



703rd Road Block



Colonel W. E. Showalter (Ret.)
Honorary President

Vol. VI #1 703rd Tank Destroyer Battalion Association Newsletter March/1995

BATTALION EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

A meeting of the Executive Board of the 703rd T.D. Bn. Association was held at the home of Pres. Frank & Marge Miller in Hurley, N.Y. on Wednesday, 18 January 1995, at 1115. Present: Frank, Marge, Bob Downey (C), and the Goldbergs (A). John, "The Barber", Czajkowski (B) who was ill, had asked that Marge sit in for him. Everett Stites (Rcn) claims that he did not get the word that there was to be a meeting.

Treasurer's Report as of 2/20/95

Checking Balance: \$3950.86

Membership for 1995: 67 for 1996: 4

Life Membership, \$75: Stites, Claude Ball (B)

OLD BUSINESS: Frank stated that of the questionnaires sent requesting members wishes as to holding our own reunion in 1996 or combine it with that of the division, 35 returns had been returned. 25 favored the separate reunion, with 10 who would combine ours with that of the 3rd Armored Division.

A proposal was formally passed based upon the results of the survey. Preparations for our separate battalion reunion in 1996 are in order. "Downey" stated he would start to work on this immediately.

The following guidelines and requests for information noted below were given "Downey", our secretary, to assist him.

Location: Probably E. Pennsylvania, in the Harrisburg, Hershey, Lancaster area.

Time: May, 1996, sometime pre-Memorial Day.

Rooms Required: Estimated between 30 and 50.

Approximately \$80 per room, per night for 2 or 3 nights. Hospitality Room: Extra cost as would a Meeting Room.

Transportation: From airport, train, bus terminal.

The above guidelines are with what we have to work. None are ironclad or positive. If and when progress is made a report will be forthcoming. Does "Downey" have to post a duty roster for our members in and about Eastern and Central Pennsylvania to get info and help for this reunion? Give him some leads, ideas, solid info, please!

Bob and Ruth Downey (C)

90 Elm St.

Oneonta, NY 13820 607 433 2243

LIFE MEMBERSHIP: Everett Stites (Rcn) and Claude Ball (B) have made heavy contributions to our treasury, and we accept them as life members. At this meeting we tentatively established Life Membership at \$75.00 and hope that goes over well with the family.

The ELIMINATION OF ROAD BLOCK MAILINGS to non-responding or non-paying persons will be put into effect immediately. We will continue mailings to family members of deceased comrades, and a few interested persons. All dues paying members will receive the Road Block as long as it is published which we hope will be for a very long time.

Battalions roster revisions were updated. Adjournment: 1300. Next meeting at Frank's call.

Respectfully submitted

Robert J. Downey (C)

Secretary

FORTY EIGHTH ANNIVERSARY REUNION THIRD ARMORED DIVISION

Have you been making plans to be at Valley Forge, Pa.. 9/13-16/1955?

T A P S

Ralph D.F. Steinhart (A)

Ralph wrote that he and Helen had moved to Tulsa because, the winter chill where they lived in Pennsylvania was getting to be too much. Even more important, in my opinion, it was to be closer to their son who is spending his medical career helping on an Indian reservation. Both Helen and Ralph have always been concerned for people. and passed their devotion to social service on to their lad.

Normandy Northern France Rhineland Ardennes Central Europe

You met Ralph in the Road Block. He was my Security Section Sergeant, close to Frank Woolner, who checked out recently, and Frank Miller. The T.D. crews in 1A always were confident they had security with "Steiny" on the ground. He suffered combat wounds twice, and returned to us. [p.7 picture]

A fine soldier, accountant, in the service of his church, he was always ready to help those who were trying to "hold up their end".

Just before Christmas Helen let us know Ralph succumbed in October. Let's hope Helen's health matches the courage she has always shown in challenging times.

8555 S. Lewis Ave. 10D
Tulsa, OK 74137 Editor

"Ralph never forgot those days, and the men, his buddies he cared about deeply! This year, as the fifty year mark was passed with so many events of World War II recalled, and shown on television,-- we were filled with memories of those days!

For all our generation, that time was a tremendous milestone in our lives, days we can never forget!

It surprised me so to look at the veterans who returned to France and Belgium, D-Day, Battle of the Bulge, and to see these 'old men!' Forever in my mind these men will always be the young men of the many pictures I have in our albums. I felt, as I looked at the reunion on T.V. at the returning vets. There must be some mistake, for to me, as I said, they will never grow old."

Helen Steinhart (A)

PLAQUE AT FLERON, BELGIUM
Le 15 janvier 1995

Henri Rogister
22, rue du Progrès
B 4032 Liège, Belgium

Dear Mr. Goldberg,

I wish to write you in order to have your help about a matter upon which I have set my heart.

In September, 1994, during the ceremonies of the 50th anniversary of the liberation of my country, a memorial plaque was chosen as a means to honor the memory of an American soldier killed, 7 September 1944 in FLERON, near Liège. Unfortunately this plaque does not bear the name of the soldier, and I would like to have his name engraved on this plaque. The town authorities of Fleron agree to make the necessary alterations of the memorial plaque. I write you because it was Task Force Lovelady who liberated Fleron. There were four tank destroyers of the 703rd T.D. Bn. and an infantry platoon in the town that day holding a road block very near the place where the American soldier was killed.

Reference to the After Action Report of the 703rd tells us that it was "C" Co. and 2 Recn. of the 703rd who were holding the road block. I take it that this is correct. A second road block was erected in Fleron made up of 4 antitank guns and an infantry platoon. I have no other information of that group. There were only troops from the 3rd Armored in Fleron on that day.

Maybe a member of your association would remember that soldier killed on 7 September 1944, so we could honor the memory of this gallant soldier who died for our liberty.

Could you please publish this letter in your Road Block so that each member would take notice of this request? I am enclosing a photograph of the place where this soldier was killed. Very little has changed there. [See page 6]

Thank you for your efforts to help. THE MEMBERS OF YOUR ASSOCIATION MAY WRITE ME DIRECTLY.

Kind regards,
Henri Rogister

EDITOR'S RESPONSE TO ABOVE INQUIRY

86 New England Ave. #50
Summit, New Jersey 07901
January 25, 1995

Dear Henri,

I respond to your letter of 1/15/95 trying help you provide the name of an American soldier who was killed on 9/7/44 while he and his comrades were liberating Fleron. You wrote that the townspeople wish to inscribe his name on a plaque of honor.

Leroy Hanneman, to whom you sent a copy of the letter, called. He left it to me to respond to you.

Haynes W. Dugan, 3rd Armored Div., Division Historian, 660 Elmwood, Shreveport, LA [Louisiana] 71104 more assuredly would be able to help you establish what units were with CCB (Combat Command B), TF (Task Force) Lovelady on 9/7/44 (Route 3)(211, 213)*. TF Lovelady's tank and infantry troops most likely went through Fleron before 1B 703rd (1st Platoon, "B" Co.) set its road block (s) there.** The enclosed map tells us CCB was in Fleron on that date. (210-211) If forward units lost a man killed in Fleron on 9/7, the A.A.R.'s of those units, or living members might give you an answer.(213)

I question your reading of the 703rd AAR Journal for 9/7, 2045 or Summary report 9/7 2015.*** One section from "C" and 2Recn. were sent ahead of the Battalion CP (Command Post) to set road blocks for CCA and CCR (Reserve) north of the Meuse, (Routes 1,2) and The 703rd Bn CP, "C" and Recon. Co.s were with CCR. (206) **** I would appreciate it if you would let me know the location of

DIERIN PATARD 396297, as spelled in the AAR Journal, that states that the Bn CP rested near there for the night at 9/8 0005 ***** That night my platoon, 1A, closed nearby in an area I was led to believe was a colliery (coal mine) or an industry producing metal. After setting our defense, some of the men learned that there were workers' showers near by. At least one of our men went there and returned safely, but Sgt. Clarence H. Gann (1A) went alone a short while later, and was killed on the way by a young antiaircraft artilleryman attempting to escape capture. (90) ***** I wonder if Dierin Patard is close to such an industrial area, a suburb northwest of Liège??. The AAR states:

Sept. 9, '44 1818, moved out from Dierin Patard
" " " 1930, column passed thru city of Liège.

If this is the case then Gann died to liberate Fleron a few miles from Fleron. He was a fine soldier and won an honor medal twice. However, is it possible that Dierin Patard is located in or near the southeast part of Liège, closer to Fleron?

I doubt whether TF Hogan had caught up with CCB in Fleron on 9/7-8. 3C of the 703rd was with that TF. But it is possible they were involved in action close by. (209)

We'll see to it that your letter and photograph are in our next Road Block. Thanks for asking if I could help. The best of health to you and loved ones.

Nathan Goldberg (A)

* See pages noted in Spearhead in the West and enclosed with this letter.

Exceptions, pp.206 and 213 not enclosed. Maps, 210-211, have my added locations Temploux, Fleron, etc.

It was not till 9/12/44, on p. 213 that we know Lovelady's units for the drive to Verriers: 2nd Bn. 33rd Arm'd. Regt., 2nd Bn. 36th Arm'd Inf.- "F"Co., Rcn. 33rd Arm'd. Regt, 1B 703rd TD Bn., 45th Med. Detachment, First Battery, 391st Artillery.

Sent later to you from H. Dugan was the suggestion that you contact the official in charge of a cemetery holding American soldiers near Liège.

** See enclosed letter of Claude Ball (1B), and Road Block item on letter from Dick Langerveld (1B).

*** 703rd Journal and Summary of Operations are enclosed.

**** 206 not enclosed.

***** Time of closing, 0045 in Summary of Operations.

***** 0930 9/8 in Summary and 0950 in Journal of A.A.R.

Editor

YOU'D HAVE LIKED THESE, FRANK (WOOLNER)! (A)

In Tribute

When God made the world,
God made it full of light;
the sun to shine by day,
the moon and stars by night.
God made it full of life;
lilies, oak, and trout,
tigers and bears,
sparrows, hawks and apes.

And God took clay
from earth's four cormers
to give it the breath of life:
And God said: This is very good!
Man, woman, and child.
All are good.
Man, woman, child resemble God.
Like God, we love.
Like God, we think.
Like God, we care.

I pray that these things never end:
The sand and the sea,
The rush of the waters,
The crash of the heavens,
The prayer of the heart.

FROM The New Union Prayer Book p.26! FOR Leslie

A JERSEY LEG

Henry Gosch (C)

Henry's leg was infected and he's been in the hospital. Years ago while he was serving with the Reserve in a tank outfit, his foot was cut by a tank engine blade. His present problem might be traced back to that accident. Everett Stites (Rcn) 11/22/94.

MORE ON JIM MURRAY (Rcn)

Talking to Everett Stites (Rcn) the other day your editor learned that Jim died in the arms of Jim Roberts (B). See Road Block, V, 4, 12/1994, p. 8.

There was a thoughtful note from Thelma Derr, his sister, just after New Years Day, with a picture of Jim for this issue of the R.B. [p.6]. On the day she received the latest R.B., Howard Shank (Rcn) visited her.

"He came up from Harrisburg, knew my brother well as he had been from Williamsport during the war, and saw [Jim] a lot in Europe.--Howard said he will look through his pictures to see if he has any we might want."

Thelma's husband has ordered the book on tank destroyer forces in W.W.II. "---maybe later we'll get the one you told us about! [*Spearhead In The West*] Thanks for your help. Happy New Year!"

OUT OF ACTION--NEVER!

"Charlie" Markeveys (Hq) looks immobile. Bill Wagoner and Kay visit him and never stop admiring what mileage he gets out of life. Bill called your editor, 11/29/94, asking for material on the 703rd in "The Bulge"! The Bristol, Connecticut newspaper was going to interview "Charlie", and he wanted to be prepared to give the reporter the best info he could get. We sent him what we had on "C" Co. at Bütgenbach, and "B" Co. at Trois Ponts. Bill told us earlier that "Charlie" saved his Road Blocks, so we gave him the many references there to "The Bulge" and the 703rd. We look forward to Bill telling us how the interview went, and a copy of the article when it appeared.

"Charlie" sure would appreciate hearing from his friends.

Nursing Care Center
Belvue Avenue
Bristol, CT 06010

THEODORA, BE EVER SO WELL!

Walt Mesunas (A) told us that accidents and Theodora's heart problem were keeping him from getting to our reunions. They have been with us in the past. "She can't travel, and I have to stay with her. I sure miss the good times. Hope, maybe we can make it again, soon!"

421 Knorr St., Philadelphia, PA 19111

LET'S DO THE POLKA!

"Andy" and Anna Bogacz (3A) not only have become great grandparents, but rejoined our outfit! We assigned him to his old platoon, but that So-and-So Ruggioli put him on K.P. before "Andy" got back to his bunk! Keep a lasso on a great buddy, McKiernan!

908 Lowell Ave.
W.Haverhill, MA 01832

WARM, GRATEFUL THOUGHTS!

The words on cards and notes had more than syllables and sound if you read them to Florence at lunch! Speaking their good words brought them to the table. There was "Rich" and Lydia Ligatti (C), Tom and Dorothy Collins (B), Dick and Ruth Langerfeld (B), Joe and Kathleen Cerrito (B) with two feet of snow off Lake Erie.

Oscar Carlson (B), was one of the "21 men" sent from the 2nd Armored to form the 3rd at Camp Polk, and on to organize the 703rd. "Thanks for all the cards I received in support last summer when my wife was lost and passed away"!

Seaton and Phoebe Perry (B) waved hello with their note telling us they'll hunt for Paul Jarvis (B) around Star Lake, N.Y. "come warm weather!" Later they found him at 240 Lewis Circle #412, Punta Gorda, FL 33950, 813 637 1735.

Nate and Bea Falk (Hq) had a bad accident late in '93. Nate recovered more quickly than has Bea. They hope to share with us, but it will take some time. Their health problems helped convince them to keep their residence in New York City, but enjoy some warm weather at 2088 Oak Ridge "U", Deerfield Beach, FL 33442. A couple of our battalion families are not too far away. Get together folks!

The notes accompanying the dues checks that many of you sent to Florence make for greetings we enjoy very much! Thank you.

A SUREFIRE REMEDY

WITH THE THIRD ARMORED DIVISION IN GERMANY
-----"So", said John Pollard (A). "Here we were in Cologne, sitting around our billets griping." Otto Strahm (A) claimed the place was not warm enough. Rosviel S. Reiling (A) Sgt. Miklausich (A), Jim Coughlin (A), and Leo Wittler (A) sat around cussing the war in general. Al Miller (A) was griping about the radio--"We need a new one!"

So--along about that time a shell came through the side of the house. Miller's radio

became a hunk of junk. Strahm found a bushel of assorted bricks and mortar in his stove. Reiling climbed out of the debris of his chair. Everybody quit griping right quick! It was a sure cure. Nobody got hurt, but all of us learned to appreciate peace and quiet. "All except me", said Pollard smiling wryly. "And here I am still talking!"

From Stars and Stripes. Sent by Al Miller

MORE GOOD FRIENDS IN BELGIUM!

Everett Stites (Rcn) received a letter from a Belgian gentleman dated 11/14/94, his address, André Deschepper, Chairman, 1944 Allied Remember Group (A.R.G.), 153, Rue du Louat, 6240 Farciennes, Belgium.

Indirectly, through an 817th T.D. vet, André Deschepper learned there was a 703rd T.D. Assn. and located us. Below are surprising portions of his letter:

"You may not be aware that there are several associations in Belgium whose objective is to commemorate the memory of those American troops who gave their lives during the liberation of Belgium."

The 1944 A.R.G. represents the 703rd who liberated an area near the industrial city of Charleroi. "A" and "C" Cos. spent the evening of the 4th and night of the 5th of 9/44 in Gilly and Chatelineau 6 miles to the east of the city. The A.R.G., formed in 1983, now has 64 members, several are married couples. We have U.S. army gear and vehicles, some bearing the markings of the 703rd. The A.R.G. is well known in Belgium, and is regularly requested to share in commemorations which highlight the U.S. presence during W.W. II."

"They publish a monthly magazine which includes information for maintenance and repair of U.S. equipment to all our members and other associations in Belgium, France and Luxembourg [copy was enclosed].--At the 50th Anniversary of the Normandy landings they spoke with 635th and 704th T.D. vets.---"As far as we know, we are the only Belgian association to wear the T.D. patch."

The 1944 A.R.G. would like, very much, to

officially represent the 703rd in Europe. They would like us to send them a copy of our emblem to display. They want continued contact.

Our association will do that. Will you? If any of us might travel there, a visit with them would be a most rewarding experience! *****

HARD TO BELIEVE!

Co. "A", Camp Polk, Louisiana

March 4, 1992

We were packed into trucks and taken to the 1000" range. After morning chow we were given lunches. It rained so hard we had to be trucked back, thus we cleaned rifles all afternoon. There had been a bit of time to fire the .22's out there, but the wind flattened my target. Holding the rifle, I took out the nine rounds in the receiver, counting them in dismay that I had not had at least fired a round!

At mail call I went up a few minutes early, and got into trouble. Not seeing anyone around, I went to the orderly room, and there was Sgt. Connell with Lt. Herron. I was rebuked for going there for my mail. When I remarked, "I'm only a minute early!", the Lt. panned me. Sgt. Connell gave me K.P. for the following Sunday. What I had done was caused only by my anxiety to hear from home, and the black mark on my record hurt, also. I was really burned !!!

March 5, 1942

Before noon we had a six mile hike, quite brisk in pace. Marching is an effort, and I walk looking very worn. On the way back Sgt. Connell pulled me out of line sending me to the rear of the platoon. As I dropped back my face must have been a foot long. The right guide dropped along side remarking out the side of his "puss", "What's the matter Goldberg, can't you take it?" I didn't have to hike looking as if I was on my way to an execution.

[Yours and my strides are not as long and crisp as they were then. I used to feel good that I finished all the hikes.]



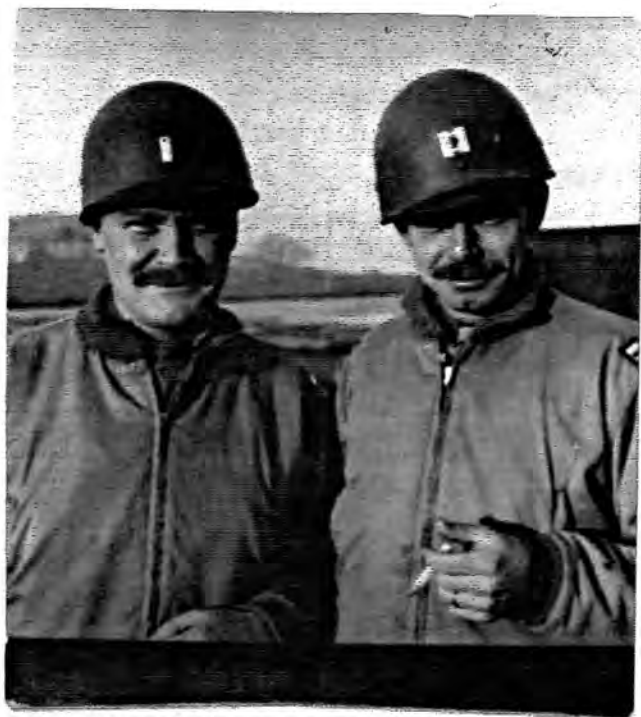
Fleron, Belgium
Not much different than on 9/7/44
See "Plaque at Fleron, Belgium"
in this R.B.



Mr. and Mrs. W. P. Coward in their garden at Mere — after 30 years he still remembers the Indian Chief and Texas gambler from the 703d Tank Destroyers. 1974
See article in this issue



James A. Murray (Rcn)



Bill Smith (Hq) Bn. Maintenance
Merle Goodrich (Hq) Bn. Exec. Officer



Beacham, Swett, Livengood, Smith, Dearden, Goodrich
Headquarters Company



Roncey, Normandy 7/1944
Goodrich, Arsenault, Soffia, Bangs



Ralph D.F. Steinhart (A)

In the afternoon we assembled in squads, each to a tent. Cpl. Krieger briefly taught what he was ordered to deal with,--map reading, military courtesy, gun cleaning, etc. quite summarily,--then enjoyed letting it become a bull session,--talked about his girl friend. She had written him concerning the launching of a destroyer at Port Arthur. (?) He showed me her letter which proved her writing style, her expression that of a person worth knowing. She was making \$2000 a month, and at college, working toward advancement. How could that fair looking, little corporal catch on with so many girls?

Just as he paused, in came Sgt. Connell and Krieger's face dropped. Now the Sergeant began to ask questions on what Krieger was to be teaching us. Bill Moody, from Pittsburgh, came through to questions about field equipment. Carl Johnson, who had worked for Salada Tea in Boston repeated his general orders perfectly. After Connell left, Krieger thanked us for getting him out of a hole.

At night we went to a basketball game and show at the Dufour Field House. "Pops" from the corner, as well as all set shooting were off. A shifting zone defense worked well for the winning team, Third Armored Supply.

The Orange, Texas Bengal Guards, 120 strong, high school girl orchestra and vocalists, along with a champion twirler were fine. They also had a Swiss Flag Waving Team.

Editor

LONG LIVE THE QUEEN VII

New skills were added and the environment of anticipation grew into April, 1944. Lt. Livengood demonstrated mine field practices. Survey teams for plotting orienting lines for indirect fire were trained. Then simulated firing concentrations were scheduled. When we fired indirectly, acting as artillery drew much interest from the men. On April 15th the battalion practiced fully loading a Landing Craft. All types of personnel equipment appeared in supply rooms. T.D. crews asked if there would be enough room in the

destroyer for 96 rounds of uncased 3" ammo, .50 cal. ammo and other equipment, let alone room for themselves. The whole division had to retrack its tanks and destroyers for the first time. Was the pressure too much for one soldier in "A" Co.? His furlough became desertion. A month passed before the word got around, but only for a moment. "Clarence" merely disappeared.

"A" Co. had sadly watched the disdain and lack of restraint of Tom Scanlon, the mental instability of Miksenas, and the battalion had had but about three cases of venereal disease. Evidently delinquencies were not a serious danger to the morale or combat effectiveness of the battalion. Yet why, among the men, was there so little concern for the few who could not or would not "stick it out"? Was it because American draftees feelings were as civilians, and with little of esprit d'corps? Certainly! The men alongside the U.S. soldier were but his acquaintances or associates. The enemy had a uniform or a symbol on a vehicle that told the G.I. where to shoot to kill, and that "gunner" knew his chances were better to make it home if he held up his end in getting a round of armor piercing ammo through the turret of a P.Z.K.W. V. He was convinced that his fear for his life, for shame, made his chances better to do his job and get home. He remembered a Bill Mauldin cartoon in which bushed, bearded Willy and Joe are looking at a brash, fist-clenched soldier looking for trouble. "He ain't no fighting man,--he's looking for a fight." The loud mouths would be the cowards.--"Clarence?-- Oh! Yeah! Wonder what happened?--Quiet like me!"

The tension mounted with a general sense of confusion. It was past mid-May when General Omar Bradley, C.O. of the 1st U.S. Army, visited camp. Through our officers he warned us that slit trenches had meant death, fox holes much more protective. He insisted that too many Americans had surrendered while still having ammunition.

There was a road march, of course, over the "Burma Road" to Turkey Mill, out to

Stourton, around the lake and the perfume of thousands of Sir Henry Hoare's flowers, the ancient overhead arch of stones and past the busy Zeals airport on the way back to camp.

Terrorizing air raids in scattered strength occurred more often in southern England. Interceptors loused up sleeping as the planes took off from Zeals. "Jerry" had an infrared device to cut the darkness for effective night bombing. If parachutists were suspected at hand, each company had guns at ready, and ten armed men per company were to go into town to support the local police.

MEMORIES OF INDIAN CHIEFS AND GAMBLER

From Spearhead, Vol. 21, #13

Frankfurt, Germany. 7/7/1974

The Spearhead's 703rd Tank Destroyer Bn. was stationed in Mere, Wiltshire during the 9 months that the division was in England. The following expressions are reminiscences about the Americans by longtime residents, F.A.V. Jones and W.P. Coward, respectively:

"I have lived in Mere from 1942 onwards, and knew several of the 3rd Armored servicemen, but recall them now only by their Christian names--Frank, Jack etc.

Basically, the part that Mere played was in welcoming the troops into local community and social organizations--Legion Club, Services Canteen, weekly dances and concerts, churches, etc.

In many cases, local householders struck up friendships with individual soldiers and invited them to use their homes whenever they wished. This gave the visitors an insight into the family life of a small rural community of England set against a background of local traditions---; our historic churches; large ancestral homes, etc. Most of these were new to many of the men and provided talking points for happy hours of discussion and comparison of such things here and in the U.S.A.

Some of the U.S. servicemen put on acts at local concerts, and many found opportunities for a day's sport rabbit shooting on local

farms or fishing on the River Sheen.

In these different ways, off-duty hours were filled with outside interests that probably helped morale by giving the men something to think about other than the restricted life at the camp."

* * * *

"Right from the beginning of the war we had a number of our own troops stationed here. In 1943 we were told that the Americans would soon be arriving in force. Having been in the British Army in France during W.W. I, I felt a little apprehensive as to how things would work out with soldiers of another land.

A few days later the American advance section arrived, and off I went to our local pub to see what sort of people they were. My worst fears were confirmed, for in our pub, where cigarettes were difficult to come by and whiskey impossible, there were six of these new fellows, taking cigarettes out, lighting them, having one draw and throwing them on the floor. To crown it all, they poured whiskey over them to prevent them from burning the carpet. I went home to my wife and said, "If this is a sample of what we are going to get, the Lord help us."

In a few days the 703rd arrived. The first day they came was a Sunday, and I remember walking down our main street to see what was cooking. A group of young men were standing about, looking, I thought, like sheep without a shepherd. I approached one of these groups and asked the men if they would like to come to my house and sit by the fire. About half a dozen of them accepted my invitation, and we had a very interesting evening. After this there was not a day without a visit from some of them, and it was not long before nearly everyone in the 703rd found a welcome at someone's fireside. Two of them married local girls.

A few individual experiences might interest you. Nearly every Wednesday, an Indian Chief and a gambler from Corpus Christi visited us. The former told my children stories, the like of which I had never heard before or since, while the gambler was the

last word with a pack of cards. I have never seen his equal, and he was quite an entertainer.

One damp, misty day when I was walking over our hills with a gun looking for something for the pot, I came across one of the 703rd who had dug a hole. He was standing in it with just his head above ground. I asked him what he was doing. His reply was: "God in heaven knows, Mister, but I've been told to stay here, and here I stay!"

I well remember my wife and I being invited to the 703d farewell. What a party! I can also remember the difficulty I had in getting home. The next morning they were all gone, but I am pleased to say a few of them returned, and we had news of them until well after the war.

We had many men from many countries in our little town during the war, but none better than the 703rd Tank Destroyers.

[See photo page]

Contributed by a member of our association,
Haynes W. Dugan, Div. Historian

OUR LEADERSHIP

H.Q. 703rd T.D. Bn. 1/18/45

"The Bulge" 12/18/44

TANK DESTROYER OPERATIONS III

By the 20th of December indications were that strong build-ups of armor and infantry were taking place in Büllingen and Faymonville. The nature of the probing attacks made up to that time made it evident that our continued defence of the enemy's main routes to the northwest offered a serious obstacle toward his efforts to de-liberate the cities of Eupen, Verviers and Liège. A strong attack, therefore, was expected somewhere along the Corps front at one or more points. The routes we were blocking were important enough to warrant our making an assumption that our sector might be hit strongly. The 12th SS Commander must have been thoroughly chagrined at the comparative success of his Panzers as against the 1st SS Division, and no doubt would do all possible

to push the attack forward for the protection of the north flank of the penetration, and, incidentally, to save his own face.

No attacks of importance took place during the day however, and he continued his probing attacks along our front. At 0615 hours a company of tanks and two companies of infantry attacked the 26th Infantry positions from the direction of Büllingen, and made a slight penetration, but by 0815 hours 8 tanks had been destroyed and all positions restored. At 0730 hours an attack was launched with infantry only up the railway between the two regiments, [16th and 26th of the Big Red One] with the mission, obtained from a PW later, to seize Obermerz and proceed west into Weismes. At 1020 hours plus, a platoon of infantry attacked from the south toward RJ (K-869040). Both of these attacks were repulsed with heavy casualties to the enemy, and the sector was comparatively quiet the remainder of the day.

During 12/20/44 the battalion lost its reserve, Company B, which was detached and moved at 1800 to the 82nd Airborne Div. which was engaged further west in a critical sector, building up a defensive line to contain the breakthrough. The loss of "B" Co. upset the plan of having an entire TD Co. in mobile reserve. A "string" was tied to 3A, which was designated as battalion reserve and ordered to reconnoiter routes to position areas throughout the [1st Inf.] Division Sector.

The infantry anti-tank dispositions were studied and after a conference with the Regimental Commanders, the following designations were made effective:

2A remained at WEISMES because of the probing enemy attacks in the center of the division sector. 1A moved to the vicinity of Road Junction (K-869040) and took up positions ready to fight in place, or to move to either flank of the 16th Inf. 3A remained in WEYWERTZ as battalion reserve.

"C" Co. in action with the 26th Inf. Regt.

CONTINUED.

LEST I FORGET!

Just before this Christmas, Frank Miller's letter asked me if I remembered what I was doing before Christmas, 1944. That's easy! That was when 1A lost Joe Olson and Ben Barbalinardo to an air bombing at the opening of the "Bulge". That was when the Germans tried to kill me with a couple of small mortar rounds as I delivered mail to the 1st platoon close in to a 1st Infantry position. That was when the battalion showed its mettle linked with the 1st Infantry and the 82nd Airborne. You've read about these events in the Road Block!

Miller says he was on liaison with Frank Woolner at CCA HQ outside Monschau, 12/19/44, "east side toward Stavelot" [well west of Monschau] the 1st Infantry close by, and no one was sure of anyone else's position. A tank and a T.D. were ready in road block. As Miller tells it,

"Our liaison group was considered a third line of defense. We were on guard around 2130 when we were hit, I think, by about 20 Kraut ski-troopers.--They came down the hill damn fast and quietly until they started shooting at the road block. Frank and I only had a chance to fire one round from our Garands which we had acquired while around Brand or Kornelmünster. We got one of them, but I don't know which of us did it. Afterwards, I picked up his sheepskin helmet, and still have it. The kids wore it Halloween at one time or another.

Everyone expected that those guys would hit us again, but they never did--just that one pass--never could figure out what they tried to achieve,--unless they were on the wrong side of the line and trying to get back ??? The one we got was dead and couldn't tell us."

[Next issue see, "Exactitude Is Not Truth" *Wattisss*]

Frank and Marge read some sad Christmas cards among the joyous ones.

"Pete" and Sadie O'Neil (A)

1804 W.18th ST. Lot 80

Sault Ste Marie, MI 49783-1266

"----moved because they had to be near facilities. Where he built out in Trout Lake it was, really, the 'boonies'!"

Henry Lesczynski (A)

P.O. Box 463

Pine Bush, NY 12566

"Betty writes that Henry lost his eyesight due to diabetes,---had angioplasty, needs surgery for a hernia, and has bad legs, thus can't get around much.

FORT MIFFLIN**ON THE DELAWARE**

in Philadelphia, PA

"Valiant Defender of the Delaware"

At our division reunion in the fall, a side trip to Fort Mifflin, just 24 miles from Valley Forge, would be most enjoyable for veterans. The fort is the site of a seven week siege by the British navy in 1777. It has been called the forgotten battle of the American Revolution, yet the stubborn defense of this hastily completed fortification against hopeless odds was one of the most courageous actions of the entire war. The fort played a protective role for the City of Philadelphia during the war of 1812 and was active as a Confederate and Union prison camp during the Civil War. This National Historic Landmark served the U.S. military till 1954.

Our delegates on the division board will try to have the planning committee include Fort Mifflin on the program. Jim Santino (A)

VETERANS ARE ANGRY!*EDITORIAL OPINION*

The re-creation of the past, and research to learn what happened "up there", will remind us that there still are questions as to why and how we did what we did! Recent media reporting followed by protesting letters from veteran organization leaders brought that need back to our minds recently.

The Smithsonian Institution in Washington changed an exhibition which had included the view that the use of the atomic bomb on Japan helped save very many American lives. The change made did not deny that statement, but avoided judgment. We know American lives were saved, but Japanese civilian lives were mutilated or lost. Would so many Americans have lost their lives in an invasion of Japan that we were correct in nuclear bombing Nagasaki and Hiroshima? Didn't the enormous losses on Iwojima prove how determinedly the Japanese would fight us defending their homes?

A New Jersey Jewish War Veteran Commander was angry at two "historians" who claim the allies in Europe, especially in "The Bulge", bungled what "was decided before it began!"

Another veteran leader complains that a postage stamp picturing the atomic bomb explosion will not be made available, because it might hurt our present relations with Japan!

We accepted the responsibility for dropping the bombs, hoping to save American lives and end the war. We should remain concerned whether it led to the nuclear era of fear-1945 'til 1993--and the collapse of the Soviet Union.

We know how horribly the Japanese behaved in East Asia before and throughout the war. Most students of the question believe we'll never find out whether we did the right thing!

"The Bulge" was not decided before it began! Not for us!

Might General Montgomery have been right that the allied attack would better have driven directly into the industrial Ruhr instead of American military leadership continuing their faith in the Ulysses Grant, wide frontal approach to warfare? Would that have checked a German attack on our flank? Remember the pasting our infantry took in the Huertgen Forest through freezing paths slightly wider than a mountain trail. Remember that British historians can be hard on Montgomery, and point at still questionable decisions made by his American colleagues.

The Japanese have long memories that go back to the treatment they received in California at the turn of the century. We might continue to help their youngsters know the postwar efforts against nuclear warfare acted upon by the government of the American people.

We search for the truth of what happened, and will find self criticism due to uncertainty. The true task will be to search in the past for some leverage to help us live today and in the future by building for peace.

Do veterans truly believe a museum exhibition, a postage stamp, or disputes of historians will greatly embarrass them or their country?

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Date of Issue
Vol. VI #1, March, 1995

FIRST CLASS MAIL

