The Octofoil, March/April 1978

Ninth Infantry Division Association

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When General Craig was honored last year at the luncheon in Washington one of the speakers was General Westover. Because of the delay in receiving the report we regret that we were unable to print the speech. It may be a little late but here is the talk given by Westover when he saluted General Craig.

I am privileged to be a party to this proud and happy occasion and congratulate those who made it possible. As many of you know from personal experience, the 9th Infantry Division of WWII was not a flashy unit. It was steady, professional, reliable.

It pursued sound tactics - no razzle-dazzle. It was a disciplined division. It did not boast; its accomplishments spoke for themselves.

Awards were passed sparingly on the basis of truly outstanding performance. Hence, there was mutual confidence up and down the chain of command.

The Division exuded integrity and had a modest pride. It was a division with self-effacing and modest, he spoke softly and politely to all. He never harangued or engaged in pompous exhortations. Never did he use crude, vulgar or blasphemous language. Dignity and integrity were his hallmarks. He led by example.

A disciplinarian - yes, but a man of scrupulous fairness and compassion. He made his decisions rapidly based on sound principles and proven tactics. He never equivocated.

He was a sensitive officer but avoided decisions controlled by his emotions. But he was also human and had his emotional moments.

There come to mind: He was disturbed by the steadily mounting casualties the Division suffered during the long weeks in the dismal Eifel Forest. He was frustrated by the weak leadership from above during the early days of the Ramagen bridgehead. He was distressed that his Division was restrained on the Elbe River and not allowed to advance into Berlin.

But he accepted his orders from above and gave them his wholehearted support. He was a master as a senior administrator giving his staff great law-way under his clearly announced policies.

I will speak of the latter of these - our honored guest. This gentleman was (and still is) a man of great moral and intellectual depth. He was a military professional in every sense. Self-effacing and modest, he spoke softly and politely to all. He never harangued or engaged in pompous exhortations. Never did he use crude, vulgar or blasphemous language. Dignity and integrity were his hallmarks. He led by example.

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(Continued on next page)
mail call

Charles A. Roderick
29 New York Avenue
Bergenfield, New Jersey 07621

I am sending in my dues for the next three years. I wouldn't miss the Octofoil; for I eagerly look forward to reading it eagerly every time it arrives. I am also looking forward with great expectations to the Philly reunion where I expect to meet B. R. & quote a few of the old buddies from the 47th A. T. From the news I gather quite a few of them are making a special occasion to be at this convention.

I also have a lot of interesting stories to tell my visitors after we visit our old battle areas. Some of these stories I have are as hard to believe as some of the combat stories we had coming home with us. I am sure you will enjoy hearing some of the old areas are today, compared to the way they looked when we were there.

I've never really met you yet but it seems like visiting an old friend whenever I write to someone concerning the Octofoil. I'd like to meet you at Philly. I'll be there!

47th R S O

Joseph A. Ales
carrier drive
Beethoven, Pa. 19017

Enclosed are some reproductions of photos with the 47th and I took on our trip to England last summer. They cover what I think are interesting views of the 47th Infantry Regiment's home away from home during 1943 and 1944.

During our stay in Winchester we took a tour on the national register area in Luray. We spent some time in Ashlott town called New London, where the headquarters of the 47th Infantry Regiment was located. One of the enclosed pictures shows the town's Main Street which is highlighted in some tour books as being one of the most beautiful small town streets in England! On one door of a building along the right side of the picture is a plaque stating, "This home was the headquarters of the 47th Infantry Regiment, 9th Infantry Division, U.S. Army - 1943 to D-Day, June 6, 1944."

Just outside of town and beyond the beautiful thatched roof cottage shown in another picture there was embedded in the River Tytherton's bank a memorial to the mascot of Headquarters, Co. C, 47th Infantry. It reads: "Here lies Hambo (11), faithful friend of the 47th Infantry Regiment, 9th Infantry Division, U.S. Army, May, 1944."

It apparently was the way townspeople of Allesford and nearby Alton said "Thank You!"

Though this might be interesting to you and something you might want to put in an issue of OCTOFOIL. Hope to get to the Philadelphia reunion.

3rd Inf., Medics - 47th

John C. Feigl
P.O. Box 273
Covington, Va. 24426

It seems I only write to you when it is time to write. Needless to say, I always enjoy the Octofoil, and the news of the association. Occasionally there is a letter from one of the fellows I knew. It was nice to receive the letter from John Jacobs of the 3rd Inf., Medics, 47th Inf.

My work schedule always keeps me from the convention, but hopefully I will be able to attend one soon.

Keep up the good work on the Octofoil and give my best regards to any of the fellows who knew me.
The complete plans for the coming operations were reviewed in the General's headquarters. The strictest secrecy discipline was insisted upon, so that we were operating in enemy territory and not uncovered. There were no communications with the troops, apart from the usual field staffs, and plans for the accomplishment of the 4th Battalion's part in the attack were made in the utmost secrecy. During the period that the battalion had become entrenched, the enemy was, on the whole, in good equipment and morale. We had to get started on this last of our phases of the assault before the battalion was confident that its part in the coming operation would be performed with exemplary efficiency.

OVER-WATCH- AND IMPROVEMENT

The attack was designed to seize the crossings of the Roer River, prepared by the 1st Battalion's crossing of that barrier, continued the defense of the public road to Blinde River, and the occupation of the strategic Rhine front. The mission, therefore, was an important operation, and the German occupation of the river embankment and the Rhine, and to deprive her of either one or the other would so seriously harass her war effort as to provide her with a continuation of her war for any length of time. In view of the importance of this region, the determined, firm control of the river at our attack point was essential. In the afternoon, with our essential ground, the village of Blinde was cleared of the enemy.

The Roer River ran generally parallel to the Rhine and about twenty-five miles to the west of it. Although not normally a navigable barrier, it offered a natural line of defense to the enemy. It was hoped to cause her to withdraw from her defense position. On the river, two hundred and fifty head of cattle was killed in the headwaters of the river, near the German occupied positions of this dam, it was entirely possible for them to raise the level of the river to flood stage, thereby flooding a portion of the terrain over which we were to operate.

HURGEN FOREST

Possession of these dams, overblown, was the key to our River defense. Several strong attacks from the north had been launched from positions held in the dense Hurgen Forest prior to the 16th November attacks, in an effort to wrench control of the whole of the dam heads. The German, in accordance with a full realization of his importance, had mapped an amazing amount of artillery guns for the protection of these dams, with two hundred, each equipped with a unique weapon to strike at the very heart of our defenses. Measuring 30 guns, they were employed to accurately strike the various objectives which were attacked. It was anticipated that German would not flood the Roer River until we had successfully breached and captured the dams. So, if, in fact, the Rhine, the west bank and the Roer and the headwaters' dams could be secured, the crossing of the river could be effected without the threat of an enemy attack.

FULL USE

Accordingly, on November 14th, the attack was launched. Immediate success had made necessary a postponement of the attack, taken command staff, and plans for the accomplishment of the 4th Battalion's part in the attack were made in the utmost secrecy. During the period that the battalion had become entrenched, the enemy was, on the whole, in good equipment and morale. We had to get started on this last of our phases of the assault before the battalion was confident that its part in the coming operation would be performed with exemplary efficiency.

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ILLINOIS CHAPTER NEWS

SAWDY MISSED
Julie Lake, brother of George "Doc" Rishel, died in January. Although he was not a member, he participated in all the affairs of the chapter. His greatest contribution was in tending to the needs of the members. He was a man in a thousand, always ready to help and always with a smile on his face. His passing is a great loss to the chapter and to all who knew him.

Battalion News

The 2nd Battalion continued its advance in its sector of enemy positions. The plan for the following day was to attack the strong point of Ror power, which was designated as the objective of the 2nd Battalion. The 3rd Armored Division and the 47th Infantry Division were to attack the strong point of Roi, followed by the 4th Division.

NEW YORK CHAPTER

The New York Chapter will hold its annual meeting on May 15th at 10:00 AM. The meeting will be held at the 2nd Street Armory. The meeting will be open to all members.

PHILLY REUNION

If you are planning on moving please notify the secretary of your new address so that we can update our mailing list.

*** LADDER AUXILIARY

THE OCTOPOIL
mail call

Continued

From C Hot Springs

Ed Hopkins
123 W 56th Avenue
Metuchen, N.J. 08840

April 10, 1978

Dear Howard:

I hope this finds you and your family well. I am writing to see if you have heard from or of any 9th Infantry Division veterans that you might wish to share with me.

I have been a member of the 9th Infantry Division since 1945 and have been a member of the Reunion since 1950. I have attended every reunion since then and have enjoyed them all. I have made many friends and have had the opportunity to reminisce about our times in the service.

I would be interested in knowing if you know of any other veterans from the 9th Infantry Division who might be interested in attending the next reunion in 1979.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

From C Hot Springs

Michael J. Schumacher
899 College Ave.
Wenatchee, Wash. 98801

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[Signature]

From C Hot Springs

Raymond F. Bertram
P.O. Box 3307
Corona, Calif. 92878

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Sincerely,

[Signature]

From C Hot Springs

John E. Taylor
123 Main St.
Metuchen, N.J. 08840

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Sincerely,

[Signature]
MAIL CALL

THO OCTOFOIL

G. C. 4th Bn.

C. "F. 4th Bn.

R. HOFFMAN
R. D. No. 2

WATERBURY,

N.Y.

11361

Here's a check for this year's dues. Late as usual.

I hope that this year's reunion in Philly. Have been slowly recovering from a heart attack for the last three days and I don't think I'll last another three, but, with a little luck, I may make it this year.

I enjoyed Happy Hopkins' letter. It is nice to read about some of the people you know.

C. 4th Inf.

F. JOHN E. PINES
P.O. Box 183

Bruns, New York 10451

Dear Mr. Hopkins; he writes well and to the point.

I am now 68 years old and was honored by the retiring National President Church Koskie's house that has dinner that John Clouser and Al manned for us this month at his house. To make trouble getting over losing my only Brother so recently. To make time and set back having suffered a heart attack 30 Jan. 77. I was for good insurance that God has given me.

I must say that I plan to go strictly by the book from here on.

May I ask God to bless the memory of your family and yourself. It was never missed, and got back and didn't make it. Was sent to E. Co. 47th as they were missing in action from the 38th Inf. I'm sure you know that combat time all seems like yesterday.

I am retired now and about meeting my own buddy. I am retired now and about meeting my own buddy. It only seems like yesterday.

I am retired now and about meeting my own buddy.


When was the last time you wrote a letter to our Call Column Date?