hour, infantry, our "Texans," would be carrying the fight. It seemed like a tremendous responsbility for untried troops and a signal honor.

Dawn of the auspicious ninth found us lining the rails, some had been patiently awaiting the break of day for many minutes. It was planned that we should be delivering supporting fire late that morning if possible.

The sea was alive with ships. All of "D-Day" had drawn up tight and seemed galvanized into a united, coordinated energy. One looked out upon incessant motion. From every direction small landing craft in long lines were racing to and from the beach. The roving eye picked up the wake of small boats darting and weaving through endlessly. Every resource had been brought to bear in thrusting an interminable weight against the invasion time table.

Inshore we heard the rattle of our machine guns, our pieces are readily distinguishable because of their heavier tone and spaced intervals. Germans fire much faster with a continuous swooshing sound and no perceptible spacing. These noises were a faint chattering intersperced by the

loud clapping explosion of detonated land mines...news came trickling back to us about the progress of the battle. Our infantry was slugging it out in the literal, hell of pitched battle. "Yankee Tenacy" against Nazi ferocity as one New York journalist later described it. "Hot as a pistol in there" called up the perspiration stained skipper of an LCT which gunned past. "Bitter fighting with an exceptionally strong German rear guard," said the conservative BBC.

During the day we made two attempts to land. The first was delayed until mid-morning while the minesweepers sought to clear a track for us. It is humorous to relate now that one soldier threw a group of us crowding the rails into near panic by identifying the paravane following the sweeper as the periscope of a submarine. This sweeping was not without success for we counted twenty-seven explosions in the wake of the winding course which we were to follow. This locality had been mined with considerable care. Our landings were held up and several small crafts were lost during the night. Attempt.

It is increasingly difficult to recount these happenings in their exact chronological relationship at this point. Throughout the day the German recon aircraft were continually overhead our ship along with others tossed up a warm welcome from all guns pointing.

To the blue, crisscrossing streams of 20mm shells and 50 cal. bullets make life miserable for over audacious Jerries. In fair proportion to their daring, they paid the price. We saw a messerschmitt blossom into flames over the beach literally sawed in half by two savage bursts. Then, too, our own fighters frequently intercepted at the outer fringes.

We were worried this day by the comparative absence of our planes. Had we realized that our Air Force had been thrown inland in large numbers pounding enemy airfields and keeping him pinned to the ground, we would have been reassured. Without the aid of this magnificent team play, the whole expedition might have been blasted from a precarious foothold. It appears that these aerial sorties in advance of the local action made the difference between sink or swim for our effort.

The latest word told of a vigorous counter-attack being launched by the enemy. Specifically, the situation with one of our four battalions at that moment encouraged no optimism. Our attempt to land in the morning was thwarted by an 88mm battery located somewhere in the hills overlooking the beach. These guns by a progressive creeping fire, sent down by excellent observation, ranged in the very strip where a group of small craft were in the final stages of unloading. They scattered madly, though one was hopelessly trapped. It never pulled off the beach. With our landing spot so bracketed there was nothing for us to do but turn tail and head for another beach. Shell fragments rang loudly off the metal flag staff at our stern, one tearing off the finger of a British gunner on the afterdeck. At the next beach, unfortunately, the surf was far too deep to land our trucks.

This particular battery of 88mm's were so stratigcally placed, seemed to be holding up the war for a few minutes. The US Cruiser came in closer

to ferret out this obstruction. Salvo after salvo walloped every spot on the hill which might house these guns. One felt a little sorry for the enemy, but we could not determine whether any of the concentrations were effective. The enemy commander called it a day after the first withering blasts from the warship.

Through binoculars, we could see major landmarks with great clarity. To the far right were the ruins of a town with an ancient greek temple featuring twin columns. The countryside immediately behind the beach seemed to be a mere pastoral setting. Here a farmhouse with smoking chimney, there a large herd of cows browsing in a pasture between two cultivated strips, the narrow stretch of sands was dominated by a horseshoe of heights.

The beach proper was by no means teeming with soldiers. They were disgorged from the boats in small parties, here they waded in knee-deep surf to the sands where they formed to await order. Upon accounting the party present, they marched off inland along a taped route cleared of mines by the engineers. Already the bulldozers were at work making the beach better fit to bear the increasingly heavy traffic. Men were hard at work laying down wire mesh road across the soft sands. Taken altogether, it was a placid arena. There were no Hollywood effects, dead strewing the beaches as troops dashed madly ashore to the machine gun's bark, wrecked equipment was piled in one place by salvage gangs.

Toward the close of the afternoon, we again attempted to find a spot of suitable depth in which to embark. Our vessel was equipped with a long telescopic ramp over which men and material could proceed directly from the deck to shallow water. The captain was faced with the problem of securing a location where he could float free and still unload. No luck again.

By the day's end our nerves were worn to the fraying point for these frustrations had served as a nervous irritant. The remainder of our outfit had made shore on other boats, while we had floated the livelong day like the provervial ducks on the pond. Moreover, our doughboys from all reports had been catching hell, and though the circumstances were beyond our control, still we wished we could be in there behind them.

We were not disappointed in the expectation that another air raid would be forthcoming after dusk. The night was fairly cloudy, and we were too far from shore to observe results accurately. It did not seem to have the intensity of the first raid.

Early in the morning of the 10th we landed on Italian soil. The beach was deadly still, the water through which we slogged left us shivering. The beach was torn in places by the bomb hits but in an area several hundred feet below us, as we filed inland we passed numerous of our soldiers, resting, smoking and quietly chatting. Along with a dozen others we had come ashore an hour or two after the guns. One of our trucks came by and we piled aboard. The sun broke through the clouds presaging a glorious summer day, Italy looked mighty good to us as we sped toward our first battle position.

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

MacGibbon's Mule Barn

by William D. MacGibbon

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

—The Editor

Nelson and I standing near a "knocked out" 88 in Alsace.

This is NELSON, my right hand man. I became very dependent on this fellow. He was so accurate in everything he did; it was phenomenal. Whether he was firing artillery, interpreting a map, or cooking chow he made no mistakes. When I came to the platoon, Nelson was a private—a jeep driver of sorts. When we said, "Good-bye," on our 25th birthday (the same day) he was a Tech. Sergeant—platoon sergeant and he deserved more.

While the Germans were trying to get out of our trap along the Rhone River above Montilemar, Nelson was the key man in our O.P. 2 on hill "363," which stuck out above the highway in front of our positions. There was nothing but brush to keep the Krauts from sending a patrol to wipe out this O.P., if they only knew where it was. Therefore the nights on the O.P. were pretty long and uncomfortable.

The first night the O.P. kept reporting troop and vehicle movement and Germans talking and shouting. The next morning, in two rounds, Nelson was on the road and shelling it with artillery. The O.P. was firing so steadily and reporting so much damage that General Stack (assistant division commander) ordered an artillery officer to go up on the O.P.

and direct the fire. So I took Captain Slack of the artillery up there with me. We sat in the tall brush of the hill and saw "just sham" artillery firing. "Just sham" is a 143rd Infantry phrase meaning "the best," "terrific," "unexplainable," literally "just some."

What an O.P.! Wagons and ambulances loaded with ammunition, supplies, men, bicycles, carts, trucks, horses, artillery and bus loads of Jerries were scattered, set fire and destroyed by our artillery. When Captain Slack saw the accuracy of the artillery fire, he told Nelson, Cowboy Collins, and the rest of the men to go ahead firing. "I'll sit here and watch you. You're doing ok."

He did fire once though, when the Jerries were trying to avoid the shelling on the highway by running across the field towards the Rhone River, down the railroad tracks and under a railroad bridge. We could see them milling around under the bridge—like ants. Finally we saw a white flag waving back and forth in the brush behind the bridge. I told Captain Slack I would give him a beer if he would knock it down. It reminded me shamefully how much fun young Mussolini had said it was to strafe the defenseless Abyssinians. But we figured a Kraut killed or wounded today wouldn't be shooting at us tomorrow, if the tide turned. As there was no target on the highway, Captain Slack started adjusting on the bridge. When he got one gun in the battery adjusted, he called for three rounds. The first round smothered the white flag, the other skooted under the bridge in a big puff of smoke and the third hit on top of the bridge. After the dust cleared away two Krauts climbed up and ran down the tracks.

This is LE MOULLEC. Next morning, August 28, the S-2 grabbed me and Le Moullec, who acted as his French interpreter, and said that we had to get B Company of the 141st back up on the hill, our front line on Magnron Ridge. During the night, through a misunderstanding, they had come down out of their positions; *they were relieved.* As a result we had

Kraut trucks, guns and men strewn along the Rhone Valley's Highway 7.

a hole on our front line which the Germans immediately occupied and were giving our Third Battalion a bad time. The colonel ordered the S-2 to get that company back in position.

We found men from B Company hiding in caves and along the road, sleeping. We finally located their captain and the bulk of their company, and headed back towards the front line. The captain said that his men were exhausted, having been fighting for 13 days and nights, since hitting the beach. Having no sleep and very little rest, the men staggered on in the dust, ragged and starry-eyed. He said that he tried to get back up the hill but the Krauts had cut them down with flanking fire. When he reached an abandoned farmhouse the captain told the S-2 that he could not and would not take the company back up the hill. He was relieved of his command.

Then with the executive officer (a young, lean and eager kid), the S-2, Le Moullec and I waded up a stream to where we could observe the Jerries digging in on the hill.

Nelson and platoon interpreters Bloch and Le Moullec.

When we got back to the company, the exec. had the first sergeant assemble the company, in the courtyard of the farmhouse. He gave a stirring speech about having to get back up in position and how they would do it, then he made a plea, "Raise your hands if you're with me." A silence hung over the courtyard as no hands were raised. The lieutenant's face dropped. Then the first sergeant (a big rough American kid) got up and asked if he could say something. He told how heroic the captain had been in Italy and since they hit the beach. He said there were many instances where the captain deserved the Congressional Medal of Honor. He told how the captain took care of the men and checked their position before he ever thought of himself. He turned to the S-2 and said, "The captain's tired and needs a rest. But we're with you." With that the sergeant got the company up and they took back the hill position, killing every Jerry they saw. No prisoners were taken. Le Moullec got a well-deserved Bronze Medal for his part in the fighting.

Incidentally the captain returned to his company after being released by a court and was killed about a month later, with five of his men, by one of our artillery shells as they moved along the road to Leaveline du

Houx from Tendon, France. This was sad news to those who knew and respected him and were aware of the tough breaks he had.

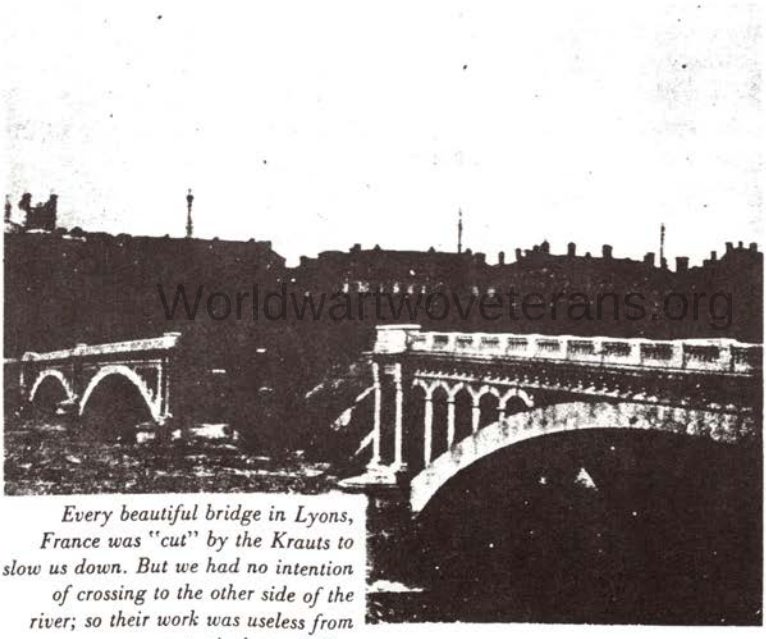
This is WILLIAMS, a red-haired jeep driver. Wherever you saw Nelson, you saw Williams. They were buddies in every sense of the word. On August 30 our regiment left their positions, after capturing 678 prisoners and killing and wounding hundreds more Krauts, and moved by truck toward Loriol. I slipped into the jeep with Nelson, Williams and Marley, not yet being definitely assigned to the platoon. We were in front of the regiment although contact with the Krauts was not expected. As we dropped through the mountain pass and into the Rhone Valley, we hit a smooth highway that followed along the base of the hills. Suddenly a German S.P. or tank opened fire on us from our left flank. We spotted a small village to the right and turned off the road and entered the town with shells bursting behind us and around us. After a few seconds everything was quiet. Leaving the platoon, we took Williams' jeep and drove out of the town towards the valley and stopped at a lone building near the cemetery. We moved around to the front of the building to try to pick up the tank and he spotted us and started lopping in shells. We hugged the ground back of the building, flat on our stomachs, as he fired away. The shells were just a little high of the house and enough to clear the cemetery wall, about 30 feet from us, and burst in the cemetery. We sweated out each shell, hoping it wouldn't hit the house or burst on our side of the cemetery wall. Finally when things quieted down we got the jeep ready and dashed back into the town. As we didn't receive any fire, we got the platoon together and drove out to the other side of the town and on towards Loriol.

The next morning we went into Loriol. Never in my life have I seen such destruction. The streets were covered with wreckage, burned transport and many German dead. This wreckage stretched from Montilemar to Loriol, bumper to bumper, a distance of 20 miles. Bulldozers had to be used to clear the road. It was quite a day for the G.I.s as we rested for several hours; they came out of the wreckage with mink coats, Leica cameras, vintage wines and champagne and other minor loot.

The brighter side of "liberation." Laughter, tears, hysteria and kisses at Lyon, France, September 2, 1944. Williams being "greeted"—we all got a lot of this. Not bad, eh?

This is MIKULENKA. The humorous aspects of the war were all brought out in Mikulenka. He was my radio operator—a tall angular, openfaced man. Whenever some Kraut would try to jam our radio band by counting or talking, he would get a cussing in Bohemian from Mikulenka. A feud eventually arose between a Kraut and Mikulenka; it was sure a kick to hear the Kraut counting monotonously and Mikulenka, red in the face, shouting back at him, giving him hell.

The most fun Mikulenka and I had was when the regiment was outside Lyons, the night of September 3. The S-2 let me go into the town to contact the French Maquis, or Resistance troops, who had taken over the east bank of the city as the Germans pulled out. The town was not to be entered by American troops, except patrols. We found that all bridges across the Rhone were blown. But the Maquis were going to cross over through the wreckage of the railroad bridge early the next morning to take the other side of Lyons from the Milice, the French gestapo. So after a sip of Eau de Vie—that's all I could stand, (The GI's called this drink "white lightening." It looked like and tasted like gasoline) we told one of the Maquis lieutenants that we would meet him the next morning. We wanted to go across the river, to the City Hall, and get some smaller scale maps. We had been using maps with a scale of 1 over 100,000. They were of such large scale that it was difficult to tell within several miles where you were. We wanted smaller more accurate maps.



Every beautiful bridge in Lyons, France was "cut" by the Krauts to slow us down. But we had no intention of crossing to the other side of the river; so their work was useless from a tactical standpoint.

Next morning Mikulenka, Johns, Sgt. Sandlin (the company first sergeant later killed) and I went to the Maquis headquarters From there a Maquis lieutenant led us to the partially demolished railroad bridge. Leaving Johns to protect the jeep, we crawled through the twisted wreckage above the swirling and muddy Rhone River. As we approached the railroad depot a lone machine gun sighted down the bridge greeted us—but is was unmanned. As we entered the depot it was lonely as hell. Only on Maquis was there standing guard. I felt a lot better when we got into the open street. It was early and there wasn't a soul in the streets. The only noise was the sound of our heels on the cobblestones and the occasional rifle shot from somewhere in town.

We entered a narrow street that the Maquis said led to the Hotel de Ville, the city hall of Lyons, where the Resistance set up headquarters and where we hoped to get some maps. A lone Frenchman hurrying along the street asked the Maquis, "Anglais?" The Maquis replied, "Non, Americaines." It wasn't long before shouts of "American, American," echoed through the streets and people poured out of the homes and shops into the crowded streets. Young and old women in bright and dirty robes, girls and men with flowers and wine and champagne shouted at us, threw their arms around our necks and kissed us. Everyone was singing or chanting or yelling. An old man forced his way out of a shop and threw his arm around me and kissed me until my cheek smarted. His rough early morning beard was terrific but it was softened by the tears in his eyes and the genuine smile of appreciation.

The mob was uncontrollable with joy as we approached the square in front of the Hotel de Ville. I looked back and there was Mikulenka, with a carbine in one hand and a bottle of wine in the other—hoisted high above everyone's heads. He was laughing, sometimes in pain, as the jubilant carriers tugged and pulled his legs and arms in opposite directions. Sergeant Sandlin, with a big smile on his face, marched arm in arm with these wild, sobbing Frenchmen. I have never seen a crowd of people so genuinely happy.

Kraut P.W.'s digging up German-laid mines in the streets of Lyons.

There were a few hundred people in the square, enough so that the Maquis had to touch a few with the butt of his rifle so that we could get through and up the steps into the Hotel de Ville. Once inside the magnificent building we ran through the halls and into a large pink and gold room filled with the leading civilians and Maquis. The crowd below kept yelling and the Maquis lieutenant said that they wanted the Americans out on the balcony. So with the leader of the Maquis we went out on the balcony. The square was just filling with people surging into it from every side street. Below were thousands of upturned faces. The court was soon filled with yelling, singing and joyful crying. I knew now how Mussolini felt on his balconies.

After about 15 minutes we left the City Hall by special auto and went to a library where we got the maps we needed. We were let out of the car at the depot, and after a lot of kissing and hand shaking we left, crawling back through the wreckage of the bridge and to our regiment.

We were then given orders to patrol the entire east side of Lyons. It was four hours before we could get through the awakened mobs of pretty girls, young boys and old people. We had just arrived at the river's edge when a couple of shots rang out and the bullets whizzed over our heads and into the tree behind us. Mikulenka and I got out of the jeep, each with an M-1 (Garand rifle). We spotted a gun sticking out of a window in a hotel and saw someone move in the room. After emptying a few rounds into the room, we had no more disturbances.

Boy, what a day! Late that night as Johns, Mikulenka and I rode north, leading the platoon, as left flank security for the regiment—our bodies about frozen, our ears and noses numb, we kept talking about the fun we had that day because we knew that we would probably never have any more like it.

This is STOKES, my platoon sergeant. Stokes organized the platoon in the Stas, wore the Legion of Merit, had a Purple Heart and was many times approached to become an officer.

In the Austrian Tyrol, Lt. Ball, my successor to the I & R platoon, Green, Ferrara and Johns.

Platoon Sergeant Stokes and Soileau in Landsberg, Germany. Stokes on his way home after the war.

One day the regiment had just left Besancon and we were the right flank security for the regiment and division. We were to patrol the hills between the 3rd Division, keeping abreast of the regiment and checking in with the 3rd Division at certain villages. On one run out to the flank, we had that eerie feeling that you get when you know that Jerry is near. You feel that he is peering down watching every move you make. So we started patrolling by foot, with the jeeps following us by bounds. But nothing happened, so we piled into our jeeps again and had just passed through some uncomfortable woods when a French kid flagged us down and said that the Germans were in the next town of Andelharre, We had heard that the German corps commander was in the town and the boy said that his headquarters were in the chateau. We looked on our map and noted that the town was in the 3rd Division zone of action but we decided to find out what the Germans were doing in the town. We patrolled up to the outskirts of the town and the kid volunteered to go into the town on his bicycle and report what he saw. We moved our jeeps up closer for a quick get-a-way if we needed them. We found a spot from which we could observe the chateau and the roads. We could see quite a lot of activity around the chateau. Just then the French boy returned, and he must have been followed by some Krauts, because as he was telling us the location of some German guns and men, a couple of machine guns opened fire on us. We called for our jeeps and boarded them as they pulled away. It was really funny watching Stokes run for his jeep, skipping and jumping and hping that none of the bullets would take.

We came into the town about an hour later; it was now occupied by the 3rd Division. We went into the chateau to satisfy our curiosity. As we walked away from the chateau I saw a G.I. searching the pockets of a dead Kraut. He then tried to take the ring off the Kraut's finger. When it wouldn't come, he took his pocketknife and proceeded to cut off the finger. He put the ring on his own finger and walked away. I looked down at my own hand and my fraternity ring, thinking maybe some day a Kraut would be doing the same thing to me.

This is GREENE. He could speak French and German very fluently, so he was of great value to the S-2 around the C.P. However, occasionally we would need an extra man and I would ask Greene to go. He would always say something to this effect, "If you want me to go, Lt., Sir, just order me; but please don't ask me." Whenever he went, he did a good job. One night he went with an L Company platoon towards Pousey. The patrol was lying alongside the road when a company of bicycle troops came by. They had quite a fight and got some good intelligence information and we were plenty proud of Greene's part in the job.

My First 72 Hours on Salerno Beach

By Douglas W. Place
Supply Seargeant, 3rd Bn. Hq., 141st

After dark on September 8, 1943 our troop ship, the USS Chas. Carroll, had anchored in Salerno Bay about 12 miles off-shore. The main force aboard the Carroll was the 141st Infantry Regiment.

At about 1 am, September 9, the leading boat teams were loading the landing crafts. At 3:30 a.m the assault waves of the 3rd and 1st Battalions had reached the beach.

Just after daylight that morning I made a request of my company supply officer that I be permitted to go ashore as early as possible. He told me to stay aboard ship to see that our company equipment was sent ashore. I attempted to locate our equipment aboard, but with no success. A short time after midday I managed to board a landing craft loaded with ammunition, several other GIs and I headed for the beach.

About half way to the beach, our Navy boatman received a radio message telling him that it was too hot on Blue and Yellow beaches and ordered him to go into Green Beach just north of Yellow. Just before dark that evening we hit a sandbar about 30 yardss from the beach and

IN MID D-DAY MORNING ITALIAN SUNSHINE IS CRISP. NAVAL BEACH OFFICERS SPEED UNLOADING AND TROOP MOVEMENT.

directly in front of the Tower of Paestum. DUKWs came out to our craft. We loaded ammunition and went ashore. An amunition dump had been set up just inside the west wall of Paestum ruins and we made numerous trips during the night from landing crafts to the dump.

On our second return trip to the beach from the dump a number of DUKWs were jammed up waiting to get back to the beach. We were stopped about half way between the Tower of Paestum and the beach. The driver struck a match to light a cigarette and a German rifle shot from the Tower was fired just over our heads. The driver put the match out very promptly and I'm sure he learned a lesson that he never forgot.

My supply crew, Paul Williams and Henry Bullock, and I spent the next few days gathering up our equipment that came ashore and had located some of their equipment. There was strafing and bombing of the beach area by German aircraft, so we managed a vehicle and moved our equipment and crews to the hills just south of the beach on the road to Agropoli. Before we left the beach we had moved down to Green beach and located some of our officers and men. There we learned of the rough time they had the first several days after landing and that we had a number of our men killed or wounded.

By September 18 the Germans had withdrawn from the Salerno Valley and on September 21 we went into bivouac below Altavilla near the Sele River. With the division we went into Army reserve for reorganization, replacement of equipment and rest. On October 13, 1943 we left the Altavilla area and headed north.

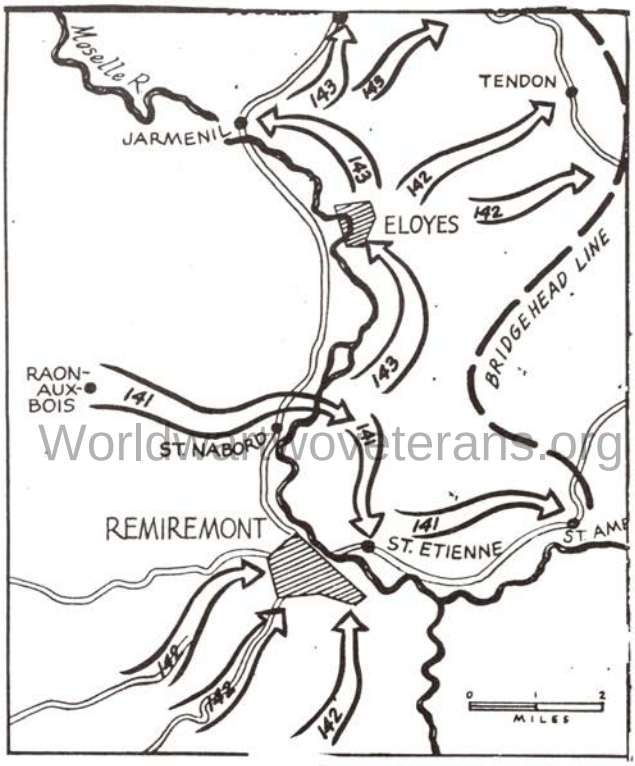
In the next 21 plus months in Italy, France, Germany and Austria there have been hundreds and thousands of stories told or to be told or to be forgotten. But we can NEVER forget our buddies who gave their all.

A Tribute To The 636th T.D. Outfit

by George J. Kerrigan

On a beautiful day in September of 1944, somewhere in Northeast France, near Remiremont, Co "A" 142 ran into a bunch of Jerries, we were in a cemetery when they fired on us, from a hill about 75 yards away, as we were in a cemetery we took shelter behind grave stones, and tried to see where they were.

I finally got the picture, there were about ten different strands of barbed wire all around this hill, then I saw two armored vehicles in what looked like garages that were dug into the hillside, and along side of that was an entrance where some guy was firing from as the vehicles were facing out toward us I was very concerned. I know they had at least machine guns, and maybe small cannon. So I yelled to all my men to keep covered, then I heard Sam Katzman yell there is a guy shooting from the doorway



near the tanks as he called them, and he said I'll get him. As I looked over to where Sam was, I saw him in the sitting position, shooting (left handed at that) in a wide open spot. I was just starting to tell him to get under cover when he said I am hit. So I ran down and dragged Sam to a place with cover. All the while he was yelling to me to stay back so I would not get hit.

I then called for a medic and got one in a hurry. Then I looked over to the doorway and saw the guy that Sam had seen, and also shot Sam in the upper thigh. So as he stepped in the doorway for another shot, I hit him in the face. I could only see him from the waist up, so he was the only one firing from that area. After about fifteen minutes one of our tanks came along a path just in front of me. I ran down and yelled to the tanker (he was standing up and looking all around). I said "Buddy there are two armored vehicles across from us, would you fire a few rounds at them?" Well he was shocked and said "Where are they?" I pointed the vehicles out and he ducked down into the tank and closed the hatch and took off in a hurry. While I was talking to the tanker I had cover, but when he left, I was out in the open cursing up a storm. Then along came a tank destroyer, so I yelled up to the guy looking around and told him about the tanker taking off on me. He asked "Where are the vehicles you're talking about?" As I pointed them out he swung the turret around and fired. The first shell missed by one foot or so but the concussion from the three inch naval gun moved it almost out of the recess it was in. Then the next shell hit it squarely on the nose. They swung over to the second armored car and one shell demolished it. The T.D. man said "OK buddy what else do you have?" I said "Nothing but admiration for you and your crew. God bless you all." He said if you need help call on the 636th T.D. Outfit. You can bet your life that I'll never forget them.

Well when that was over there was no more firing in that area, so we started for the hill cutting the barbed wire as we went. Then as I reached the entrance to the cave I saw the Jerrie that had hit Sam, the same one I hit later. There was blood on the wall. After he was hit he spun around and messed up the place. I just stepped over him and went inside to look around when one of my men said "Hey Sarge look." He had a beautiful Luger pistol that the Jerry I shot was laying on, so I missed a beautiful souvenir. I thought he was only a rifleman. From then on I always rolled them over.

Anyway, as I looked around, the place was loaded with communication equipment. It was a communication center. Of course the rest of the Jerries inside were not fighters like the guy at the entrance and all the others outside had taken off.

The next time I saw Sam I kidded him saying "I never thought that I would kill someone for shooting a Jew in the ass!" After he called me an Irish SOB he then roared with laughter.

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

Escape From Poland

by Richard M. Manton

Company F, 141st Infantry

This story was sent to Hank Gomez and somehow found its way to the editor of the Quarterly. Richard Manton lives in N. Tonawanda, N.Y. and he writes that he is a life member of the 36th Division Association and that he subscribes to the Quarterly. He is a member of the 141st Regiment Association. For over 40 years, he says he was not associated with any veteran's organizations, devoting almost all his free time to Boy Scout work. Then, he became interested in veteran's work and has become quite involved with ex-POWS. He is a life member of American Ex-Prisoners of War, Inc., holds membership in Disabled American Veterans and the American Legion.

The story, ''Kreigie,'' by ''Chum'' Williamson was of great interest to me in that it tells about Oflag 64 where I was interred at the same time as the author. My experience differs with his after we began the march back into Germany which began on January 21, 1945 (just exactly one year from the date of my capture at the Rapido River in Italy). While we were being marched back toward Germany I escaped from the column on the road. I merely sat at the side of the road and when a German guard questioned me, ''Was ist los?'' I replied, ''Ich bin krank.'' He simply replied with disgust, ''Ach,'' and he walked away leaving me sitting there. I ducked into a Polish home where the family concealed me and fed me. There were several other American Officers there also and after a time we took off walking toward Russia. I became separated from them and finally I stopped at a large Polish farm house. It reminded me of the feudal system with a large manor house and down the lane a village of huts where the farm workers lived. The first night I spent sleeping on a G.I. raincoat and when I awoke in the morning I discovered that I was in the middle of a frozen pond. The next day I met up with Lt. Jim Lisembe, an old buddy of mine. We moved into the barn and the next night we slept in the barn on top of a pile of manure. The manure generated

heat and we were toasty warm, but Jim got badly bitten with lice. They didn't seem to bother me but he must have been allergic because he swelled up all over.

After that we moved into the manor house where a large number of American Officers were gathering. All of them had escaped from the Germans on the march. There must have been fifteen or twenty of us. We didn't have any heat in the house but it was shelter from the wind and we had some gear to sleep on and keep warm. The Polish farmers were wonderful to us. They provided us with food from their already meager supplies. We waited there for several days until a Russian column came by and found us. The first Russian who came upon us almost shot us because he thought we were German. Not being able to speak Russian, someone from our group decided to try speaking German and the Russian sergeant shot his machine pistol into the air and we all hit the deck. We shouted "Americanski, Americanski!" and he finally caught on that we were Americans.

From there we were taken back, by truck, to Rimbertov, across the Vistula River from Warsaw. There was a redistribution center there and they had people from all over of every nationality. We were able to take warm showers and they fed us a couple of meals a day, even though one might be at 2 a.m. and they consisted primarily of soup and kasha (a mixture of boiled grains). Eventually we were loaded on railroad boxcars and shipped down to Odessa, on the Black Sea. We were put up in the old Italian Embassy building and there was a large stone wall all around it and they placed guards on the gates and we were confined there almost as much as we had been in Germany. I became sick with dysentery while there and I was in a Russian hospital. Conditions there were primitive and I was in a ward with several other Ex-POWS until one day a man came into the ward and said there was an American Liberty ship and another British ship in the harbor which was going to take the Ex-POWS out. I was the only officer in the hospital so I told the men to get their clothes and come with me. The Russians didn't want us to leave but we went anyway and walked down to the compound where the Americans were and we reported to the Colonel in charge. He put us in front of the column and we marched down to the docks and boarded the ships.

From there we went to Port Said, Egypt, for some debriefing and medical treatment and then back to Naples, Italy. From there we sailed home on a lone ship across the north Atlantic. Just as we were about to come into Boston Harbor we had a submarine scare. Our ship began to zigzag and a dirigible came out and dropped depth charges on the sub. We were in sight of land when this occurred. So that is how I happened to get back to the United States even before the war in Europe ended.

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Marvin Steitle and his crew sure did an outstanding job in the construction phase.

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Gordon Rose's text on the obverse and reverse.