

BLUE RIDGE

The Service Magazine

Volume 88, Number 351 Issue 3



In Flanders Field

*In Flanders fields the poppies grow
Between the crosses row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.*

*We are the Dead, Short days ago
We live, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.*

*Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, through poppies grow
In Flanders fields.*

Dedication Issue

This Issue of the Blue Ridge Service Magazine is Dedicated to the Memory of our Comrades who never made it back from World War I and II.


Eightieth Division
Veterans Association

BLUE RIDGE

The Service Magazine

The official quarterly publication by the 80th Division Veterans Association. (Incorporated as a not-for-profit organization in the State of Pennsylvania).

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COMMANDER'S REPORT

I WANT TO THANK ALL, for your participation in Honoring our Combat Fallen of both World Wars at Fort Benning, Georgia. At our Memorial Service in the Post Chapel we remembered too many of our Comrades who fell to the ravages of time.



Those of you unable to attend the Dedication Ceremony to our War Dead at Sacrifice Field, Fort Benning and are ever in that area, please make an extra effort to visit the Monument site.

Virgil Myers was very effective in his remarks to bring back some memorable moments of his experiences in Combat. PNC Walt Spangler did a great job as Master of Ceremony. Thanks to both!

The 80th Division supported us with the attendance of our Color Guard. Major Generals David L Evans, John McLaren, James Archer and Douglas O Dollar (ret) were all part of each days activities. LTC Glen Hence, 3/319 coordinated the events of the reunion with Ft Benning personnel and us. All were very supportive in every way. Not enough words to express our thanks!

A new era has entered into our Association. We Honored the Combat Deaths of a Grandson and two Comrades of the 80th Division who also lost their lives in the fight against an elusive enemy in Iraq.

Whatever our thoughts, they were engaged in the same type of struggle that we had encountered many years ago. The volunteer Army of today has the same intensity, but are better trained and equipped.

In our Business meeting the Association voted to admit the Descendants of the 80th as an Auxiliary to the Association. With their future help, we rapidly disappearing veterans may have our 80th Division legacy continually "Only Moving Forward!"

Bob Burrows, National Commander.

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THE REUNION

THE 87TH ANNUAL REUNION held in Columbus, GA has come and gone. Our crowd was not as large as years gone by but we had members from all Four Corners of the United States. We renewed the friendships built over the years and had many new comers greeting buddies they hadn't seen since the war. The hotel was not large enough to hold everyone, but that didn't seem to matter, at least I didn't hear any complaints.

I have asked the Posts not to send in their news as this issue of the Blue Ridge is dedicated to those who paid the supreme price for the freedom we now enjoy and the names of those attending would be appearing in this issue.

Some of the people started arriving on Sunday, more drifted in Monday and Tuesday and then on Wednesday people really began to arrive and continued on through the week.

I have all the speeches you may have missed starting with the Commanders Reception on Wednesday night and the Dugout Party on Thursday night.

Everyone was talking about the dedication to take place on Friday morning and of Sacrifice Field at Fort Benning. Several of the men were asked if they wished to take a trip over to see Benning, and were loaded in cars for the short trip. After arriving and standing around for a bit, they found out that the Army van that was to take them on a tour of the base had been in an accident and the MP's had held it. The sight-seeing trip was then called off as the time had grown too short and the men had to get back for a meeting at 2 P.M.

Friday morning started with the Memorial Service held in the beautiful Chapel at Fort Benning, with a luncheon at the Officers Club and the Dedication of the Memorial that afternoon.

Starting at the 2004 Reunion, Dempsey Prappas made an offer that he would match up to \$10,000 for any money that came in toward erecting a monument to our fallen comrades. No sooner than he spoke, the first donations began to come in. The donations continued on including a donation made at this Reunion.

The Committee, Gene O'Neil (C-319), Chairman, Archer Futch (C-317), Bob Burrows (Hq-317), Walter Spangler (A-319), Marvin Spencer (Hq-317) and Robert Murrell (M-318), wish to thank Dempsey and all who made donations. It was a huge success. Our thanks also go to Gene, who did most of the legwork, and to Joe Smith, a son of the descendants who designed the stone.

All week the question on everyone's mind was what will the weather be like for the unveiling of the monument? It turned out to be a very nice day. In fact, it only rained on Sunday when we were leaving.

Friday morning, the sun came out and people were up early waiting for the passenger buses that were to take us to Fort Benning, GA. At nine 'clock, the buses began to arrive which allowed the people to board with



ease. The boarding was delayed a bit, because Maureen Bacon, wife of George Bacon, 80th Signal Corp, had fallen and dislocated her shoulder. (Talking to her on Sunday Morning as she was leaving, she said she was ok, even though her arm was in a sling.) After a short ride to Fort Benning, where we saw a number of barracks and men training we pulled up in front of the Chapel I couldn't help but wonder about the men who had trained there and what was going through their minds. The people took their time in unloading and reverently entered the Army Chapel. To my knowledge there weren't any empty seats. The military personnel that were present marched in, in full dress uniform and seated themselves in the third row from the front. The Past National Commanders and the Executive Council, along with the Ladies of the Auxiliary, filed in. The Ladies on the arms of the Executive Councilmen taking their places right and left of the Chapel. You could hear a pin drop, everyone was so quiet. William Putman, the organist played a memorial selection while the processional filed in.

Commander Spangler called for the Colors to be posted. The Color Guard from the 80th Division (IT) then very smartly marched down the aisle giving commands as they posted the Colors. Following the posting of the Colors, an invocation was given by PNC Chaplain Angelo Barone. The National Anthem was then played and sung, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and the 80th Division Oath, then a moment of silence and facing west to our departed comrades.

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PRESENTATION TO THE 80TH DIVISION VETERANS

21 SEPTEMBER, 2006

By Lee S. Anthony, Commander, Descendants of the 80th Division



GOOD MORNING, GENTLEMEN. It is a privilege to meet with members of my Dad's unit; the 80th Division.

The news, which I have today, is good news.

In spite of the actions of French politicians, there are many French people who appreciate our country and its soldiers, such as yourselves, who have sacrificed so much to bring freedom to the peoples of Europe.

Some of you have also spoken of strong bonds with the people of Heidersheid, Luxembourg, for example.

As you know, this Association has provided flowers to the American Military Cemeteries in Europe every year for Memorial Day Remembrance ceremonies. It has been my privilege to represent you and to present these flowers on your behalf to honor the 80th dead whose bodies lie in the French soil which they died to free.

Among many other activities, the Descendants of the 80th Division have provided donated Hershey chocolate bars (with the 80th logo), as suggested by General Dollar. This is reminiscent of the WWII GIs who reportedly handed out chocolate bars to the children of the towns, which they liberated.

I should note that the Memorial Day activities in France are so extensive that we are put to shame here in the U.S. by the secular, Luke-warm observances which we sometimes see in our own country.

Increasingly, I see more French people (re-enactors/'living historians") each year who wear the uniforms of WWII GIs drive jeeps with the American flag, carry MI Garlands, etc. In past years, many of these persons wore the insignia of the 3rd Infantry Division.

Now, a number of these historians want to honor the 80th Division by affiliating with the 80th in lieu of the 3rd Division.

In fact, such a group has just been formed, on 11 September 2006, to further these goals. This group has members from the area of the Somme, down to the Meuse-Argonne. (We remember that the 80th fought in the Mousson area in both World Wars.)

The president of the "Blue Ridge Association in France" is a retired pediatrician; the treasurer is a filmmaker/producer/director, and the secretary is an officer in the police (gendarmerie), who have approximately 100 gendarmerie offices who report to him.

We note that a monument to the 80th was placed in Nantillois by Pennsylvania after WW I; Pennsylvania also erected a large memorial in Varennes.

However, there are no memorials to the 80th in the Somme, where it first fought in WWI. Although there is



no official statement as of yet, I believe that this newly formed group, along with previously established groups, may wish to have such a memorial to the 80th placed in the Somme.

Bottom line: If this enthusiastic love of the U.S.A. and of the 80th Division is pleasing to you, I would respectfully ask that you support this concept, with "moral support" at least; any available financial support would be welcomed as well.

Perhaps an appropriate modification of previous memorial designs would meet with everyone's approval. Thank you again for the opportunity to meet and talk with you.

Lee S. Anthony" Commander"
Descendants of the 80th Division

GENERAL MCLAREN

GOOD EVENING LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, 80th Division Soldiers, and friends and supporters of the 80th Division; I am most gratified and pleased to have been asked to speak to you tonight about the recent 80th Division deployment to Iraq. Thank you for this opportunity, on behalf of over 700 Soldiers who have just returned from that deployment. Thank you also for your steadfast support over the last year during our deployment.

The past year was fraught with danger for our Soldiers in the 80th Division. I am sure, however, that there is not a single Soldier who will tell you that their time in Iraq was not worth the investment and the personal sacrifices they all gave in building Iraqi Security Forces. I am equally as sure each Soldier and their family will tell you they are glad to be home again. These remarkable women and men, the ones that I had the honor to lead into Iraq, put their private lives on hold. Each of them, and their families, dedicated themselves to be a part of the less than 1 percent of the Nation that is carrying 100 percent of the burden of this war. They each trained to a fighting edge and deployed to build an Iraqi Army and Police forces, while fighting a Counter Insurgency War. This was no simple task. It was a lot like building an airliner in mid-

air. A counter insurgency fight is constant warfare; never knowing the enemy's location, how they are armed, constantly on guard for the enemies ever changing Tactics, Techniques and Procedures, and always trying to ensure the general populace is protected from their indeterminate wrath. The pressures on these Soldiers' were tremendous, but they responded in ways that would make you, the keepers of the "Blue Ridge Division Heritage" proud - as proud as I am of each of them and their distinguished performance in Iraq.

We, as a group, did much to ensure the success of the fledgling Iraqi Army and Police. In the summer of 2005, when the Soldiers of the 80th Division arrived in Iraq, there were fewer than 10 Battalions of the Iraqi Army capable of a sustained fight against the enemy. There were three Brigades and no Divisions capable of a sustained fight against the enemy. Today we leave behind almost 75% of the Iraqi Army capable of fighting the enemy at the Battalion level, almost 70% of the Army capable of the fight at the Brigade level, and over 50% at the Division level. I am sure that you have read the media accounts of the success of the Iraqi Police and Army in capturing insurgents. These successes can be directly attributed to the excellent training and men-

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REUNION: CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

A solo, "In the Garden", was sang by Beth Novak, and the poem "Listen With Your Heart", was read by PNC Max Schmidt. Chaplain (Captain) Sean Facchinello of Fort Benning gave the memorial enlightenment.

The roll call was then read. Each man was asked to stand and remain standing as the names of those from his unit were read. I must say, as the names of my two buddies were called, I was crying uncontrollably. This was followed by Don Davis Sgt.-of-Arms accompanied by PNC Cistolo and Vern Schock bringing the wreath forward. Commander Spangler and Ladies President Donna Kutch then placed the wreath in center of the podium.

As the Infantry Center Band played taps, each man and woman present stood at attention and saluted. There were very few dry eyes in the place.

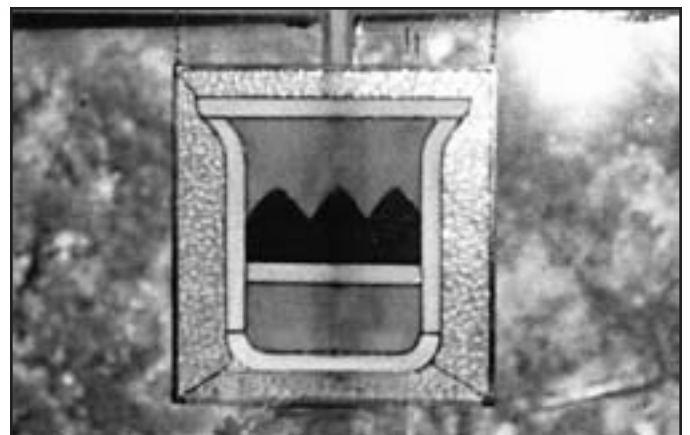
"It is Well With My Soul" was sung by Beth Novak followed by the Benediction by PNC Angelo Barone.

The commander then called for the colors to be retired, and as the hymn "O Beautiful for Spacious Skies" was sung, the Executive Council, along with the ladies, filed out.

Leaving the Chapel and boarding our buses we drove to the Officers Club for a wonderful lunch. After our lunch we again boarded the buses and drove to the Military Museum, where we saw all weapons that were used in all wars along with the uniforms of each. Three floors of item so vast I can't begin to tell you all the things there.

A stained glass of the 80th Logo was presented to the Museum, by Virgil Myers (G-317) (See below picture of glass.)

From the Museum, it was just a short walk to Sacrifice Field of Fort Benning where our monument was installed, and where our Memorial Service was to take place. You could feel the excitement. Unit flags of the infantry regiments, field artilleries, machine gun battalions and engineers were carried by those representatives. The Soldiers of Fort Benning were busy seeing to it everyone was taken care of. A First Aid stand had been set up and bottles of water were passed out to those who needed them. Everyone present was given a program of events.

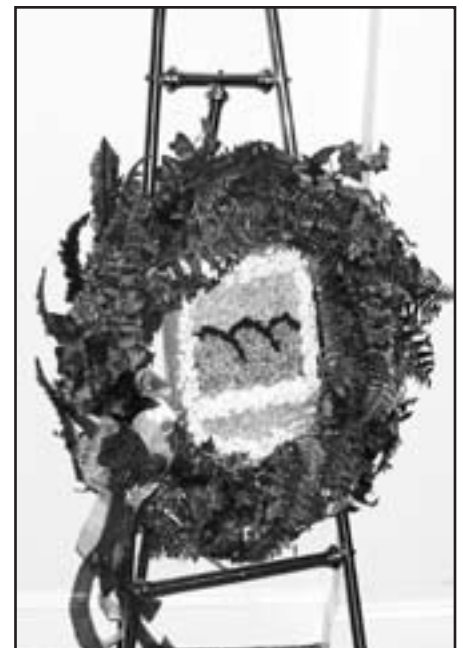


toring from our Soldiers. The 80th Division's Soldiers gave a magnificent performance from exceptionally outstanding leaders during their long year of service in Iraq. Every Soldier was a leader; the Transition Team members, the trainers, and the staff members stationed across Iraq. All played a key leadership role in our success. I am exceedingly proud of all they accomplished and applaud their fighting spirit and dedication to duty against sometimes monumental difficulties.

I must take a moment to talk about a very important topic. There has been a lot of negative media coverage on the actions of a few Soldiers and Marines that failed to follow the Law of Land Warfare. The actions of a few have brought discredit upon thousands of other fine and honorable Soldiers and Marines. I cannot help but note that those who might be inclined to trumpet these events, like the press, may themselves do well to maintain some perspective. War, in short, is savage. All wars, bar none. War has always been savage, and it will always be savage. No matter how "Good" the war is, how completely altruistic the motives, war is a business that leaves no real winners. A guerilla war is the most savage of all wars, because the enemy is everyone and no one. Military professionals know this, and it is one of the very real reasons that we, as professional Soldiers, are so often opposed to the use of force. A guerrilla war opens Pandora's Box. Soldiers have an informed idea of what rests inside Pandora's Box; the thought of what is in the box colors our thoughts when we consider being asked to use force and expose the contents of that box. At the most basic level, one role of the professional military officer is to control and direct the use of violence. It is to confine the savagery. You cannot prevent the savagery entirely. You can train for a lifetime, devote vast resources to the creation of a professional force, and emplace institutional checks to reduce the incidence

of misdirected violence, but you will never, ever, stop it entirely. Many of you here this night know this and have lived it. I can only say that it is unfortunate actions like Haditha happen. We, as leaders, must never condone the actions of those individual Marines and Soldiers. We must never say that what was done was acceptable. I will do everything in my power as a leader to prevent and stop actions like this from ever happening - it is a part of my code as a warrior. The adrenalin and fear all Soldiers feel cannot be turned on and off like a light switch; a simple statement of fact. But we must prevent, at all costs, needless loss of life in the savagery that is war; it is our commitment and our duty as Soldiers.

I would be remiss to not tell you a little bit of what our real mission was in Iraq with the 80th Division. We, all of us in this room, are at the greatest peril that we have ever been in as a Nation, since July of 1863. In July of 1863 we, as a Nation, fought the last enemy whose avowed purpose was to destroy the United States of America. Since that time we have not fought an enemy who stated their mission was to destroy us as a Nation; not until now. In the Spanish American War, World War I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam, the Cold War, Grenada, and in Gulf War's I and II our enemies never stated, as one of their goals, that their aim was to destroy the United States as a Nation. Osama Bin Laden said, in 1998, he and Al Queda were in a state of Holy War, Jihad, with the United States. The avowed purpose of his war was our total destruction. His followers believe every word that Osama Bin Laden said in that Declaration of War. The events of September 11, 2001 confirmed just how serious he was in his declaration. Since that declaration and the events of September 11, 2001, hosts of "believers" have run to join the cause of Jihad. In Iraq, our 80th Division Soldiers fought in the front lines against Osama Bin Laden's war. If we lose this war in Iraq, if we do not destroy this evil enemy, we will fight him and his kind in



New York, Chicago, and San Francisco. We must win this war. We must win it in Iraq, so that we are not forced to fight it here at home. This is a deadly serious enemy who will stop at nothing, who has no conscience about killing, and who shows no quarter in the manic attacks against us and the Iraqi people. This is not the time for our Nation to lose heart. The Soldiers of the 80th Division assigned to Iraq, have faced this enemy and understand what the enemies is capable of and understand a lack of will may result in war on our door step. To win the war we must let the Iraqi's fight it and win to prove to their Arab brothers the power in freedom. As the Army and Police of Iraq stand up and win this fight we will send our troops home. We in the 80th Division were instrumental in setting the conditions for ultimate goal of making the Iraqi Army and Police capable of winning the fight against Al Queda. We set the force in Iraq, making the Iraqi Security Forces competent at the Battalion level. The brave Iraqi's that are a part of their Army and Police become more capable and competent each and every day. I have no doubt with the training, mentoring and advice we gave them and that they continue to receive that they will succeed.

I am proud to have served with the Soldiers from the 80th Division in Iraq. It was one of the best times that I have ever had as a Soldier. At the same time it was also one of the worst times I ever had as a Soldier. No amount of mental conditioning will ever prepare a Commander for the first call that one of your men has been Killed in Action. I had over 2500 Soldiers, Marines, Sailors, and Airmen under my Command in Iraq. Marine Corps Sergeant Brian Duncan was my first call in September 2005. He was not from the 80th Division, but his loss was no less of a shock to me about the reality of war. I unfortunately got ten more calls from my Transition Teams, but pointedly three more from MNSTC-I about Soldiers from the 80th Division — LTC Thomas Wren and SPC David Cissel, both killed in accidents, and SSG Robert Hernandez, who was Killed in Action. May they all rest in the presence of God. May He bless their families and all of us in this fight for our way of life; I know the memory will continue for many years. I know I will never forget the Soldiers who paid the ultimate price in Iraq.

Finally, I would like to read a part of an article that appeared in the Boston Globe on the birthday of the United States Army, 14 June 2006. It is titled "Signs Of Success In Iraq" by Jeff Jacoby and reads, in part, as follows:

Boston Globe, June 14, 2006
Signs Of Success In Iraq
By Jeff Jacoby, Globe columnist

...In the June issue of Commentary, veteran Middle East journalist Amir Taheri describes "The Real Iraq" as a far more promising place than the horror show of conventional media wisdom. Arriving in the United States after his latest tour of Iraq, Taheri says, he was "confronted

with an image of Iraq that is unrecognizable" — an image that "grossly ...distorts the realities of present-day Iraq."

What are those realities? Drawing on nearly 40 years of observing Iraq first-hand, Taheri points to several leading indicators that he has always found reliable in gauging the country's true condition.

He begins with refugees. In the past, one could always tell that life in Iraq was growing desperate by the long lines of Iraqis trying to escape over the Iranian and Turkish borders. There have been no such scenes since the toppling of Saddam Hussein in 2003. Instead of fleeing the "nightmare" that Iraq has supposedly become, Iraqi refugees have been returning, more than 1.2 million of them as of last December.

A second indicator is the pilgrim traffic to the Shi'ite shrines in Karbala and Najaf. Those pilgrimages all but dried up after Saddam bloodily crushed a Shi'ite uprising in 1991, and they didn't resume until the arrival of the Americans in 2003. "In 2005," writes Taheri, "the holy sites received an estimated 12 million pilgrims, making them the most-visited spots in the entire Muslim world, ahead of both Mecca and Medina."

A third sign: the value of the Iraqi dinar. All but worthless during Saddam's final years, the dinar is today a safe and solid medium of exchange. Related indicators are small-business activity, which is booming, and Iraqi agriculture, which has experienced a revival so remarkable that Iraq now exports food to its neighbors for the first time since the 1950s.

Finally, says Taheri, there is the willingness of Iraqis to speak their minds. Iraqis are very verbal, and "when they fall silent, life is incontrovertibly becoming hard for them." They aren't silent now. In addition to talk radio, Internet blogs, and lively debate everywhere, "a vast network of independent media has emerged in Iraq, including over 100 privately owned newspapers and magazines and more than two dozen radio and television stations." Nowhere in the Arab world is freedom of expression more robust.

As Congress embarks on a wide-ranging Iraq debate this week, Taheri's essay is well worth reading. "Yes, the situation in Iraq today is messy," he writes. "Births always are. Since when is that a reason to declare a baby unworthy of life?"

May God bless each of you here tonight in this celebration of all that is good in the United States of America and its Army. I am honored to have served in the 80th Division for over 28 years, I have been reassigned to the Joint Forces Command in Norfolk, VA. I am proud to continue serve each of you, I am proud to have been a member of the 80th Division in Iraq, and I am most proud to be an American Soldier.

Thank you all and good night.

REMARKS FROM THE COMMANDING GENERAL 80TH DIVISION INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING

by General Evans at the Dugout Party

FRIENDS AND COMRADES, 80th Infantry Division Association; Our Army is at war and transforming to combat an adaptive enemy. Our Army has changed drastically since the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. Not since World War II has there been as many combat veterans tilling our ranks as there are today. To capitalize on these strengths, the Army is accelerating the transformation of its training that will ensure we meet the future challenges facing our nation here at home or abroad.

I am proud to say the 80th Division is doing its part in the Global War on Terror continuing to protect this Nation's freedom and to ensure your dedication and sacrifices and those of all Veterans remain our legacy. We recently had over 700 of our Soldiers return from twelve months of service in Iraq where they were involved with the training of the Iraqi Army and other Iraqi security forces or performing important support roles as part of the Multi-National Security Transition Command state. Even today we have over 300 of our Soldiers deployed around the world serving in Afghanistan, Qatar, Kuwait, Honduras and at several military installations in the United States.

As an overview of the future of the 80th Division, we will become a Training Command for The Army School System (TASS) and have national responsibilities for Military Occupational Specialty training for multiple combat

support and combat service support skills. In February of this year the Vice Chief of Staff for Army approved an Army Reserve proposal to transform its Institutional Training Divisions that reduces the number of two star Divisions from six to two. As a result of the approved decision point, the 80th Division will become one of the two remaining two-star functional Training Commands. Our Concept Plan has been submitted to Army Reserve Headquarters and Headquarters, Department of the Army and is pending final approval at this time so please understand what I am presenting here is pre-decisional.

With the approval of the Concept Plan, the 80th Division will exercise command and control over three one-star Division Headquarters and become fully operational as one of the new training command no later than 1 October 2009. Force Sustainment will be at Fort Lee, Virginia and will conduct training for Quartermaster, Transportation, Ordnance and Personnel Services. Another of our Divisions will be Operational Support located at Fort Knox, Kentucky and will conduct Military Intelligence, Signal, Civil Affairs, Psychological Operations and Health Services training. Maneuver Support will be located at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri and will be responsible for Engineer, Military Police, and Chemical training. In closing, I want to thank each of you and your families for answering the Call to Duty • You have given us a legacy of valor and service that will never be forgotten. Whatever our nation has achieved, whatever bounty we have been granted, we owe it to you and the other brave Veterans who guarded our Nation's front lines when called on to do so. Therefore, the next time you say the Pledge to Allegiance or stand in honor of our National Anthem, know it is a testimonial that honors your sacrifice and courage and the thousands of Americans just like you who have and are sacrificing to build our Nation and promote freedom around the world.

"Strength of the Mountains - Only Moves Forward"

David L. Evans
Major General, USAR Commanding General
80th Division (Institutional Training)



A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAPLAIN

(CPT) Sean Facchinello, USA 2-54 Infantry

WHAT AN OUTSTANDING GROUP of Americans before me here in the chapel. The 80th Division served with honors and valor. Thank you for being here today as we remember our fallen comrades. For you shaped history and gave freedom to the world through your service for our country and other nations seeking peace. You have been an example to young people especially those entering the Army today. They are your grandsons and great grandsons who heard of your hard work in WWII.

When I think of good mentors like you I am reminded of an Old Testament Bible character named Elijah. He mentored Elisha who became his predecessor continuing the work of a prophet of God. Elisha's job was to help Elijah in the service of God.

Elisha's calling by God left him with a decision to leave behind what he had previously done as a young man, including leaving his family behind. One day God called Elijah his mentor to come to heaven on a chariot of fire. Elisha had one request from Elijah before departing to heaven, and that was for a double portion of his spirit, or the Spirit of God twice over. "let me inherit a double portion of your spirit." -II Kings 2:9.

Our young men and women entering the Army today are much like Elisha who had a great mentor Elijah. You are the mentors of these youth like you joined in time of war, and now volunteer to serve and fight for freedom. This generation is the next great generation of Soldiers fighting terrorism, where you fought Nazism.

A request came to Elisha to make a lake of water drinkable because it was contaminated and his school of the prophets needed water. This man of God simply said "bring me a new bowl, put salt in it. So they brought it to him. Throwing it into the bad water saying "this is what the Lord says:" "I have healed this water. Never again will it cause death or make the land unproductive." -II Kings 2:20-22.

The water was now pure and drinkable. What a miracle of God! The power of God to supply for the simple needs of these men was wonderful. God provides for theirs and our needs. He did that for many of you in combat when you were hungry, tired and scared. He was with you in that foxhole like He is with Soldiers today in Iraq.

On another occasion in which the power of God worked through the prophet Elisha a widow who was poor was on her last bit of food and made a simple meal for her and her son to eat and then die. Not much hope here. Sounds like suicide. Unless this lady paid her debts off her son was to be taken as a slave. After hearing this bad news, Elisha told the lady that God would provide her needs. To simply get as many jars from others as she could collect and then take the little olive oil she had in her cupboard and pours it into the first jar. She did this and filled it up, and then the next and the next and so on. There were many jars there and everyone was filled to the brim with olive oil. (II Kings 4). Another miracle of

God accomplished by the hands of Elisha to help someone else in need. Then she was to take the oil in the jars, sell it, and pay off her debts. Now her son was free from becoming a slave. No bondage but freedom. God provided for her and her sons needs.

Elisha trained by Elijah was used by God. Today's Soldiers mentored and shaped by your sacrificial contributions to our country has set the foundation for them to be of service today in this time of war.

There are so many miracles performed through Elisha that one is amazed to see how God used him in a mighty way. He has used you in a mighty way in the past as well to fight for freedom.

Elisha performed another miracle for a woman from the town of Shunem. This lady on the other hand was financially well-off. She and her husband built a small room with some furniture for traveling Elisha to enjoy on his long journeys on foot. He would stop by and visit them. He said, what can I do for you? "Can I speak on your behalf to the king or the commander of the army?"(II Kings 4:13). He was like a chaplain to the army. His servant noticed that she had no children and her husband was getting up in years. "About this time next year," said Elisha "you will hold a son in your arms." She became pregnant and the next year gave birth to a son. But one day later the boy got a head injury. His mother laid him on the bed of the man of God, Elisha, and she traveled to Mount Carmel where Elisha was staying. Now I have been on that mountain and it is a long distance up to the top. As his servant traveled to meet the women from a long way off, he asked her if everything was fine. She said yes. When she met Elisha on the mountain she took hold of his feet and then he realized that something was wrong. Seeing her hidden distress, she asked "did I not ask you for a son, my lord? Didn't I tell you, don't raise my hopes?" Elisha ordered his servant to take his staff in his hand and run to the woman's house immediately. Elisha followed with the woman. Laying the staff on the boys face but no sound came out. He did not awake. When Elisha reached the house he found the boy dead on his bed. Shutting the door behind him he prayed to God. He lay on top of the boy's body stretched himself over him. Instantly his hands got warm and he began to breathe. He sneezed 7 times and opened his eyes. He was alive and his mother was happy! Praise God for blessing this family.

Elisha's ministry was very diverse and fulfilling. God truly blessed him with a double portion of the Spirit of God.

I believe this current generation of Soldiers here at Fort Benning, GA where I minister in a basic training battalion and all training units in the Army is full of wonderful people like you who have gone before us in sacrificial service for God and Country. As you fought in WWII and those or WWI and other wars, we today fight in Iraq, Afghanistan and wherever the fight against terrorism is to be fought.

Thank you for this opportunity to be here and celebrate with you the accomplishments of your service because without your service we would not have the freedoms we enjoy today. And without this next generation of Soldiers we will see our freedoms vanish. Thank God for His blessings upon us in the past, present and future.

DEDICATION OF 80TH MONUMENT

Commander Spangler presided over the service. He first called for the colors to be posted by the 80th IT Division Soldiers followed by the National Anthem by the U.S. Army Band.

The following was a speech by Virgil Myers G-317:

WHAT IS THE SIGNIFI-

CANCE of our presence here today? It isn't to honor the surviving 80th Division Veterans that are attending here today. This covered object will be a constant reminder to all of us, of those 80th Division men we fought along side of. They gave their lives to make this country a safer place for all of us to live in today. It is so easy after 62 years of peaceful living to gradually forget much of the combat action we were involved in during 1944 and 1945. Those that lay in European cemeteries as a result of combat in that period of our history could very easily have been one of us.

Those of us here today that were involved in America's greatest land battle of all time will never forget those horrible 6 weeks of constant combat during the "Battle of the Bulge". Weather conditions were the worst of the last 110 years. The temperature reached down to 15 degrees below zero. The wind was blowing 10-30 miles per hour with 15 to 18 inches of snow on the ground most of the time. Most infantrymen had to stay in foxholes nearly all of the 6 weeks. Either German or U.S. artillery destroyed 98 % of all houses in the Bulge area. There were few places to seek cover from the weather other than the foxholes you had dug in the frozen ground. Most of us had no Sno-Paks or over shoes and many had not been issued all of their winter clothes as yet.

Even though we took part in and lived through the "Battle of the Bulge" few of us remember the military details of that conflict. To refresh your memory -



Quoting Military Statistics, "The Battle of the Bulge" was the greatest military encounter the U.S. ground forces has ever been involved in during the history of this country. . The battle started on December 16, 1944 ending on January 25, 1945. By the end of the battle 600,000

Americans and 500,000 Germans had been in conflict with one another. Of those G. I.' s that took part in the battle there were 81,000 total American casualties - 18,000 killed - 47,000 others wounded - 15,000 captured by the German's. Germany reported 112,000 casualties - 26,000 killed. Last 1,000 tanks each.

This all happened in an area the shape of a triangle 90 miles wide along the Luxembourg and Belgium-German border and went 65 miles deep to just west of Bastogne, Belgium. Compared to today's conflict in Iraq where an average of 3 or 4 casualties each day is considered by the media as a terrible loss. We agree any loss is a terrible thing to happen but comparing today's conflict with the "Battle of the Bulge's" 6,week conflict where an average loss was 442 Americans killed each day another 1044 were wounded each day and 333 were captured each day.

Does anyone remember what was winding down? What happened to the 2nd Battalion of 317th Inf. Regiment on January 21, 1945? The 2nd Battalion Company's E, F and G were assigned the objective of capturing the Village of Bourscheid, Luxembourg and a road junction just east of the village where the Germans were using to transport equipment and men in a retreat back to Germany.

Early on the morning of January 21, the 2nd Battalion left the area just west of Kehman with Co. E and F leading in a column about 1/4 mile apart with G Company in reserve behind E and F Companies. The snow was knee deep in the forest and G Co. was assigned the section through the woods up the mountain and over the hill to the East Side of the village along the Sauer River. Co. G



wasn't at full strength, only 147 men. The recruits the company had been promised didn't arrive as planned. The 4th weapons platoon was to take the center of the march up the mountain. A squad of machine gunners and one squad of mortar men was each side of the Forest fire path to be close to the rifle platoon. We were carrying heavy equipment through the woods and in knee deep snow up extremely steep hills. As we started moving we received the expected rifle, mortar and burp gun fire. We didn't expect what came next. As we moved up the mountain to about the three-quarter point, all hell broke loose. The Germans had the mountain zeroed in as a defensive action firing artillery, 120 mm mortars. When the shells began exploding in the forest and fire lanes, we dashed to the trees at the edge or the clearing for protection. We found in short order that was a serious problem. The Germans had planted mines in the snow and had trip wires just under the snow. When we ran to the woods we tripped Bouncing Betties Bombs. These bombs would jump 40" high when tripped. They were the size of a gallon bucket filled with ball bearings, nails and pieces of metal. They were a terrible anti personal weapon.

We had wounded men everywhere. The medics soon ran out of bandages and did the best they could to make the others comfortable. Capt. Mike, our Company Commander said he was going to 2nd Battalion Headquarters to see if there was a change of plans. As he walked through the woods in the direction of Battalion Command Post we heard a rumble that just kept getting louder and louder. Suddenly it seemed the mountain

exploded. Full size trees flew 50' in the air, smoke and an acrid smell of sulfur was all over the hill. Not five minutes later the same thing happened again. It turned out to be a railroad gun located almost 15 miles east in Germany. One of the shells made a direct hit on the Battalion forward Command Post killing Lt. Colonel Boydston, and five of the six Battalion officers and men.

When the shelling let up, we began to collect our wits and see who was still around. The 4th Platoon it turned out was in the center of the most severe actions in this attack on G Company. When Sgt. Adam Haiser of the machine gun section and I counted the men, we only had 6 people in the 4th platoon left of the 24 that started with the company that morning that weren't casualties"

We received orders to pull back taking as many injured as we could with us. When Company G's count was made that evening it was found 61 of the 147 that started the attack that morning were left uninjured. There were 86 casualties that one-day. When we started they didn't expect any problems. They didn't count on what artillery, mortars and land mines could do in defensive action. After hearing the number of casualties, Capt. Mike said fellows we are all bound to go to heaven, for today, we have all been through hell together.

When a friend of our family in Lakeland heard I was coming to the 80th Reunion she gave me a poem she had written dedicated to WW II Veterans. I think it is appropriate for this occasion. "The Gift You Gave, A Tribute to all World War II Veterans" by Lisa Palas.

THE GIFT YOU GAVE

A Tribute to U.S. Veterans of World War

*You left your homes and friends and families.
Put your lives and dreams on hold.
To bravely stand for peace and liberty
For those of us you left at home.
And we thank you for the gift you gave.
We thank you for the sacrifice you made.
And for the life we're living, each and everyday,
In freedom, the gift you gave.
You came from all across this nation,
answering your country's need.
All courageous men and women,
willing to make history.
And we thank you for the gift you gave.
We thank you for the sacrifice you made.
And for the life we're living, each and everyday,
In freedom, the gift you gave.
And we will not forget.
We will not forget.
And we thank you for the gift you gave.
We thank you for the sacrifice you made.
And for the life we're living, each and everyday,
In freedom, the gift you gave.*

The gift you gave Freedom.

THANK You!



80TH DIVISION MONUMENT DEDICATION

by Douglas O. Dollar, Major General (Retired)

GOOD AFTERNOON LADIES AND GENTLEMEN! It is with a great sense of respect, and pride, that I address you in the dedication of this beautiful monument to the remembrance of our 80th Division comrades who died and served in World Wars I and II, today.

The building of a memorial is a time-honored tradition dating back thousands of years. Whatever form they come in - be it a building, the planting of a tree, a massive stone statue, they mark themselves in our consciousness and are a constant reminder of things that might ordinarily be forgotten in the hustle and bustle of our everyday lives. Thousands of years have passed since the days when Joshua ordered the Israelites to build a memorial of twelve smooth stones from the riverbed to mark their crossing of the Jordan River into the Promised Land. Yet today, we still build monuments to remember those who have gone before us and the impressive deeds that they have done.

Almost exactly 90 years ago, the 80th Infantry Division was constituted at Fort Lee Virginia. It was a model of the nation's first combined-armed divisions, organized in four large infantry regiments designed to withstand the grueling combat of the Western Front trenches, and supported by substantial elements of artillery, heavy machine gun and mortar units.

The Division's first commander, MG Cronkhite, chose the name Blue Ridge Division, rather than the Lee Division as many felt it should be called. In late 1917 the familiar coat of arms was executed, and the motto, "Vis Montium," Latin for "Strength of the Mountains," was adopted. The three mountain peaks unique in the design represented the states of Virginia, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania, which were home to most of the WWI soldiers recruited into the Division. The distinctive shoulder patch, adapted from the coat of arms, was adopted in March 1918. By the end of the war, MG Cronkhite adopted the motto, "Only Moves Forward," because the 80th was the only Division in the AEF that never gave up ground.

It was less that a brief 20 years when a new generation of Blue Ridgers were called upon to defend freedom. Tens of thousands of young soldiers, many of them with us today, sacrificed to obtain a free Europe. The 80th Division in World War II compiled one of the most notable combat records of any division as it fought in the famous Third U.S. Army. The meaning of that record in terms of human costs has been vividly illustrated for us today by my friend Virgil Myers, through his recollections of the Battle of the Bulge.

We are very familiar with and proud of these emblems and mottos today. They are something like what a Madison Avenue ad agency might develop today for an organization - even a product or business. Yet,

these emblems, these mottos, are quite different. We sense that without really thinking about it; and, this is where this beautiful monument we are dedicating today teaches us a valuable lesson, because, you see, these emblems and mottos are backed up by something extremely valuable and telling. We read them on the monument: the campaigns, the casualties, the battle deaths. We see that the soldiers of the 80th Infantry Division have given credibility to the tokens and words. They have, if you will, sanctified them. The words "Blue Ridge Division," "Strength of the Mountains," "Only Moves Forward," and the distinctive blue mountain range in the crest and shoulder patch, are backed up with the sacrifices, often the ultimate sacrifice, of tens of thousands of soldiers.

This monument, erected at the home of the United States Infantry, helps us realize their lasting contributions. It will help to make us and everyone who comes after us, aware and thankful to those who offered the bravest kind of service and dedicated and risked everything for our country and the ideal of freedom.

We can never afford to forget, nor to let America forget what those soldiers have done for our country. This memorial is a reminder of our duty to those who have gone before us, especially those who have given, in Abraham Lincoln's words, the last full measure of devotion to their country.

Let this monument also stand to reflect the present as well as the past, by reminding us of those who continue to "risk all" for this nation - providing the will and commitment to make the World safer for democracy.

This monument's lasting legacy will be to help us remember our complex past, and to honor all of those whose dedication makes America great. Let this monument stand to remind us daily of all the Blue Ridgers, and to give them voice.



Representatives from 80th Division Units



As we walk around this memorial today, we should all pledge ourselves to never forget why this monument is here. Too many have given too much, for too long, for us to allow ourselves to forget the soldiers of the 80th Division.

So now let us dedicate this enduring memorial in remembrance of the 80th Division and its proud soldiers, who unselfishly served on behalf of all Americans, and all World citizens, who love liberty!

Thank you all for being here, and God Bless America and the soldiers of the 80th Division!

After the ceremonies, one after another was seen having their pictures made beside the monument. It seemed it would go on forever, but we soon boarded our buses to head back to the hotel. The buses took the scenic trip back to the hotel, going through the city of Columbus so as to let us see the town. It was a scenic trip of about an hour with all the stops for signal lights through the city.

80TH DIVISION REUNION BANQUET TALK

by Douglas O. Dollar, Major General (Retired)

GOOD EVENING LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

First, let me note what an honor it is for me to speak to you tonight -- and I'll explain that more later.

Next, let me welcome you to what we affectionately referred to in my younger days as "The Benning School for Boys." I'll always enjoy coming back to Fort Benning and Columbus - which shows you that our memories do soften us - or the events that happen to us - since I can assure you that everything here was not always pleasant for me! Like having to crawl out of that nice, warm sleeping bag in the pitch black during Ranger School and face an uncertain day - uncertain except that we knew it would be grueling! Or, staring blankly across the distant landscape while dangling from the top of one of those 300-foot jump towers down at the Airborne School. And, maybe, struggling to stay awake during class in Infantry Hall.

But, this is the "Home of the Infantry," and it really does seem like coming home now - now that I'm an old man whose memory is somewhat faculty. What a blessing that we can filter out so much information, until mostly the best at our highest level of memory remains.

During this reunion, we have heard some of what has been happening to the 80th Division during the present war, and some about the future. We've met some of the current Blue Ridge soldiers and heard about their experiences in Iraq, and I would like to try and put that into context - with your war - the big one - "W" "W" "Two."

Over the past few years, we've had some great events in which some of you have visited today's 80th Division to speak about World War II and your experiences in that war. On such an occasion, one of you asked me why today's soldiers are so interested in,

and want to share in, the activities of the 80th Division Veterans' Association. I was kind of surprised, because it seemed so obvious to me - that is that today's Blue Ridge soldiers take such pride in the heritage of the Division - the heritage that you created other there in Europe 60 years ago.

I think the mystique, or élan, of the World War II GI is unsurpassed. There is the image of that distinctive, not-quite perfectly rounded, metal helmet - or "Steel Pot" - the starched Kaki uniforms, or crisp OD wool ones - polished brown boots - marching to Jody calls with those famous M1 Garand rifles, held just so on the shoulder - riding that famous, indestructible jeep, or half track - or in a more somber tone - trudging with a determined expression through snow with sagging web gear and back packs. There is also the enduring image of infantrymen dashing over fields criss-crossed with tracers, or down rubble-filled streets. These are some of the images that go with your legend. I was admiring more of them in Andrew Adkins' book about H Company, 317th Infantry, last night.

Now, when I was growing up, you were my number one heroes. I did not then know you personally, or your individual "story," but I knew you in spirit - even then. "My Hero!" - as only a young boy can imagine a hero. Now, of course, there are other types of heroes for a youngster - the talented baseball player, or the rough-and-tumble Cowboy on the movie screen; but, there were no other heroes who really came up to the standards you set. For physical courage, intelligence, creativeness, determination or resourcefulness - no one matched the combat GI.

When I was about age six or seven, my sister's future



husband was in basic training at Camp Chaffee, Arkansas, during the Korean War. We lived only a few miles away in Van Buren, Arkansas, and she would take me with her to visit him on some evenings when the training ended. Don't you know he just loved it when she brought her little brother along?

Anyway, sometimes we would drive up to the training company area just as it was getting dark, and I could see the soldiers in formation, silhouetted against the evening sky. Here were more of those "Heroes" - the GIs, in their OD uniforms, metal helmets, and M1 rifles, who could do anything! - and I would think to myself, "How great it would be to be a soldier, and live here in these wooden barracks with a bunch of guys!"

Now, let me remind you that I was about seven - and my views have changed considerably since then! It was not too long before I discovered girls, and it sure is funny how that milestone in life changes your perspective on some things!

Also, I've lived to see the other side of a soldier's life - Gerald Myers spoke to this eloquently yesterday at the monument dedication. This is the part of a soldier's life that can never be portrayed justly in the movies - or certainly not in the recruiting posters! Which, in fact, now makes you even greater heroes to me.

So, today's soldiers take pride in, and want to be a part of and contribute to that same heritage - the heritage or legend of the 80th Division we celebrated yesterday at the memorial dedication.

I think the dramatic changes that took place with the United States Army during World War II profoundly altered the image of the soldier, for millions of us in America. There is a terrific book I would recommend, entitled *There's a War to be Won: The United States Army in World War II*, by Geoffrey Perrett, that was first published in 1997 by Random House, I believe. It chronicles the development of our Army - beginning with the story of the "Lost Battalion" in the Argonne Forrest during World War I, through the interwar years and into and during World War II. You can read about how George Marshall, as chief of infantry here at Fort Benning, mentored soldiers like George Patton, or Omar Bradley, who he later, as Army Chief of Staff, selected to lead great armies through Europe. But, more to the point, he explains the training, psychology, and élan of the combat GI of World War II. In the words of the review I Googled on the internet today, it is "the landmark story of one of the greatest armies in history, a conscript force of amateur soldiers who had an unparalleled record of combat success." And, it did not end there - you came back to the States to restart your lives and built an American that has been unparalleled in growth and prosperity!

I saw the movie, "Patton," only last week. I love that scene where Patton learns of the Germans' attack into the Ardennes in December 1944, and has his staff begin planning for a change of direction to attack north into the "Buldge" and relieve Bastone. Then he goes to the big meeting of the Allied commanders. He bides his time

while other commanders say they cannot do anything to help, then stuns everyone by saying "I can attack with three divisions in 48 hours."

Now, in the 80th Division, we think Patton said, "I can attack in 48 hours with my three BEST divisions - the 4th Armored, the 26th Yankee Division, and the "80th Blue Ridge Division!" Now, I'm not sure whether anyone here "doctored" that famous quote, but I'm going to check it out someday! Still, I like it better our way - and we might even "improve" the quotation to: "I can attack, etc., etc., and the 80th Blue Ridge Division, that 'Only Moves Forward!'"

Well, it's a great movie, anyway; and, those scenes depicting the Third Army attacking through the snow, day and night, are tremendous. When I see that movie, I always think of you guys.

So, even though there have been other wars since you marched through France, Luxembourg, and Germany, it is still that image of you that provides inspiration for today's soldiers. I assumed command of the 80th Division (Institutional Training) just prior to 9/11, 2001, and in the four years of my tenure there, almost 75 percent of the Division was mobilized and deployed. I think it is telling that, for those soldiers who were deployed to combat zones, it was very important that they be able to wear the 80th Division patch as their combat patch upon return. Gen. McLaren has worked very hard to see that they are able to do that, and last night he told me it will probably be the case. For the first time in over 60 years, soldiers will sew the famous Blue Ridge patch onto the right shoulder of their uniforms - and I think that is a notable milestone in history!

I don't know whether I've told you anything tonight you did not already realize about what you represent to so many people - about the impression you make when someone realizes you are a combat veteran of one of the greatest divisions, of one of the greatest armies, in history. I encourage you, though, to not waste the opportunity this provides. We have far too few real heroes today. Too many of the highly-paid "hero" athletes have let us down - and the young people who admire their talents. Too many of our political leaders have done the same. And I won't even mention the movie stars who make so much money in our society.

I encourage you to speak to groups whenever you have the opportunity, and tell them about the high price that has been paid for a free Europe. Tell young people, as I think you would, that being very afraid when facing danger is nothing to be ashamed of - but that seeing your duty through is what counts. Tell them about those desperate days, so many years ago, when freedom was in the balance, and an army of young men made such a difference. Doing so will mean a lot for our country, at a time we need to know that great things can be accomplished by determined patriots.

Finally, let me thank you for being my heroes; and, the tremendous time I have had with you these few special days! May God speed you home safely, and be with you until we meet again!

The Memorial Service in the Fort Benning Chapel





Re-enactors of WWI Veterans





Attendees and their families pose with the Monument

LETTERS

NATIONAL INFANTRY MUSEUM UNITED STATES ARMY INFANTRY SCHOOL

Fort Benning, Georgia 31905-5593
September 26, 2006
Mr. Gerald V. Myers
320 East Palm Drive Lakeland, Florida

Dear Mr. Myers:

We are pleased and honored that the men of the 80th Infantry Division presented the National Infantry Museum with a stained glass panel in remembrance of the Division's outstanding record in World War II. We are also pleased to have your excellent monument which you dedicated on Sacrifice Field on September 22, 2006. Thank you and your members for all they have done to remember those who never came home from the war. May God bless each one of you and your families.

On behalf of the U. S. Army Center of Military History, Fort Benning, and the National Infantry Museum, thank you for your gifts and for keeping your country free. Yours is truly The Greatest Generation!

Sincerely,
Z. Frank Hanner Director, National Infantry Museum

THE DESCENDANTS THANKS THE 80TH VETERANS

On behalf of the Descendants of 80th Division Veterans, please know that we are grateful to the Veterans who supported the affiliation of the Descendants as an auxiliary unit of the 80th Division Veterans Association. We are honored to have received this recognition and will strive to uphold not only your traditions but our mission and goals to perpetuate the history and honor of the men who served in the Division.

It was certainly a pleasure to be in the presence of the Veterans, but particularly to be able to spend some time with all the Veterans during this special celebration. We are grateful for the opportunity to share these moments of commemoration with good friends.

Sincerely,
Lee S. Anthony, Ph.D. Commander USNR (Retired)

GOING TO LUXEMBURG?

The American Friendship Week will be held from June 20th through June 24th (5 days). Tell all your 80th Div. Friends that we will do our very best to make their stay over here as agreeable and enjoyable as possible.

If they have questions you can't answer, contact me.
CONSTANT GOERGEN.
Pres. USVF.

If you plan to go to Luxembourg this year let me or them know by March 1st. If possible. More 80th Monuments are visited, and flowers placed in honor of the 80th men than any other unit in all Luxembourg. Last year 4 monuments were visited during the week.

Plan to arrive in Luxembourg at least by the 19th. This gives you the afternoon to rest. Plan your return June 26th or later.

If I can help you with your questions please call me. G. Virgil Myers: 863-686-2121 or E-mail me: V-Bmyers@webtv.net

SOME VETS DENIED BURIAL HONORS

Some military veterans have not received full burial honors because they do not have their discharge documents when they die. Since 1950 the discharge form has been called DD form 214. That document went by other names prior to 1950, but they all serve the same purpose.

When a veteran dies, the family provides a copy of DD 214 or equivalent discharge documentation to the funeral home which uses it to arrange for an official flag, honor guard, grave marker and burial in a national cemetery, according to the veteran's service level and last wishes. But, problems can arise with veterans who do not have copies of their discharge certificates available at the time of death.

For more information on obtaining a discharge form, contact your county's veteran's service officer.

TAPS

Bierbaum, Paul 2926-11th Street Bolder, CO 80304-3022 Rptd by Son	80th QM 5/13/2005	Hilton, William Roy 8292 Plainview Road Hornbeck, LA 71439-1760 10/13/2006 Rptd by Son Doug	C-318	Schlager, Lester J. 3974 S. 15th Street Sheboygan, WI 53081 Rptd By Daughter Joan	B-905 FA Bn
Burk, Harold D. 110 E. Center Street Leipsic, OH 45656 Rptd by Wife Ethyl	Hq-905 FA Bn Unknown	Kumor, Stanley P. 62 N. Gordon Street Uniontown PA 15401-3738 3/2004 Rptd by Son Tom	C-318	Shropshire, William Bert 5707 Hill N Dale Drive Farmington, NM 87402-8243 Newspaper Obit 9/14/2006	E-318
Cyrana , William J. 752 Roessner Drive Union, NJ 07083-8782 Rptd By A. Barone	L-317 9/2006	Lephew, Elba W. RR 2 Box 48 Sinks Grove WV 24976-9720 10/6/2006 Rptd by Hank Einolf	L-319	Simpson, William G. 817 Elden Drive Cry, IL 60013-2147 9/11/2006 Rptd by so Scott	C-317
Daunoras, Albert J. 3619 Rahke Road Indianapolis, IN 46217 6/3/2005 Rptd By Wife	305-Eng	Nagel, Thomas F. 355 Carolyn Ave. Latrobe, PA 15650-1067 11/13/2006 Rptd by Raymond Fritz	Cn-318	Strickland, Frank W. 510 Poppy Court Longhorne, PA 19047 8/26/2006 Rptd by Family	D-317
Elvin, William J. Jr. 6618 -31st NW Washington, DC 20015 8/24/2004 Rptd By Daughter Jan <i>Sorry I failed to publish at time of death.</i>	E/F-318	Nathason, Robert N. 1739 Faunce Street Philadelphia, PA 19111 10/24/2006 Rptd by Angelo Barone	PNC L-317	CORRECTION FROM LAST ISSUE Vieth, James W167S7228 Briargate Lane Muskego, WI 53150 5/29/2006 Rptd by Daughter Gigi	80th Rcn
William E. Fox Jr. Roanoke, VA 11/22/2006 Rptd by News Clipping	G-318	Richard Rasmussen 32 Julian Drive Preston, CT 06365-8001 2006 Rptd by Mail return Deceased	I-318	<i>Bisick</i> should have been: Visik John J. 9191 Roundtop Road #111 Cincinnati, OH 45251 7/31/2 Corrected by his Son-in-law	Anti Tank
Hanson, Robert D. 1901 N. 5th Harrisburgh, PA 17102-1510 7/28/2006 Rptd by Ivan Downs	DV Hq	Reeder, Eugene Annadale, VA 9/2006 Rptd by Ray Patterson	A-317		

THE 26TH DIVISION FIGHT FOR A BRIDGEHEAD ON THE SURE

24-27 DECEMBER (CONTINUED FROM LAST ISSUE)

Forty-five minutes after midnight the two rifle companies started to climb the highest of the three hills on which the town stands, this being the south side. The night was cold and clear, and a full moon was out. As the attackers tramped forward, long, grotesque black shadows followed on the glittering snow. For the first few minutes all was quiet, ominously lovely and peaceful; then, as the first line reached the crest, all hell broke loose. The German rifle line lay along the reverse slope, the grenadiers in white capes and sheets blending unobtrusively with the panorama of snow. Burp guns and rifles cut loose at the splendid targets the Americans provided. In face of such a fusillade the attack wavered, then fell back. Three tanks, all that Hamilton had, churned to the fore through the snow but were checked by a little creek, extended by an antitank ditch, about 300 yards from the nearest building.

A hurried call by Hamilton, who wanted reinforcements to cover his flanks, brought no reply from the division headquarters except "Take Eschdorf." There was little choice but to continue with frontal tactics. At 0400 a second assault started, this time with the tanks and Company G forming the center under orders to drive straight into Eschdorf without pause. Company G got only as far as the crest; the tanks went as far as before, and no farther. But the Germans facing the center were kept occupied long enough to start the wing companies moving. Firing as they went the two companies reached the village. Instead of marching past and around, the men closest to the buildings drifted inward, seeking the shadows and some kind of cover, dragging the two companies in with them.

What then happened cannot be recorded with any certainty. The story of Christmas Day inside Eschdorf was one of confusion at the time and recrimination later. Members of the 104th Infantry subsequently claimed to have captured Eschdorf and believed that no part of Task Force Hamilton held on in the town. Officers and men of the task force, somewhat closer to the scene, have a different story. 16 The men of the two companies that had reached Eschdorf on Christmas Eve were stranded there in the houses while German armored vehicles jockeyed about, firing at doors and windows. In the meantime the bulk of the enemy infantry gathered in the southeastern corner to meet any attempt to reinforce the attackers. When day came the commander of Company E, Capt. Vaughn Swift, took his chances in the gauntlet of bullets and ran out to the American tanks. By some miracle he reached the Shermans alive and led them into Eschdorf. Two were knocked out there, but not before they had quieted the enemy armored vehicles. (Captain Swift was given the DSC.)

As the day went on the two company commanders tried to sort out their men and resume the drive to cut through to the roads entering Eschdorf from the north. Whether this was accomplished remains a matter of debate. Finally, in the late afternoon, the division headquarters responded to Hamilton's urging and instructed the 104th Infantry to send its 1st Battalion and envelop Eschdorf. The instructions were followed. Company C entered the village an hour or so after daylight on 26 December and by 0800 reported Eschdorf clear of the enemy.

Throughout Christmas Day corps and division artillery beat the northern approaches to Eschdorf, hoping to isolate the uncertain dogfight within the town. As it turned out, the Fuehrer Grenadier Brigade had no intention of intervening there but was slipping north through the woods and ravines, while a few rear

guard detachments fought on to form a new bulwark to defend the Sure River line. As early as the afternoon of 24 December the 3d Battalion, 104th Infantry (Lt. Col. Howard C. Dellert), had reached Heiderscheid, there secured guides from the 319th, and had gone on to relieve the two companies of the 319th on the river at Heiderscheidergrund.

While the 104th put troops along the river, its sister regiment made a march of three and a half miles over rough country but against little opposition and by nightfall of the 24th was nears the bridge site at Bonnal. On the extreme left flank at Bilsdorf, Company C of the 249th Engineer Combat Battalion was on reconnaissance when it was struck by a much larger enemy force deployed in the village. The company commander, Capt. A. J. Cissna, elected to stay behind and cover his men as they withdrew from Bilsdorf; he fought alone until he was killed. Cissna was awarded the DSC posthumously. The 1st Battalion of the 328th (Lt. Col. W. A. Callanan), aided by the 2d Battalion, 101st Infantry, found a rear guard group of the Fuehrer Grenadier Brigade holed up in Arsdorf, near the division west boundary, and spent the night of the 24th digging the grenadiers out of attics and cellars. By midmorning Arsdorf was in hand and the left flank of the 26th Division was fairly secure except for Bigonville, three miles northwest, which now passed into the division zone as CCR, 4th Armored Division, left that village to play a new role on the western flank of the corps.

But the main mission of the 26th Division, to make a crossing at the Sure River, had yet to be accomplished when Task Force Hamilton started the fight at Eschdorf on the night of 24 December. General Paul, beset by incessant urging from the III Corps commander, passed the word to his two forward regiments that the attack must get into high gear, then sent a message to General Millikin that he hoped to seize the Sure crossing before daylight on Christmas Day. Pitched battles at Eschdorf and Arsdorf so entangled the division that the idea of a general movement forward had to be abandoned, particularly when on Christmas Day an additional battalion had to be committed at both of these towns. Although troops of the two attacking regiments were within sight of the river on Christmas Eve they found that there would be no surprise crossing. In the zone of the 104th Infantry the enemy, alerted by the presence of the two companies of the 319th, had strengthened his position at the opposite end of the Heiderscheidergrund bridge and it was apparent that a crossing site would have to be sought elsewhere. On the left the 3d Battalion of the 328th Infantry (Lt. Col. Arthur C. Tillison) reached the bare hill above Bonnal on Christmas morning, just in time to see the last German half-track cross the bridge before it was blown.

The corps commander now released the 101st Infantry from reserve and ordered General Paul to "keep going" and get to Wiltz, four miles the other side of the Sure. Paul planned to relieve the 328th with his reserve regiment, but while arrangements were being made, on the night of the 25th, word flashed back that a bridge had been captured and that the 3d Battalion was crossing. This episode of the Bonnal bridge is an apt-and instructive-example of the "fog of war." The bridge actually had been destroyed eight to ten hours earlier, but it was nearly midnight before the 328th Infantry was able to ascertain that none of its troops had got across the river. Bad news never comes singly. The 104th Infantry had to report that the Germans had blown up one span of the bridge at Heiderscheidergrund.

The Sure River is in itself not too difficult an obstacle, at its widest point no more than twenty-five yards across. The current is not swift, and there are many places where it is possible to wade across. (Plans actually were made for sending an assault party through the bitter cold stream, then wrapping the troops in blankets and thawing them out on the far bank.) The problem is to get down to the river and to get up the steep cliffs to the north bank. So twisting and tortuous is the river course and so blind are its bends that great care must be exercised in choosing a crossing point lest one have to cross the river twice. The approaches to the river, the meandering of the riverbed and the exits on the north bank combined therefore to dictate where the 26th Division might cross.

Whether the enemy was strong enough to dictate how the division had to cross remained to be seen. The lay of the ground gave three potential crossing sites in the 26th Division zone: from east to west, Heiderscheidergrund, Esch-sur-Sure, and Bonnal. All had stone arch bridges of solid construction or did prior to 25 December 1944. Heiderscheidergrund normally would present the most attractive of the three crossings because it gave entrance to the main Wiltz road. But the fight for Eschdorf had slowed down the 104th Infantry and prevented a thoroughgoing exploitation of the 319th toehold at Heiderscheidergrund. Furthermore the enemy had first concentrated to defend this, the most obvious of the three crossings. What he was set to do to defend Esch-sur-Sure and Bonnal remained to be tested.

The fragmented commitment of the Fuehrer Grenadier Brigade had resulted in heavy losses and blunted the fighting edge of this "elite" unit. By the very nature of its dispersed and staggered commitment the brigade had succeeded in creating a picture of strength quite out of keeping with reality. The 1st Battalion of the brigade, for example, had first appeared in front of the west wing of the 26th Division headed southwest, then had been turned around, had bumped back across the front of the 328th-fighting here and there in the woods as it went—and then had taken a hand against the 104th. Furthermore the Fuehrer Grenadier Brigade was an amorphous organization which accorded with none of the tables carried in the American handbook on German order of battle. Since its numbering and unit names fitted much of the description of the elder formation, the Grossdeutschland Panzer Division, the brigade had been first identified as the division. It would take much time and numerous prisoners before the 26th Division order of battle team could complete the true picture of the brigade.

When the Seventh Army commander ordered the Fuehrer Grenadier Brigade to withdraw to the Sure on 25 December, he intended the defense to continue on the south bank of the river. But the brigade's rifle regiment, much understrength as the consequence of the rough handling received at Arsdorf, Eschdorf, and in the counterattack at Heiderscheid, could no longer provide the necessary infantry. The bulk of the brigade had apparently crossed to the north side of the river by the morning of 26 December, forming a line or what passed for a line—east and west of Esch-sur-Sure. The only German reserve in this sector was the army engineer brigade at Nothum, a 2 1/2-mile march north of the Bonnal crossing. But General Brandenberger was loath to employ any of his small engineer complement in the firing line except under the direst of circumstances.

There was little artillery to defend the line of the Sure; most of the guns and Werfers which had good prime movers and could be hauled along the crowded roads west of the Our were at work around Bastogne or firing in defense of the Bour-scheid bridgehead. One advantage the defenders did have:

good observation from the heights overlooking the separate crossing sites.

The morning of 26 December dawned bright and clear with the promise of air support for the 26th Division at the river. On the left the 101st Infantry had relieved the 328th and stood ready to attempt the crossing. The 101st was fresh and its ranks were full. After its first effort to reach the piers of the stone bridge at Bonnal was met by rifle fire, a patrol discovered a good site farther to the west where a river loop curled to the American side. Engineer assault craft reached the 3d Battalion (Lt. Col. James N. Peale) shortly before noon, but a rumor had circulated that the enemy was lying in wait on the opposite bank and the troops showed some reluctance to move. Col. Walter T. Scott, the regimental commander, took a single bodyguard and crossed the river in a rubber boat, returning without mishap. The battalion then crossed, the silence broken only by the sound of the paddles, an occasional hoarse-voiced command, and a few rifle shots. The 1st Battalion (Maj. Albert L. Gramm), closer to Bonnal, likewise made an uneventful crossing. The enemy, no more than a few stray pickets, did loiter. Engineers started a Bailey bridge, using the supports of the stone bridge at Bonnal, while the two battalions, tired by their scramble up the steep banks, dug in along the edge of the bluffs. The few enemy planes that tried to strafe along the river were destroyed or driven off by alert fighter-bombers and the 390th Antiaircraft Automatic Weapons Battalion. Nor did a small German counter-attack during the evening have any effect.

The eyes of the Fuehrer Grenadier Brigade were fixed on Heiderscheidergrund where the German fighting vehicles and riflemen waited for the main American effort. Although one span of the stone bridge had been blown as a precautionary measure, the enemy threw a trestle over the gap, preserving the bridge as a sally port to the south bank. Twice German tanks and assault guns made a bid to recross and counterattack the 104th Infantry. The first attempt was stopped short of the bridge by rapid shellfire. The second was more successful: four tanks and an assault gun rammied across the bridge but were abandoned by their crews when American guns and howitzers brought salvo after salvo of white phosphorus to sear the near bank. During the 26th, patrols operating in the 104th Infantry sector put their glasses on Esch-sur-Sure. They reported that there was no sign of the enemy in the village, but Colonel Palladino could not risk an immediate crossing on his left while the Germans opposite his right held a bridge and still seemed willing to carry the fight back to the American side of the river.

The troops in the attenuated 101st bridgehead easily repulsed a minor counterattack on the morning of 27 December. As yet there was nothing to indicate an enemy shift to meet this threat to the Sure River position. By midmorning the Bailey bridge was open and tanks and tank destroyers crossed to support the 3d Battalion as it climbed on up the bluffs to Liefrange. Since the two bridges at Esch-sur-Sure had been demolished, the commander of the 104th Infantry arranged for his left battalion to borrow the Bonnal Bailey. As the right battalion put on a demonstration with much firing at Heiderscheidergrund, the left crossed, then swung back toward Kaundorf as if to command the road climbing from Esch-sur-Sure. While this maneuver was in process the engineers constructed a treadway bridge at Esch and tank destroyers were put across to reinforce Palladino's battalion on the far bank. By the close of the day it could be said that the Sure bridgehead was firm and the way open to recapture Wiltz.

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THE 4TH ARMORED DIVISION REACHES BASTOGNE

Christmas Day came and went leaving the 4th Armored Division toiling slowly toward Bastogne. The left wing of the III Corps now conformed to the slow, foot-slogging pace of the divisions on the right and in the center. Both CCA and CCB had an additional rifle battalion when the attack resumed on the 25th, for the 1st and 2d Battalions of the 318th Infantry had reported to General Gaffey late on Christmas Eve after a cold, miserable, six-hour truck ride from the 80th Division sector. Both battalions, the 1st attached to CCA and the 2d to CCB, were considerably understrength after the bloody engagements at Eitelbruck. The 1st Battalion, whose officer losses had been very high, had a new commander and so did all of its companies.

During the fight at Warnach a few tanks from CCA had tried to drive on to Tintange but had bogged down. General Gaffey therefore decided to employ a part of his infantry reinforcement with the general mission of attacking to reach Bastogne, and the more immediate job of taking Tintange. After a freezing night bivouacked in the snow, Maj. George W. Connaughton's 1st Battalion, 318th, set off for a line of departure south of the village that was shown on the map as a small creek.

Gaffey had said that the battalion would have to fight for its line of departure. He was right. The two assault companies reached the creek only to discover that they faced a deep gorge, with Germans arrayed to defend it. Somehow the infantry scrambled down and up again while their opponents pitched in hand grenades. Emerging south of the village the attackers came under continuous rifle fire, but what stopped them cold was a single large-caliber assault gun whose shells burst wherever the Americans turned. The support, Company B (Capt. Reid McAllister), was given very special attention by the German gunners. Tired of taking losses where it lay, the company asked permission to take the burden of the assault on its own shoulders. Two platoons advanced through the forward companies and the enemy infantry inside the village immediately opened fire. In so doing the Germans gave away their locations to the third platoon, which had circled in from the east. Return fire coming in from the east momentarily silenced the garrison; galled by its losses Company B rushed the village, captured the maddening assault gun as its crew sought to escape, and took 161 prisoners. This action must be credited to the infantry, but it should be added that eight fighter-bombers from the 377th Squadron had hit Tintange on call, blasting with bombs and rockets just before the riflemen moved in. During the day the 51st Armored Infantry Battalion carried the advance on the west side of the Arlon-Bastogne highway as far as Hollange, pausing here with night coming on and the enemy showing his first intention of making a stand. CCA now had cleared another stretch of woods and villages flanking the Bastogne highway—but the streets of Bastogne still were seven miles away.

The 2d Battalion, 318th Infantry (Lt. Col. Glenn H. Gardner), did its chore of woods clearing and village fighting on Christmas Day alongside the armored infantry and tanks of CCB. Chaumont, scene of the bitter action two days earlier, remained the immediate objective. This time the enemy was deeply dug in, all through the woods south of the village. While tanks from the 8th Tank Battalion edged around the woods firing indiscriminately into the pines, the foot troops routed out the German infantry from holes and log-covered trenches where they sought shelter from the tankers' shells. This was a slow, precarious

business. Some of the enemy paratroopers could be persuaded that surrender was the better part of valor, but many had to be finished off with grenades and even bayonets. In this manner the 2d Battalion worked through three successive wood lots, meeting strong rifle and automatic weapons fire in each. Here Sgt. Paul J. Wiedorfer made a lone charge against two German machine guns. He killed the crew serving the first weapon and forced the crew of the second to surrender. (He was awarded the Medal of Honor.)

Chaumont village was less of a problem. Prisoners had reported that a large number of panzers had come in during the night, but in fact there were no tanks, except the derelict Shermans left on the 23d. The American light tanks moved in with the infantry and by dark the village was in American hands—most of the enemy had withdrawn farther north after the struggle in the woods. The 2d Battalion saw nearly a hundred of its men evacuated for bullet wounds mostly suffered inside the woods. Both here and at Tintange the 5th Parachute troopers had been forced to rely on their small arms; the 318th as a result sustained more casualties from bullet fire than at any time since its frontal attack at the Moselle River in early September.

Artillery and large numbers of fighter-bombers belabored the 5th Parachute Division on 26 December. The advancing Americans of the two combat commands and the attached infantry found that more and more of the enemy were willing to lay down their arms after honor had been satisfied by token resistance, but for each point where the combination of American fighter-bombers, artillery, tanks, and infantry won quick surrender there was a crossroad, a patch of woods, or a tiny collection of houses to which a tough young officer and a few men clung fiercely. Bravery was matched with bravery. Pfc. O. M. Laughlin of the 318th broke up one German position with grenades after he had been hit in the shoulder and could not use his rifle. (He received the DSC.) Spread across a wide front, CCA and CCB could maintain little contact; nor could the rifle battalions and tank-infantry teams. Much of the American combat strength had to be diverted to screen the flanks of the individual detachments or to circle back to stamp out resistance flaring up unexpectedly in areas supposed to be free of the enemy. (CCA, for example, captured a battalion headquarters and a large number of prisoners in a fight at Hollange, south of Chaumont, which had been taken by CCB the day before.) Mines also made for delay. There were more in the path of the advance than ever before, but they had been laid hastily, were not well concealed, and often lacked fuzes. Again the most lethal and in numerous cases the sole German weapons were the rifle, machine gun, or machine pistol. These served the enemy well, and gaps in the ranks of the attackers widened even as the prisoner bag swelled. Captured paratroopers complained that they no longer had artillery support, that morale was cracking when friendly guns could not be seen or heard; nonetheless the dwindling strength of the 318th and the armored infantry battalions bore witness that the enemy still was in a fighting mood.

Despite all this the lines of the 101st Airborne Division were appreciably closer. By dark the 2d Battalion, 318th Infantry, after bitter battle and very heavy casualties, had reached the woods near Hompré, some 4,000 yards from the Bastogne perimeter. Using green and red light signals, learned from prisoners in the past two days, 1st Lt. Walter P. Carr and a four-man patrol stole through the German lines, reaching the Bastogne outposts at 0430. The return trip, with a situation map marked by the 101st Airborne G-3, wrote *finis* to a daring and successful mission. But other Americans had beaten Carr to Bastogne.

On Christmas Eve, when it was apparent that no quick

breakthrough could be expected on the Arlon-Bastogne highway, the 4th Armored Division commander could look to two possible means of leveraging the slowing attack into high gear. The two battalions of the 318th were ready to add more riflemen to what had become a slow-paced infantry battle; perhaps this extra weight would tell and punch a hole through which the tanks of CCA and CCB could start rolling again. But General Gaffey was a veteran and convinced armored officer, serving a commander whose name was everywhere attached to feats of speed and daring in mechanized warfare and whose doctrine was simple: if the ground and the enemy combined to thwart the tanks in the area originally selected for attack, then find some other spot where the enemy might be less well situated to face a mechanized thrust.

The command had caught a catnap by 1100, fuel tanks were filled, commanders were briefed, an artillery plane had oriented the gunners-and the drive began. The light tanks and a platoon of tank destroyers from the 704th Tank Destroyer Battalion led off, followed by paired teams of tank and armored infantry companies. The scattered German outposts, members of a replacement engineer battalion, dived for cover as the tanks raced along the road, then hastily surrendered to the infantry following. Beyond Vaux-lez-Rosières the column left the pavement and headed northeast on a secondary road, hoping to find it ill-defended. Thus far the teams had leapfrogged, taking turns in dealing with the little villages away from the main route. About 1400 the advance guard was checked at a small creek near Cobreville where the only bridge had just been blown. Abrams called for the battalion bulldozer, always kept close to the headquarters tank in the column. It took an hour for the bulldozer to demolish a stone wall and push the debris into the creek-then on went the column.

CCR of the 4th Armored Division had just taken Bigonville on the division east flank, and was counting its prisoners, waiting for orders, and making plans for feeding its troops a big Christmas dinner when Colonel Blanchard heard from the division commander. The order given was brief: move to Neufchâteau at once. Starting an hour after midnight, the combat command was near Neufchâteau when it received other and more detailed orders-attack toward Bastogne to assist the advance of CCB (then south of Chaumont) and to protect the left flank of the division and corps.

For this task CCR had the 37th Tank Battalion (Lt. Col. Creighton W. Abrams), the 53d Armored Infantry Battalion (Lt. Col. George Jaques), the self-propelled 94th Armored Field Artillery Battalion, and a battery of 155-mm. howitzers from the 177th Field Artillery Battalion. Although CCR normally was not employed as an integral tactical unit in 4th Armored practice, the tank and rifle companies of the two battalions had teamed together in many a fight.

Colonel Blanchard had selected his own route (to avoid blown bridges) and an assembly area southwest of Bercheux village on the Neufchâteau-Bastogne road. Here the column closed shortly before dawn on Christmas Day. Almost nothing was known about the German strength or dispositions along the twelve-mile stretch of road that lay ahead. Inside of Bercheux was a company of First Army engineers, which, as part of the VIII Corps barrier line, was preparing to make a stand. Thus far, however, the Germans had shown little disposition to push much beyond Vaux-lez-Rosières, a mile and a half farther up the road, from which the 28th Division headquarters had been driven on the night of the 22d.

Remonville was next. Perhaps some sixth sense warned that it was full of Germans; maybe a spotter plane had seen move-

ment there or a frightened prisoner had talked. Whatever the reason, Remonville got the treatment. A company of Shermans lined up on the high ground outside the village with their guns trained on the houses. Four battalions of artillery, emplaced close enough to reach the target, opened rapid fire with high explosive and the tanks joined in. For five to ten minutes, long enough for the A Team to race to the village, shells rained down. In the streets the tank crews worked their machine guns until they were hot, while the infantry leaped from their half-tracks and sprinted from building to building. The German garrison, the 3d Battalion, 14th Parachute Regiment, had remained hidden up to this point. Some now emerged-but it was too late. Tank gunners and riflemen cut them down from every side. Hand grenades tossed through cellar windows and down cellar stairs quickly brought the recalcitrant-and living-to the surface. By dusk the job was finished. CCR had taken 327 prisoners.

The light tanks in the advance guard moved on, but only for a few hundred yards. A large crater pitting the road where a small creek made a detour impossible brought the column to a halt as the day ended. CCR had come abreast of CCB, in fact was fearful of using its artillery against any targets to the east. Gaffey still expected CCB to make the breakthrough now that its west flank was protected. To this end General Taylor, impatient to reach his division in Bastogne, had joined General Dager's command post, bringing the first word Dager had that CCR had come up on his left. Even so the general mission for all of the 4th Armored Division remained the relief of the 101st Airborne.

On Christmas night Colonel Blanchard and his officers huddled over a map which had just arrived by liaison plane. This map showed the American disposition in the Bastogne perimeter, only six miles away, and a somewhat hypothetical scheme of the German order of battle as it faced in toward Bastogne and out toward the 4th Armored. The red-penciled symbols representing the enemy were most numerous and precise where they faced north; by now the 101st had had ample opportunity to gauge the German strength and dispositions hemming it in. The red figures farther south were few and accompanied by question marks.

Basing it on this rather sketchy information, Blanchard gave his plan for attack on 26 December. This called for an advance through Remichampagne, a mile and a half away, and Clochimont. Then the combat command would turn northwest to Sibret, thus returning to the Neufchâteau-Bastogne road. At Sibret, which air reconnaissance had reported to be full of troops, the main fight would apparently be made. Fighter-bomber support had been promised for the morning of the 26th, and CCR had seen the sky full of American planes over Bastogne. The four firing batteries with CCR would displace from Juseret to new positions south of Cobreville, but because the exact location of CCB was unknown the howitzers would not be laid on Remichampagne. Immediate targets would be two: a large block of woods west of Remichampagne, for which CCR could spare none of its limited armored infantry; and the road from Morhet, leading east of the Neufchâteau-Bastogne highway, on which spotter planes had observed German tanks.

When CCR started for Remichampagne on the morning of 26 December, the ground was frozen, and tank going was even better than it had been during the summer pursuit across France. The column had just gotten under way when suddenly a number of P-47's appeared. Although the 362d Fighter Group was slated to give CCR a hand, these particular planes, prob-

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ably from the 362d, had not been called for. Bombing only a few hundred yards in front of the leading tanks, the P-47's shook all ideas of resistance out of the few Germans left in the village or the woods.

Next was Clochimont. CCR was reaching the point where a collision with the enemy main line of resistance could be expected or a strong counterattack be suffered. Carefully then, CCR deployed near Clochimont, moving its teams out to cover the flanks. Colonel Abrams dispatched one tank company northward hoping to uncover the next enemy position or draw fire from Assenois, straight to the fore, or Sibret, the objective on the Bastogne highway. It was about 1500 when these dispositions were completed. Orders called for the attack to be continued toward Sibret, over to the northwest, but this town was probably well defended and German tanks, more likely than not, would be found guarding the main road. The 37th Tank Battalion had lost tanks here and there along the way and had no more than twenty Shermans in operation. The 53d Armored Infantry Battalion, weak to begin with, now was short 230 men. The two battalion commanders, Abrams and Jaques, stood by the road discussing the next move and watching what looked like hundreds of cargo planes flying overhead en route to drop supplies to the 101st when Abrams suggested that they try a dash through Assenois straight into Bastogne. It was true that Sibret was next on the CCR itinerary, but it was known to be strongly held and Bastogne was the 4th Armored Division objective. Jaques agreed.

Abrams radioed Capt. William Dwight, the battalion S-3, to bring the C Team forward. It was now about 1520. Another message, this time through the artillery liaison officer, gave the plan to the 94th Armored Field Artillery Battalion and asked that the 101st Airborne be told that the armor was coming in. The 94th already was registered to fire on Assenois, but there was little time in which to transmit data to the division artillery or arrange a fire plan. CCR alone among the combat commands had no telephone wire in. Continuous wave radio could not be counted on. Frequency modulation was working fairly well, but all messages would have to be relayed. Despite these handicaps, in fifteen minutes three artillery battalions borrowed from CCB (the 22d, 253d, and 776th) were tied in to make the shoot at Assenois when the call came.

Colonel Abrams had entrusted Captain Dwight with the shock troops (Company C of the 37th Tank Battalion and Company C of the 53d Armored Infantry Battalion), telling him: "It's the push!" By 1620 all was ready and the team moved out, Shermans leading and half-tracks behind. Abrams stayed glued to his radio. At 1634 he checked with the 94th Field Artillery Battalion and asked if he could get the concentration on Assenois at a minute's notice. Exactly one minute later the tank company commander, 1st Lt. Charles Boggess, called from the lead tank. Colonel Abrams passed the word to the artillery, "Concentration Number Nine, play it soft and sweet." A TOT could hardly be expected with existing communications, but the thirteen batteries (an unlucky number for the enemy) sent ten volleys crashing onto Assenois.

Eight antitank guns were sited around the village; here and there a gun crew fired a wild shot before a shell blasted the piece or the furious fire of the Sherman machine guns drove the cannoneers to their holes. At the dip in the road on the village edge Lieutenant Boggess called for the artillery to lift, then plunged ahead without waiting to see whether the 94th had his message. So close did the attack follow the artillery that not a hostile shot was fired as the tanks raced into the streets. The center of the village was almost as dark as night, the sun

shut out by smoke and dust. Two tanks made a wrong turn. One infantry half-track got into the tank column; another was knocked out when an American shell exploded nearby. The initial fire plan had called for the battery of 155's to plaster the center of the town, and these shells still were coming in when the infantry half-tracks entered the streets. Far more vulnerable to the rain of shell fragments than the tankers, the armored infantrymen leaped from their vehicles for the nearest doorway or wall. In the smoke and confusion the German garrison, a mixed group from the 5th Parachute and 26th Volks Grenadier Divisions, poured out of the cellars. The ensuing shooting, clubbing, stabbing melee was all that the armored infantry could handle and the C Team tanks rolled on to glory alone.

The "relief column" heading out of Assenois for the Bastogne perimeter now consisted of the three Sherman tanks commanded by Lieutenant Boggess, the one half-track which had blundered into the tank column, and two more Shermans bringing up the rear. Boggess moved fast, liberally spraying the tree line beside the highway with machine gun fire. But a 300-yard gap developed between the first three vehicles and the last three, giving the enemy just time to throw a few Teller mines out on the road before the half-track appeared. The half-track rolled over the first mine and exploded. Captain Dwight then ran his tow tanks onto the shoulder, the crews removed the mines, and the tanks rushed on to catch up with Boggess. At 1650 (the time is indelibly recorded in the 4th Armored Division record) Boggess saw some engineers in friendly uniform preparing to assault a pillbox near the highway. These were men from the 326th Airborne Engineer Battalion-contact with the Bastogne garrison had been made. Twenty minutes later Colonel Abrams (subsequently awarded the DSC for the action at Assenois) shook hands with General McAuliffe, who had come to the out-post line to welcome the relieving force.

Colonel Jaques and the 53d Armored Infantry Battalion missed this dramatic moment; they were involved in a scrambling fight for possession of Assenois-strictly an infantry battle now that the artillery no longer could intervene. This battle continued into the night, the 53d capturing some five hundred prisoners in and around the town. One American, S./Sgt. James R. Hendrix, took on the crews of the two 88-mm. guns with only his rifle, adding crews and guns to the bag in Assenois. (Hendrix was awarded the Medal of Honor). More Germans filtered in along the dense woods which lined the east side of the Bastogne road north of Assenois. Here Company A of the 53d was put in to dig the Germans out, the company commander, Capt. Frank Kutak, directing the fight from his jeep for he had been wounded in both legs. (For bravery here and in other actions Kutak was awarded the DSC.)

An hour or so after midnight enough of the enemy had been killed or captured to give relatively safe passage along the Bastogne road. Over 200 vehicles had been gathered at Rossignol waiting for the road to open, and during the night the light tank company of the 37th Tank Battalion escorted forty trucks and seventy ambulances into Bastogne.

REUNION ATTENDEES:

Dom Abbruzze 313 FA S Plainfield, N J	Tom Barry A/702 Tnk Bn Clearwater, FL	Bunny Cople Hq/318 Haupauge, N Y	Elmer Dorsten A/318 Coldwater, OH	MG David L Evans Cmdr 80th IT Shelbyville, TN
James "Jim" Acree C/319 Dallas, TX	Jeffery Barton M/319 Hamburg, NY	William J Cople Hq/318 Haupauge, N Y	Dave Dowdy Hq 3/318 Ortonville, MI	Patricia Evans Cmdr 80th IT Shelbyville, TN
Andy Adkins H/317 Gainesville, FL	Tina Barton M/319 Hamburg, NY	Joanna Coscia A/319 Southhaven, MS	Dave Dowdy Hq 3/318 Ortonville, MI	Rodolphe Fabre L/318 Lafayette, LA
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