



703rd Road Block



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

Vol. IX #1 703rd Tank Destroyer Battalion Newsletter March, 1998

TWENTY-FIVE MORE ROOMS TO RESERVE! *LET'S GO!*

At the present time we have but fifteen rooms reserved of the forty hotel rooms we hope to be used by OUR members and guests in Grand Rapids, Michigan, May 17-21, 1998. Let's get over the writer's cramp we picked up during the Christmas card season. Sit down and WRITE YOUR RESERVATION NOW!

The forms you need and other key information are enclosed. Fill out the forms, and send them to the hotel and Len Straub (with check) as directed, **AS SOON AS POSSIBLE!**

For those of you travelling by plane who will need to stay over Saturday so as to qualify for a reduced travel rate, please send your reservation request to Brian Behler, at the Holiday Inn-North with a note telling him why you are staying over.

Complete the form! That is the only way you can attain a prior date before the 17th of May. The folks coming to the Holland Tulip Festival will fill all living space in and around Grand Rapids for two weeks ahead of our reunion.

PLEASE SEND IN YOUR RESERVATION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE!

Those who plan to drive in from the west on the ferry from Manitowoc, Wisconsin to Ludington, Michigan, might better try another route. "It's no bargain!" [\$45/car-\$37/person]

Flying in? You will be picked up at the airport. Let the hotel know the air line and the arrival time.

Cancellations can be made through May 16, 1998 by calling the hotel. Leave your name, that you registered for the 703rd T.D. Bn. Reunion, and tell them the number of people who would have been in your party.

Should you still have questions call Bob Schutt (616) 453 7571.

THE LAST HURRAH!

The clarion call has sounded,
inviting from near and far
The survivors of the 703rd
For one final "Last Hurrah"!

To the veterans of the T.D.'s,
Who once marched strong and proud,
But now are aged, slow and beat,
Whose sight has begun to cloud.

The call goes out to join us
In our official, "One Last Fling"
When we'll rehash all those happy times
As well as the sad remembering.

"Do you remember--?" The questions start,
"The road that Recon made--"

For whenever a tank went through Mere
Cobblestones had to be relaid.

How about the guy from "A" Company,
Who died digging a kitchen pit?
His name is on the tip of my tongue,
But I can't remember it!

The revolving door of officers
That passed through officer ranks,
From Cincinnati's huge Lou Capelle,
To the tiny Lieutenant Banks.

In "A" Company, before the E.T.O.
Led by Sm(y)the, and above named Lou,
Had officers named O'Connell, Ruff,
Howard, Chism, Wissing were a few.

Normandy Northern France Rhineland Ardennes Central Europe

McIntyre, Henderson and myself.
I'm sure there were one or two more,
But Henderson was the only one left
In "A" at the end of the war!

The same applied to "B" and "C",
And it wasn't officers alone.
The turnovers came in enlisted men
From misfits to kids fresh from home.

So many memories from Polk 'til now,
The Gap, Camp Pickett, Camp Hood,
England, France, and Deutschland
Evoke feelings bad and good,

So now, at our last time together,
Come out and reminisce with the guys,
But, kindly, dear friend, remember
We'll be exaggerating, not telling lies!
"Hap" Paulson (A,C)

THE GOOD WORD!

Frank and Marge Miller (A) with Diablo
III 154 Conifer Lane, P.O.Box 131, Hurley N.Y. 12443 keep in
contact with our friends, despite Frank being
limited to movement in his wheel chair.
There's always that dry smile on his face!
Frank let us know that the ice storms pre-
sented some difficulties in Hurley
recently. Here's the latest batch of news
from this compassionate couple.

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Out of Florida, RUSS STEELE (Div.Hq.)
sent a photo of "ED" and CLAIRE McINTYRE (A),
enjoying a visit from Wilbur and Lucille
Showalter. They enjoyed brunch together at
the Wright-Patterson Air Force Base.

"Ed" is reconciled to the probability that
he'll have to finish the game the rest of the
way in a nursing home. Drop him a line, and
you'll sense Claire's and his smile getting
through to you.

WBC 8000 Evergreen Ridge -216
Cincinnati, OH 45215

CLAUDE BALL (B)44669 Willow Oak Ct.,California, MD. 20619
Claude is much more insistent in demanding of
his legs the ability to get to
Grand Rapids this Spring. We are rooting for
him. Being with us means very much to him.

FRANK AND SUE WALKER (A) Rte. 2 Box 776, Sweeny TX
77480.They are makin' it, yet their medics get a
workout from them! He had to give up his
working with the Boy Scouts. Sue feels he
won't get to our battalion reunion,--too far
to drive! He has been trying to follow the
route the 703rd took from Omaha Beach to the
Elbe R. As he tells Sue what he remembers,
she learned that his roots go back to
Leipzig in Eastern Germany.

MILDRED OXLEY (A), sister of DONALD OXLEY (3A
d. 10/87) passed on 5/21/97. "Don", with that
half smile, "got the job done" and was a
modest, gentle comrade sharing the
accomplishments of his comrades. He's "long
gone!" Frank and "Marge" have not forgotten.

BURDEN OF ILLNESS

AL MILLER (A) could no longer properly
handle the needs of IMOGENE who has suffered
from Parkinson's disease for some time. What
with his own lingering illness, he had her
placed in a nursing home. It hurts "Al"
deeply, but he could no longer do what was
best for her. He was always there for us as a
comrade. How about a few words of encourage-
ment from you.

205 W. 14th St., Lanar, MO 64759

AULAY and ISABEL TOMPKINS (C) need our good
wishes as they struggle to handle their
effort to overcome multiple health problems.
Isabel was present at our reunion despite her
illness, and Aulay did so very much to make
the affair a success near Hershey, PA. Please
encourage them with your good word!

93 Almond Dr., Hershey, PA 17033

THEY HAD THEIR 50th AT SEA!

Ed and Maja Hoy (Hq.,Rcn.) enjoyed their
50th wedding anniversary on a Caribbean
cruise last August. We hope that one of the
pleasures of the southern seas was an
improvement of their health. They wrote that
they'll try make it to our reunion in Grand
Rapids! Won't you renew your friendship with
a fine couple, joining them in that lovely
city! Please drop them a line!

4627 Vista Drive, Cottonwood, AZ 86326 (520) 646 9168

T A P S

The day was cold and clear,
People came from far and near,
Again an old soldier will be laid to rest,
In war and peace he gave his best.
Four long army years,
Filled with prayers and tears,
Back home to marry and the G.I. Bill.

Locally and nationally he helped lead the way
To give many thousands a brighter day.
Always with a smile,
Ready to walk the extra mile.

His love of family and country was great
So today his passing is not too late
To join his buddies who are already on high.
We will salute as taps ring into the sky!
Don McKiernan (3A)

It was at our reunion in the Poconos that we met and sensed the love and devotion shared by Lydia and RICHARD LIGATTI (C). The call that "Rich" had passed on rolled us out of our "sacks", Friday, 12/19/97. If only we could pass on a bit of our good fortune so that Lydia can find comforting peace in his memory!

Please let Lydia know how deeply we feel!

7950 Dorcas St. Philadelphia, PA 19111

Frank Miller (A) called again. It was good to learn that "Marge" was feeling better, but not to know that he had shown no progress as far as being able to improve his ability to walk.

He reported that FRANK KARPINSKI (A) lost his scrap with lung cancer, 9/16/97. We must recall that Frank was a fine comrade, and wish the best for Vicki, his beloved. Let her know what his platoon buddies thought of him.

1817 Clearview, Scranton, PA 18508

NORMAN E. RAMSDEN (C) passed on 12/9/97 after a long struggle. Helen and his daughter, Barbara, wrote "Hap" Paulson that emphysema and heart failure were the final causes. In 1979 he retired after thirty years, a civilian employee of the Willow Grove Naval Air Station as an Equipment Inspector. He had been a Sergeant who was awarded three bronze stars, and the purple heart with an oak leaf cluster.

2100 Carlson Drive, Willow Grove, PA 19090

CLYDE JOHNSON, a life member of our association, passed away last March. Let Lucille learn that his comrades thought much of him.

10335 Hillsover Dr. Kirtland OH 44094

STANLEY DYMEK (HQ) checked out this past October. I'm sure Stan's comrades want to tell his daughter, Christine, what a fine "medic" and soldier her father proved to be.

6450 Penrod, Detroit, MI 48228

LET'S DEVELOP A FINE IDEA INTO HAPPY REALITY

Here's an example of some praiseworthy thoughts addressed positively to a few of us who would be involved if action was taken. The rejection was prompt, but the initial idea led to more hopeful prospects. Please "get in on the thinking"!

On 12/7/97 Wilbur Showalter wrote a few of the members of this association recommending that we quickly arrange an invitation for one of the 1944's A.R.G. (Allied Remembrance Group in Belgium) to join us at our reunion in Grand Rapids. The response was mixed, but Bob Schutt, our chairman promptly called and wrote us of the difficulties involved. He gave his negative vote. All asked liked the idea, but how to do it was the concern!

A good suggestion was dealt by Showalter on 12/23/97.

My 12/7/97 "Pearl Harbor" Memo concerning the Belgians created quite a stir--so much that I want to clarify my intentions, and summarize some ideas.

First, I emphatically do not want to detract from our 'last burrah' reunion at Grand Rapids in May. Also, I have total respect and admiration for Bob Schutt and his efforts to make this reunion a memorable one. In fact, after receiving Bob's reaction and concerns by telephone, I withdrew my idea--at least as far as the Grand Rapids reunion is concerned,--too many problems, not enough time, and above all a detraction from our primary purpose--to honor the 703rd and each other for possibly the last time (at least for some).

Second, I am impressed with a letter from "Hap" Paulson which spells out much background previously unknown to me, and

possibly to you. This included previous planning by the Division to invite some Belgians, perhaps two years hence. The 703rd should consider whether or not to blend its actions with that of the 3rd Armored Division. I hope that any 703rd funds would be used primarily for friends of the 703rd, and not disappear without benefit to the 703rd and our Belgian friends.

Finally, and I repeat, I hope that at Grand Rapids as we honor the 703rd, we also pay respect and appreciation to each other.

Happy New Year---and see you at Grand Rapids.

"Hap's" Letter of 1/3/98

"-----our organization should get a handle on what the cost will be. The group of Belgians at the Louisville reunion (CRIBA) might be coming back to Columbus, Ohio, to the division reunion in 1999. The Third Armored had a travel agent prepare a tour for them. If we wish we can get a "ballpark" figure in the same way. Another option might be to raise a fund, said fund to be used to allay the expenses of anyone wishing to join us, or join CRIBA if they are coming. Some hospitality by our members in Ohio (sightseeing tours, home visitations, etc.), and any other locations that our Belgian friend(s) may wish to visit. We should also attempt to learn what remuneration was given to the visitors by the Third Armored Division. Some preparation along these lines should be made between now and May, so we can discuss it at Grand Rapids."

Col. Showalter, Bob Schutt and the executive committee of our association welcome your encouragement, your suggestions for an invitation to our Belgian supporters.

NORMANDY V

July 18-24, 1944 [CONTINUED]

In every combat in which the U.S. military was involved, the course of the fighting was affected by the behavior of the enemy, logistics, materiel and training. These conditions varied in many ways in each fighting area. Our experiences in Normandy and Northern France made pursuit the way it appeared we would quickly end the war. The logistics of getting manpower and materiel to sustain the pursuit, and the persistence of the enemy convinced the military leadership to hesitate just inside Germany till supply seaports in Northern France, Belgium and Holland were ours. Then a fresh frontal assault on Germany could be mounted. But that would be later.

Right now we were beginning to go on the attack in Normandy, about to attempt to force the German forces to move back to the East. The 703rd had yet to be severely tested.

A TD (M-10) crew consisted of five men, commander, gunner, loader, driver and assistant driver on radio. A TD might also

carry a couple of men on security, a platoon leader or platoon sergeant, thus eight men.

As to armament, the M-10 had 80 Rounds of 3" ammo (armor piercing, and high explosive). The Platoon Security Sergeant had an M-1 rifle, as did at least one other security man. The others had the .30 Cal. carbine, with 150 rds. of ammo. The 30 cal. MG had 2500 belted rounds, and the 50 cal., 1500, for the gun mounted on the turret. There were ground mounts for both MG's, incendiary grenades for self-destruction, and many hand grenades. for security purposes.

In action the range for firing was 1.25 miles. The method was to isolate or ambush the heavier German tanks and "hit 'em" with all guns! For that reason the T.D.'s would be called upon to provide road blocks for task force columns. The Germans use four to five tanks with a company of infantry. The tanks have to be hit first or their long .75's could disable our M-4 tanks up to 2400 yds. We were to wait for the German attack to attempt to reach us when our TD's were in defilade, or have side views of targets, or we were "fools"! Our divisional task forces have with them a few 90 mm. AA guns converted for AT needs. They can stop any German tank at 1800 yds.

Capt. Seibert (B) C.O. had a run-in with 2nd Lt. Lewine (2B) over a move while in action. An investigation resulted in Lewine being reinstated in his platoon and Seibert was given a staff position. Capt. S.S. Smith leads Hq. Co. Capt. Capelle took over "B". S/Sgt. Thornhill (3A) butted heads with 2nd Lt. Ferchaud, his platoon leader. "Thorny" lost his job, but was soon reinstated.

Clyde A. Hildinger (B) became our third K.I.A. John Cox (A) has a Purple Heart coming his way from a "flak" wound on his face. S/Sgt. J.L. Warwick (A) was in a TD when an air burst resulted in his receiving a slight wound.

One of my assignments is to get the "news" at a field close by. The 32nd Armored Regt. has a radio that picks up international items in English. The staff at its CP is very

undisciplined. Off

icers and men stand erect to watch enemy aircraft. I almost felt lonely when I hit a ditch and remained there. As soon as the skies are partially clear, P-47's are overhead with bombs. Our artillery never ceases its harassing tactics. Some of its eyes, the darting Piper Cubs, observe for them. We have had "poison gas scares"! On one occasion a report that the Germans had used gas had our troops putting on gas masks as far back as the beaches.---

Good news! The engineers have put in showers nearby.

July 25-August 6, 1944

Plenty of moving about by us. It is almost certain that some thinking has taken place as to all the shifts, but up to now we have not been told the reasons for the moves. Right now we are on high ground. I am writing from just north of Juvigny. Officers tell us that our 1st and 9th Inf. Divisions have hemmed in a pair of German divisions.

On 7/20 we were told of a planned breakthrough southwest of St. Gilles to be initiated by a 4000 plane bombing and strafing attack. The high ground there, before St.Lo, was where our forces had been held back. After the breakthrough, we'd change direction and head south to Coutances where we'd be relieved by the 1st and 4th Infantry Divisions.

After three days of rain, the weather cleared and the sea of bombers poured their loads up ahead on high ground. I saw a Liberator go down in flames. However A-20's hit short and we soon learned Gen'l. L. McNair had been killed by our own bombs. It was a great show, however little gain was evident! Yet on the morning of 7/27 we moved out into the hole made past St. Gilles. Actually three armored divisions wormed through the gap. The plan was working. A fourth armored division plunged through the hole to go further south reaching Avranches. They were probably responsible for the taking of Rennes and Dinan on the Brittany Peninsula.

The breakthrough was no "dash"! "A" Co.

was in C.C.A., split among three task forces, each on different routes on one axis. For the time consumed, the mileage appeared small, but it stunned the German defenses and mobility, and took from them much ground. It enlarged our grip in France, and appeared worth the time and cost in the training of the armored force.

The 1st platoon of "A" Co. of the 703rd TD Bn. was part of Task Force (TF) Brewster. As ever characterizing Army movement, we started and stopped, again and again, the morning of the 28th. We saw the flow of prisoners, the occasional work of our airforce along the roads. Our column halted at the higher ground outside Canisy, and our first section spent a few hours in trying to destroy a towed German .88 road block, with its personnel carrier. The Germans blew up the gun themselves.

A few days later a rare event occurred. "A" Co. line platoons found themselves together before Cerisy La Salle. Sgts. Gann and Barbalinardo commanded the leading destroyers that stopped a German counterattack when friendly light tanks and infantry peeled behind us to reform before a threatened German thrust. Two anti-tank rounds had zipped close to Feeney's TD. We held the road into the night, however the Germans convinced our platoon leader, Lt. Ralph Henderson, that movement of their medical unit in front of us had a right of clearance. It was a ruse to gain an offensive position. We had to withdraw, but using our security weapons, we sprayed the hedges and held on. As evening was close, our P-47's strafed the hedges fifty yds. ahead of us. Light tanks and infantry joined us in our withdrawal about 150 yds. in darkness.

Starting at 1000 next morning our artillery went to work till 1400. We were almost the first elements going through the town. The enemy had left one man. Feeney blew up an abandoned German tank. Slowly we gained a little "speed", and had no trouble getting to Saussey.

The one time we had had to move at night since the breakthrough was fearsome. Staring

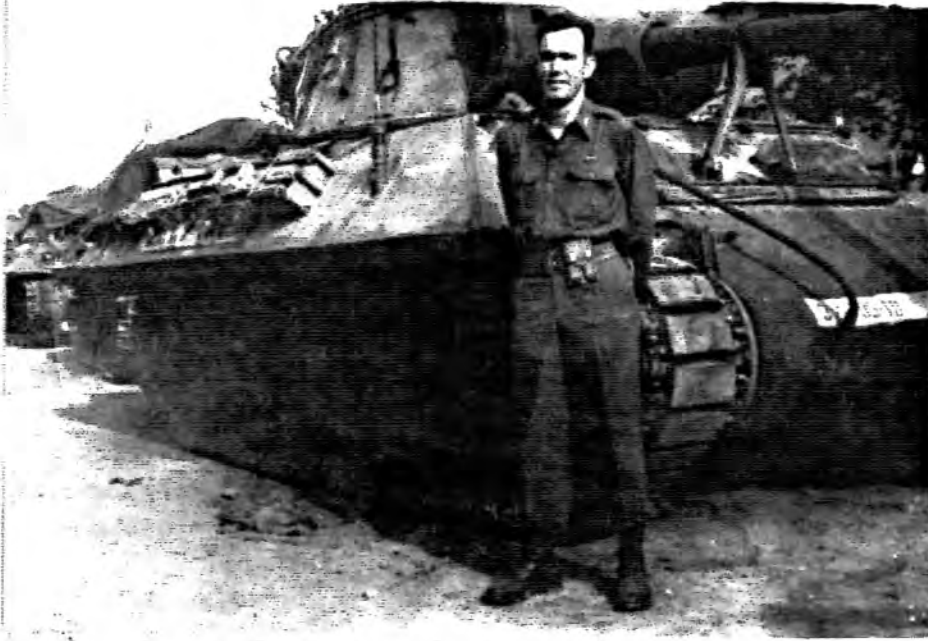
through the darkness for the "daffy" German with the Panzerfaust [bazooka] or possibly facing a road block made this G.I.'s hands "clammy"!

Our lead destroyers would receive Bronze Star awards for their work before Cerisy La Salle, but we griped at division light tanks and infantry that had exposed us. Any time they were in trouble they called on us! Twice the 36th Armored Infantry had moved back of us in the face of the enemy. The "dogfeet", had been heard to say, "----those TD's saved our butts!" Looking back now I realize that friendly troops withdrawing meant that the T.D.'s were being called upon to face enemy armor,--our job!

[To Be Continued]

RETURN TO DOM BÜTGENBACH

Members of the 703rd T.D. Bn. know that we played a significant role in helping check the armored forces of S.S. General Peiper in the Battle Of The Bulge. Our share in the action alongside the 1st Infantry Div. and 82nd Airborne Div. has been positively recorded in our Road Block. However there is no detailed narration of the 703rd successes against German tank attacks at and west of Dom Bütgenbach during the third week of December, 1944. Neither a C.O. of an A.T. Co. of the 26th Infantry Regiment (Rivette-1st Inf. Div.) in his top-flight article in the Infantry Journal, nor the papers of Colonel Daniels, the C.O. of the 26th Inf. Regt. task force, under whom "C" Co. fought, correctly tell of the part played by the 703rd! Neither did Charles B. MacDonald's, *A Time For Trumpets*, still the most read book on the U.S. Army in the "Bulge"! After our research led us to obtain the article, the book, and we read Daniel's paper in the Library of Congress, we felt we had gone as far as we could to get deserved recognition. Jean-Jacques Derycke, a Belgian historian, and a candidate to join the A.R.G. (our friends in Belgium) with whom we have been in touch, is determined to learn all he can about the 703rd. His early questions indicated that his limited English and my sophomoric French were not ready for his enthusiasm. It led to my effort to ease the correspondance. I referred him to the A.R.G. Soon I received a recom-



1st Lt. Claude Ball, 6/45 in Darmstadt. His last seven months of World War II were with "B" Co. 703rd Tank Destroyer Bn.



Lt. Col. Wilbur Showalter , Lucille,
1st Lt. Edward MacIntyre, Claire
1997



The A.R.G. honoring the 703rd at a function



The Chairman of the A.R.G. is Daniel Van Herck.
This is his son and his Jeep.



On the Move! Our friends of the 1944's Allied
Remembrance Group in Belgium. 1977

mendation of Jean-Jacques from my original correspondent in the A.R.G. that helped me to keep the lines open. The edited letter below, (his English is much improved) could result in "C" Co. getting its due!

"B" Co.'s role was very important with the 82nd Airborne Div. The Road Block description of Bill Crochetière's aggressive success and the loss of Al Morrie, need more recognition. The wild attack of the 82nd Airborne Regiment involved Jim Roberts platoon and left the question as to the senselessness of the Airborne Division first attack on Cheneux.

135 rue Grimard January 27, 1998
Montignies-sur-Sambre Belgium

Dear Mr. Goldberg,

I am happy to continue corresponding with you, because I believe that I have information that verifies events as asserted by your colleagues. I just received a letter from Major Donald E. Rivette (Ret.) who was the C.O. (Commanding Officer) of an A.T. (Antitank) Co. in the 26th Infantry Regiment of the First Infantry Division. He was wounded on December 21st, 1944 at Bütgenbach in Belgium. He states that "C" Co. of your battalion was in the command of Capt. Henry F. Gosch. "The company had two platoons, four M-10 Tank Destroyers (3" guns) in each, and one platoon of four M-36 T.D.'s (90mm.guns)". That confirms 1st Lt. Harold Paulson's contradiction of your assertion that he must have had M-36's in the action at Dom Bütgenbach! One of the other platoons must have had M-10's, and the third, M-36's.

You brought to my attention via the Road-Block, MacDonald's failure to mention the 703rd's role at Dom Bütgenbach. He credited the 613th T.D. Battalion with what had been done by your battalion. I wrote Mr. Paulson a year ago that there wasn't any 613th T.D. Bn. in the American army. I've sought more information on the action at Dom Bütgenbach by writing several veterans and associations.

In his letter to me Mr. Rivette offered the following explanation.

"The 703rd has been a sort of 'lost battalion' as far as getting credit for their action during the Battle of the Bulge. Part of it has been my fault. In October, 1954 I wrote a story [article] in the U.S. Army's Infantry Journal, called, 'The Hot Corner at Dom Bütgenbach'. In that article I identified the T.D. platoon with us as from the 613th T.D. Bn. At this time I cannot tell you why I made that mistake, especially since there wasn't a T.D. battalion with that number in the U.S. Army. This error was picked up by Charles MacDonald for his book, A Time For Trumpets. That book has become sort of a bible on the 'Battle of the Bulge'. Other authors have also made this error!"

Now I know why MacDonald didn't include your battalion in his narration. Mr. Rivette is writing a book, Close Station, March Order, hoping it will be published, June, 1998. He wrote that he gives "considerable credit to "C" Co. of the 703rd."

Acknowledgement soon will come more than fifty years after the event. I'll be very happy for you and all the men of the 703rd!

Sincerely yours,
Jean-Jacques Derycke

P.S. Could you please correct my English?

GRENADIER REGIMENT 89

The Battle of the Bulge II
Continuation of the memoirs of Hans Zeplien, a Company Commander in a regiment (Gren Regt 89) of the 12.Volksgrenadierdivision (12 VGD).

Finally on the route along the reservoir, just across the dam, Hans saw Hitler's castle, "Vogelsang", shone upon by early or evening sun sometimes hidden by mist.

Hans also saw along the route some anti-tank, mobile weapons that were unfamiliar to him. By 12/8/44 there were but a few days till the German massive attack would open. It would be then that Hans might have felt those new weapons would be put into position to fight in another campaign.

We came across the two tank-destroyers on a woodpath above a brook. Their guns were .75mm. We had heard of this type, but never had seen one till then. A shield protected the gun. The tracked vehicle itself offered no cover for the gun crew from above or behind. We had no idea that these vehicles belonged to units being assembled in this area for The Battle of the Bulge. We wondered why this type of weapon had not been employed at Aachen.

There was some planning on moving 14co to Wollseifen or Mariawald, but there were no training facilities there,-- so talk, and fortunately no move.

Company strength on 12/11/44 was one officer, six NCO's, twenty men and six supporting volunteers. Zeplien's company was far from ready to be part of a full offensive.

Probably on that day, the company was relieved of guarding the dam. After the formalities of informing the relieving unit of how the 14co had prepared for an attack on the dam, Hans gathered his men. As they moved into the open they heard the approach of British bombers. The lead bomber dropped his bombs close to the barrage (a protective wall of water) where the company stopped. A shower of rocks dropped on them from where the bombs exploded. The pillbox, where there would be some protection, was across a brook. Hans call was effective in having one of his men stationed in the pillbox bring a small boat across the brook to pick them up, Hans, himself, was on the oars, straining to make it to the pillbox up to fifty meters away. That soldier saved the lives of his comrades. There was no safety till after an exposed dash, and they were in that bunker.

Almost immediately a bomb struck atop of the pillbox. It jolted into the ground. The occupants clung to the chains of the metal bed frames. Detonations close to the men were more their concern, because the bunker appeared to rock under the shock wave! At least that was their impression! But they were happy to be safe from the bombardment.

Too, if the bombs had damaged the barrage so that part of the water in the reservoir would have escaped, then they would all have drowned. Fortunately the walls of the barrage were thick, and the bombs struck a bit away. After what seemed an eternity, but after about a half hour the aircraft had left the pillbox area, and Hans climbed the barrage full of concern for the other troops who had been at the top of the barrage.

Their roof and walls were seriously damaged, and the AA guns gone. There were bomb craters at the edge of the barrage which, fortunately, did not cause a flood wave out of the reservoir.

Not one of Hans' men was killed or wounded. The relieving company, though, lost men, weapons and gear. Hans ordered his men to take care of the wounded, evacuations and to recover equipment, moving it into pillboxes. The men of the relieving company were very demoralized. 14co was split, a group caring for the wounded, and the fewer remaining men putting recovered equipment into the pillboxes. Without stretchers, the bed frames were used to transport the wounded. The craters near a vital section of the road made the road section impassable, however the wounded were carried along a rocky path, over the breach, where a vehicle took them to field hospitals. When his men reached their assembly area in Kall, they found a surplus in small arms which 14co kept as a reserve. This did not cause any pangs of conscience for all units depended a bit on commandeering during these difficult times.

Orders for redeployment on 12/13/44 now came, but with destination unstated. The march was in darkness, generally to the southwest, along paths readily handled by our horse-drawn guns and trains. We were passing through forests in a rather snowless month of December. There was the feeling of isolation.

After the first march of 20-30 kms., the men rested in a small forest as daylight approached. Proper security measures were taken. The trains personnel cared for the horses and "grub" as sleep became the goal at

the edge of a freezing temperature.

Hans and the headquarters squad followed the same procedures as their men. Hans got but a little sleep, because moisture crept through his brushwood mattress, and two blankets were not enough to keep the body heat essential for sleeping. He was occupied with a number of problems with regard to the supplies and preparedness of his company. For example on this first night one of his vehicles had run into a farmer's rack-wagon standing without lighting at the edge of the road. The shaft was broken, and there was need for replacement, but we had no spare shafts. After some effort they found an ash tree they improvised as a shaft.

Since most of the men did not benefit from enough sleep, the leg of the march that evening began with the cold and tiredness. There was little griping, and expectation of a better day's rest in another forest. The more veteran troops took it more in stride than the replacements who still were adjusting to the conditions. There was no snow or ice on the road, merely dense fog which made orientation more difficult. On the other hand it provided protection from air raids.

The men showed great respect for the capacities of our enemy's air force. Before the bombardment of the Urft Dam, and at the battles for Aachen, our troops had faced many bombing and strafing raids. The men really felt helpless, because there were nearly no countermeasures available. If there was an AA 20mm gun in position between Werth and Hastenrath to ward off hostile observation aircraft of the U.S. artillery, it had to change position after a few bursts to escape fighter-bomber attacks or shelling. Only once did they see their own aircraft for minutes. Only the V-1 missiles could be watched in the evening as they followed their flight paths at medium height. U.S. AA weapons fired at them "like mad" without success. They were sure of that because they could see the blaze of the rocket motor in the dark sky.

To Be Continued

C H O W !

Maybe there's only the feeling that our reunions do more than become holidays of exaggerations! There's one topic that was common when we were in the army,-- chow! I'll bet that if we recollected how we were fed, we would very much be a bunch of liars! But no one has mentioned it the last ten years. There has been so many more substantive matters to talk about!

The reason I bring it up now,--is that I, personally, had little to complain about compared with my comrades! At Camp Polk and later, my comrades selected more than one dish for their venomous dislike, but I'll remind you of one,-- its name,--- "Chips On A Shingle", a main course of overcooked small pieces of corned beef in a dark brown sauce!

So many of us were just getting into the service, and our complaints were self-muffled to avoid thankless extra duties, or politely known as-- "details"! Slowly I learned that the kitchen crew had to be pretty rotten to make me turn away, even from those Beef Chips! As now, I liked to eat. We were not allowed away from the battalion area as we suffered six weeks of basic training, concentrating on learning to avoid the problems dispensed by the character of the training cadre. So my tastes sturdily accepted whatever was on the mess kit! We had choices along the mess line,--at least I thought so---, but one incident prove to me that my Mom's cooking had raised me with eating peculiarities!.

I had an early taste of K.P. First, I shared in getting the mess hall tables in order. I thought I was learning to avoid criticism, by measuring up the "cooks" who acted as if we were criminals who had tortured them into being corrupters of the army menu, and, especially the agonizing-looking Matt Arquilla (A) whose sneers would have frightened Benito Mussolini. Later, only when I learned why he had to take a medicinal tea, did his personality show an opening for a bit of my sympathy!

It was "chow time" and at the last minute I was assigned to the "chow line". I was placed in back of a five or 7 1/2 gallon bucket filled with squash steeping in its deep molasses sauce. I'd serve it with a long ladle, carefully, and ever extolling its virtues.

I picked the points of attraction as I truly felt. That squash was what I would have offered my best friend, expecting that no one would turn it down. I tasted it and was sure I'd write home to my "Mom" assuring her that the army had learned of her culinary talent,-- somehow!

Most of that squash had to be thrown out! If I had to ladle out a couple of quarts, it was a lot! I had to look into that bucket with disappointment. I had a couple of big servings. Still that Yankee dish didn't go over for six hundred men, and I learned that my taste for food was unique in comparison to that of my colleagues. With time I learned how to make my taste, my advantage!

Do you remember those small boxes and cans of food,--"C Rations"? Well I was happy to exchange the coffee, for your lemon juice powder to be made into hot lemonade,--- absolutely delicious! I'm eternally grateful to my comrades for enjoying the coffee I could do without! Even the powdered milk suited my appetite!

Then there were those rations that included pressed fruit bars, combinations of cooked apricots, raisins, prunes firmly waiting to help make a soldier "regular"! But that taste and most of you wanted no part of those delights. I shared your enjoyment of the canned ham and eggs!

I'll admit that I looked forward to getting out of camp to try some southern cooking. There was the early hope to be had at the PX, till we could get to Leesville. Often in life an experience that is emotionally exciting to one person, is a bore to another.

After I was served an "awful" burger I reached the coffee urn. The thin woman serving wore a bright red dress, and she appeared utterly bored. As I was forming a

mental picture of how I'd describe her, she clearly dumbfounded me with a clear phrase.

"Northern or Southern!"

Loyal to my world of home, I stumbled,

"Northern!"

Her pale, thin visage remained disdainful as she started to pour, and I had the nerve to ask: "What's the difference?"

"Southern is strong, Northern is weak!"

She was correct. The coffee was as bad as the meat in the hamburger!

Recall a Christmas in England? On that day the Jewish men in the companies were on duty so the other men could enjoy the holiday at services and with the families with whom they were building friendships. It was only a few days later that we were given the day off. Len Straub and Larry Gatti (A) joined me. They had not had Christmas Day off. We were invited to a home at Doverhay Down not far from the Bristol Channel where we practiced the T.D. guns, a home where the master of the house, in shipping, was spending about seven years in Aden far away from his family. His wife had put aside a duck for us. It was a precious feast when served, as well as the fixins'! Her son, a young gentleman showed us his German pistol. Our hostess wore deep facial lines due to the long time her family life had been disrupted by the war. I visited the lad for lunch at Eton on my later furlough!

I mustn't forget that Pete Kotarski (A), our last Mess Sergeant, tried to have eggs as each of us wanted them on a few weekends. I want to believe that the rare treat of having some ice cream on rare occasions was due to "Pete" going out of his way to trade with a civilian for the gear to make it, or swiped it from some French shop!

Yet it was the hospitality shown us added to that Christmas dinner that left little room in my memory about poor army grub!

Wasn't it a fact the army diet led to our good health?

TREASURER'S REPORT

Fourth Quarter Report 1997

Balance 9/1997 \$6623.26 Receipts \$873
Expenses \$228.09 Balance 1/9/98 \$7268.17

ANNUAL REPORT 1/9/98

Initial Balance (From Former Treasurer) \$5515.04
Receipts \$2516 Expenses \$711.87
Balance for the year \$7268.17

Life Members- 28 1997 Paid Members- 58
Total Membership 1997-86
1998 paid members- 09 Registered For Reunion-18
3 / 9 / 98

The above does not reflect the cost of
printing and mailing of the 703rd Road Block.

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