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9th Infantry Division Association

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The Octofoil, January/February/March 2014

Ninth Infantry Division Association

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The Octofoil

Jan.-Feb.-Mar.,
2014

Volume LXIX, No. 1

President's Message



It is March and I'm pleased to report that Spring is on it's way, I hope. My yard is in full bloom, but it is still too cold to garden. I'll eat those words come mid-May!

I was mildly amused recently by a prediction I read on one of those strips of paper that come in a fortune cookie. This is what was written, "You will attend a party where strange customs prevail." The only parties in my future are the ones that Mary Cooper and Bette Prochaska are planning for the reunion in Houston. Do the makers of fortune cookies in New York know anything at all about our reunion parties?

It bears repeating that important news is passed along to members via *The Octofoil*. I read the TAPS that are sounded, Mail Call, etc. each quarter.

This issue contains recent appointments to offices. Regard these reports as official business. Also look for updates and reminders of reunion events and chapter activities.

I am looking forward to seeing many of you in Houston in July. Have a wonderful Easter with your family and friends.

Paul Schumacher, President
The Ninth Infantry Division Association

Treasurer's Report January, February, March 2014

In this past quarter, we started to work with the accounting firm of Mize Houser and Co. P.A., in Topeka, Kansas to assist in our financial accounting efforts, including quarterly financial statements and tax return preparation. Having professional assistance provides the Association with expertise on accounting of all revenues and expenses, which also gives us more oversight of the finances of this organization.

As your treasurer, I will continue to catalogue all day-to-day transactions for the Association. I send updated spreadsheets and documentation of deposits and expense payments to Mize Houser for their review and use in compiling quarterly statements. I also send them the monthly bank statements which they can use for reconciliation purposes. Copies of all this information also goes to Peter Stern, who is an additional resource in reviewing the Association's financials. Mize Houser prepares, for each calendar quarter, two types of statements—a Statement of Assets, Liabilities and Equity and a statement of Revenues, Expenses and Net Surplus (Deficit). The second type of statement also is broken down each quarter for each of the six main categories of revenue/expense that the Association maintains. The first set of statements were prepared for the quarter ending December 31, 2013 and year-to-date (YTD) through December 31, 2013 (our fiscal year is July 1 to June 30).

Current Assets (which are the cash balances for all six main accounts plus the value of our mutual fund holdings) YTD totaled \$64,467. Excluding the mutual funds, they totaled \$29,375. The assets take into account reconciliations related to the bank statement through December 31, 2013.

Revenues across the six main accounts of the Association YTD were \$9,413.02. Expenses have been structured into common expense categories by Mize Houser (including office expenses, postage expenses, refunds, printing/copies, supplies, entertainment and (our largest category) food/catering expenses. Expenses YTD were \$15,479.46. As noted above, each of the six categories of revenue/expense have their own Statement of Revenues, Expenses and Net Surplus (Deficit), so we can look closer each quarter at where funds are coming in and where funds are spent.

Looking at revenues YTD—expenses YTD leaves a deficit YTD of (\$6,066.44). This amount only takes into account funds in and out for this fiscal year and not any cash balances going into the year. The first half of our fiscal year usually includes a majority of expenses related to our annual reunion and this year it included major expense (mainly food/catering) tied to the Charleston

(continued on page 2)



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OUR MISSION

This Association is formed by the officers and men of the 9th Infantry Division in order to perpetuate the memory of our fallen comrades, to preserve the *esprit de corps* of the Division, to assist in promoting an everlasting world peace exclusively by means of educational activities and to serve as an information bureau to former members of the 9th Infantry Division.

THE OCTOFOIL

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The Ninth Infantry Division Association.

Send payment to: **Publisher, The Octofoil**
Theda Ray

[Redacted Address]

[Redacted Address]

The Ninth Infantry Division Association Inc. is a registered 501(c)19 Veterans' Organization of the Internal Revenue Code in a determination letter issued in January 1948. Contributions are tax deductible.

Volume LXIX Number 1 January-February- March, 2014

TIP OF THE HAT

We thank the following members and friends for remembering the Memorial Fund and our buddies who have answered their last Roll Call.

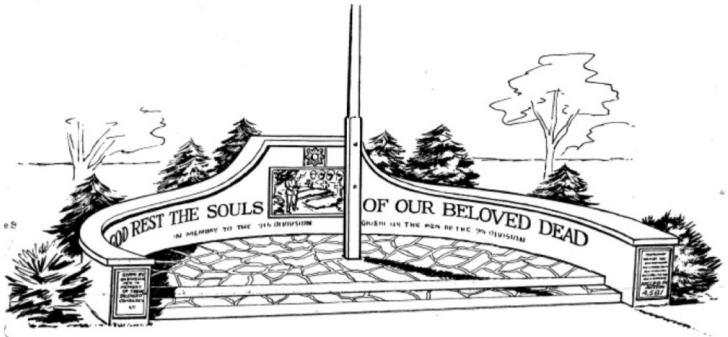
Leslie Dail in memory of Leon Burium

Marilyn Martin in memory of John Baswell

Note: Please make checks payable to:

The Ninth Infantry Division Association

Send to: **Mary Cooper**



(Treasurer's Report continued from page 1)

Reunion. The second half of our fiscal year (January through June) usually has much more revenue than expense, so we very likely will see our funds move in this direction again this spring. Also, keep in mind that cash balance as of December 31, 2013, without the mutual funds (cash in the bank), was \$29, 735.

I want to thank Williams Sauers for all of his great work as our past treasurer and for setting in place all of the details of our accounts to allow us to move the Association forward. I look forward to serving as your treasurer.

Mary Cooper, Treasurer
The Ninth Infantry Division Association

Friends of Father Connors Fund

The Friends of Father Connors Fund would like to thank the following new donors for their generous contributions:

Janet Casanave Brown in memory of George Brown

Paul Schumacher as a memorial to John Baswell for his dedicated and skilled professional service to the Ninth Infantry Division Association

The current balance of the fund account for restoration work is \$7813.41. No expenses have been incurred during the first quarter of 2014.

If you would like to donate please make your check payable to: **The Ninth Infantry Division Association.** Please note in the memo section of the check "FFCF" and send to :

Mary Cooper, [Redacted Address]

**69th ANNUAL REUNION
MARRIOTT HOTEL
6580 FANNIN ST.
HOUSTON, TEXAS
JULY 11, 12, 13, 2014**

Howdy from Texas!

We are so excited about everyone coming to Houston for this year's reunion. We are still in the planning stages but here is what we have to date of this newsletter. The hotel is the Marriott Hotel (near downtown) and is on the Houston light rail which will take you from the front door of our hotel to our Downtown area or the Museum District. Within the Museum District, we have the Houston Museum of Natural Science (one of the top 10 in U.S.), Houston Museum of Fine Arts, the Houston Zoo, Hermann Park (with its own beautiful grounds), and much, much more.

We are beginning our reunion with an event on Friday night away from the hotel, so try to make plans to check in by late afternoon. We will go by bus to a microbrewery (St. Arnold's-one of the best), where we'll have dinner.

The hotel's restaurant is where we'll meet for breakfast at your own cost, since we have those who like just a cup of coffee and cereal and others who like a big buffet. You can meet and visit while enjoying breakfast together.

Saturday evening will be spent enjoying some of our Texas hospitality and that's all we are going to let out of the bag at this time. But we will say that we are going to be kickin' up our heels. Be sure to pack your boots for the occasion.

Sunday morning will be our Memorial Service. We are planning to have it at a special venue this year and we think you will find this to be a very meaningful experience. Sunday evening we will have our final dinner, which will be held at the hotel.

The Reunion events (hotel room not included) will be a total of \$300 per person. Although the initial deadline for your deposit has passed, you may still register. Please send your registration form and a deposit of \$100 (\$50 non-refundable) ASAP. Final payment **MUST BE RECEIVED** by June 1, 2014.

We are offering an optional extension to the reunion for those who are able to stay until Tuesday. We are planning a trip to College Station (about a 1 1/2 hour trip) to see the George Bush Library. The additional price for this event will be determined when we know how many people are interested.

To reserve your room, please call the hotel directly at Marriott Reservations at (800) 228-9290 before June 10th to get the group rate of \$105.00 per night plus tax. Be sure to state that you are with the Ninth Division Veteran's Group (that's how they have it listed) and that the hotel is the **Houston Marriott at the Texas Medical Center** located at 6580 Fannin Street. There are a limited number of rooms at this rate, so call in as soon as possible to take advantage of this.

Once we receive your registration deposit, we will contact you directly with more information and details.

**REGISTRATION FORM
69th Annual Reunion
July 11-14, 2014
Houston, Texas**

NAME _____ # IN PARTY _____

STREET ADDRESS _____ CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____

BEST PHONE # TO CONTACT YOU _____

EMAIL _____

Please make check payable to **Ninth Infantry Division Association**.

Send Registration form and deposit to Mary Blann Cooper, _____

If you have any questions, please contact Bette Blann Prochaska at _____ or Mary Blann Cooper at _____.

TAPS SOUNDED

The muffled drum's sad roll has beat the soldier's last tattoo;
No more on life's parade shall meet that brave and fallen few.
On Fame's eternal camping—ground their silent tents are spread,
And Glory guards, with solemn round, the bivouac of the dead.

Bivouac of the Dead by Theodore O'Hare - 1847

9th Infantry Division Medal of Honor Recipients World War II

S/Sgt. Herschel F. Briles, Co. C, 899th TD Bn; Near Scherpenseel, Germany; 20 November 1944
2nd Lieutenant John E. Butts*, Co. E, 60th Infantry; Normandy, France; 14, 16, 23 June 1944
T/Sgt. Peter J. Dalessandro, Co. E, 39th Infantry; Near Kalterherberg, Germany; 22 December 1944
Sgt. William J. Nelson*, Co. H, 60th Infantry; Djegel Dardys, NW of Sedjenane, Tunisia; 24 April 1943
PFC Carl V. Sheridan*, Co. K, 47th Infantry; Frenzerberg Castle, Germany; 26 November 1944
Captain Matt L. Urban, 2nd Battalion, 60th Infantry; Renouf, France; 14 June to 3 September, 1944
* Posthumous award

Source: U.S. Army Center of Military History

Vietnam War

SGT Sammy L. Davis, Battery C, 2nd Battalion, 4th Artillery; West of Cai Lay; 18 November 1967
SP4 Edward A. Devore, Jr.*, Company B, 4th Battalion, 39th Infantry; Near Saigon; 17 March 1968
PFC James W. Fous*, Company E, 4th Battalion, 47th Infantry; Kien Hoa Province; 14 May 1968
SSG Don J. Jenkins, Company A, 2nd Battalion, 39th Infantry; Kien Phong Province; 6 January 1969
SGT Leonard B. Keller, Company A, 3rd Battalion, 60th Infantry; Ap Bac Zone; 2 May 1967
SP4 Thomas J. Kinsman, Company B, 3rd Battalion, 60th Infantry; Near Vinh Long; 6 February 1968
SP4 George C. Lang, Company A, 4th Battalion, 47th Infantry; Kien Hoa Province; 22 February 1969
PFC David P. Nash*, Company B, 2nd Battalion, 39th Infantry; Giao Duc District; 29 December 1968
SP5 Clarence E. Sasser, Headquarters Co., 3rd Battalion, 60th Infantry; Ding Tuong Province; 10 January 1968
SP4 Raymond R. Wright, Company A, 3rd Battalion, 60th Infantry; Ap Bac Zone; 2 May 1967
* Posthumous award

*Sources: A Short History of the 9th Infantry Division and
www.homeofheroes.com*

Joseph Bacchieri
D Co., 47th Inf. Regt.

Sam L. Burns
F Co., 39th Inf. Regt.

Glenn E. Eldridge
D. Co., 60th Inf. Regt.

Lila Stansell
Wife of H.F. Stansell

John W. Baswell
Son of J.W. Baswell

Thelma Solar
Widow of Richard Solar

TAPS OBITUARY

TAPS LETTERS



JOHN W. BASWELL
Son of J.W. Baswell

Mr. John W. Baswell, Jr., 70, of Ackerman, MS, passed away at OCH Regional Medical Center in Starkville on Friday, February 14, 2014.

John was a deputy Forest Supervisor for the Ouachita in Hot Springs, AR. He worked for 49 years in the Forest Service and was an acting Supervisor on the Ozark in Russellville, AR. John was a 1963 graduate of the Mississippi State University Forestry Department. He loved his family, Mississippi State University and traveling.

He is survived by his loving wife of 49 years, Glenda Ellis Baswell of Ackerman, MS and Hot Springs, AR; daughter, Sally Baswell Stutson (Ben) of West Monroe, LA; sons, Richard Leonard Baswell (Brenda) of Jacksonville, AL; and John Edd Baswell of Chicago, IL; a sister, Jeanette Baswell Taylor (Jerry) of Collierville, TN; 8 grandchildren; and nieces and nephews.

In lieu of flowers, the family requested donations be made to Mississippi Forestry Department at Mississippi State University Foundation/Forestry, Mail Stop 9680, Mississippi State, MS 39759; or French Camp Academy, 1 Fine Pl, French Camp, MS 39745.

SAM L BURNS
1923-2014

F Co., 39th INFANTRY REGIMENT

It is with deep sadness that I report the death of my friend, Sam L. Burns, veteran of Fox Company, 39th Infantry Regiment, Ninth Infantry Division. Sam passed away January 18, 2014 at the age of 90 in Burleson, TX. He was born in Big Spring, TX on Feb. 8, 1923. He was the fifth of six children. Sam married Dorras Anderson in Houston, TX in 1947 after World War II service from May 1943 to October 1945. Sam and his family lived in Big Spring until 1969, then moved to Burleson, TX, near Ft. Worth.

In WWII Sam served as a BAR automatic rifleman fighting in the Normandy, France campaign. He was severely wounded by mortar fire in the St. Lo area in July 1944 and evacuated. Sam was decorated with 2 Bronze Stars for valor and received the Purple Heart with 2 clusters. He was returned to the United States McCloskey General Hospital, and after lengthy treatments and recuperation, he was honorable discharged in October 1945.

He was predeceased by Dorras, his wife of 53 years, and his parents and siblings. Sam is survived by 2 daughters, their husbands, 4 grandchildren, and 3 great-grandchildren. Also left to cherish his memory is his longtime companion, Anita Biver, and her family.

TAPS LETTERS

(Burns continued)

Sam loved his family and his friends. It's been said he never met a stranger. In recent years, often in ill health, Sam was known and admired throughout central Texas for his tireless work with disabled veterans, helping with claims, and many health issues. He also spent much time working with the Purple Heart Association, The VFW, Masons Widowed Persons Society, and local hospitals, looking after veterans of recent conflicts. He was a dedicated member of the Texas and Greater Southwest Chapter of the Ninth Division Association.

His famous barbeques at his ranch near Burleson attracted Ninth Division veterans from all of the southwestern states. His trademark was his pork pie hat, a homemade hiking stick, and a jug of Gallo wine.

There were full military rites at the DFW National Cemetery in Grand Prairie, TX on January 31, 2014.

Those of us who spent much time with Sam in recent years knew how much he loved his family, knew how dedicated he was to helping the less fortunate. He was a man full of fun and his trustworthiness, his generosity and decency were immense. All of us who knew him will sorely miss him.

Memorials may be made to the Military Order of the Purple Heart or the Widowed Persons Society.

Submitted,
Herb Stern, Ninth Infantry Division Association

TAPS LETTERS

February 24, 2014

Dear Sir:

My husband, Glenn A. Eldridge, passed away Jan. 31, 2014. We were able to attend a few of the Ninth Division reunions.

Glenn was a replacement taken to the front line October, Friday the 13th. He became one of the Second Platoon of D Company of the 60th Infantry Regiment, First Battalion, Ninth Division of First Army.

Fighting was fierce in the Hurtgen Forest. The winter was the worst in 30 years. He courageously served his duties as Platoon Runner repeatedly under intense enemy artillery, mortars and small arms fire to deliver messages.

He served in the Ardennes, Rhineland, Central Europe. He was awarded Bronze Star combat Infantryman Badge, European theater ribbon with 3 bronze stars, Purple Heart. He was wounded in the Hartz Mountain area on April 18, 1945. The war ended after his hospital stay, he was in the 71st occupation forces and discharged in February, 1946.

Sincerely,
Betty Eldridge

Dear Ms. Cooper,

This is a long overdue notification but did want the Ninth Infantry Division Association to know that Mr. Joseph Bacchieri, 66 Papermill Dr., W. Wareham, MA 02576 passed away in June 2012.

He was a very proud member of the Division and I'm sure he would want them to know.

Sincerely,
Doris Bacchieri


HAPPY
PASSOVER



Happy Easter

◆ **Appointment**

It is a privilege to report to the membership that the Board of Governors, in its official capacity, has unanimously appointed Glenda Baswell as 3rd Vice President and Governor on the Board of Governors of The Ninth Infantry Division Association, effective March 1, 2014.

Glenda has graciously accepted. She will be filling the unexpired terms of her late husband, John Baswell.

Paul Schumacher, President
The Ninth Infantry Division Association

◆ **Agenda Items and Suggestions Requested**

Greetings from Tennessee.

This article is for the purpose of soliciting items/subjects for the various booklets and meetings that are in preparation for the 69th Annual Reunion on July 11, 12 and 13 in Houston.

During a phone conversation with Mary Cooper recently, I expressed a desire to have a meeting with Officers and Governors on the first day to propose and discuss some important issues facing the Association in the coming years.

To begin:

- We should hear the Secretary's report, the Treasurer's report, comments from the Publishers/Editors of *The Octofoil*, and perhaps some comments from the Reunion Chairpersons.
- The Committees need to be announced and chairpersons need to be selected so that they have time to consider the subjects assigned to them.
- Also, the Board of Governors will be asked the question: Do you want to resume a staggered 3 year term beginning in 2016 when the current terms expire?
- It appears to me that Chapters, as we have known them for 69 years, will be closing out soon. Does the Board of Governors desire to reorganize the Chapter system?
- Does the time and place of reunions need to be established two or perhaps three years in advance?

As you have concluded, we will be delving into items that affect the future of the Association, but deserve to be discussed and resolved beginning with the 69th Annual Reunion business meetings.

So here is how each of you can help. If you have a suggestion, send it to Secretary Clare Irwin, or to Treasurer Mary Cooper, or to President Paul Schumacher. We will see that it gets to the proper person, committee or meeting.

Keep in mind that programs and agendas for meetings are being considered and some are being drafted now. Please don't wait until the day the reunion begins to submit your proposals for business or for any ideas that may benefit the Association in the next few years.

Sincerely,
Paul Schumacher, President

Witness to War Foundation: This non-profit organization is based in Norcross GA. It is dedicated to preserving the oral histories of combat veterans from all of America's conflicts so that generations that follow, may honor their sacrifices and help to educate the public as to the sacrifices made by our military over the past century. The Foundation conducts free video interviews that typically last one hour and outline one's military experience from beginning to end with a focus on their experience in the field and in combat. Every veteran interviewed will receive 3 DVD copies, free of charge, which they are free to distribute to their families and friends. In addition, the videos are donated to the Library of Congress. On January 26, 2014, Mr. Madert interviewed Emil De Donato and Paul Crumb at the De Donato residence. Any veteran meeting requirements and would like to be interviewed, please contact Mr. Martin S. Madert Witness to War Foundation, 5555 Triangle Pkwy., Suite 300, Norcross, GA 30092. Phone: 770-481-3018, email: martinwitnessstowar.org.

A note from Lila Stansell's sister, Iris Chapman, notified us that Lila passed away at home on February 4, 2014. Lila had been in declining health for the past two years. She suffered several light strokes which didn't keep her and her husband H.F. from attending all of the Florida Chapter Reunions with the exception of the past two years. Lila was born on May 9, 1924. Her funeral was held on February 8, 2014 with Rev. Mark Huckaby officiating. Interment was at the Wax Cemetery in Ormond Beach, FL. H.F. Stansell is in a bad way with Alzheimer's disease. Our prayers are for the repose of Lila's soul and the recovery of H.F.

Faye Moser described her three week vacation to Israel as a "trip of a lifetime". She visited many biblical places, got her feet wet in the Red Sea, waded in the Dead Sea, took a short swim in the Mediterranean Sea and took pictures of the Sea of Galilee, Bethlehem, Palestine and Jerusalem. She said it was just a great trip. We are happy to learn of her vacation and we wish her many more. Faye lives at 1571 W. Moreland Rd., King, NC 27021.

Anyone living in the radius of 50 miles of Ocala is fortunate to have the Ocala Civic Theatre group to see great theater productions. The cast to many performances are made up of non-professional actors and actresses, but their acting ability compares to Broadway talent. One of the shows in their schedule was *I Do! I Do!* which ran from January 9-14, 2014. Six weeks prior to the performance, the Theatre ran a contest asking couples who are married 50 years or over to submit a letter stating how they met, how the husband proposed, and anything interesting about their marriage. Emil De Donato entered the contest. He was one of ten winners. Emil and Audrey received two complimentary tickets to the *I Do! I Do!* show. Audrey was presented with flowers and both were honored on the night of the show. The couple received dinner for two at the Braised Onion Restaurant, plus a certificate for a portrait by a local photographer. Anyone wishing to receive the "Ocala Civic Theatre Curtain Raiser" schedule of the Season performances, please write to: Ocala Civic Theatre, 4337 E. Silver Springs Blvd., Ocala, FL 34470.

Submitted by Emil De Donato

December 7, 2013

"Something to Think About in 2014 and 2015"

It's not too early to begin planning a trip to Europe in 2014 or 2015.

The New Year 2014 is the 70th Anniversary Year of the June 6 landings on Normandy, France. There will certainly be some grand events planned by the French, the Americans and the British for veterans of the campaigns around all of the beaches—Sword, Juno, Gold, Omaha and Utah. These historic beaches, the American Cemetery at Normandy, as well as major points of interest such as Ste. Mere Eglise, the Carentan Peninsula, St. Lo and other significant places will have parades and tours for veterans and visitors.

Then in 2015, we celebrate the 70th Anniversary Year of the end of World War II in Europe. Surely there will be events in Belgium, the Netherlands and perhaps in Germany in the Hurtgen Forest, at the Bridge at Remagen (early March 2015) and on the Elbe River where World War II ended for me. Expect large and overwhelming crowds on the Anniversary dates. However, the pageantry will be impressive and majestic! If you like to do your own planning and if you want to visit sites in a leisurely fashion, I suggest you plan your travel a month or so after formal activities are over.

There are several museums that I have found educational and informative around the coast of Normandy. They are easy to find on the main road through the towns on the coast. Also, there is a large monument to the Ninth Infantry Division at Barneville, France, of which Dr. Marty Gross has spoken and written about. When in Belgium, the Remembrance Museum which is a product of Marcel and Mathilde Schmetz at 4 Les Beolles, 4890 Thimister-Chermon, Belgium (near the American Cemetery at Henri Chapelle) please all who visit it.

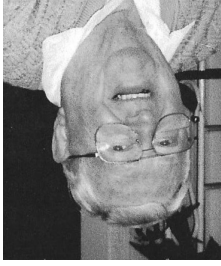
The Museum of the Hurtgen Forest at Vossenack, Germany is also of personal interest to Combat Infantrymen and is highly recommended. My friend, Albert Trostorf in Merode, Germany (Schloss Str 12, 52379 Langerwehe-Merode, Germany) is a good one to contact about details for this museum. And of course, you will want to see Project Peace at the bridge-towers at Erpel and Remagen, about which there was a lengthy article in the last issue of *The Octofail*. These are the 30' paintings here as enemies 68 years ago. When plans for tours and exhibitions are announced, I'll have them published in future issues of *The Octofail*.

Submitted by:
Paul Schumacher
Company C, 39th Infantry Regiment
[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]



TY'S CLUB

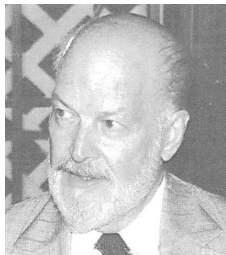
Here's
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ment of 90
your name and recent photo to Jane Mitchell,
Editor.



THE NINE-

New Ninety's Club Member





Reprinted with permission of the author, Don Stibitz. Part Five and Six of a Seven Part series. Other parts were printed in previous Octofoil issues.

ADVANCE TO THE HARTZ MOUNTAINS

Our next mission was to follow the 3rd Armored on the Authbahn to the Hartz Mountains and to protect their rear. They had broken through the German lines and were moving rapidly. We had a tough time trying to keep them in sight. I ended up being in charge of carrying the terrain maps. They only covered a few miles and I had about 20 in no time. We reached the Mountain and I company was again assigned to climb to the top and take the high ground.

When we reached the top of the Mountain, everyone was moaning, groaning and complaining. It was quite a fast climb with some very steep inclines. If the Germans would have been in that area, I think we would have been wiped out. Luckily, there were no Germans there. As soon as we caught our breath I was told to take a machine gun squad and a couple of riflemen to the front and set up an outpost. I picked the spot and did just that. We were about 80 yards from the rest of our company.

On the way back, it was getting dark and I saw two soldiers walking towards me. Because we hadn't seen any Germans, I thought it was someone from our company looking for me. When they were about 25 feet from me I realized it was two German soldiers. It looked like they were reaching for their rifles, so I screamed "hand de ho". They must have realized I had the Thompson aimed at them. They froze and I told them to drop their rifles, then to sit on the ground. As I got a good look at them, I thought they might only be about 15 or 16 years old. I asked them to empty their pockets and take off their jackets to make sure they didn't have any hidden weapons. The one started to cry and this startled me.

I told them to put their jackets back on and told them to walk ahead of me. I turned them over to the CO and tried to get some sleep. The next morning we headed out along the ridge, picked up the outpost and moved on. About a half mile later our scouts sighted some vehicles ahead. We sent a patrol ahead and they reported what appeared to be 5 command cars and some motorcycles and two soldiers outside of a small hut. We surrounded the hut and our platoon leader, who spoke perfect German, yelled for all of them to surrender. No problem. A white piece of cloth was shown and the Lieutenant yelled for them to come out. There were 8 officers and 5 enlisted men. The colonel came up to our CO and surrendered. Some of them almost seemed happy to surrender to American troops. It would save them from the Russians.

The German colonel was a little arrogant and demanded soap and a razor to wash and shave. It irked our CO a little bit. He called me over and told me to look for the rustiest old razor that I could find. Then pick up some GI soap and any old dirty rag and take the colonel down to the creek and make sure he washes and shaves. This I did and the Colonel did while he glared and muttered all the time. The prisoners were then taken back while our platoon had a great time with their command cars and motorcycles.

We had a demolition derby, crashing into each other and to trees and we kept it up until none of the vehicles could run anymore. I had grabbed a scout motorcycle and went roaring down a lane. There was a sharp turn at a bridge over a small creek. I slid into the bridge abutment, flew over the top of the motorcycle and into the creek. Luckily, I ended up with only a few bruises, but did get a little wet. We discovered later that the forward part of our outfit had stopped an armored outfit and that it had surrendered a short time earlier. The Germans who surrendered to us were the Battalion Headquarters of that Division.

Things may have been looking up for us, but our war was far from over. Our outfit moved out again and we were advancing rapidly through many towns and finding little resistance. In one of the towns we went through, there was something that I found very interesting. We entered an area that had many, what we call, row houses, in this case about a dozen that were joined together.

I sent a squad down to the far end of the buildings and sent another squad to the near end to search and meet in the center. What was happening at that time, is that the German SS troop units would force the Wehrmacht (the regular army) to fight us until things got too hot. The SS troops would take off and the Wehrmacht would be left to surrender.

But back to my story. I had been in the center of this group of houses waiting for my guys to make it to where I was. All of a sudden I could hear this very loud screaming and crying. I wondered where my guys were since I hadn't seen any movement from one house to the next. I ran into the center house and opened the cellar door and there must have been 20 women and children. It took me more than 20 minutes to convince them that we were not going to kill and rape them.

When they finally calmed down, some of them started to chatter and point at me and to call out for one particular woman to look at me. When she came up to me, she put her hands on her chest and started to cry. Later I found out that they said I looked just like her son who was in the Army and that she hadn't seen or heard from for several years. She asked me to sleep in her house that night which I did. She made up a bed with clean sheets, great pillows and a blanket. I had asked her to waken me at 5:30. She woke me and I could smell food. She had bacon, eggs, potatoes and ersatz coffee for me. I thanked her, gave her a big hug and left. To this day, I regret not getting her name and address.

I forgot to mention April 12, 1945. We were in the lower hills of the Hartz Mountain area, and who should we see arriving at this location but two Red Cross girls. They gave us the news about President Roosevelt's death. He almost made it to the end of the war in Europe. They came up to serve us doughnuts and coffee.

From what I heard, our kitchen gave them the flour, sugar and the oil to make the doughnuts and the kitchen made the coffee. Very surprising, as we never got anything but C-rations, we had gotten two hot meals in a combat area. The one, they heated C-rations in a 50 gallon drum full of hot water. For the other one, we had dehydrated potatoes, slices of ham and coffee.

To show you what kind of platoon leader I had, between the two of us, he made the ruling that all of the privates went first, then corporals, buck sergeants, staff sergeants, tech sergeants, from the whole company. I was the last non-com, then the officers. Any other time and place in the service, the officers always went first for anything good, then the enlisted men.

I am only talking about what I was personally involved in. In most infantry companies in combat, the platoon leader was in front of the platoon, except when scouts were sent out. They had a very high rate of casualties. You probably know all of this-if so, I apologize. I did have that CO in Mississippi, who went over the hill the first day he was in combat, and he was a West Pointer. I also had one platoon leader who went over the hill and caused a number of casualties. He was another one who was extremely strict until he saw his first combat day.

I guess I better get back to my trip to England. We left by truck to Cologne and stayed overnight. The captain went to an office set up by a group (I can't think of the name), who were in charge of governing the civilian population and involved in rebuilding. They confiscated German buildings for themselves, including their offices and living quarters.

Here was a dozen combat soldiers, all had been wounded, all had been with their companies for a longer stretch after rehab than any other non-coms. The head of this group gave the captain an address where we were to spend the night. He went to look at it and came storming back to us and said, "I should go back and kill that S.O.B. The address was that of a very large concentration

(continued on page 9)

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camp that we had been involved in taking in Cologne and freeing the prisoners. And this civilian chief wanted us to go there to sleep. Were we being punished for being in combat for a minimum of four straight months? The Captain found a nice home and asked if we could sleep there that night. They very happily agreed. Next stop—Paris.

AN EVENT AT THE MULDE AND ELBE RIVERS

In the Hartz Mountain area, we encountered some very ferocious fighting against SS troops as if they were putting up a last stand of a do or die situation. They knew it was near the end and also knew the hatred that was building up against them. After they were overcome, many of the SS troops disappeared and the German Wehrmacht started to surrender to the Americans, hoping to avoid capture by the Russians.

After going through the Nordhausen concentration camp, everyone was sickened by the horrible sight of the starved zombie-like skeletons. Most of them couldn't even stand up. I had been through a number of smaller ones, but the massiveness of this made it so much worse.

At the next town, Harzgerode, on April 19th, I went on patrol with our jeep driver to look over our next area. We are driving east on the road toward the Mulde River. On my right, I noticed a convoy of German trucks and big guns, a German

artillery battalion or larger unit. What do I do? The war is winding down, but we are still getting some sporadic firing.

The convoy stopped and then a white flag appeared. An officer got out of the lead truck and started toward us. I told the driver to stay there and I went to meet the officer who turned out to be a colonel. He saluted me and I returned the salute. He let it be known that he wanted to surrender to a colonel or higher. I told him that I was a colonel and he should have all of his men get off the truck, and put all of their rifles in one pile and all of their pistols in a separate pile.

I then told him to have all of the men board the trucks. I told him to follow me to the jeep. I instructed the driver to get a sack and put all of the pistols in it and put them in the jeep, then get on one of the scout's motorcycles and lead the convoy following me in the jeep back to town. What a great feeling—here I am, a tech sergeant capturing a whole artillery outfit.

As I approached the town, I could see the CO standing in the middle of the street and I believe the whole company was behind them. I drove up to the captain, got out of the jeep, told the colonel to follow, walked up to the Captain with my swelled out chest, gave him a very snappy salute and presented the German colonel to him for the official surrender. I then grabbed the driver and split all of the pistols with him—35 pistols each. What a day! The next day, we headed toward Wolfen and Jessnitz at the junction of the Mulde and Elbe Rivers. This was as far as we were allowed to go, according to the arrangements made by Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin. This is about the 21st of April, as we anticipate finally contacting the Russians.



Photos of Donald Stibitz, author

NOTE FROM THE EDITORS

Do you have a favorite memory of Memorial Day? Does your family have a special tradition on the Fourth of July? How do you and your family observe Veterans Day? We'd like to hear from you—not just from our veterans, but from spouses and children, grandchildren and friends. We would like to run a series of articles in *The Octofoil* with your commentary on these 3 holidays as they relate to their true meaning in your families.

It's not necessary for your article to be lengthy, but just spoken from the heart. Please submit your articles to: Jane Mitchell, editor, at [REDACTED]

As an example, Marlynn Ray, wife of Clarence Ray, has submitted some of her memories of Memorial Day, as written below. Our thanks to her!

Decoration Day Memories from the Early 1940's and Up

Decoration Day, as it was known in my youth, conjures up thoughts of picking lilacs and taking glass canning jars filled with lilacs to all of the cemeteries where we "decorated" the graves of our ancestors. It was sometime after World War II that Decoration Day became known as Memorial Day.

The parades in my country town of Randolph, NY were a great attraction, and very reverent. The marchers entered the cemetery to a muffled drum roll in the background. It gave one chills. The gun salute and the playing of taps was another chilling experience. The youngsters were not permitted to dive onto the ground to collect shell casings until it was over and someone gave them a signal to go ahead. In both cemeteries, Randolph and East Randolph, this was done on a special "mound" where the Civil War monuments were placed and stood looking out over their "sleeping flock". A member of the graduating class at the high school recited the Gettysburg address. An address was given by a dignitary and was always well done.

My town had two big cemeteries. The parades are alternated each year with the parade being in East Randolph one year and the next year in Randolph. But a short service was always held in the non-parade cemetery.

The parade consisted of school children each with a small bouquet of flowers and a small American flag they could keep. They left the flowers on a veteran's grave site. Such graves were marked by grave size flags provided and placed a week ahead of time by the American Legion volunteers, a practice still followed. The high school marching band played, the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, 4-H and American Legion members marched. The Sons of the Legion, the Legion Auxiliary and Volunteer Firemen marched with a vast array of modern fire equipment, as well as several pieces of antique fire equipment.

Antique cars and classics, especially convertibles transported the World War I and later, World War II vets who were unable to walk that distance, to the cemeteries. People waved with real reverence to these veterans to whom they owed their freedom. Other veteran organizations joined in the parade as various later wars came to a close. Children not involved in other groups were allowed to bring their patriotic colored crepe paper decorated bikes and were at the end of the parade, but not quite the very end. That unique honor of bringing up the rear (for obvious reasons) was reserved for the large number of horses that took part each year. They were beautiful and the pride and joy of the kids and adults that owned them.

My earliest memory of the parades was of my uncle, a World War I vet, who wore his Legion uniform with pride—a handsome Irish man, who, after the service, gave me his legion poppy!

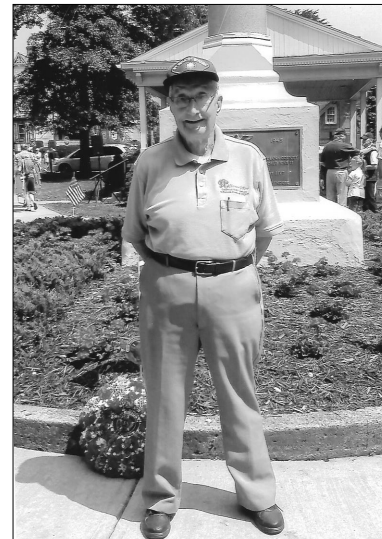
In the late afternoon or early evening we would get out the car and ride through both cemeteries and see how nice and neat they looked all trimmed and covered with flowers galore—a practice I always enjoyed from a very early age.

Another special Memorial Day memory was in 1995. When my first husband died in 1992, he was deeply involved in restoring a 1926 Model T that he had owned for several years. The car was probably 90% completed and my oldest son, Mike, wanted the car. I said O.K., but only if he finished it meticulously as his father would have done. I held my breath, but he made me proud as he drove it carrying a couple of elderly Legion Auxiliary members to the cemetery for the Memorial Day program. It glistened like a black diamond in the sunlight.

Since Clarence and I were married in 2002, we still sometimes go back to New York for Memorial Day activities. Other years, we attend the program at Memorial Park in his hometown of Indiana, PA., which is always inspiring. Part of the agenda that I had never seen before, I found so interesting. A man and wife dressed in Civil War garb read the charge that is known as General John A. Logan's Order #11—the order that declared a holiday to honor those who fought and were lost in the Civil War. It is a wonderful story from 1868 about the events that led up to this order. It recounts that Logan was deeply involved in his work, but he had wanted to visit southern battlefields. The opportunity presented itself when his wife, Mary S. Cunningham Logan, visited one such battlefield in Petersburg, VA. Her group was taken through an old church yard where graves of confederate soldiers were marked with flags and strewn with spring flowers. Immediately upon her arrival home, she verbally related the touching story to her husband. He was taken with the idea and issued his order #11, thus designating a dedicated day in late spring, May 30th as "Decoration Day".

Then, and still to this day, Memorial Day is my favorite Holiday.

Clarence Ray at Memorial Day Service Indiana, PA.



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