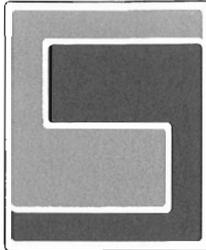


FIGHTING 69TH INFANTRY DIVISION

★★★★ *Association, Inc.*



VOLUME 67, NO. 2

www.69th-infantry-division.com

JANUARY -- FEBRUARY -- MARCH -- APRIL
2013

"THE THREE B'S"
BOLTE'S BIVOUACKING BASTARDS

P.O. BOX 4069
NEW KENSINGTON, PA 15068-4069
724/335-9980

bulletin

Upcoming 69th Division Association 66th Annual Reunion Nashville, TN Holiday Inn Opryland/Airport

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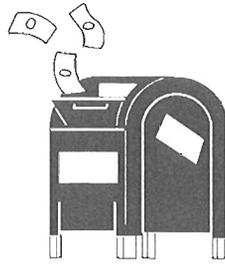
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OCTOBER

15 THROUGH 20, 2013

THE MAIL BOX



By **Dottie (Witzleb) Shadle**
Editor

Company E, 273rd Infantry Regiment
P.O. Box 4069

New Kensington, Pennsylvania 15068-4069
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E-Mail: danne345@comcast.net

Leslie H. Lee, 8011 Waldorf Court, Orlando, FL 32817 — Company HQ 1st Bn., 273rd. Thanks for all the Fighting 69th Infantry Division papers I have them all put together and will save them as long as I live.

Just a Trip

Submitted by: **Margaret Lombardi**

Daughter of **Robert Perry**
Anti-Tank Company, 272nd
Columbia, SC 29210-4905

My father **Robert Perry** is a member of the Fighting 69th. We enjoy his bulletin's together. Daddy is well past the ability to travel, but his family isn't.

So we made a trip: Margaret (oldest daughter), John (ex Air Force, son-in-law); Charles (only grandson, a sergeant U.S. Army on active duty), his wife, daughter (great grand) and their son's (Mr. Perry's only great grandsons). It was quite a crew. But, together we visited Bastogne and sites nearby. In a longer venture, we toured the Normandy invasion beaches.

All of us adults found the experience overwhelming. The kids were excited - not inappropriate. We were above Omaha Beach, on a clear sunny July day, and we spent as much time as we had. Tucked at one end of the beach is a hotel which has red beach canopies for their guests. It seemed very odd, almost surreal, to see "normal" beach goers, dogs and children running and playing while at the top people touring the invasion site.

My son walked me from one spot to another explaining "overlapping fields of fire". Off to the left Pointe du'toc still marked by the naval gunfire of 1944. Before we left that hillside, I spoke of how odd was the juxtaposition of Omaha Beach 1944 and 2012. My clear eyed soldier son replied simply "That's why they were here Mom." I didn't disagree, but he expressed it best.

The next part of our walk was through the cemetery. The price was very high, but they won. My 5 year old granddaughter, in her daddy's arms, looked at the markers. He told her quietly that each one was a soldiers grave. She said, "But there are so many", indeed there are!

I can be pessimistic about the future. But, when I spend time with our current soldiers, I am sure that their part in it will be in good hands. Thank you very much.

Chief Justice Chandler

Submitted By: **David L. Allen**
Company G, 271st
P.O. Box 414
Hartsville, SC 29551-0414

The headline read "Former SC Chief Justice Chandler dies at 89" (1922-2012).

I knew Judge Chandler casually since I grew up in the town where he began his law practice. I was located fourteen miles away when I was discharged from the Army in 1946 but frequently visited the county seat afterwards. I knew him as a member of the South Carolina House of Representatives and later a judge. The fact that he became Chief Justice of the SC Supreme Court speaks highly of him. I always saw him as an unassuming Southern gentleman. By chance, we had a casual conversation one day and determined that the two of us served in the 69th Division—me as a sergeant in a rifle company and he as an artillery officer. I served in Company G, 271st Regiment and I think he served in the 272nd Regiment. He was awarded a Purple Heart and Bronze Star. (He was a member of "The Class That Never Was" (The Citadel class of 1944). Although he wore The Citadel ring his whole life, he never actually graduated, but was later awarded a Citadel honorary degree.)

I was assigned to Company G, 271st either late December 1943 or January 1944. I went overseas with the 69th in November 1944—was stationed at Winchester Barracks until that fateful Christmas morning 1944 when I was one of the sergeants "chosen" to be sent to Belgium as a replacement in the Battle of the Bulge. I was wounded in the Bulge—sent back to England and then back to the Zone of the Interior (U.S.A.) for hospitalization. I was treated well and have suffered no long term effects from my combat wound.

I have been a member of the 69th Association for many years and always look forward to each issue of the Bulletin. Thanks for all the work you folks continue to do so faithfully.

MOVING???

Please let us know so you don't lose-out on receiving your bulletin.

Send your change of address to:

Paul Shadle, Membership Chairman
P.O. Box 4069
New Kensington, PA 15068

A Message from Our President Edward J. Sarcione

Anti Tank, 272nd Infantry Regiment
P.O. Box 648
Hamburg, NY 14075
Telephone: 716/862-7660



Greetings: Time has arrived for all 69th Infantry Division Association Members, Families and Friends to make plans to attend the 66th annual Association reunion scheduled at the Holiday Inn/Opryland/Airport, Nashville, TN October 15 – 20, 2013.

Important decisions regarding the future status of the existing 69th Infantry Division Association will be acted upon at this reunion, and I urge all who are able to voice their opinions.

Two proposals will be submitted by various 69th members at the Friday Board of Directors meeting, and the Saturday General Membership meeting for discussion and voting.

- 1) To legally dissolve the current 69th Infantry Division Association, and transfer all future activities to the 69th Next Generation Group. Under this scenario the Next Generation Group would schedule all future reunions and perpetuate the history and legacy of the 69th Infantry Division. All original 69th Infantry Division members and families would be invited to attend all future reunions as honored guests.
- 2) To continue all currently existing 69th Infantry Division Association activities and defer any dissolving action to some future undetermined date. (In other words status quo. Kick-the-can-down-the-road.)

Regardless of which of the above options may be selected, several administrative issues will require resolution and will be discussed at the next Board of Directors and General Membership meetings. Both proposals are viable and workable. However, it is immediately apparent that a final vote to dissolve the 69th Association transfer to 69th Next Generation Group

at the Saturday morning General Membership meeting would have a critically important influence and impact on the Saturday evening Banquet Program Format. Furthermore it would be virtually imposible to prepare a suitable and appropriate Saturday evening banquet program to properly reflect the Saturday morning decision to dissolve the 69th Association.

In an attempt to obtain advance notice of the most likely final decision desired by 69th Infantry Division Association members a short Straw Poll Ballot is included in this bulletin issue. The results obtained with this Straw Poll will be used to prepare a suitable and appropriate Saturday evening Banquet program.

STRAW POLL

TO DETERMINE FUTURE STATUS OF THE 69TH INFANTRY DIVISION ASSOCIATION

Please check only one (1) box and return only one (1) ballot to either of the designated locations listed below by **15 JUNE 2013**.

1) To legally dissolve existing 69th Infantry Division Association/transfer future Activities to 69th Next Generation Group.

2) To continue all current/future 69th Infantry Division Association activities. Defer any Dissolving/transfer action to future date.

Print name/ Unit Date

Signature

Return to:

Ed Sarcione, President
P.O. Box 648
Hamburg, NY 14075
C:EJ Sarcione@yahoo.com

OR

Paul Shadle, Membership
P.O. Box 4069
New Kensington, PA 15068-4069
C:Pauls1504@comcast.net

If you are NO LONGER interested in receiving the Bulletin in the future, please let us know.

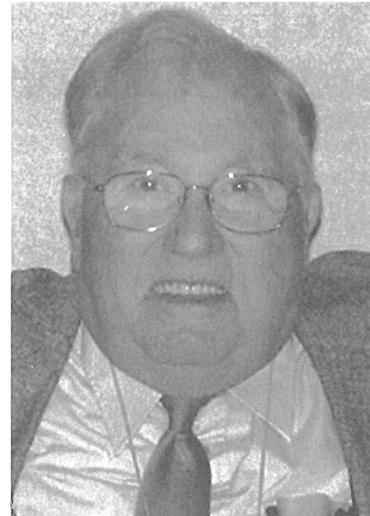
If you are still interested in receiving the Bulletin, please make sure your dues are paid in full and are up to date.

Ballot on reverse side

PLEASE
DO NOT
FORGET TO
VOTE AND
SEND YOUR
BALLOT TO
ED SARCIONE
OR
PAUL SHADLE

Ballot on reverse side

Vice-President's Corner



George C. West, Vice-President
Anti Tank, 271st Infantry Regiment
2526 Greenacres Drive
Allentown, PA 18103-3740

It has been a long ride since the 69th Infantry Division Association was incorporated in the state of New York, May 5, 1950. Our first reunion was in New York in 1947. We all have traveled a long way and now I feel that the time has come to make plans for the next generation to take over the planning and execution of the reunions. Since this may be the final get together for the "association" it would be a good move to work with the NEXGEN and continue the reunions. Our offspring and friends hope that the reunions continue as many new acquaintances were forged. My two daughters are excited and want to attend the 66th reunion and renew the relationships forged over time. I want to extend an invitation to members and wives, widows, all the members of the next generation group to meet in Nashville in October.

661st TD Upcoming Reunion

Dear 661st TD Family and Friends:

The 2013 661st reunion will be hosted by Thomas and Tammy Slopek in Akron, Ohio. The dates for this year's event will be August 22nd through the 25th. We have reserved a Hampton Inn in Stow, Ohio to accommodate everyone. The Hampton Inn provides a free breakfast every day and we will also have a hospitality room stocked with refreshments daily.

We have a tour of a nearby aviation museum planned for Friday, along with a city tour of Akron on Saturday. Saturday night will feature the annual banquet at a local VFW hall complete with a surprise presentation.

Attendees must make their own reservations before July 30, 2013. This can be done one of three ways:

- 1) Guest may call toll free 1-800-426-7866 and reference group block **661st Tank Destroyers Group** to receive your group rate.
- 2) Guest may call hotel direct at 330-945-4160 and ask for **661st Tank Destroyers Group** block.

(Continued on Page 5)

661ST REUNION (Continued from Page 4)

3) Guest may book online at www.stow.hamptoninn.com and enter group code **TDG** to receive groupe rate.

The hotel address is: *Hampton Inn Stow, 4331 Lakepointe Corporate Drive, Stow, OH 44224*

The rate will be \$89.00 per night.

It is important to forecast a head count, so if you could, please contact Thomas Slopek and let us know who will be attending.

Tom's contact info: tas5559@yahoo.com, (330)715-2659 or post on Legacy of the 661st Tank Destroyers on Facebook.

Hope to see everyone in August!

Greetings From the Next Generation Group

Submitted By: **William H. Sheavly, Jr.**
The 69th Next Generation Group
3500 Virginia Beach Blvd., Suite 200
Virginia Beach, Virginia 23452
Telephone: (757) 340-7006 or (757) 470-3622

Next Generation Group Announces 2014 European Tour

The 69th Infantry Next Generation Group is pleased to announce that they are sponsoring a European tour in the spring of 2014 which will include a stop in Torgau on Elbe Day. "We are delighted to announce this major trip to Europe for all of our members and families" said Bill Sheavly, Jr., President of the Next Generation Group. "We have had a lot of people asking for just such a tour and are very pleased to announce that it is here." Thomas Slopek, Vice President of the Next Generation Group, has worked with American Express Travel Services and they have worked up an exciting itinerary which we think everyone will truly enjoy.

The preliminary itinerary is as follows:

- April 15, 2014 (Tuesday)..... Depart U.S. for London
- April 16-17 (Wednesday-Thursday) Tour London includes Stonehenge and Winchester Cathedral
- April 18 (Friday) Depart London for Paris via Eurostar train (Chunnel) and tour Paris
- April 19 (Saturday) Tour Paris
Options may include Versailles, Seine River Cruise and show at the Lido
- April 20 (Sunday)..... Paris, then to Brussels by train, onto Margraten Cemetery, Henri-Chappelle, Malmady Massacre Memorial, on to Cologne
- April 21 (Monday)..... Cologne and Aachen
- April 22 (Tuesday)..... Cologne, Weimar (Seigfried Line), Buchenwald Concertration Camp, on to Leipzig.
- April 23 (Wednesday) Leipzig and Torgau
- April 24 (Thursday) Torgau
- April 25 (Friday)..... Torgau and Elbe Day celebration
- April 26 (Saturday)Torgau to Potsdam to Berlin
- April 27 (Sunday)Tour Berlin
- April 28 (Monday)..... Tour concludes. Departures

This is a preliminary itinerary, and changes will be made as we progress. However, the dates will remain the same. Our goal in submitting this itinerary to the bulletin at this point is to get everyone thinking about this and hopefully drumming up some excitement. The next bulletin will contain more precise details as to destinations, pricing, etc.

Please consider joining us on this exciting tour of Europe!

A Message from Paul and Dottie Shadle Membership Chairman and Editor

Paul Shadle, Company E, 271st Infantry
P.O. Box 4069 • New Kensington, PA 15068-4069
Telephone: 724/335-9980
E-Mail - Dottie: danne345@comcast.net
Paul: pauls1504@comcast.net



Membership Chairman Paul Shadle and Editor, Dottie Shadle

Looking forward to this years reunion in Nashville, TN. We would like for you to let us know if you are planning to attend, so we can plan for busses and tours. We are hoping for a great turnout and lots of fun. Since we are all getting older we should all enjoy these reunions as long as we can.

PLEASE RESPOND AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE.

Thank you, Paul & Dottie

**KEEP THOSE LETTERS,
ARTICLES, AND PHOTOS
FLOWING IN
SO WE CAN KEEP THE
BULLETIN GOING OUT!**

Quo Vadis?

Submitted By: **Gus R. Wiemann**

Company L, 271st
7126 Canella Court
Tamarac, FL 33321

When a group of us were employed by the International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg to prepare a record of the major war criminals trial, we were quartered in Stein Castle, the country home of the Faber family, especially noted for their Number 2 pencils. Other than myself, my fellow employees were graduates of ivy league schools, some of whom enjoyed displaying their erudition.

After a week of work I decided to use a Saturday and Sunday to explore the Bavarian countryside. As I left my small room in the castle, my next-door neighbor, a young member of the elitist, saw me, smiled and asked, "Quo vadis?" Noticing my perplexed reaction, he asked, "Where are you going?"

"I don't know where I'll end up, but I want to see the countryside." After having been a GI for three years and being told where and when to go, I would walk or hitchhike without any fixed destination. Eventually, I found myself on the Autobahn or highway entrance and walked alongside the road, hoping for a ride.

In a few minutes an army truck came rumbling out from the area behind me. I raised my thumb and as the truck slowed and pulled alongside me, I asked the GI driver, "Can I get a lift?"

"Sure, hop in."

As I entered the cab and sat next to the driver, I said, "Thanks. How far are you going?"

"I've got a delivery to make just this side of a small town called Ingolstadt. I can take you up to the road leading into town, but then I have to head back."

"Okay, that's great. I'm just sightseeing."

For the rest of the trip we just talked about the army, how long he had been in and that I had been discharged recently. Then he turned up a dirt road, unloaded a few crates at what appeared to be a supply depot, turned back onto the highway and headed for Ingolstadt.

After about ten minutes he pulled off the road and stopped near a sign indicating Ingolstadt and an arrow pointing to a two-lane paved road and several buildings about a mile distant.

I grabbed my small overnight bag, hopped out of the cab and waved as I called out, "Thanks a lot."

He nodded, made a U-turn and headed down the highway.

Late afternoon was turning into evening and as I began walking to the town, I could see a tall man in uniform with a peaked cap heading in my direction. As he came near I called out in German, "Is there a hotel nearby?"

"Oh, yes. It's about a mile down the road to the right."

"Thank you."

"Wait a minute," he said. "You have an accent. Where are you from?"

As I knew that Americans were unpopular in some areas, I answered, "Braunsberg," which was the birthplace of my father in East Prussia.

"Well, I'm from there, too. I guess you could call us brothers in suffering." Referring to the war's displaced persons.

"Yes, I guess you could," I replied, shaking his outstretched hand. Bidding him good-bye, I hurried toward the hotel.

By the time I reached the hotel and registered I was tired from the trip and decided to bed down for the night. Black-out drapes from the war years hung by my window. I closed them, undressed and, as we said in the army, hit the sack.

At about seven in the morning I arose, showered, dressed and headed for the small cafeteria off the lobby. Coffee, toast and three scrambled eggs energized me for more sightseeing. As I checked out, the clerk mentioned, "You know, sir, there is a Hollywood movie crew at the train station making a picture. Perhaps you would be interested in watching them."

Little did the clerk know that I was a film buff and would rush to that train station. "How do I find the station?"

"Sir, just take the streetcar with the number 4, which stops at the hotel about every 15 minutes. It's only a ten-minute ride and they call out each stop."

Thanking him, I picked up my bag and in about ten minutes boarded the streetcar. In those days the conductors wore uniforms and collected the tickets from the passengers.

Also, in those days Allied personnel could use train and streetcar transportation free by using their identification cards.

When the conductor approached me saying, "Ticket, please," I showed him my Allied identification card. As I handed it to him, I looked up from my seat and recognized him as the one who called me his "brother in suffering."

As he studied my pass and scrutinized me, his face fell as he had been deceived by this American. In a moment he returned my pass, continuing down the aisle between the seats and chanting, "Tickets, please. Tickets."

Within five minutes the streetcar turned into a designated stop, the motorman announced, "Train station" and I hurried off. Approaching a train platform, I spotted two motion-picture cameras, several klieg lights and an actress running toward one of the cameras.

"Cut," called a man, obviously directing the scene. With that, the actress walked to a canvass-backed chair and sat down. A little hesitant that I might be interrupting, I approached her and introduced myself. As I glanced at her face, I recognized her as having played supporting roles in films during the 30's and 40's. I mentioned one movie in which she was being victimized by the film's villains in her home.

"Oh, yes," she answered, smiling at my remembering a picture released about ten years earlier. "That was 'Kind Lady'." Her name was Aline McMahon and later appeared in "Ah, Wilderness" as the love interest of Wallace Beery and as the confidant of Judy Garland in her last film.

As we talked there was a lull in the filming and she asked, "Would you like to meet the director?"

"Oh, yes. Thank you."

She then accompanied me to an area where the

(Continued on Page 7)

QUO VADIS? (Continued from Page 6)

director, Fred Zinnemann, sat and introduced me. A friendly young man, he asked, "How would you like to go with me up on the railroad trestle and line up a shot?" All I could do was to show surprise and nod. In a few minutes we climbed up on to the trestle overlooking the tracks where he sighted the scene through his viewer. By this time I felt that I had taken enough of his time, thanked him and Ms. McMahon and headed out of the station.

Years later I learned that Fred Zinnemann had been chosen to direct "From Here to Eternity" and that Frank Sinatra had asked Zinnemann to read for a part. For that film Zinnemann received an Oscar as Best Director and Sinatra earned his Oscar as Best Actor.

By the end of the day I had returned to the castle where once again I met my neighbor. "Hi," he greeted me "Did you get to see some Bavarian countryside?"

"Yes, and I made some friends, too."

D-Day Memorial Founder Bob Slaughter Dies

Submitted By: **Carl Yusna**
HQ Company, 273rd
17 Cove Street
Old Saybrook, CT 06475-2507



John Robert (Bob) Slaughter, Sr. died May 29, 2012 in Roanoke, VA at the age of 87. According to the Washington Post he was once described as perhaps the "best known" D-Day Veteran in America.

In 1940, at the age of 15, Bob persuaded his parents to let him join the National Guard to earn extra money for household expenses. He joined Company D, (a heavy weapons company in Roanoke) 116th Infantry Regiment of the 29th Infantry Division. By June 6, 1944, D-Day, he was a sergeant commanding a machine gun squad. Company A, from nearby Bedford, VA landed in the first wave at the Vierville Draw. Company D was supposed to land behind them in the second wave. But strong currents, steering around obstacles, navigation problems due to smoke and fog obscuring landmarks on shore caused the coxswain of his LCA landing craft to land about 200 yards to the east. The LCA struck a submerged sandbar and Bob went off the side of the ramp into the water up to his armpits. The Long March of Sergeant Bob Slaughter had begun. He was wounded twice in France but was on the front lines with his company when the war ended eleven months later.

He returned home, married, started a family, and began a career with the Roanoke Times and World News. When he retired in 1987 he declared, "We have no gathering place, no meeting hall, no memorial where our country can collect its memories and lessons learned from D-Day." Shortly thereafter he along with other supporters formed a committee to raise money

and search for a location for a small memorial. The project got a big boost when Bob, along with Joe Dawson, and Walter Ehlers of the 1st Infantry Division were chosen to walk with President Bill Clinton on Omaha Beach during the 50th anniversary of D-Day. The photo of the walk as well as coverage of all the ceremonies by the networks brought worldwide attention to D-Day. Bob became chairman of the memorial foundation. On Veterans Day 1994 it was announced the memorial would be located on an 11 acre site in Bedford, VA. *Peanuts* cartoonist Charles Shultz contributed 1 million dollars in 1997. Historian Stephen Ambrose and *Saving Private Ryan* director Stephen Spielberg also came aboard. Bedford was chosen by Congress in 1996 to be the National D-Day Memorial site as it had the highest per capita killed on D-Day of any town in America, nineteen of the 35 Company A "Bedford Boys" as they came to be known as, were killed before the Longest Day ended. Most were killed within the first few minutes of landing. By the end of the Normandy Campaign two more Bedford Boys from Company A had died as well as two serving in another 116th company. The National D-Day Memorial was dedicated on June 6, 2001 by President George W. Bush with Bob at his side. As he wrote in his memoirs, *Omaha Beach and Beyond: The Long March of Sergeant Bob Slaughter* "The long march had come full circle."



On June 6, 2004 I attended the 60th anniversary of D-Day ceremonies at Omaha Beach with the 29th Division Association. An article I wrote for the Association's Twenty-Niner newsletter about the famous picture LIFE magazine photographer Robert Capa took of 29'r Ed Regan on Omaha Beach brought a response letter from a Company D member. This was followed by an invitation to Company D's annual D-Day reunion in Roanoke, VA in 2005. It was there that I met Bob Slaughter. As a writer and photographer I was honored when Bob sent me the preface to his memoirs for comments before the book was published in 2007. The formal Company D reunions ended in 2010. The 67th anniversary remembrance of D-Day at the Memorial in 2011 was also the 10th anniversary of the Memorial. Bob was named Director emeritus. It was great to be there and to congratulate him on the honor. In May 2012 New England Post 93 of the 29th Division Association elected me Junior Vice Commander of the Post. I was looking forward to seeing Bob on D-Day and telling him how I had become an officer for the first time. But then the news came of his passing. So it turned out that my first duty became to represent the Post at his funeral on June 2nd.

"Now that I am in my eighties I am well aware that the long march that began so many years ago is about to come to a halt. I am proud to say my generation helped save the world from tyranny, prevented the extinction of an entire group of people, and preserve the democratic freedoms of our wonderful American way of life. I wouldn't change a thing, except to wish

(Continued on Page 14)

**69th INFANTRY DIVISION ASSOCIATION
OCTOBER 15-20, 2013
HOLIDAY INN SELECT OPRYLAND/AIRPORT - NASHVILLE, TN**

Tuesday, October 15

			Breakfast each morning is included in your room rate
			Hospitality and Souvenir Rooms open
2:00 p.m.	-	6:00 p.m.	Reunion Registration open
			Dinner and evening on your own
12:00 p.m.	-	5:00 p.m.	Hospitality Room open

Wednesday, October 16

			Breakfast each morning is included in your room rate
8:30 a.m.	-	9:00 a.m.	Reunion Registration open
9:30 a.m.	-	3:30 p.m.	RCA STUDIO B / COUNTRY MUSIC HALL OF FAME TOUR (description follows)
12:00 p.m.	-	5:00 p.m.	Hospitality Room open
4:00 p.m.	-	5:00 p.m.	Reunion Registration open
7:00 p.m.	-	11:00 p.m.	Hospitality Room open

Thursday, October 17

			Breakfast each morning is included in your room rate
10:00 a.m.	-	10:30 a.m.	Reunion Registration open
11:00 a.m.	-	2:30 p.m.	NASHVILLE NITELIFE LUNCH AND MATINEE (description follows)
12:00 p.m.	-	5:00 p.m.	Hospitality Room open Dinner on your own
8:30 p.m.	-	11:30 p.m.	PX Beer Party

Friday, October 18

			Breakfast each morning is included in your room rate
12:00 p.m.	-	5:00 p.m.	Hospitality Room open
	1:00 p.m.		Board Meeting
6:00 p.m.	-	10:00 p.m.	GRAND OLE OPRY (description follows)
7:00 p.m.	-	11:00 p.m.	Hospitality Room open

Saturday, October 19

			Breakfast each morning is included in your room rate
9:00 a.m.	-	12:00 p.m.	Membership Meeting
9:00 a.m.	-	12:00 p.m.	Ladies' "Get Together"
1:00 p.m.	-	4:00 p.m.	Hospitality Room open
6:00 p.m.	-	7:00 p.m.	Cocktail Hour with Cash Bar
7:00 p.m.	-	7:30 p.m.	Memorial Service
7:30 p.m.			Banquet served, followed by music and dancing

Sunday, October 20

Breakfast each morning is included in your room rate
Farewell Breakfast and Departures

CANCELLATION AND REFUND POLICY FOR ARMED FORCES REUNIONS, INC.

For attendees canceling reunion activities prior to the cut-off date, Armed Forces Reunions, Inc. (AFR) shall process a full refund less the non-refundable AFR registration fee (\$10 per person). Attendees canceling reunion activities after the cut-off date will be refunded to the fullest extent that AFR's vendor commitments and guarantees will allow, less the non-refundable AFR registration fee. **Cancellations will only be taken Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, excluding holidays.** Please call (757) 625-6401 to cancel reunion activities and obtain a cancellation code. Refunds processed 4-6 weeks after reunion. Cancelling your hotel reservation **DOES NOT** cancel your reunion activities.

Register online & pay by credit card at www.afr-reg.com/69inf2013

69th INFANTRY DIVISION REUNION - TOUR DESCRIPTIONS on page 13

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69th INFANTRY DIVISION ACTIVITY REGISTRATION FORM

Listed below are all registration, tour, and meal costs for the reunion. Please enter how many people will be participating in each event and total the amount. Send that amount payable to ARMED FORCES REUNIONS, INC. in the form of check or money order. Your cancelled check will serve as your confirmation. Returned checks will be charged a \$20 fee. You may also register online and pay by credit card at www.afr-reg.com/69inf2013. All registration forms and payments must be received by mail on or before September 12, 2013. After that date, reservations will be accepted on a space available basis. Please make a copy of this form before mailing. Please do not staple or tape payment to this form.

Armed Forces Reunions, Inc.
322 Madison Mews
Norfolk, VA 23510
ATTN: 69th INFANTRY DIVISION

OFFICE USE ONLY	
Check # _____	Date Received _____
Inputted _____	Nametag Completed _____

CUT-OFF DATE IS 9/12/13

	PRICE PER	# of PEOPLE	TOTAL
TOURS			
WEDNESDAY: RCA STUDIO B/COUNTRY MUSIC HALL OF FAME	\$ 64		\$
THURSDAY: NASHVILLE NITELIFE LUNCH AND MATINEE	\$ 64		\$
FRIDAY: GRAND OLE OPRY	\$ 69		\$
BEER PARTY AND MEALS		# of ppl	
FRIDAY: BEER PARTY <i>(Please indicate # of people attending)</i>	No Charge		
SATURDAY: BANQUET <i>(Please select your entrée)</i>			
GRILLED SIRLOIN	\$ 41		\$
GRILLED CHICKEN BREAST	\$ 37		\$
BAKED SALMON	\$ 40		\$
MANDATORY PER PERSON REGISTRATION FEE			
Includes entertainment and administrative expenses.	\$ 10		\$
DUES—NEW DUES YEAR IS AUGUST 1, 2013 — JULY 31, 2014			
REGULAR MEMBERSHIP	\$ 10		\$
LADIES' DUES	\$ 5		\$
POSTAGE AND BULLETIN DONATION (UP TO YOU)			\$
Total Amount Payable to Armed Forces Reunions, Inc.			\$

PLEASE PRINT NAME AS YOU WANT IT TO APPEAR ON YOUR NAMETAG

FIRST _____ LAST _____ EMAIL _____
 UNIT _____ NEXT GENERATION? YES NO FIRST TIMER? (YES) OR (NO)

SPOUSE NAME (IF ATTENDING) _____

GUEST NAMES . . .

STREET ADDRESS _____

CITY, ST, ZIP _____ PH. NUMBER () _____

DISABILITY/DIETARY RESTRICTIONS _____

(Sleeping room requirements must be conveyed by attendee directly with hotel)

MUST YOU BE LIFTED HYDRAULICALLY ONTO THE BUS WHILE SEATED IN YOUR WHEELCHAIR IN ORDER TO PARTICIPATE IN BUS TRIPS? YES NO (PLEASE NOTE THAT WE CANNOT GUARANTEE AVAILABILITY).

EMERGENCY CONTACT _____ PH. NUMBER () _____

For refunds and cancellations please refer to our policies outlined at the bottom of the reunion program. **CANCELLATIONS WILL BE TAKEN MONDAY-FRIDAY 9:00am-5:00pm EASTERN TIME: (excluding holidays).** Call (757) 625-6401 to cancel reunion activities and obtain a cancellation code. Refunds processed 4-6 weeks after reunion.

HOLIDAY INN OPRYLAND/AIRPORT - NASHVILLE, TN

(615) 883-9770 OR (866) 871-1171

The Holiday Inn Opryland/Airport is located at 2200 Elm Hill Pike, Nashville, TN 37214; approximately 3 miles away from the Nashville International Airport (BNA). If you are driving, please call the hotel for driving directions. The Holiday Inn offers 383 spacious guest rooms each with coffee maker, complimentary Wireless High-Speed Internet Access, hairdryer, iron, and ironing board. Guest can also enjoy the hotel's dry sauna, whirlpool, indoor pool, and on-site exercise facility. Handicapped and non-smoking rooms are subject to availability. Please request these special accommodations when making your hotel reservation.

Parking for registered guests is complimentary. Check-in is at 3:00 p.m. and check-out is at 12 noon. **Jackson's Veranda** serves breakfast, lunch, and dinner offering a variety of menu selections. **Little Johnny's Pizza** is the hotel's on-site pizzeria and service is available for lunch and dinner. **Ivorie's**, open from 6:30 p.m. - 12 a.m., offers guests delicious cocktails and live entertainment after 8:30 p.m. The **Terrace/Atrium** bar serves poolside spirits & eats from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Room service is available from 6:00 a.m. - 11:00 p.m.

The hotel provides a complimentary shuttle to and from the Nashville International Airport (BNA) that runs every 20 minutes from 5:00 a.m. - 11:00 p.m. You may want to consider other transportation, as space is limited on courtesy services. More information is available at the ground transportation level in the Airport Terminal.

The Hotel has limited parking space available for guests with RV's. Should you require full RV hook-up service, please call Nashville KOA at (615) 889-0286, Nashville's Jellystone Park at (615) 889-4225, or Two Rivers Campground at (615) 883-8559. Ask for information, reservations, and directions to determine which is best for you. Parks recommend reservations be made immediately due to limited space and availability.

Should you need to rent a wheelchair for the reunion, ScootAround rents both manual and power wheelchairs by the day and week. Please call their toll free number at (888) 441-7575 for details.

Vendors, Schedules, and Prices are subject to change.

----- CUT HERE AND MAIL TO THE HOTEL -----

69TH INFANTRY DIVISION ASSOCIATION REUNION - HOTEL RESERVATION FORM REUNION DATES: OCTOBER 15 - 19, 2013

NAME _____ SHARING ROOM W/ _____

ADDRESS _____ ZIP _____

TEL. NUMBER(_____) _____ HOLIDAY INN PRIORITY # _____

ARRIVAL DATE _____ APPROX. TIME _____ DEP. DATE _____

OF ROOMS NEEDED _____ # OF PEOPLE IN ROOM _____ HANDICAP ACCESS _____
SMOKING _____ NON-SMOKING _____ KING BED _____ 2 DOUBLE BEDS

In the event room type requested is not available, nearest room type will be assigned.

Rate: \$99 + tax (currently 15.25%) + \$2.50 per night per room occupied room tax. Rate will also be honored 3 days before and after reunion dates, based on availability.

CUT-OFF DATE: 09/12/13. Late reservations will be processed based on space availability at a higher rate.

CANCELLATION POLICY: Deposit is refundable if reservation is canceled 24 hours before arrival. Call (615) 883-9770.

All reservations must be guaranteed by credit card or first night's deposit including tax, enclosed.

_____ AMEX _____ DINERS _____ VISA _____ MASTER CARD _____ DISCOVER

CREDIT CARD NUMBER _____ EXP. DATE _____

SIGNATURE (regardless of payment method) _____

MAIL TO: HOLIDAY INN OPRYLAND/AIRPORT, 2200 ELM HILL PIKE, NASHVILLE, TN 37214

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69th Infantry Division Reunion - Tour Descriptions

RCA STUDIO B / COUNTRY MUSIC HALL OF FAME

Wednesday, October 16

The country Music Hall of Fame has been the home of America's music since 1967. Located on the west bank of the Cumberland River, it is just a few steps from the historic Ryman Auditorium and the honky tonks of lower Broadway. The Museum presents a vast collection to illustrate country music's story as told through the turns of two centuries. Enjoy historic country video clips, recorded music, and dynamic exhibits. Lunch will be on your own at the Museum's Restaurant or snack bar. Be sure to allow some time to shop in the Museum Store! Following lunch, reboard for RCA's Studio B, one of the world's most important and successful recording studios. More than 35,000 songs were brought to life by Studio B magic — including over 1,000 American hits and more than 200 Elvis Presley recordings.

9:30am board bus, 3:30pm back at the hotel

\$64/Person includes bus, guide, and admissions. Lunch on your own

NASHVILLE NITELIFE LUNCH AND MATINEE

Thursday, October 17

Come and experience a celebration of Country Music from both the past and present. Hear songs from many of the great artists of country music history — Enjoy the music of everyone from Patsy Cline and Hank Williams, Sr. to the superstars of today, Sara Evans and Toby Keith. But first — be sure to bring your appetite - there is a full lunch buffet with salads, vegetables, baked chicken, ribs, pasta, rolls, beverages, and fruit cobblers for dessert!

11:00 am board bus, 2:30 pm back at the hotel

\$64/Person includes bus, escort, lunch and matinee.

GRAND OLE OPRY

Friday, October 18

After an early dinner on your own at the hotel, board bus for the Grand Ole Opry. Tonight's performance will be at the historic Ryman Auditorium. During any given Opry show, audiences can expect the best in country, bluegrass, comedy, gospel, and more by Country Music Hall of Famers, cast members who helped establish the Opry as the home of country music, revered superstars, and young artists just starting to make names for themselves. It is the longest-running live radio show in the world. Sit back and enjoy an American Institution at its entertaining best.

6:00 pm board bus, 10:00 pm back at the hotel

\$69/Person includes bus, escort and show.

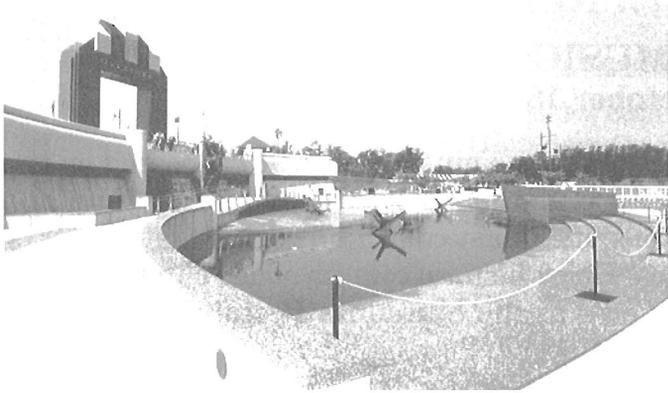
Driver and Guide gratuities are not included in the tour prices.

Please plan to be at the bus boarding area at least five minutes prior to the scheduled time.

All trips require a minimum of thirty five people, unless otherwise stated.

D-DAY MEMORIAL..... (Continued from Page 7)

that my dear army buddies could be here to see and touch the magnificent National D-Day Memorial."



This excerpt from the epilogue from Omaha Beach and Beyond: The Long March of Sergeant Bob Slaughter is on the cover of the program for the June 6, 2012 68th Observance of the Normandy Invasion at the National D-Day Memorial under a photo of Bob taken in Germany in 1945. Although the 69th didn't land on D-Day or fight in Normandy you to "...helped to save the world from tyranny, prevent the extinction of an entire group of people, and preserve the democratic freedoms of our wonderful American way of life..." Thank you!

Carl Yusna is the son of the late Joe Yusna Company A 269th Combat Engineers and HQ & S 121st Combat Engineers 29th Division for Army of Occupation. He lives in Old Saybrook, Ct. 860-388-0175

Visit the National D-Day Memorial's website: www.dday.org.



Bobligen, Germany

Submitted By: **Douglas George**
HQ Company, 273rd
1012 Jay Court
Loveland, CO 80537

Some of our company (ones that went to the 69th when it was originated sometime in early 1944) were sent back to the U.S.A. Others like me were someplace in West Germany getting ready to be shipped out to Japan. About the second week in August 1945 we were on our way, waiting in a pasture, when they dropped the Atomic bomb. So we were ordered back to where we were staying to await further orders. In late August some of us were sent to Bobligen, Germany, to the 87th Field Artillery Ordinance Company to watch

over German prisoners and apply cosimelene (a grease) to preserve the artillery guns until they were needed. While we were there we stayed in a large barracks complex. (about ten men to a large room).

This past fall, a friend of mine, who has an electronics company with distributors in Europe including Bobligen, Germany near Stuttgart, was visiting there and took pictures of the now revised and improved barracks. This complex is now being used as a Police Training Camp.



A Soldier's Odyssey

Submitted By: **Gus R. Wiemann**
Company L, 271st
7126 Canella Court
Tamarac, FL 33321

In 1947 I was assigned as an assistant to the managing editor of our Army newspaper, the Stars and Stripes, in Germany. It was then that I decided to attempt finding my Dad's family. Fortunately, our printing plant and offices were near the Rhein-Main airport. With a three-day pass I rode one morning in a jeep driven by the soldier who delivered our paper to the airport. By wearing my uniform I was able to hitch a ride on a C-47 which was delivering a cargo of flour to American troops encircled by Russian forces in Berlin, the last city I knew where Dad's family lived.

(Continued on Page 15)

A SOLDIER'S ODYSSEY (Continued from Page 14)

My only luggage was an overnight bag containing two boxes of chocolate, held together by a red ribbon bow, a bag of ground coffee, toilet articles and a change of clothes.

Within a couple of hours I arrived in Berlin's Tempelhof airport. By this time I was ready for supper or, as we said then, chow.

Another advantage in wearing the uniform was that if you could find an Army kitchen, you could eat. This airport was American administered, so the problem of securing food was solved.

Afternoon had drifted into evening and the need to find a place to sleep was the next challenge. As Americans administered the airport, again a solution was obvious. Finding the building for flight personnel was simple. Once there I showed my pass to a corporal who pointed out a bunk not in use and handed me a bedroll.

Even though I was in my early twenties, by now I was brushed and slept for eight hours. In the morning I returned the bedroll to the corporal and, as he appeared to be intelligent, sympathetic type, I showed him the last address I had of Dad's family.

"Any idea how I could get there?" I asked.

"That area was pretty well plastered by air raids, but there are still some blokes standing. You might be lucky to find them there. My girlfriend lives near there."

With that the corporal pulled out a sheet of paper from a desk. "You can get a streetcar numbered 4," he added as he drew a rough map. "Just show the streetcar conductor the address you want. He'll let you out at the right place."

Thanking the corporal for his help, I picked up my bag and headed with the corporal's map in my pocket for the streetcar. Tucked in my pocket with the map was the only picture I had of Dad's family: his brother, my Uncle Otto, a man who resembled my father, but appeared to be heavier and older; then on each side of my uncle were his son, Karl, a dark haired youngster wearing what seemed to be leather short pants, known as Lederhosen; and his sister, Marianne, a blonde teenager with braided hair. Not knowing when the picture was taken, I wondered what their appearance was now.

After what seemed like a long hike I noticed the street sign of Kurfuerstendamm, the Fifth Avenue of Berlin. It was famous as a neighborhood of high-end shops as well as a series of consulates. On the sidewalk near the curb was a small enclosed newspaper and magazine shed. As I approached it I noticed a sliding window for the vendor inside to pass a newspaper or magazine out to a customer.

When I knocked on the window, an elderly man opened it and asked, "May I help you?" I showed him my press pass and asked him if he would mind answering a few questions for my newspaper, the Stars and Stripes.

"Not at all," he replied. Then in answer to a few questions he told me that he and his wife had bought the stand from its previous owner ten years ago who had said, "I don't want to spend a second war in Germany."

Before the war, he continued, his international patronage, which belonged to the various consulates in the neighborhood, preferred magazines like Esquire, Vogue, Life, Harpers, Screen, Movie Humor

and the German language New York Staatszeitung and Herold Sunday edition.

Today all the foreign papers and magazines he is able to buy are the English Daily Telegraph, London Times, Daily Express, Daily Mirror, Daily Herald, Daily Mail and the European edition of the New York Herald Tribune. He added that today he receives 10 copies of the English papers, 20 of the Herald Tribune, 10 Time and 2 Newsweek magazines.

At this point the vendor's wife added that a total of 2,000 papers are sold daily from the heated stand and the English-licensed Telegraf is the most sold at the stand. The American-sponsored Tasgesspiegel and the French-backed Kurier follow in that order. The book racks are bare except for old weathered reference books.

"We hope we'll be able to sell more soon," said the husband as the couple handed papers through the sliding window and watched their customers hurry down bleak and gutted Kurfuerstendamm.

It was only a short walk from the stand until I found the stop for the streetcar. In a few minutes it arrived, I hopped aboard and showed the conductor the address I hoped to find. He nodded and within five minutes he came to a stop and pointed out the direction that I had to follow. In looking at the bombed-out buildings I noticed signs like "Schmidt Family Now At 12 Freiburg Street."

I pulled out the envelope of the last letter before the war that my uncle had sent to us to double check the address. On the front was a black stamp: "READ BY CENSOR," a comment on the suspicious nature of the Third Reich.

Finally I saw the address of my Dad's family on a house with boarded-up windows. Avoiding the broken sidewalk leading to the house, I rang the bell. Shortly a woman came to the door. I asked in German, "Is this the home of the Wiemann Family?"

"Yes," answered the woman who resembled an older version of my cousin Marianne.

"My name is Gus Wiemann, I'm the nephew of Otto Wiemann."

"Oh Gus, I'm Marianne. My father passed away. He was killed in an air raid. Please come in."

As I entered Marianne closed the door and said, "Come, let's sit down in the living room so that we can talk."

Looking at the woman, I recalled the last picture we had received of Uncle Otto with my two cousins. Her features matched those of my cousin. Now her hair was short, darker and showed several streaks of gray.

"Yes," I said, smiling. "You must be Marianne, but the picture that we had showed that you had long blonde braids."

She laughed. "Yes, those braids are long gone and my hair is no longer blonde."

"And where is Karl, your brother?"

Marianne looked down for a moment, then turned to me. "My brother was killed at Stalingrad."

"Marianne, I'm sorry. I thought that all of us could have a family reunion." Then placing the two boxes of chocolate on the living-room table, I said, "A little chocolate from America."

"Thank you, Gus. We haven't tasted chocolate in years. You know my father was a civil engineer and was even called to work in Switzerland. Before the war my family was ready to emigrate. My father saw

(Continued on Page 16)

A SOLDIER'S ODYSSEY (Continued from Page 15)

where Germany was heading, but if you were a civil engineer you would never get a visa."

"I know," I replied. "My mother and father had friends who were able to leave. They told us what was happening. By the way, Marianne, I just remembered in my bag I have a package of real coffee. Let me find it and we'll have an old-fashioned Kaffeeklatch."

"Wunderbar," replied Marianne. "I'll put a pot on the stove right away."

For the rest of the afternoon we attempted to catch up on our lives. Marianne related the dark years of inflation and joblessness, how Germany stimulated the economy through construction projects like the Autobahn and the Germans not realizing it was paving a road to war. I told her the Americans felt they could remain isolationists, not aware that the world would soon travel that road.

By this time we had finished several cups of coffee. I told Marianne that my pass would expire soon and that I had better return to my unit. I gave her my military address and asked her to let me know if she needed anything.

As the sun had not set yet, I decided to follow the streetcar route and return to the airfield. Walking past the ruins, I thought of my Dad's courage and foresight in working his way from his home to America and silently thanked him.

**Elie Wiesel,
Survivor Buchenwald**

Submitted By: **Glenn L. Felner**
Company E, 271st
840 Sheridan Road
Glencoe, IL 60022-1341

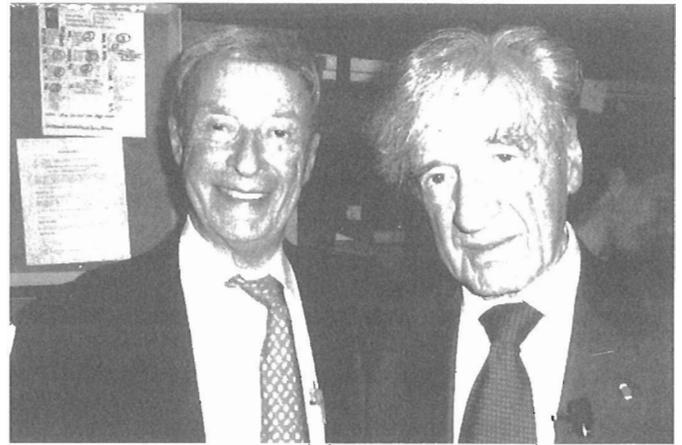
Recently, The Chicago Tribune announced they were giving a literary award to **Elie Wiesel**, a survivor of Buchenwald. Having participated in the liberation of Buchenwald as an advance member of the L&R Platoon of the 271st, I wanted to attend the event. Learning the site for the presentation at Chicago Symphony Hall, was sold out, I called the Tribune and told them of the role the 69th played in Buchenwald's liberation and my interest in attending this event, but not able to get a ticket.

A few days later, the editor of the Trib. called and invited me to be their guest and be seated in the VIP section along with the Consul General of Israel. After the presentation we were taken backstage to meet Elie Wiesel.

I shook his hand and told him of the 69th, he hugged me and thanked me for his freedom. (His father, who was a prisoner with him, died shortly before he was freed. His mother and little sister were gassed at Auschwitz)

Since then Elie and I have become friends, exchanging letters and photos. He has won numerous literary awards including the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the United States of America Congressional Gold Medal, the French Legion of Honor and in 1986, The Nobel Peace Prize.

I am Proud of having fought with the 69th Division.



Glenn L. Felner, Co E, 271st with Elie Wiesel

Dave's War

Continued from Vol. 67, No. 1

Submitted by: **Mrs. Jeanne F. Theobald**
Wife of **David Theobald**

Company F 272nd
8401 Moravian Court
Sacramento, California 95826

EUROPE

We boarded trains again and were off to the Port of Debarkation at Camp Kilmer, N.J. A couple of days later we boarded the SS Santa Maria, an old beat up freighter that belonged to the U.S. Fruit Company. The ship was used to haul bananas. We were assigned bunks made of canvas, stacked four high. When the bunk above was occupied there was barely room to turn over.

The Santa Maria pulled out to sea and the ocean and weather was very calm the first two days. On the third morning I woke early. My stomach was churning. The ship was pitching and rolling like a cork. The smell of vomit was everywhere. I put on my shoes and headed for the john. When I arrived all the facilities were full, sinks urinals and toilets. The deck was covered with vomit. I climbed the ladder to go topside, in the open air only to find the rail was occupied everywhere with soldiers losing their previous day's rations. Somehow I didn't throw-up. I was very close but it didn't happen. The sea sickness made our tough group of "fighters" into rag dolls. I volunteered to deck cleanup duty and because I was the largest of our detail I operated the fire hose. We cleaned the entire deck twice a day for the rest of the trip, 14 days in all on the North Atlantic in November.

The Santa Maria was part of a convoy of about 15 ships, two of which were destroyers. On about the 10th day, the tin cans, as they were called, started dropping depth charges. I was below deck when the first charges went off and even though we were half a mile away, the explosions, were enormous and quite frightening. I was on deck in a flash ready to use lifeboats and scanning the horizon for the action. I wasn't sure we hadn't been hit with a German torpedo.

One of the things I remember most about that 14 day cruise was the food or lack thereof. When we lined up for the galley we used our aluminum mess kits and

(Continued on Page 17)

DAVE'S WAR (Continued from Page 16)

cups. They had a handle and the top and bottom of the mess kit hung from that handle. The Santa Maria was designed for travel along the coast of North and South America and not for the North Atlantic in November. The gangway we lined up in was very narrow about three feet wide. With every wave, our ship pitched and rolled like nothing any of us had experienced before. The result of that pitching and rolling was a lot of staggering sideways and forward and backward by the soldiers in line. The result was a cacophony of aluminum mess kits striking steel bulkheads. That noise became a prologue for our meals. Those meals consisted mostly of boiled potatoes and some other boiled items because the ship was not built to feed 1,800 men. For lunch each man received an apple and a package of four crackers. It got so bad that they had to put an armed guard on the man that carried bread from the bakery to the mess hall because without the guard, the carrier was jumped and relieved of his wares. The story went that the turkeys that were being held for the officers for Thanksgiving were also hijacked before they were prepared for Thanksgiving dinner. The other rumor that circled F Company was that the Purser for the trip was court marshalled for pocketing the funds he was supposed to have used to feed us on the trip. The result was that we all lost weight and were looking forward to the first meal on dry land at a real mess hall. Some of us ate the K-rations assigned before we left the U.S. although we were warned that eating same would result in a court marshal.

Finally we arrived in England. I'm not sure where we docked because the Army was not in the practice of informing PFC's of anything. My guess is that it was Plymouth or Portsmouth. Wherever it was we were transported again by reliable GMC 6 by 6's to a camp on the Salisbury Plain. Naturally the first thing the army did was run us through the mess hall. We each were doled a spoonful of dried eggs, two slices of bacon and a half slice of bread. I asked for another half slice and was told that was all there was. Our habitats were quonset huts. A quonset hut was a half circle of corrugated metal in this case about 20 feet wide and 40 feet long. I assume the shelters were erected for the troops held in England for the assault on Utah and Omaha beaches in France on D day. I have two recollections of our camp.

One was the latrines. Not connected to a sewer system, users mounted a small platform about two feet above the ground and used a toilet seat that collected items below in a fairly large bucket. Every day a man and his daughter emptied the contents of each bucket in a tank truck we called the "honey wagon." Seemed like a very undesirable occupation, but maybe the pay was good.

The second recollection was that several of us went into the town in Salisbury and bought a knife. This was a fairly large knife, similar to a hunting knife used to butcher deer. I can't remember the brand name, but it was the same as swords used in Europe. The knife was in a leather scabbard that we inserted in the leather tops of our combat boots. The blade was honed to a razors edge but the only thing I ever used it for was opening a can of C rations. Part of our regular armament was a bayonet that hung from our ammunition belt along with a canteen and a first aid kit that contained a large bandage and sulfa power for use on wounds. Having the extra knife in our boots was kind of comforting in case we got into a hand-to-hand combat situation. This was serious stuff.

I also remember we had Christmas on the Salisbury Plain before we boarded the Polish liner SS Sobetski for our trip across the English Channel to France. We landed at Le Harve and were trucked to Rouen. During our stay in Rouen, Collins Foucheux of our squad, a Cajun from Louisiana, who spoke French, became a sort of hero in that the natives understood him perfectly, most importantly the girls. I remember we were there long enough to learn we could buy some calvados from a little store run by an old lady.

COMBAT

Our next move was by train, through Belgium to the Ardens Forrest. It was winter and cold. We were instructed more people were being incapacitated by frost bite than by enemy fire. We wore every stitch of clothes we had, in my case three pairs of socks. It still didn't stop the snow and wet mud during thaws from getting our feet wet. I had six pairs of socks, three on my feet and the other three inside my shirt drying out. I changed them every day. We slept on the ground or in a dugout, which reminds me of another story about Collins Foucheux.

When you are in a forrest, many people were killed by shrapnel from tree bursts. The artillery shells would go off when they hit the trees and scatter shrapnel in a wide area. Fox holes were no protection. The answer was to dig a dugout about four feet deep, with an exposed area of about 10 feet by 10 feet. Five or six people could sleep in such a hole, but you needed logs on top of the dugout to absorb the shrapnel. Collins and I were out looking for logs to cover our hole. Collins was an expert with an ax as he had made his living in the bayous of Louisiana chopping moss from cypress trees as he stood in a pirogue, a canoe chopped out of a log, to harvest the moss. We chopped down a couple of trees that were in a draw below our shelter. We hoisted one ten foot log onto our shoulders and started up this hill. About half way up the hill the log was killing my shoulder. I asked Collins to stop a minute, put the log down, and let my shoulder stop hurting. His reply was, "Here Dave, you carry the ax." and with that he picked up the log and we marched up the hill to our shelter. The guy was no bigger than I, but he had been exposed to a life I wasn't used to. Obviously he was stronger.

Several other things happened in the woods that I will always remember. We had scouting parties every day looking for the enemy. On one such spree we came upon the first dead German I had ever encountered. He was lying in about six inches of snow. It looked like someone had checked his pockets, because there was a couple of cards and a razor blade lying on his chest.

Another event that I will always remember occurred when we were strafed at the location by a plane that I believe was one of our own P-47s. One of the men from another platoon was using the slit trench (toilet) just as the plane flew over casting 50 caliber rounds about every hundred feet. The exposed soldier stood-up to run for his dugout, but his pants were down, he tripped but somehow seemed to travel at the same speed as running, on all fours. I was laughing so hard I didn't even hit the ground, which is an almost automatic reaction when under fire.

Our location was about 200 yards from a road. All of the privates and PFCs pulled guard duty along this road and it became fairly thrilling at night. We were told to stop all vehicles and ask for the password of the day. We were also told some Germans had captured some of our jeeps and were using American uniforms

(Continued on Page 18)

DAVE'S WAR (Continued from Page 17)

as they drove on these roads. Believe me my finger was on the trigger as I pointed my rifle at the officer in the passenger seat of every vehicle I stopped. At this same location, a platoon of negro soldiers had been added to F Company. A soldier of that platoon shot and killed another negro soldier that had come to relieve him. We were all trigger happy to put it mildly.

Finally the 69th Infantry moved up "on the line." We occupied the foxholes of men of the 106th Division who had been overrun in the Battle of the Bulge. Our position was on a knoll overlooking a row of pillboxes on the Ziegfried Line. We assumed our positions about midnight. The sky was alight with artillery and a large German mortar called nebbelwerfers, we called them screaming meemies. The screaming meemies made a horrendous noise as it flew through the sky, lit with a huge explosion, but was not to effective because the shrapnel was thrust forward and unless you had a direct hit, it was not damaging. As a green soldier on the line for the first time the whole thing was awesome. My foxhole partner and I spent the night deepening our hole. Sleep was out of the question, as about every half hour or so the pillboxes would supply us with a wake-up 88 shell right in our position.

For the next two weeks or so, (I really can't remember the time because I had no calendar reference, no newspapers, etc.) I lived in that foxhole. We ate K rations and kept our heads down. The Krauts in the pillboxes kept us on our toes at all times. If you wanted an 88 shell in your position, all you had to do was to wave a shirt out over your foxhole. They knew we were there, but we were a couple hundred feet higher than the pillboxes, about a half mile away. The 88s were a high velocity gun that couldn't lob a shell and the German mortars didn't have that range. We came out of our holes at night, risking a shell, but we couldn't stay in those holes for days. There was a farm behind our position and one night my foxhole buddy and I collected some hay to line our hole. The pillboxes guessed we were getting out of our holes at night and every hour or so they fired a round. I remember one night the fellows in the foxhole to our right placed their canteen on the edge of their hole. A round came in between them and us and the sharpnel cut a fist size hole in the canteen. K ration boxes served as toilets during the day. I can't remember the name of my hole mate, but he was pardoned from a GI prison by coming to the front. You didn't have to love your fellow soldiers as long as they pointed their rifles towards the enemy and tried to stay alive like you were.

One story about that stint above the pillboxes is worth repeating. Sergeant Hess and three other members of his squad were placed in two foxholes several hundred yards down the hill from our positions. It snowed that night, and in an attempt to keep their holes dry, they placed their parkas over their holes supported by their rifles. They positioned the parkas so that the holes for the head and neck were such that they could look forward from their outpost positions. One of the two men in each foxhole was supposed to stay awake. About two o'clock in the morning, the awake person in the outpost hole heard footsteps. The parkas were covered with three inches of snow. Sgt. Hess looked out of the hole in the parka and saw the boots of two German soldiers. The Krauts carried on a conversation in German naturally, but because of the snow cover, didn't see the foxholes only ten feet away. Sgt Hess woke his partner, and held his mouth until his buddy was awake. Unfortunately

their rifles were not available because they were supporting the parkas. They both pulled the pins on hand grenades determined to toss them out in the event they were discovered. Eventually the Germans walked away, their pins were reinserted and the rifle supported parka removed. A little dampness by melted snow was a minor inconvenience after we heard of that event. Also there were no volunteers to man the outpost.

After about three days of no 88 greetings from the pillboxes, the higher headquarters decided to send out a daytime patrol to determine if they were still occupied. The third squad of the first platoon, Sgt Boyer's squad which I was the first scout of, plus the company executive officer and a couple other gung-ho sergeants were assigned to the duty. We circled behind a hill and a stand of pine trees and advanced towards the Ziegfried line of pillboxes. This was the real thing folks, no blank ammunition, no guarantee of returning and no weapons that could even touch those pillboxes. We crept slowly forward for about a half-a-mile. (The pillboxes were placed in strategic locations with excellent fields of fire.) We came out of the pine grove about 200 yards from a pillbox, below us. We crept on all fours about 100 yards down the hill until we reached a stand of bramble bushes. Sgt Boyer who was supposed to be a good shot with a bazooka was ordered to load up and fire a round at the apperture of the pillbox. Charlie fired but missed the apperture. (You can follow the flight of a bazooka shell if you watch carefully kind of like the flight of a golf ball.) But I wasn't watching the flight as I concentrated on the reaction from the pillbox. I committed to watching the flight of the second round to see where it went. Charlie fired the second round but before I could follow the flight, a mortar shell landed about 20 feet from me. A second and a third closely followed. The entire patrol jumped up and ran up the hill towards the pine grove. I swear machine gun bullets that opened on us as we ran up the hill had to pass between my legs because I could see the dirt fly before me. As we reached the pine trees, little branches were falling off the trees as they were pruned by the machine gun bullets. When we crested the hill we all took a dive on the ground, to get our breaths. Sgt Boyer had retrieved the bazooka, but a little Italian guy from Brooklyn had left a bag of bazooka shells back in the bramble bushes. Sgt Boyer told him to go back after them, but disobeying a direct order the guy from Brooklyn allowed " If you want those shells Sgt, you go after them." By a miracle none of us were even wounded. We did find however that the pillboxes were still occupied. That night the Germans in the pillboxes undoubtedly developed some serious headaches as they were subjected to scores of direct hits from our 105 Artillery.

CONTINUED IN THE NEXT EDITION

**Looking Forward
to Seeing all of You
at the 69th Infantry Division's
66th Annual Reunion in
Nashville, TN
October 13 through 20, 2013**



“Taps”

The melody of TAPS was composed by a non-musical (musician with no formal knowledge) nor the technical names of any of the notes. Union General Daniel Butterfield whistled it for Brigadier General Oliver Norton who wrote the notes on the back of an envelope July 2, 1862. The plaintive bugle notes that bring an involuntary lump to the throat typifies our loss and feelings of these two great buglers.

THE WORDS TO “TAPS” SAY IT ALL

**Day is done, gone the sun
From the lakes, from the hills,
from the skies.
All is well, safely rest, God is nigh.
Thanks and praise for our days
'neath the sun, 'neath the stars,
'neath the sky.
As we go, this we know. God is nigh.**

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Places and Dates

Submitted by: **Bill Halainen (son of Milt Halainen)**
769th Ordinance
4032 Conashaugh Lakes
Milford, PA 18337

Milt Halainen, a proud longtime member of the 69th Infantry Division Association until his death in 1991.

During the war, my father kept a great scrapbook of his travels, including photos, postcards, newspaper articles, matchbook covers, tickets and sundry other items. At the front of the scrapbook, he dedicated a page to a detailed listing of every town he was in while the 69th was in Europe, including the dates he was there. Since this may be of interest to other members of the association, I've transcribed his entries for inclusion in the newsletter:

<u>France</u>		<u>Belgium</u>	
Le Havre	1/24/1945	Montenau	2/10/1945
Rouen	1/27/1945	Waimes	2/11/1945
Forge-les-Eaux	1/28/1945	Bullingen	2/27/1945
Clermont les Fermes	2/2/1945		

<u>Germany</u>	
Schmidtheim	3/9/1945
Bad Neunahr	3/25/1945
Niederberg	3/28/1945
Obertiefenbach	3/30/1945
Zuschen	4/4/1945
Kassel	4/6/1945

Heilbad Heilingenstadt	4/10/1945
Kolleda	4/12/1945
Naumburg	4/13/1945
Pegau	4/17/1945
Borna	4/18/1945
Naunhof	4/19/1945

After the war ended, he moved to several locations with the 69th Infantry Division and then the 84th Infantry Division before he had sufficient points to come home. During that time he was in the following cities:

<u>Germany</u>	
Weissenfels	5/11/1945
Rotenburg	7/1/1945
Winnenden	8/21/1945
Goppingen	9/11/1945
Unterturkheim	11/20/1945
Philippsburg	11/25/1945

There are other interesting item in the scrapbook that may also be of interest to association members or their children. There are some great *Stars and Stripes* articles that I'd be happy to transcribe, and some postcards and pictures that I can have scanned (some great postcards of Camp Shelby, for example).

Sincerely,
Bill Halainen
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the 69th

INFANTRY DIVISION ASSOCIATION, INC.

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Lest We Forget/A Summery of World War II

Submitted By: **Vern D. Hunt, Retired Corporal U.S. Army**
Company E, 273rd

7774 Richard Drive, Lucerne, CA 95458

“The Pacific Theater”

On December 7, 1941 the Japanese attacked our U.S. Fleet, which was stationed in Pearl Harbor, in Honolulu, Hawaii.

The United States lost a vital part of our fleet, therefore we could not respond effectively.

Because of the loss of this indispensable part of our Navy, the Japanese were able to take over the Philippines, where we had troops stationed.

The Japanese took over the Philippines and also our small U.S. Outpost on Guam, endangering Midway Island.

By July 1942 U.S. was able to launch an offensive against the Japanese in the Solomon Islands, including Guadalcanal and Bougainville.

In the meantime our Navy had replaced some of its losses and were able to engage the Japanese Navy in the naval battle, known as the Battle of Midway.

As a result, we were able to destroy several of the Japanese naval ships, which included three Aircraft Carriers and several other war ships.

In 1943 we were able to engage in the Battles of Tarawa, New Guinea, Iwo Jima, Saipan and many other Islands in the Pacific.

We were now prepared to confront the Japanese forces in major battles throughout the Pacific, which resulted in our victories throughout the Pacific and eventually taking back all Japanese held territories and Islands, which some had been American Territories, such as the Philippines, Guam and Wake Island.

In 1945 we went into Okinawa, which was the nearest Japanese Island next to Japan itself.

The culmination of the war with Japan occurred in August 1945 in the dropping of the Atomic Bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

If we had not dropped the bomb we could have lost an estimated five hundred thousand to one and one half million young American men.

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