Excerpted from MARQUETTE AND ALGER COUNTY LOSSES IN WORLD WAR II (1941-1946)

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Leo Richard Robinson (ASN 36835917)-Private, B Company, 705th Tank Destroyer Battalion, 11th Armored Division, U.S. Army. Born 7/7/1925 in Marquette, Michigan. Killed on Christmas Eve, 1944, when a German bomb hit the Bastogne, Belgium, aid station where he was being treated for wounds received during an enemy mortar attack. The son of Goldie Robinson (later Mrs. Arthur Mannisto; 5/10/1901-11/12/1970) of Sundell, he probably never knew who his father was. Friends and relatives of Leo's would later recall that Goldie was raised by her grandparents as their daughter while she believed her mother—Nellie (Robinson) Simons—was her sister, the truth probably not being revealed under after Goldie's "father" William had passed away and after Goldie's son had been killed in World War II. Leo himself was largely raised by his (great) grandparents, William and Mary Robinson, on their small farm on the County Road near Sundell. He attended the Eben School where he made a lasting mark on many of his classmates, with friend and relative Jean (Winters) Janofski (3/31/1921-4/4/2012) noting that he indeed must have been a special boy/young man to escape the stigma of having no father at home. One of his closest school chums was Margaret Hill and his practice of writing her notes in class often found them both in trouble but also revealed Leo's interest in Margaret's younger friend and another schoolmate, Beatrice "Bea" Kallio. Both girls would always remember how much he loved his mother even though they never met her. The 9/20/1941 Marquette Daily Mining Journal mentioned that Leo Robinson had been elected to represent the Eben High School sophomore class on the student council, an achievement that was repeated his junior year. During those high school days, Margaret Hill Beaudry remembers Leo as very active in their class and recalls how well-liked he was. The two of them regularly went to their school's basketball games together, traveling to away games by fan bus, and he almost always bought her ticket—"a real true friend," says Margaret. When Leo Robinson and his friends weren't traveling by school bus, he often provided a slick set of wheels: a Cadillac, probably belonging to his (great) grandfather. According to Margaret and Beatrice, two of his closest male friends were Harold Swanberg and Leslie Salminen, who was perhaps his very best friend of all. On 6/20/1942, the DMJ reported that Leo was attending a trade school in Houghton, although he returned to Sundell in early August to spend a week with his (great) grandmother. The Friday, 8/28/42 edition of the Munising News made known that he was to return from his summer in

Houghton the next day. Sometime the week of 3/29/1943, Leo Robinson visited Marquette "on business," according to the 4/2 Munising News, and by 5/21, Robinson and another Sundell boy, Sulo Pohjala, had left for Cleveland, Ohio, to work. The 9/23/43 Daily Mining Journal reported that "Leo Robinson, who has been working on an ore carrier, has returned home," and according to the 9/24 Munising News, Leo's stint on the Great Lakes had only been for the summer months. Jean Janofski recalled Robinson as being a handsome boy. A cousin, Bill Fowler, remembered him as tall, too, and said his mother was very proud of that. Included on Alger County's October 1943 draft list, Leo Robinson was accepted for military service following examination at the Marquette induction station on Thursday, 10/15/43. The Daily Mining Journal's 11/1 Sundell column wrote, "Vaino Oja, Leslie (Pohjala) and Leo Robinson were in Marquette a few days ago." The 11/3 DMJ included Alger County's November draft list in its Munising section, noting, "The board also announced that the following men of the enlisted reserves will report to the Lake Superior and Ishpeming depot here at 3:15 p.m. Friday, November 5, for transportation to Camp Grant, Ills." Leo R. Robinson was among the men named. He was inducted into the Army on Friday, 11/5, and the Sundell column in that day's Munising News announced that "a farewell party was given for Leo Robinson Sunday afternoon at his home here…A large number of his friends attended. A gift of money was given." His best gal pal Margaret was unable to be at this send-off, having gone to Pontiac to work in a war plant. Beatrice Kallio, his crush one grade behind him, missed the party as well—her mother would not let her go, envisioning—Beatrice supposed—teenagers at their worst. The Wednesday, 11/10 Daily Mining Journal wrote that Leo had "entrained at Little Lake last Friday evening with other inductees for Fort Sheridan, Ill." Robinson was assigned to Camp Grant, IL, and then to Camp Roberts, CA (where the 11/26/43 Munising News placed him), for four months of basic training. According to *Wikipedia*, Robinson's eventual outfit, the 705th Tank Destroyer Battalion, was formed in December 1941, training in California and Texas, before moving to Oregon in early 1943. Battalion history places it at Ft. Lewis, WA, beginning 11/14/43, with the unit relocated to Camp Shanks, NY, P.O.E. from 4/6/1944. The Wednesday, 3/22/44 DMJ's Sundell column noted Private Leo Robinson's four-day furlough home enroute from Camp Roberts to Fort Meade, MD, a visit which may have found him attending a wedding dance for his mother and her new husband, Arthur Mannisto, at the Sylvan Inn on Saturday night, 3/25. "Mrs. Mannisto is the daughter of Mrs. Mary Robinson, who resides here, and Mr. Mannisto is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Mannisto, Eben. The couple is making their home here where Mr. Mannisto has some lumbering operations." At the time of Pvt. Robinson's "delay-enroute," he visited Margaret Hill's mother to ask for her address, also learning then that Margaret was married. Leo went overseas in the latter part of April 1944, in line with the 705th's transfer to New York and 4/18 boarding of the liner Queen Elizabeth for its voyage to the United Kingdom, which began on 4/20. The battalion arrived at Garoch, Scotland on the 27th, entraining to Tilshead, England on 4/28, and setting up camp at Trowbridge, Wiltshire, in southern England on 6/1. This information matches Stateside newspaper reports of Sundell's Pvt. Robinson first serving in England and then France. The men of the 705th sailed from Southampton to Normandy on 7/13, landing at Utah Beach. *Wikipedia* notes the outfit was equipped with M18 Hellcat tank destroyers. The battalion was initially attached to a task force of Patton's Third Army, which pushed through Avranches with the objective to capture ports along the northern coast of Brittany. This first tactical mission is shown in official 705TB history as occurring from 7/31-9/21/44. More specifically, from 8/6-8/16, Leo Robinson's B Company was attached to the 83rd Infantry Division, while on 8/17 the battalion liberated the north coast town of Paimpol. On

8/23, B Company was assigned to the 2nd Infantry Division, fighting in the Battle for Brest, not being released until 9/19. During that time, the remainder of the battalion was employed fighting on the Crozon Peninsula, south of that port. *Wikipedia* notes, "A shortage of the M18 Hellcat in the supply chain – most battalions in France were equipped with M10s at the time – led to the battalion being assigned a number of M4A3 Shermans, which carried the same 76mm gun, as temporary replacements." The unit regrouped in late September, training reinforcements, before moving to northeastern France and the Moselle River, leading to young Pvt. Robinson seeing action in Germany. Battalion history has the 705TDB attached to the 95th Infantry Division for Moselle River fighting from 10/24-31, and crossing the Moselle River at Thionville on 11/3. The 705th made a repeat crossing of the river, entering Deutschland near Merschweiler on 11/18. Beginning 12/1, the outfit was in the 9th Army Sector at Kohlsheid, Germany. A blindsiding 12/16 German counterattack in the Ardennes brought Leo to the Bastogne area of Belgium, where he would die from wounds received in action—a tragic event that would be followed by months of confusion for his family. On 12/18, the 705th, still at Kohlscheid, near Aachen, Germany, and under the command of Lt. Colonel Clifford D. Templeton, was ordered to move south and join VIII Corps at Bastogne, a town on a critical road junction in the southern Ardennes. Leo Barron and Don Cygan's *No Silent Night: The Christmas Battle for Bastogne* describes the battalion traveling in blackout conditions, where all one could see in front of them was from the cat's eyes on their vehicle's headlights. Liège was reached at 0100 on 12/19, but, otherwise, delays greatly slowed progress in what should have been a straight shot south. Houffalize, already in German hands, had to be bypassed (between 0700 and 0800 hours) and the 705th had to secure the town of La Roche, all the while traveling on roads clogged with "remnants of American units that had fallen victim to the winter blitzkrieg," The command and combat elements of the battalion were not fully arrived in Bastogne until late on the night of 12/19. According to *Wikipedia*, "Templeton detached two platoons to hold a bridge at Ortheuville and a platoon to La Roche, and the supply and support elements were sent west, escorted by a single M18 and instructed to 'hook up with some big friends.' A platoon was sent north from Bastogne on the early morning of the 20th to help relieve Task Force Desobry, defending the northeast approaches to the town. The platoon, accompanying a battalion of paratroopers, blunted the attack of the 2nd Panzer Division, destroying a number of German tanks. The battalion was formally attached to the 101st Airborne Division, the formation holding Bastogne, on 20 December, and was engaged throughout the siege, fighting a number of small actions. It provided a major part of the 101st's combat capabilities; on the 21st, the total armored reserve available other than the 705th amounted to about forty operable medium tanks. *No Silent Night* indicates one squad of Baker Company, 705, was at Flamierge, Belgium, as of 1200-1600 on Saturday, 12/23. *Wikipedia* states that on the 24th, the 705TDB was distributed between the 101st's regiments; a platoon to the 501st Parachute Infantry, two to the 506th Parachute Infantry, two to the 502nd Parachute Infantry and four to the 327th Glider Infantry, with one platoon deployed as a reserve in the town itself." *No Silent Night* sets the scene for the 12/24 German Luftwaffe bombing attack that took Leo Robinson's life. "On Christmas Eve, holiest of nights for the many Christian peoples of Europe, Adolf Hitler was unleashing the full fury of his remaining Luftwaffe bomber force on Bastogne. For Bastogne was the holdout city, center of Allied resistance to his *Wacht am Rhein* (Watch on the Rhine) offensive—the German surprise attack in the west that would become known among the Allies as the Battle of the Bulge. Frustrated with epic resistance from the U.S. forces trapped inside the Belgian city of Bastogne, Hitler had authorized a bombing mission that was debatably military in scope and nature.

Instead, it was more a punishment for the people of Bastogne. *Der Führer* had had enough of the American resistance in the encircled town and was preparing the outlying areas for a final ground assault to break the resistance and capture Bastogne. Civilian targets would be hit indiscriminately, and numerous Bastogne citizens would be killed on this Christmas Eve, buried in the rubble of their homes and shops. Collateral damage was not Hitler's concern, but to him, it was a fitting by-product for their support for the Allies." Assigned to the evening aerial attack was Staffel 1, Kampfgeschwader 66 (KG 66), a bomber unit based at Dedelstorf, Germany, flying Junkers 88 medium bombers, on this occasion each carrying nearly 7,000 pounds of high-explosive munitions in their bomb bays. *No Silent Night* has the first reports of approaching German aircraft coming over the radios around 1925 hours (7:35PM), "and within minutes bombs were falling in the center of Bastogne…The citizens of Bastogne hid in their basements, shivering with cold and fear. As each Luftwaffe plane buzzed over, more flares fell, sputtering and photo-flashing against the stone facades before thudding to the streets. The flares, as much as the bombs, created a freakish effect—strobe lights in the hellish night. The concussions could be felt easily for miles around the perimeter of Bastogne. The earth pounded and rocked for the men crouching in holes dug in the frozen earth…Since the bigger antiaircraft guns were oriented toward ground targets, they were powerless. For what seemed like forever to those on the ground, the bombers had a free rein of destruction over Bastogne." On the western end of town, a single bomb penetrated the timber roof of a building in use as an aid station, detonating upon contact with the station floor. The ensuing explosion shattered glass windows for blocks "as smoke and flame erupted from the openings." Years later, Captain John "Jack" T. Prior, a medical officer present that night, recorded his experience at the scene. "I was in a building next to my hospital preparing to go next door and write a letter for a young lieutenant to his wife. The lieutenant was dying of a chest wound. As I was about to step out the door for the hospital one of my men asked if I knew what day it was, pointing out that on Christmas Eve we should open a Champagne bottle. As the two of us filled our cups, the room, which was well blackened out, became as bright as an arc welder's torch. Within a second or two we heard the screeching sound of the first bomb we had ever heard…We hit the floor as a terrible explosion rocked our building." Prior rushed outside, trying to pull away the planks and bits of stone. "He could hear the cries of the wounded, trapped underneath. More bombers started strafing the area with their machine guns. Several times, he and the enlisted men had to duck under nearby vehicles for cover, reemerging to continue their rescue work." As Prior recalled, "A large number of men soon joined us and we located a cellar window (they were marked by white arrows on European buildings). Some men volunteered to be lowered in to the smoking cellar on a rope and two or three injured were pulled out before the entire building fell into the cellar." *No Silent Night* adds, "When the ground floor had collapsed into the basement, dozens of wounded soldiers were instantly buried, killed, or entrapped." On the eastern edge of the city, *Buffalo Evening News* reporter Fred Mackenzie experienced the bombing attack from the basement of 101st Airborne Division Headquarters at Heinz Barracks, more commonly referred to then as "the Cave," located across the street from the local cemetery. As the men inside regained their senses, Mackenzie followed a soldier outside. From *No Silent Night*, "In a sense, he was like someone on the Great Plains emerging from the cellar after a tornado had roared through the town, wondering what had just happened. Mackenzie could still hear the bombing in the distance as the drone of the Ju 88s faded into the night. In front of him were several blazing fires…One monstrous conflagration caught his attention, and the intrepid reporter ran toward the blaze like a moth drawn to a flame." Several minutes of jogging down the Rue de Neufchateau, past the

center of town, brought him to the scene. "What was once a building was now twisted, burning embers and smashed masonry. Several troopers were trying to put out the fire using only buckets. It was a losing battle, but they tried anyway. Other men dug furiously, desperately trying to help their buddies out of the rubble. It was dangerous work. All around them the building continued to burn and crumble…'There were 32 wounded men in there,' a shocked lieutenant cried out, pointing at the monstrous, consuming inferno. On the way to the site, Mackenzie had learned that the holocaust in front of him had been the medical aid station for Combat Command B of the 10th Armored Division. Finally, disgusted and defeated, the diggers retreated and yielded to the glowing fire. The lieutenant then pointed at the debris and remarked, 'One of the men told me that a Belgian nurse was caught under a falling timber just as she was nearly out,' said the lieutenant. 'She was taking care of the wounded'…Mackenzie later learned that her name was Renée Lemaire, daughter of Gustav Lemaire, a village merchant." The medical aid station had been located in a three-story building on the edge of town, and those present wondered if its apparently callous bombing had been accidental, although from the air it would have made a tempting target, half-tracks and jeeps parked outside to deliver the evening's wounded and frostbitten. "To a Luftwaffe bombardier at almost 2,000 feet, zipping by at more the 200 miles an hour in the dark, it could have appeared to have military value…" On 12/25, Christmas Day, in the wake of Robinson's and so many other deaths, the 705TDB was engaged in the thick of the fighting. As *Wikipedia* describes, "an attack by eighteen Panzer IVs of 15th Panzergrenadier Division was broken up by M18s of the battalion. One half of the attack was caught in a close-range action by units of the 502nd PIR and a platoon of B Company; two M18s were knocked out at the start of the engagement, but the other pair quickly accounted for three Panzer IVs. The other half, meanwhile, was caught in a crossfire between four M18s, a group of M4 Shermans, a group of 105mm howitzers and infantry bazookas and destroyed." Leo Robinson's mother, Goldie, did not receive absolute confirmation of his death until late April 1945 due to conflicting reports, which possibly resulted—at the War Department level—from another soldier having the same name: On 1/16/1945, his mother had received a telegram saying her son had been slightly wounded on 12/22/1944, but on 1/20/1945 a message arrived informing her that he had died from those wounds on **December 24th** (this is the date of death that appears on Leo Robinson's Park Cemetery grave marker in Marquette, MI). One week later, on the afternoon or evening of 1/27/45, she received a person-to-person phone call from the adjutant general in Washington, D. C., revising Leo's condition to still alive and in a hospital in Belgium. The War Department telegram of April 26th read in part: "It is with deep distress I must now inform you a corrected report has been received which states that your son, Pvt. Leo R. Robinson, who was previously reported missing in action, died Dec. 26, as a result of wounds received in action. The Secretary of War asks that I express his deep sympathy to you in your loss and his regret that conflicting reports have caused you great distress." A confirming letter that followed indicated that Leo had received treatment for his wounds at the battalion aid station at Bastogne, Belgium, which was besieged at the time. According to the 5/17/1945 Daily Mining Journal's Sundell column, Mrs. Mannisto had received word that son Leo had "died of wounds Dec. 22, and was buried in Belgium. The Catholic chaplain who performed the last rites sent the information." In addition, Leo's division commander, Brigadier General H.E. Dager, wrote: "Your son was a patriotic and a gallant soldier...As a member of the 705th Tank Destroyer Battalion your son was participating in a battle of vital importance to our operations and the zeal and courage with which he fought was an inspiration to his comrades and friends." Leo was predeceased by his (great) grandfather, William H. Robinson (DOD 2/16/1941), and

survived by his mother, her husband Arthur, and (great) grandmother, Mary Robinson (1860-1956) of Sundell. He had never had a chance to write to his high school chum Margaret. Mrs. (Hill) Beaudry learned of his death in a letter from her mother, friends of Margaret's having told **her** the sad news. A memorial service for Pvt. Robinson—with many out-of-town friends and family attending—was held on Sunday, 6/3/1945, at the Finnish Lutheran Church in Eben, where he was confirmed five years earlier. Those attending from out-of-town included Mr. and Mrs. Sudley Robinson of Marquette, Mrs. Earl Robinson of Skandia, and Jean Janofski's mother, Mrs. Neil Winters of Carlshend. According to the 7/13/1945 Munising News, Goldie Mannisto had received word from one of her late son's buddies, then in Germany, "that **Leo was not killed by the wounds inflicted by a mortar shell, but the hospital he was in was bombed by the Germans** and partially destroyed on Dec. 26th." Beneath all the military red tape, the true course of events lies in the paperwork completed by grass-roots Army Graves Registration personnel. Private Robinson appears to have been wounded in action while with his tank destroyer battalion in the Bastogne area, and taken to the doomed hospital or aid station in that small city. Following his Christmas Eve death, he was buried in a "very shallow grave" (grave 78), as were four of his comrades, in Bastogne's civilian cemetery. He was recovered by Army Graves Registration on or around 1/19/1945, and interred in U.S. Military Cemetery #1 at Grand Failly, Longuyon, France, on 1/22/45 at 1400 (Plot I, Row 2, Grave 39). No personal effects were found with his body. The Report of Burial noted a shrapnel wound to the back of Private Robinson's right leg. Interestingly, the War Department had a formal report of Leo R. Robinson's death, complete with accurately recorded Army serial number and names of next-of-kin, in-hand by 1/24/1945. "Cause of death: Wounds received in action." For reasons unknown, the report was cancelled as of March 8th, and Robinson was officially considered "missing in action" from 12/26/1944 to 4/24/1945 ("when evidence considered sufficient to establish the fact of death was received by the Secretary of War from a Commander in the European Area"). A new Report of Death was issued by the War Department on 5/4/45, although that version lists his date of death as 12/26/1944, two days later than the bombing of the aid station. On 8/27/45, Robinson's mother, Goldie, wrote to Adjutant General Ulio in Washington, D.C., asking if he could tell her when her son's body could be shipped home for burial. "I know at the present time you can not give me definite information. If you could give me (a little advice) I would sure appreciate it very much." On 9/28/45, Col. M. V. Turner from the office of the Quartermaster General, replied, detailing Leo's burial location at Grand Failly. Regarding the cemetery's location, he wrote, "Grand Failly, France, is eighteen miles northeast of Verdun and ten miles southeast of Montmedy, both in France." In answer to her question, Turner added, "Now that Japan has been defeated, immediate plans are being formulated with a view to returning to the next of kin the remains of their loved ones. This sacred duty will be carried out by the Government at its expense…The mission as a whole is world wide in scope and of necessity time consuming, but you may rest assured that this office fully appreciates your desires and will do everything in its power to fulfill them at the earliest possible date. This office regrets, sincerely, the delay in answering your letter and wishes to extend its deepest sympathy in the loss of your son." Leo was among the Alger County war dead recognized at a Wednesday, 8/14/1946, V-J Day memorial service in Munising, where his next of kin, his mother Goldie, was presented with a Gold Star certificate in his name. The 8/8/1947 Marquette Mining Journal included an NEA wire story written by Douglas Larsen entitled, "Sightseers And Scars In Bastogne." Larsen described a pleasant summer in the Ardennes, filled with youthful hikers and cyclists, shiny new cars whizzing along the roads, and buses loaded with tourists. "The

picturesque countryside—in some places—looks like it always has for the past hundred years. But in most places it's difficult to go very far without being reminded of the grim business which was taking place on these soft green hills, quiet farms and cool woods two and one-half years ago…The deep scars that battle left on the land and on the people are here." According to Larsen, if a farmhouse had not been repaired chances were the owner and probably his whole family had been killed. Likewise with tiny ruined churches. "Where the Padre was killed during the fighting, the people now worship elsewhere." Many survivors could tell stories about German atrocities, pointing out spots marked with crosses and fresh flowers. Some would show worn photos of a G.I. they saved or vice versa. "…You might see Sgt. Richard E. O'Brien from Denver who is now stationed in Germany and has come back to visit the graves of his buddies…The sergeant pauses for a long look at the memorial in the churchyard where 13 of his friends disappeared completely when a bomb went off. He'll tell you how close he came to making that number 14." In late November 1947, Goldie Mannisto officially made known her wish to have her son's body returned to the U. S. and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan for final burial. Leo Robinson was disinterred from the American military cemetery at Grand Failly on 8/2/1948, at which time he was found to have suffered a fractured skull. He was transported by rail to Antwerp, Belgium, in late September, casketed, and loaded on the Army transport Carroll Victory on 10/29/48 for repatriation to the U.S. and the U. P. The transport's manifest included the names of 7,572 American servicemen who had originally been interred in temporary military cemeteries in France, Belgium and Holland. The Carroll Victory, which also carried Alger County's Staff Sgt. Richard Coffman and Carlo Erickson, as well as Marquette County's T/4 Wilbert Johnson, PFC Keith Koepp, Pvt. Fred Lukkarinen, Staff Sgt. Wilio Wainio, and PFC Elden Gjers (who, like Robinson, had been buried in the temporary American cemetery at Grand Failly, France), arrived in New York on 11/16, with Private Robinson beginning the final part of his journey home by train on 11/18. The Thursday, 12/23/48, Mining Journal reported that Pvt. Leo R. Robinson's body was on its way to Marquette, accompanied by a military escort, and would be taken to the Swanson Funeral Home upon arrival. The official Receipt of Remains indicates that the casket bearing Leo was to arrive by Duluth, South Shore & Atlantic train #8 in Marquette at 7:30AM on Tuesday, 12/28, and would be received by a funeral home representative. Services were held at 2 p.m. the next afternoon, Wednesday, 12/29, in the funeral home, the Rev. T. L. Rydbeck, pastor of the Messiah Lutheran Church, officiating. Military rites followed at Marquette's Park Cemetery where Leo Robinson was laid to rest that afternoon. Private Robinson's services occurred almost simultaneously with those for Marquette's Corporal Terence Lee Van Voorhees. Also at 2 p.m. that same afternoon in the western Marquette County town of Republic, funeral and burial services took place for PFC Elden Gjers, a 12/23/1944 Chaumont, Belgium casualty from 4th Armored Division's 8th Tank Battalion, with whom Robinson was returned from Europe. Private Leo Robinson's pallbearers, who were all ex-servicemen, included Albert Ikkala (10/5/1920-1/13/2018), brother of Alger County WWII KIA Aaro Ikkala (USNR, fatally wounded in action 11/29/44 in the Southwest Pacific), and William Brown, Munising; Lee Stuer, Sundell; Robert Gauthier, Little Lake; and Charles Gogarn and Leonard E. Johnson of Marquette. Others who were in attendance at the funeral included Mr. and Mrs. Earl Robinson, Mrs. Frank Stuer, Sr., Aune and Sulo Pohjala (11/28/1918-4/6/2003), Mrs. William Robinson of Ishpeming, and Mr. and Mrs. Neil Winters and son Allan of Carlshend, as well as Mr. and Mrs. Henry Ikkala, the parents of Aaro J. Ikkala, and their son Art. On the day of the funeral, Goldie Mannisto completed the application for her son's flat-granite, military grave marker. The Friday, 12/31/48 Mining Journal included the following Card of

Thanks: "We wish to thank our friends and neighbors and all those who assisted us in any way following the death of my dear son, Pvt. Leo R. Robinson. In a special manner do I thank Rev. T. L. Rydbeck, Mrs. Milton Johnson and Mrs. Neil Winters, the pall bearers, those who sent flowers, donated cars, the staff of the Swanson Funeral Home, Mrs. Ernest Hoppe, Mr. Phil Spear, the American Legion, the Amvets, firing squad, Mr. Edward Soderberg and Mr. Roy Norberg and all those who gave of their time and efforts to assist me in any way. Their kindness will always be appreciated and remembered." Later in life, Goldie and Art Mannisto lived in the Trowbridge section of Marquette in a house they rented from Bill Fowler's parents. Both Bill and Jean Janofski recalled that the Mannistos took in Goldie's grandmother, Mary Robinson, and that while Goldie may have been a rather unique individual, she never lacked friends to look out for her. In 1985 citizens of the villages around the Grand Failly temporary American World War II cemetery site dedicated a monument and memorial to symbolize their continuing gratitude to the fallen soldiers once buried in what is now farmland. "Here rested in peace 2967 American soldiers from December 1944 to 1949. These brave men made the ultimate sacrifice during the Ardennes Offensive. They will always have our utmost respect, admiration and remembrance."

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Pvt. Leo Robinson was included in a 5/25/45 Munising News Memorial Day photo tribute to all of Alger County's World War II dead. He is incorrectly listed as having served in field artillery, and even more unfortunately, his name was misspelled **Robinjon**, which eventually led to his name being spelled that way on the Jacobetti Veterans Home's U. P. Roll of Honor, and on the Alger County War Memorial in Munising.

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Several relatives of Gold Star mothers with whom we have spoken distinctly remember a mother determined to have her son's casket opened after its arrival in his hometown. The mother wanted to see that it was really her son. The Army never allowed this to happen, of course, and having read only a small handful of Army Individual Deceased Personal Files, I wish I could tell those grieving mothers they would not have wanted to look inside those boxes. If a soldier was buried in Europe in 1944 with only his military uniform between him and the effects of mother nature, Graves Registration personnel handling disinterment duties several years later were left to write, as in the case of Leo Robinson, "Condition of Remains: Advanced Stage Decomposition." In the cases of four Marquette and Alger County soldiers who were killed in the European Theater, Graves Registration personnel at both the time of original burial and again at disinterment before final burial were meticulous in documenting a soldier's identity. When Leo Robinson was recovered from the shallow grave in Bastogne, Belgium, for example, identification was included on the stake marking it, and two officers from the Civil Affairs Team, 101st Airborne Division, were questioned. When Robinson was interred in the U.S. Military Cemetery at Grand Failly, an imprint of his dogtag was made on the Report of Burial. When he was disinterred in 1948, a checklist shows that one dogtag remained with the body, and one was on the stake marking his French grave. Before the Army sent his casket on its way to Marquette (probably from Chicago) on 12/22, its condition was carefully checked and a scratch on the rim appears to have been repaired. As for the confusion—warranted or unwarranted—that the War Department experienced in handling two deceased Leo R. Robinsons from Michigan, this is also perpetually documented in Private Leo R. Robinson's I.D.P.F. Among the file's contents is a letter from T. S. Larkin, the Quartermaster General, dated 6/7/46, to Mrs. Mildred G. Robinson of Flint, Michigan, regarding her late husband, T5 Leo R. Robinson, A.S.N. 36 422 830, who was buried in the U.S. Military Cemetery at Foy, Belgium, four miles

northeast of Bastogne. **An unidentified Robinson, who I believe to be Leo, is included a 705th TDB, B Company, Third Platoon group photo taken at Ft. Lewis, WA in March 1944. Marquette, Michigan's Marquette Area Veterans Memorial sidewalk includes a brick in Leo Robinson's name (donated by Jim Koski). The Munising All Veterans Memorial walk also includes a brick in Leo's name—which is so unfortunately misspelled on the actual memorial (donated by Jim and Loraine Koski).** *NOTES: Leo Robinson's Army Individual Deceased Personal File contains a map showing where he was buried in the Bastogne, Belgium, civilian cemetery in December 1944. The two officers from the 101st Airborne's Civil Affairs Team questioned regarding Robinson's burial in Bastogne were Lt. Harry V. Anderson (O-923580) and Capt. Robert S. Smith (O-904740). The 705th Tank Destroyer Battalion remained stationed in Bastogne for the remainder of the Battle of the Bulge, being released by the 101st on 1/18/1945 and withdrawn to rest and refit. The battalion was later awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for its role in the defense of Bastogne. In the waning days of the war in Europe, the battalion liberated two prisoner-of-war hospitals and a large forced-labor camp, and in late April 1945 arrived at the Flossenbürg and Buchenwald concentration camps. The battalion crossed the border into Austria on 5/1 May, linking up with Soviet Army troops on 5/8, the day that German's surrender was announced (Victory in Europe Day). On 12/28/1948, Goldie Mannisto filed a Request for Reimbursement of Interment Expenses with the Chicago Quartermaster Depot, American Graves Registration Division, for interment expenses in the amount of $121. The 12/29/48 application for Leo's grave marker shows that the choices offered to next-of-kin included upright marble, flat marble, flat granite, or bronze markers.* ***In the late George Koskimaki's excellent, in-depth book of oral histories on the defense of Bastogne, Belgium, during the Battle of the Ardennes, The Battered Bastards of Bastogne, no aid stations are mentioned as having been bombed on December 26th; however, the book includes accounts of the aid station bombed* in *Bastogne on Christmas Eve, and* 12/24/1944 is the date of death that appears on Leo Robinson's grave marker in Marquette's Park Cemetery.** ***The German bombing of that 20th Armored Infantry Battalion aid station took the lives of approximately 30 wounded American soldiers and a Belgian nurse. General Patton's forces broke through to the area on 12/26, and evacuation of the most seriously wounded began that night.*** *705th Tank Destroyer Battalion (C Company) veteran and association president Wayne Tennant wrote to me, "We left England after watching two LSTs unload casualties, we then loaded onto these ships and landed on Utah Beach in France." Wayne, who was himself wounded during the Battle of the Bulge, noted that his outfit was encircled with the 101st Airborne during that Christmas season of 1944. He recovered enough after three months in the hospital to return to his unit and finish the war.* ***In an August 2005 phone conversation, funeral pallbearer and World War II veteran Albert Ikkala told me that his brother Arthur and Leo Robinson had been good friends. When Jim and I visited Albert at his home in Eben on 10/16/05, he described the small farm where Leo Robinson had lived as being about a quarter to a half-mile down Sundell's County Line Road, right-hand side. We were able to locate this property following our visit, although the original house has been replaced by a log home.*** *In September 2006, Jim and I visited the site of the Bastogne aid station bombed by the Germans on 12/24/1944, and also found the approximate location of Leo Robinson's temporary grave in the city's civilian cemetery. We returned to Europe for more World War II explorations two years later. On Wednesday morning, 9/3/2008, we were able to join the people of Grand Failly, France, at their memorial to the almost-3,000 American men killed in the Battle of the Ardennes who were once buried in a temporary American military*

cemetery near their village. Among the soldiers recognized at the ceremony held that morning were Pvt. Leo Robinson of Sundell and PFC Elden Gjers of Republic in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. In a letter to the people of Grand Failly, our U.S. House (District 1) Representative, Bart Stupak, expressed his appreciation and paid tribute to our French friends "for keeping Elden and Leo safe until they were able to return to their families in Michigan. I know all of Marquette County, Alger County, and northern Michigan residents are thankful for the way Grand Failly took care of our boys." ***On 11/20/2006, Jim and I visited Jean Janofski in her Marquette home and learned that she had worked for the War Department in Detroit during the war; however, she still remembered very clearly how Leo was pacing the floor his last furlough home because he did not want to go overseas. At some point, Jean and Leo became related by marriage when Nellie Simons became Mrs. Sam Winters. Bill Fowler remembered the conflicting telegrams from the War Department regarding his cousin Leo and what a shock they were to the family. Jean was heartbroken when she heard the news of Leo's death—the nice, handsome boy with so much potential. The loss of her childhood friend brought the reality of the war home. Astoundingly, in all of the years Jean had lived on Seventh Street in Marquette—directly across from Park Cemetery—she never knew that Leo Robinson's grave was a mere couple minutes' walk from her front door.*** *On Memorial Day 2009, Jim and I served as guest speakers at ceremonies in Rock River Township (Pine Grove) Cemetery near Chatham, which led to my receiving an 8/15/09 phone call from Leo's high school crush, Beatrice (Kallio) Johnson (5/28/1927-5/5/2016), requesting a copy of what Jim had read about Pvt. Robinson several months earlier. Needless to say, I was able to provide a great deal more information than that and in return I received an 8/26 handwritten note: "Back from a short trip downstate (to) Pontiac. My friend Margaret was amazed at all the info you e-mailed on Leo. We were both teary eyed talking about it when she finished reading it. We are both grateful to have had Leo in our lives, for a short time…Margaret is quite sure she has a picture of Leo by our old Eben High School. When and if she finds it, will send it on to you." On 11/21/09, Jim and I traveled to the Beatrice Johnson's Chatham home to share stories and information about Leo, the area and Eben school days. I also found myself on the phone speaking with the lively and informative Margaret Beaudry (DOB* ***12/24****/1925), who told me about Leo seeking her address from her mother and about the many notes they had passed back and forth in class, some having been confiscated by their teacher, Eino Luoma. Despite her cheery personality, a void was obviously left by the knowledge that Leo had never had a chance to write her a letter from overseas. She was also left to ponder his day of death coinciding with the anniversary of her birth. Enroute home to Alger County after the war, she passed through Ohio where, at a meal stop and purely by chance, she met her high school teacher Eino Luoma, who, in good humor, revealed that he still had the notes he once confiscated from her and Leo! To this day Margaret wishes she would have had a chance to see them. Soon after this serendipitous meeting though she learned of Leo Robinson's death.* ***In his war memoir "Jump: Into the Valley of the Shadow," World War II 82nd Airborne veteran Dwayne Burns described Camp Roberts, CA, where he went through basic training: "Our camp sat 20 miles from the Pacific Ocean, approximately halfway between San Francisco and Los Angeles…Camp Roberts was one of the largest infantry and artillery training camps in the world, covering 47,000 acres. The camp had all the comforts of home such as service clubs, theaters, bowling alleys, recreation halls, chapels and a hospital. Rows upon rows of two-story barracks lined the hot, dusty streets. High, grass-covered hills surrounded the camp. In the middle stood a parade ground so long and wide an airplane could land on it from any direction. The parade***

ground was also hot, and during the day you could see the heat waves shimmering above it." *According to Leo Barron and Don Cygan's* No Silent Night: The Christmas Battle for Bastogne*, when the 705th Tank Destroyer arrived in the E.T.O. with its M18 "Hellcats," the vehicle was rather new to the Allies in that theater of war. With tank destroyers primarily designed for defensive operations, M18s were a perfect example of this. "The tracked vehicle had a powerful 76mm gun designed for penetrating thick German armor. But most incredibly, the Hellcat was one of the fastest military vehicles ever designed. It could travel on good roads at speeds over 55 miles per hour, powered by its 460-horsepower radial aircraft engine." Unlike the standard U.S. Army tank, the M18 "was designed to 'shoot and scoot'... Instead of getting into a head-on tank-versus-tank battle, the Hellcat was supposed to race ahead and ambush German armor, and then race away before the German tanks could return fire. The downside was that return fire on an M18 was devastating. Its designers had made sacrifices in order to give it such great speed. The vehicle was lightly armored—only one-half to one inch of steel protected the crew compared to an M4 Sherman tank's "2.5-inch-thick frontal armor and a German Panzerkampfwagen Mark IV's typical three or more inches."*