

BLUE RIDGE

The Service Magazine
Volume 88, Number 355

Post Reunion - 2007
Issue 3

80th Infantry
Blue Ridge Division




Only Moves Forward

A.E.F.	E.T.O.
1917-1919	1942-1946
Artois-Picardy	Northern France
St. Mihiel	Ardennes
Meuse-Argonne	Rhineland
Battle Deaths 1232	Central Europe
Casualties 5000	Battle Deaths 3,480
	Casualties 12,484

In remembrance of our 80th Division comrades
who died and served in WWI and WWII

Official Publication of the 80th Division Veterans Association, Inc.
Deadline for the next issue is December 1, 2007



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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*All communications, including articles, photos, news items for publication, changes of address,
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COMMANDER'S REPORT

It was a very good reunion and many enjoyed the trip to the Airforce Museum. As the new Commander of the 80th Division Veterans Association I wish to thank all of you who attended the reunion in Fairborn, OH.

Also we voted to take the 80th (IT) Division into the Association and we want to welcome them into the Association.

I look forward to being your Commander for 2007-2008, and would like to see all of you in Carlisle for our next reunion.

Elmer G. Dorsten (A-318)

Change of Address:

Fellows, you asked for it. Please note I have removed the postal REQUEST FOR CHANGE OF ADDRESS from the newsletter. It is costing too much for those of you who move and don't send in your change of address causing a charge to be sent to me of \$1.54 each, with the new rates it will be even more. Now if you move and haven't sent in your change of address the Blue Ridge will not be mailed to you. If you didn't send your new address in, don't blame me—blame yourself.

Additional copies of the MEMORIAL NEWSLETTER: DEDICATION ISSUE are available. Send \$5 to Robert Murrell, Editor, 630 Pennsylvania Ave., Oakmont, PA 15139-1574

LIFE PLUS CLUB 2007-2008

If you have sent in money and I omitted your name, let me know so I may give you credit. Last date I have entered a name 1 September 2007.

John H. Eckrich C-318
W. C. Nicol 780th Ord
Walton W. Spangler A-319
Shoemaker, Howard I-317
Smith, Robert W. K-317
John T. Wettig, Sr Hq 2nd Bn 319

TAPS

Edwards, Daniel L. Jr. 80th Signal
5474 Naughton Drive
Huber Heights, OH
8/2/2007
Rptd by wife Mary

Lee, Junior L. B-317
547 E. Monticello Ave.
Lima, OH 45804-5507
3/13/2007
Rptd by wife.

Noxon, Charles W. B-313 FA Bn
10013 Newbys Bridge Road
Chesterfield, VA 23832
8/23/2007
Rptd by Fran Potetti

Stephens, John E. ?-317
12 C Sycamore Drive
Storres, CT 06268
8/6/2007
Rptd by Nephew

Waldron, Nelson "Tubby"
124 Clearfield Place
Pittsburgh, PA 15204
8/16/2007
Rptd by Newspaper Obit.

McBRIDE SCHOLARSHIP FUND

If you have sent in money and I have omitted your name please let me know so I may give you credit. Last date I have entered a name 1 September 2007.

W. C. Nicoll 780th ord

McBRIDE SCHOLARSHIP

Our Scholarship was awarded to Sara K. Riekofski as the fifth recipient of the \$500.00. Sara will attend Wayne State College in Wayne, NE. She plans to pursue a degree in medicine. She sends along a Thank you note and it reads; Thank you so much for selecting me to receive the 80th Division Association General Horace McBride Scholarship. It is truly an honor. The money will be of great assistance to further my education.

I am sending a copy of all my awards, activities, and achievements. Also I'm sending a copy of my College and career plans. She sent along two full pages of education, Work Experience, High School Awards/Honors Activities, Community Service/Skills, College/Career Plans and gives References are available upon request. (Ed. Note: This girl, how she found time for herself, is a big question. She closes with she hopes to be a Geriatrics doctor or an Anesthesiologist.)

ODDS N' ENDS

To All Who Attended The Reunion:

I wish you to know the housekeeping department of the Hotel searched my room on Sunday while I was having breakfast and found my cap where it had fallen in between the ottoman and the big chair. My thanks to everyone who helped in the search.
Bob Murrell

Reunion Attendees:

Sorry folks the Roll Call did not reach me in time for this Issue. It will appear in the next issue.

Monument Unveiled: Luxembourg

On 20 June 2007 Daniel R. Fleming was invited to the unveiling of a monument in Pintsch, Luxembourg as a member of Company K, 317th Regiment. The town was liberated on 25 January 1945.

The Kiischpelt Commune represents several towns comprising a county area; all of which I understand participated in the erection of the monument which expresses their appreciation to all 317th Regiment liberators. I wanted to share this information to let all the men of the 80th that Luxembourg is most grateful for our service.

MEMORIAL FUND

If you have sent in money and I have omitted your name please let me know so I may give you credit. Last date I have entered a name 1 September 2007.

Umberger, Howard

A-317

Welcome Men of the 80th (IT) Division

We WWII veterans welcome the 80th Division to the 80th Division Veterans Association!

At our 88th annual reunion the membership voted to extend the same privileges of camaraderie we veterans of WWI and WWII have enjoyed for the past 88 years and are still serving 80th Division by our annual remembrances.

Hopefully our embracing you 80th Soldiers in our ranks is accepted in the manner it is intended; for camaraderie and for your like service to our Country in its time of need!

80th Division Soldiers who have served outside the Continental limits of the United States of America since the War on Terror began in 1991 and pay a yearly fee of \$20.00 or \$150.00 for life membership will have voting privilege in the Association. 80th Soldiers who are serving stateside, would pay a yearly membership fee of \$15.00 or life membership \$150.00 with no voting privilege. (If ordered and served outside the Continental United States under the 80th Division Command, they also will be eligible to vote)

In the words of Robert A Higgins PNC, Co A, 318 Infantry, WWI, when he passed his blessing to us WWII vets. "We are passing on to you! With the 80th, go 80th ideals, 80th traditions, 80th Soldiers, 80th words, 80th deeds, 80th action and 80th prayers; all become part of you, just as you become part of us."

—*Bob Burrows PNC*

How I Spent My Summer Vacation

by Jeff Wignal

We spent four-day sightseeing in Paris, which I'll skip right over because your editor will insist.

On Thursday afternoon, June 14, we boarded the train that at a speed of 185 mph delivered us to Luxembourg City shortly after 3:00.

Now, at this point I must regress a bit. Having this spring contacted Virgil Myers (317) about an unrelated matter, I happened to mention we were thinking about going "over," and he immediately suggested I tie into the US Veteran's Friends, Luxembourg's "Friendship Week" observances in June.

Critical to my own plan however was a visit to the village of Farebersviller, in the hope of finally locating the place where my father had been killed in December of 1944. Subsequent communication with Constant Goergen, USVFL, determined that the best plan would be to arrive in Luxembourg a few days prior to Friendship Week, make the trip to Farebersviller and return before their activities commenced on June 19.

Everything fell nicely into place, and I set up the travel arrangements accordingly. There remained the one issue of transportation to Farebersviller and I asked Constant if he might be able to make arrangements for a rental car for that portion of the trip.

When I next heard from Constant he advised me that the rental car would not be necessary as he and a friend, Marco Eifes, would meet us at the RR station and take us where we wished to go. Words failed me then and do now. Constant was not a complete stranger to me—we had met briefly some years before, but that was the sum of our acquaintance. Constant and Marco were waiting for us when we arrived, and in moments we were under way, reaching the home of Mayor Laurent Kleinhentz in Farebersviller early in the evening. We soon left to investigate some sites along the road to Cocheren, returning to the dining room of the hotel in which we were staying for dinner, hosted by M. Kleinhentz.

The next morning commenced a varied and fascinating day M. Kleinhentz had scheduled in order to give us, I think, a sense of the area and its heritage.

The first was a visit to a coalmine near Saarbrucken, now shut down and converted to a museum. Both coal mining and steel production has ceased in the region, and the area is commercially depressed at the present time. From there we drove further eastward (and several centuries back in time) to Bliesbruck-Reinheim, to an archeological site dating from the Roman presence in the region to see an exhibition relating to Pompeii and its relationship to the Roman settlement here. The selection, display, and interpretation of the artifacts was extremely well done, and greatly enhanced for us by the very knowledgeable young woman who guided us through the exhibit—in very fluent English.

We then traveled still further eastward to the town of Bitche, of personal interest to M. Kleinhentz as he had attended school here for some seven years, where he again played host to our foursome in a local and excellent restaurant in the village before touring the massive Citadel of Bitche that overlooks the village and the surrounding area.

On Saturday morning we again met with M. Kleinhentz, and after briefly visiting his office at the town hall—which serves somewhat as a gallery for several of his paintings, another of his many talents—returned to the road to Cocheren, ultimately arriving at a local farm where Mayor Kleinhentz had thought was the most likely spot, and for several reasons—beyond the scope of this report—I believe it is.

The mayor's knock that brought the lady of the house to the door, and he quickly obtained her willing approval for us to ascend the hill through the pastures to the site, some two hundred meters from the house, which was easily found, as the mayor was quite familiar with it. All that remains are some cemented chunks of the walls, the original structure having been demolished by the owner of the land several years ago in order to create a roadway to the top of the hill.

We parted company with M. Kleinhentz for this last time and started across the province of Lorraine, a distance of roughly 60 miles that had required nearly three months for the 3rd Army to cross in the fall of 1944, with the first stop some six or seven miles to the west at the US Military Cemetery at St. Avold to revisit my father's grave. Here I must give special thanks to Assistant Superintendent Walter Benjamin for his most cordial and helpful reception.

From St. Avold we traced the route Company A of the 318th Regiment—as nearly as I could reconstruct it, in reverse—back to Pont a Mousson on the Moselle river, passing through as many of the towns mentioned in the reports as possible while trying to follow a reasonably direct route, passing Delme Ridge and crossing the Seille River near Nomeny. We eventually reached a crossroad known as Quatre Fers that was of interest as I knew Ron Martin, had been badly wounded near there on October 8, 1944, but had no knowledge of the place.

We drove from there into nearby Clemery, then doubled back to regain the primary route, eventually reaching St. Genevieve which had been heavily counterattacked after the Moselle crossing in mid-September.

By this time we were into the evening, and near Mousson Hill. We drove nearly to the top, but finding time running short came back down and drove on into Pont a Mousson to get situated in our hotel.

On the following morning—Sunday—we began a day-trip with a return to Mousson Hill, this time going to the top where the remains of a castle dating from the time of the Crusades were still visible. Of greater note was the vast distance that could be observed in all directions from this vantage point, which had been firmly in German hands as the 80th approached the Moselle in early September 1944.

We followed the Moselle south for about 15 miles to Nancy, and with the benefit of Marco's trusty GPS easily found our way to the center of the city where we spent a couple of hours wandering about Place Stanislaus, the beautiful public garden, and the streets, and stepped into the cathedral (service in progress) built in the style of those of the middle-ages, but about 1875.

The next stop was at St. Mihiel at a church I had visited previously to view the wooden carving that stands just inside. Carved from a single huge block of wood—something like four feet high and two and a half wide—in the 1500's, it has never developed a crack! The church itself was still in a war-damaged state in 1993, but restoration has been completed. We then visited to the US Military Cemetery there, briefly as it was near closing time.

Turning back toward the east and Pont a Mousson, we made a stop at the WWI memorial at Mont Sec, and another at the site of the village of Remeneauville, completely destroyed in WWI.

On Monday morning we checked out of the hotel and drove to Verdun, stopping first at Memorial—essentially the reception center—where we viewed an introductory film, and rather quickly viewed the extensive exhibits, then went to the “Trench of the Bayonets,” where the earth thrown up by a shell had buried a group of French soldiers, leaving only the bayonets of their rifles showing above the ground. A memorial has been constructed over the site to protect it, and the men remain interred there as “unknown,” but the bayonets have rusted away over the years and only the base of one remains visible.

Our final stop was at the Ossuary, which faces the main cemetery. If I remember correctly there are some 15,000 French graves there, although the visual effect is that there are far more. Beneath the Ossuary however lie the unidentified bones of a calculated 130,000 French and German combined. Otherwise the German dead are located in numerous smaller cemeteries throughout the area.

Late in the afternoon we reached our hotel in Luxembourg where we said a temporary goodbye to our congenial companions. We would be seeing them again soon, in different roles (but wearing the same hats!).

The following was our one free day, and after a leisurely start we rode the commuter bus into the city spending several hours—as Marco would say—“getting our shoes full of feet,” returning to the hotel in the late afternoon to prepare for the scheduled reception that evening to commence Veteran’s Friendship Week. Several members of the USVFL and the roughly fifty veterans and family members gathered at 7:00 for general introductions after which a group of us with 80th connections decided to gather in the hotel restaurant for dinner. As we were being seated, Russ Sick announced that he would be picking up the check.

So much activity filled the days that followed that I can do little but reprint the published schedule with as little added comment as possible. Much to my regret, space will not permit a full appreciation of these events.

Names are noted only as they appear in context. I do not have a complete list of the people involved and attending since in reality it would extend to hundreds—as will be seen. To attempt a list and omit some would be a disservice to them, so best to not make the attempt and convey my deepest thanks collectively. I will go so far as to identify by group, the members of the USVFL who were involved both directly and I’m sure from behind the scenes, the present day 80th Division, the veteran’s and family members who attended, the public officials throughout Luxembourg (and Northeastern France) with whom we were in contact, numerous representatives of the US government, the various groups that hosted the many events (that will appear in the following), and the people along the way who merely gathered to be a part of what was going on. Even in this I risk omission for which I will apologize in advance of discovery.

Wednesday, the last morning to sleep in for those inclined. We left at 1:00 PM for a bus tour of Luxembourg City with limited stops planned. At one, a vantage point from which to view some of the old fortifications, we incurred our only casualty when Elmer Dorsten stumbled on some stone steps. Fortunately he was not badly hurt, but 80+-year-old frames don’t take that kind of abuse without making the owner aware. He was able to conceal the aches and pains that

followed, but could do little to hide the black eye.

Somewhat to his advantage, our next stop was at the Pescatore—now an old age home—where some readily available medical assistance was summoned for him. The larger significance of the visit there was that it was in the chapel there that General Patton read his famous prayer to entreat the almighty to straighten out the weather so his planes could fly. We had the unique pleasure of hearing it reread by his granddaughter, Helen, in that same chapel.

This was followed by a reception at the town hall by the mayor of Luxembourg City, after which we were taken to the American Cemetery at Hamm to take part in an observance there. Helen Patton remained a noticeable presence, and the US Ambassador, Ann Wagner, addressed the group. Major General David Evans, with his wife and a group of non-coms, of whom five served as color guard there and at several other similar ceremonies through the week, represented the present day 80th Division.

At the conclusion of the event we were bussed to the town of Oetrange for dinner, breaking up sometime after 10:00, and returning to the hotel after 11:00. Short day.

Thursday the bus rolled out of the hotel driveway at 9:40 to Dudelange for a wreath laying ceremony at the US Monument there, then a reception in the town hall hosted by the city's mayor. Ann Wagner was again present, and at the close of the formal portion of the program several of us were presented with a very nice keepsake book about the town, and I think all were autographed by Ms. Wagner and General Evans. I know mine was.

Lunch followed at the Parc Hotel, after which we traveled south of the border to tour Fort Hackenberg in Veckring, France, a Maginot line fort now maintained as a museum. Our most informative guide—Charlie—compensated for the reduced length of the tour by speaking twice as fast, but in excellent English. A wreath laying ceremony followed at a WWII GI monument there on the grounds—representatives of both French military and resistance groups present, then a reception and a dinner hosted by the Moselle River, 1944 Association, in Metzervisse I believe.

Off again at 9:30 AM to arrive shortly after 11:00 at Cinqfontaines for a memorial ceremony at Jewish Deportation Memorial. This was a rough one, especially when during a particularly solemn portion of the service a train passed on the nearby track.

A reception followed in the town hall at Wincrange, then lunch, and the dedication of a newly erected 80th Division monument at nearby Pinsch, after which we rode to Eschweiler to visit the church that figured into the George Mergenthaler (28th Division) story, commemorating a memorial there, and, after a slight delay of the bus by a herd of cows returning home for the evening via the town's main thoroughfare, attended a reception and dinner hosted by the Commune of Eschweiler.

The event for Saturday was the Te Deum, a special service in the Luxembourg Cathedral in observance of National Day, much like our 4th of July celebrated with night-before fireworks everywhere. This was our one "dress" affair. Admission to this service is by invitation only; the Grand Duke and his family attend, all the top government officials, foreign and EU representatives, ranking military personnel, and the guests of the USVFL—which is to say, us. Rain dampened us coming and going, but nothing serious.

After the service we left for Boulaide for another memorial ceremony, followed by a reception and lunch, these hosted by the Commune of Boulaide, then on to Dilligen to unveil another 80th Division monument on the Our River at the spot where much of the division had crossed into Germany in early February 1945. Much of this affair was observed from beneath umbrellas. The reception that followed was delayed as an evening mass was still in progress in the local church and apparently it was the custom not to serve alcohol during that time. We spent much of the delay chatting with Erin Kraft and her two young children, the family of Steven Kraft, an embassy attaché who we met briefly a bit later. Soon the wine began to flow, and not long after we were ushered into the large dining room of the local restaurant for dinner, and another late return.

That was it for us. I had booked our return flight from Paris on Monday and we had to leave Luxembourg on Sunday to be sure of making the flight.

The final day's schedule took the group first to Heiderscheid and a ceremony at the monument there, then mass at the church in Dahl in remembrance of those lost in the Battle of the Bulge (special reference I'm sure to Sgt. Day Turner who was awarded the Medal of Honor for his action there), another ceremony at the Aasterterhoff, a barbecue at "Michie's Tavern, and on the return, a visit to Bourglinster Castle. A farewell dinner was scheduled at the hotel in the evening—I hope the staff was prepared this time.

During the course of the week's activities numerous awards and presentations were made to the various officials we were received by, and several members of the group. I personally received the "Medaille d'Or" of the Village of Farebersviller from Mayor Kleinhentz (separate from the USVFL program), a highly prized Commanding General, 80th Division, challenge coin from General Evans, and was inducted along with several others into the Chapel of the Four Chaplains.

I also had the opportunity to speak briefly with Helen Patton, whose mother and brother operate a produce farm near us (and have achieved national recognition for their innovative methods in organic farming). Space will not permit comment on Helen's many accomplishments, for which I will suggest and encourage a visit to the Internet. Likewise, I spoke briefly with Ms. Wagner whose son has just entered West Point, thus we share the label "Academy Parent," although mine has accumulated 24 years of dust, and is Air Force Academy.

A comment I would address personally to Mrs. Evans: my wife Mary is convinced it was all the salt in the ham. Mrs. Evans confirmed by the way—and all those of you who have received challenge coins take note—that, yes, if you are "challenged" and don't have it with you, you buy the drinks.

We meanwhile had boarded the train comfortably about 1:00 and arrived back in Paris shortly after 3:00 (love that 185 mph!).

From one Old COOT to another

I like the saying Bob Fasnacht had in his newsletter to Company "F" 318: "I sincerely hope you can make it (To the reunion)...time is getting short...remember when we were young and used to sort of "tolerate those veterans of WW I?" Well...now we are the "Old Coots" from WW II, let's make the most of it. Hope to see you at the reunion.

POST NEWS

3rd Battalion 317th Post #36

It was wonderful to see everybody again at the 88th Reunion. I realize that many would like to be there, however, because of health or economic conditions many had to miss it. For those of you who missed coming to Fairborn near Dayton, Ohio, we had a nice reunion, although smaller, which is the trend as we get older. The tour to the National Museum of the USAF at Wright-Patterson AFB was very interesting. It has one of the best collections of aircraft in the nation.

Some of those attending from the 317th and other units are as follows: Ray Dumrauf, Dom Palombaro, Bob Burrows, Bob Simpson, Howard Shoemaker, Jack Edwards, Robert Morehead, Virgil Myers, Max Schmidt, Angelo Barone, Doug Flick, Robert Parks, Laverne Schock, Alexander Russell, Victor Mullen, Howard Umbarger, Jerry Spellman, Leroy Pierce, Virgil Esco, Sal Artino, Robert Bagg, Clarence Brockman, Andy Adkins, Ellery Hatton, Jim and Dan Christen, Burt March, Jim Philips, Jeff Wignal, Harry Nutting, George West, George Bell, Russ Sick, Lee Anthony, Helen Beers, Rose Cistolo and Doris Wollen.

We had a nice Memorial Service on Saturday morning led by our National Chaplain, Abe Barone, who did a great job. We attended the Ladies Auxiliary annual luncheon at noon on Saturday. They do a great job in supporting our reunions. In the evening we attended the banquet with ten to a table and we were at table 18, so it will give you an idea of how many attended the big event this year.

Our sympathy goes to Robert Simpson, whose wife, Mabel, passed away on May 10th.

We had little news for this issue. Please forward information of your activities to me, so that we can keep our membership informed. Thanks for your cooperation. We will look forward to seeing many of you at Carlisle, Pa on August 13—17 in 2008.

Bob Smith, 61 Broad St. #108, San Luis Obispo, CA 93405, 805-545-7815

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Lee S. Anthony, Ph.D., Commander

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

Lane Hall Post # 42

Reunion News: Well I made it to the reunion in Dayton, OH and was very happy to be able to see some of my old friends from the 80th. The names of Ann Hatcher, and her friends Mary Seitz and Ruth Liete, Audrey Blocker, Friend Phyllis Weber, Audery daughter Claudia Bomham, Domenick Abbruzzese, Hilda Ltusek and Daughter Patty and husband Jack Fleming. It was a very nice affair, but on looking around, we saw so many friends missing. It was nice being with everyone, and I hope to make it next year to Carlisle, PA in August 2008.

On 30 June I heard from Paul BURGIO who told me his wife Mary had passed away in the hospital. Paul has been Mary's caretaker for sometime since she had a stroke. I sent a Mass Card from the 313th. Our Symphy and Prayers go out to Paul and family.

I want to report my son David, a member of the Patriot Guard Riders, has asked his State Representative to submit Legislature to prevent disruptions at funeral for soldiers returning home to be buried from the Iraq War. A modified version was passed by the CT. Senate and is awaiting for Gov. Rell's signature. The House has already approved it. The Law would be in affect from one hour before and after each service. Protesters must stay 150 feet from any funeral entrance and exit.

On Sunday 17 June, I received a call from Carl Hensley asking for a copy of the registration letter, however I was disappointed he did show.

My Computer has been down since 13 June, and if anyone has sent e a message please resubmit it. My new E-mail address is ffrangram@yahoo.com

First of August, I received a call from Lou Shirey, he called to check and then told me that Elmer Thygne had passed away in June 2007. I was sorry to hear this news since no one had notified me. I also sent a Mass Card from the 313th.

Thanks so much, and hope all is well with all of you.

Francis Poletti, 28 Arnold Lane, Rowayton, CT 06853, 203-855-1928

POST #47

The Reunion of 2007 is history and Elmer Dorsten can be congratulated for a job well done. Clarence and Naomi Brockman did not arrive until Thursday afternoon. They were in time to enjoy most of the festivities. Laverne Schock was in attendance and looked great for all he went through this past winter.

The New York Post gathering at Geneva, NY in May had a significant number of Florida Post members in attendance. We also had the pleasure of very pleasant weather conditions. The Post's side trips are always of special enjoyment. We did not have as much time for socializing in the evening because of a video that was being presented in the party room.

I had people asking about the October dates of our Ocala meeting and I informed them it would be included in the Post article in the next issue of the Blue Ridge Magazine. As I promised the dates are October 25th through the 27th, 2007 at The Hampton Inn, 3434 College Road, Ocala, FL 34474. The phone number for reservations is (352) 854-3200. When making reservations be sure to tell them you are with Post #47. Reservations must be made before October 11,2007. See you there.

Francis Rajnicek, Sect.

New York Post #43

The 88th reunion held at Dayton, OH was another successful outing with approximately 200 attending. I counted the number of Veterans on the Sign in Board and found there were only 83 veterans present. This is about the same number of last year but our number are dwindling. Elmer did a great job as all of our Past Commanders have done. The food was excellent and the socializing was superb.

The trip to the Airforce Museum was some thing to see. I recommend that anyone interested in Airplanes to make a trip to Dayton, OH. Of course the memorial Service was outstanding. Angelo and Kay Barone did a great job as usual.

Don't forget our Post #43 Reunion is May 19 through May 22, 2008 at the Ramada Lake Front Motel, Geneva, NY. All 80th Men and friends are welcome. Post letters will be mailed around 1st of April or you can call me at 716-648-2534. Geneva is a great place to visit the wineries and shopping, also the scenery is great on Seneca Lake.

Angelo and Kay Barone along with Barbara and Burt Marsh, Eugene and Ivy O'Neil attended a luncheon at Gettysburg, PA to give our WW II experiences to Craig Rahanian the superintendent of the ABMC Somme, Cemetery at Bony, France. The cemetery has eighteen WW I 80th Veterans interred there.

See you in Geneva, NY in May.

Burt Marsh, Commander

Apology

My apologies to Post #43 and to Burt Marsh Post Commander for failure to post your AD in the Program Reunion Booklet for the 88th Annual reunion.

Elmer G. Dorsten, National Commander.

Also to New York Post #43 - 1/4-Page Ad, In Memory of Robert Lishko Company "M" 319th Infantry, Burt Marsh, Commander

Welcome

Upcoming phases of transformation which will change the 80th Division from an Institutional Training Division into a 2-star Training Command (The Army School System) with a national mission including three subordinate 1-star training divisions and several TASS Training Centers (TTC).



REUNION PHOTOS





REUNION PHOTOS





REUNION PHOTOS





REUNION PHOTOS



OUT OF THE PAST...

Gottterdaemmerung (Continued from last Issue)

General Reinhardt met General Rusakov, the man of many welcomes, on the east bank opposite TORGAU at 1600 on the 26th. Camaraderie photographs, toasts, dancing in the street and a hastily assembled feast with the main dish of fried eggs were the order of the day. General Huebner conducted a second ceremony on the 27th with the opposite, the commander of the 34th Russian Corps, and General Hodges a third on the 30th with the commander of the First Ukrainian Army. The American, British, and Soviet governments officially announced to the world at 1800 on the 27 that east and west had met on the ELBE at TORGAU.

In the meantime, somebody at last had remembered to do something about LT Kotzebue, Major Craig, and their men waiting on the east bank upstream near KREINITZ. Late on the 26th, a patrol brought the news that history had passed them by. On the same day, LT. Shank of the 104th Division, who also had a close brush with history, returned to TORGASU, this time actually to meet the Russians he failed to wait for long enough two days before.

A few problems of co-ordination with the Russians remained on the northern and southern portions of the front. The British Chiefs of Staff were particularly concerned lest the Russians intended the ELBE as a stopping point in the north as well as the center of the front. A Russian drive to the ELBE would jeopardize the British drive to the BALTIC. Urging General Eisenhower to make the distinction clear, The British Chiefs also pointed out that by seeking to halt on a well-defined geographical line, Eisenhower might be forgoing remarkable political advantages to be gained by the liberating PRAGUE and much of the rest of CZECHOSLOVAKIA. If possible without detracting from the main drives to the BALTIC and into AUSTRIA, they believed the Allies should exploit any opportunity to drive deep into CZECHOSLOVAKIA.

In the course of passing that view to General Eisenhower, General Marshall remarked: "Personally and aside from all logistic, tactical or strategical implications I would be loath to hazard American lives for purely political purposes." Right or wrong from a political standpoint, the decision was in keeping with the U.S. military policy followed generally throughout the war, to concentrate everything on achieving military victory over the armed forces of the enemy.

First priority, Eisenhower told Marshall, was to be accorded the drives to the BALTIC and into AUSTRIA. The thrust to the BALTIC, he said, was to forestall Russian entry into DENMARK (a departure from the stated military policy which no one officially remarked); the thrust into AUSTRIA to deny a National Redoubt. If additional means should be available, he intended to attack enemy forces that still might be holding out in CZECHOSLOVAKIA, DENMARK, and NORWAY. Both the latter, he believed, should be the province of the Allies; but the Red Army was in perfect position to clean out CZECHOSLOVAKIA and certainly to reach PRAGUE in advance of U.S. troops. "I shall not attempt any move I deem militarily unwise," he assured Marshall, "merely to gain a political prize unless I receive specific orders from the Combined Chiefs of Staff." As in the case of going to BERLIN, such orders never came.

In an even fuller explanation of plans to the Russians, General Eisenhower on the last day of April allayed British fears about lower reaches of the ELBE. In the north, the Supreme Commander noted, he intended to clear the BALTIC coast as far east as WISMAR and build a line south to SCHWERIN, thence southwest to DOCMITZ on the ELBE, 23 miles downstream from WITTENBERGE. From headwaters of the MULDE RIVER southward, he intended to hold a line approximately along the 1937 frontier of CZECHOSLOVAKIA, through he might advance as far into CZECHOSLOVAKIA as KARLBAD, PILSEN, and CESKE BUDEJOVICE. Farther south he planned to halt in the general area of LINZ.

The Russians accepted these proposals, but four days later, on 4 May when General Eisenhower said he was willing not only to advance to the ELBE in the vicinity of DRESDEN but also to clear the bank of the VLTAVA within CZECHOSLOVAKIA, which would bring his forces in the center as far east as PRAGUE, generally on a line with those in the south at LINZ, the Red Army Chief of Staff strongly objected. To avoid "a possible confusion of forces," he asked that the Allies confine their advance in CZECHOSLOVAKIA to the KARLBAD-PILSEN line as earlier stated. He added pointedly that the Russians had stopped their advance toward the lower ELBE in accordance with Allied wishes.

General Eisenhower promptly agreed to the Russian request.

The End in Berlin

Linkup by the enemies of the Third Reich was but one more thorn in a bristling crown of troubles pressing hard on Adolf Hitler's brow. Indeed, amid the welter of sad tidings pouring into Fuehrerbunker, the meeting on the ELBE may have passed unremarked.

Since Hitler's decision on the 22nd to stand and die in BERLIN, an air of aimless resignation had hung over the bunker, relieved more and more rarely by some vain flurry of hope. It was common knowledge among the sycophants in the bunker that Hitler intended suicide, as did Eva Braun. Late on the 26th, Russian artillery fire began to fall in the garden of the Reich Chancellery above the bunker, reminder enough for any whom still might have doubted that the end was near. Yet the Fuehrer's military chiefs, Keitel and Jodl, even though now removed from Hitler's presence, persisted either in coloring their reports on the military situation or in refusing to face the facts themselves.

General von Manteuffel, who earlier had been transferred from the west for the twilight of the campaign in the east, told Jodl late on the 27th that anyone who wanted a true picture had but to stand at any crossroads north of BERLIN and observe the steady stream of refugees and disheartened troops clogging the roads to the rear. What the soldier could do had been done, Manteuffel insisted; now the time had come for political action, for negotiations with the Western Powers.

Yet both Keitel and Jodl could persist in their belief that more still might be done. Relieving the army group commander north of BERLIN, they ordered General Student, commander of the First Parachute Army, to fly from the NETHERLANDS to assume command.

On the 28th, grim news poured into the bunker in a torrent. Italian partisans, Hitler learned, had rested his erstwhile partner, Mussolini, and there were more distressing rumors of army leaders in Italy negotiating surrender. He learned too of the uprising in Munich. On that day also, telephone communications with OKW failed.

The 29th was grimmer still. Hitler himself would not be notified until the next day, but on the 29th the last thin hope of relieving Berlin evaporated when the turnabout attack of General Wenck's Twelfth Army stalled near Potsdam, seventeen miles southwest of the capital. Only some 30,000 men of the Ninth Army south of Berlin had escaped Russian encirclement; so exhausted were they, so depleted their arms and ammunition, that they would be of no help to Wenck.

Mussolini and his mistress, Hitler learned, had been executed the day before and strung up by their heels. Yet the most crushing blow was the word that Heinrich Himmler had turned traitor. Goering, Hitler expelled him of all claim to the succession. When his fury had passed, he drew a will and testament appointing Admiral Doenitz as head of the Germany state and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces. Then, before daylight the next morning, he married Eva Braun.

Field Marshall Keitel finally sent a message by radio early on the 30th telling of the failure of Wenck's Twelfth Army, in effect admitting that all hope was gone. Although the message may have never reached the bunker, Hitler apparently already had concluded that it was time to die. He spent much of the morning saying farewells to his staff, seemingly unmoved by the news that Russians troops were little more than a block away, then in mid-afternoon retired with Eva Braun to his suite.

Eva Braun killed herself by biting on a cyanide capsule. Hitler shot himself with a pistol. In accordance with prior instructions, members of the household staff burned the bodies outside the bunker.

News of the Fuehrer's death was slow to emerge. Most likely those in the bunker delayed in order to await the outcome of Goebbels-inspired attempt to negotiate the surrender of BERLIN in exchange for safe passage of those in the bunker. When the Russians predictably declined any accommodation, word went out at last, more than twenty-four hours after the suicide, that Hitler was dead. Admiral Doenitz announced it publicly by radio that evening, 1 May, in the process giving the impression that Hitler had died a hero's death.

That same day Goebbel and his wife, after poisoning their six children, arranged their own deaths at the hands of an SS guard. Three of Hitler's military entourage also killed themselves. The others tried to escape. Few made it.

The Drive to the Baltic

As these melodramatic events occurred, two major Allied offensives were continuing, one by Montgomery's 21 Army Group to clear northern Germany and the NETHERLANDS, the other by Dever's 6th Army Group and the Third Army into AUSTRIA.

The 21st Army Group's offensive evolved from the bridgehead established over the RHINE near WESEL. While the First Canadian Army on the left drove generally north to reach the LJSSELMEER and the North Sea, the Second British Army attacked northeast to seize the line of the from WITTENBERGE to the sea. Those goals achieved, the Canadians were to turn west to clear the NETHERLANDS and east to sweep the littoral from the Dutch border to the estuary of the WESER RIVER. The British were to attack across the ELBE to capture HAMBURG and make a 45 mile drive to the BALTIC in the vicinity of LUEBECK.

Benefiting much as had the First and Ninth Armies from the great gap created in the German line by encirclement of Army Group B in the RUHR, the British south wing alongside the Ninth Army made the most rapid gains. There the

8th Corps had a four-day brush with the contingents of Wenck's Twelfth Army near UELZEN but reached the ELBE the next day, 19 April, opposite LAUENBERG some thirty miles upstream from HAMBURG. Another corps in the center reached the ELBE opposite HAMBURG four days later on the 23rd. Both this corps and another on the left that was advancing on the great port of BREMEN fought against the essentially makeshift force, Army Blumentritt, formed in early April as a new command under Field Marshall Bush which had been created as the Allied armies threatened to split the Western Front. Strengthened by sailors fighting as infantry, the Germans made a stand for a week in front of BREMEN, but by nightfall of 26 April the British were in full control of the city.

The First Canadian Army at the same time was facing the remains of General Student's First Parachute Army and the Twenty-fifth Army, which was subordinate to OB NEDERLANDER, the new command under General Blaskowitz who formerly headed Army Group H. Comprising two of the more cohesive forces remaining to the German Army in the west, the troops drew added strength from readily defensible positions along one canal or river after another. Contingents of one Canadian corps nevertheless reached the NORTH SEA near the northeastern tip of the NETHERLANDS on 16 April, thereby splitting the German front. Another Corps on the 14th took Arnhem on the Neder Rijn, an objective that had eluded British troops in the preceding September's big airborne attack, and on the 18th ended a 40-mile trek to the IJsselmeer. One corps turned east to clear the coast between the Dutch border and the Weser, but little reason remained for the other to make the planned assault to erase the Germans trapped in the western portion of the NETHERLAND. If the Canadians attacked, the Germans in all probability would flood the low-lying countryside, increasing the suffering of a Dutch population already facing a food shortage that was close to famine. Even the Nazi high commissioner in the NETHERLANDS, Arthur Seyss-Inquart, had by early April become concerned that a catastrophe was in the making. Word that Seyss-Inquart might be amenable to relief operations reached the Canadians in mid-April to provide food for the Dutch by land, sea and air. Air-drops began on 28 April while negotiations were still going on.

During the conferences, General Eisenhower's representative tried to persuade Seyss-Inquart to agree either to a truce or unconditional surrender. Seyss-Inquart refused on the grounds that it was the duty of the Germans in the NETHERLANDS to fight until ordered to do otherwise by the German government. As Dutch relief operations got underway, a lull not unlike a truce nevertheless settled over the front.

For the British attack across the ELBE to reach the BALTIC, General Eisenhower provided assistance by General Ridgeway's XVIII Airborne Corps with three U.S. Divisions. Although the corps was attached to the Second British Army for the operation, the Ninth Army provided administrative and support services. Under the British plan, the 8 Corps was to make an assault crossing of the ELBE, whereupon the 12 Corps and the XVIII Airborne Corps were to cross into the bridgehead, the former to mask and latter capture HAMBURG, the latter to clear additional bridging sites upstream and protect the right flank of the 8 Corps in a northward drive to the BALTIC.

Continued in next issue

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