



THUNDERBOLT

83rd INFANTRY DIVISION ASSOCIATION, Inc.
WORLD WAR II

Vol. 66 Issue No. 3

Summer Issue 2011

— WELCOME TO THE THAYER HOTEL —
AT WEST POINT

65
— YEARS —

1946 – 2011

NORMANDY

ARDENNES

BRITTANY

RHINELAND

CENTRAL EUROPE

WEST POINT, NY

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AUGUST 3 – 7, 2011

THE THUNDERBOLT

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A SALUTE TO PAST PRESIDENTS WHO HAVE SERVED US WELL

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1963 Manuel C. Martin*	1980 Samuel Klippa*	1997 Keith Davidson*	

*Denotes Deceased



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

CARMELLA CATRAMBONE

Sixty Five Years of Memories

Carmella Catrambone
President

Who would think that any good could come out of war. Hopes and dreams no longer exist for those who lost their lives. Those who survived have only memories of loved ones killed in battle or the atrocities of war. But because of our brave 83rd Infantry, we now have our freedom, the countries where our men fought have been liberated and those people also experience freedom. And from that freedom comes the ability to communicate and share our lives with each other, not just our immediate families, but the family that has grown into what is now the 83rd Infantry Division Association.

What happened when the war ended? How did people adjust to their changed lives? No matter what happened and however they adjusted, sixty-five years ago the men of the

83rd decided that they would not let their memories die. They fought for a purpose that must never be forgotten. For that reason, sixty-five years ago the 83rd Infantry Division Association held its first reunion and ever since then memories continue to grow and new ones are created. Some of the veterans have participated in reunions since the very beginning and some are new to the reunion as recently as this year. Although a number of our beloved veterans are no longer with us, their memories live on in the hearts of their descendents, family members, friends, and the 83rd family who now attend the reunions. We bring with us, in this sixty-fifth year, many dear memories of the past.

We will never forget the sacrifices of the 83rd Infantry Division. Gratitude extends throughout the United States and throughout Europe. As proof, this year's reunion will host a record number of participants from Europe. Thus far, registration received includes: five from France, one of which is the Mayor of Sainteny, five from Belgium, four from the Netherlands, and two from Luxembourg. Participants from the United States include: Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. Reservations are coming in each day, so who knows what other areas will be represented at our reunion. One thing I do know is that wonderful new friendships and memories will be made. ▼

Instructions For Arrival At Thayer Hotel

Please see the information from the Thayer Hotel concerning arrival instruction [on the following page]. It could be a little confusing, so I suggest you read the instructions carefully and keep a copy with you when you arrive at the hotel.

I am trying to round up some volunteers to assist with arrivals. If successful, part of the day on Wednesday, some members wearing 83rd Infantry Division shirts or holding signs will be outside of the hotel and/or near the parking lot to give directions. If you do not see any of our people, please be sure to call the bellman at **845.446.4731** or **press 0** for the shuttle from the parking lot.

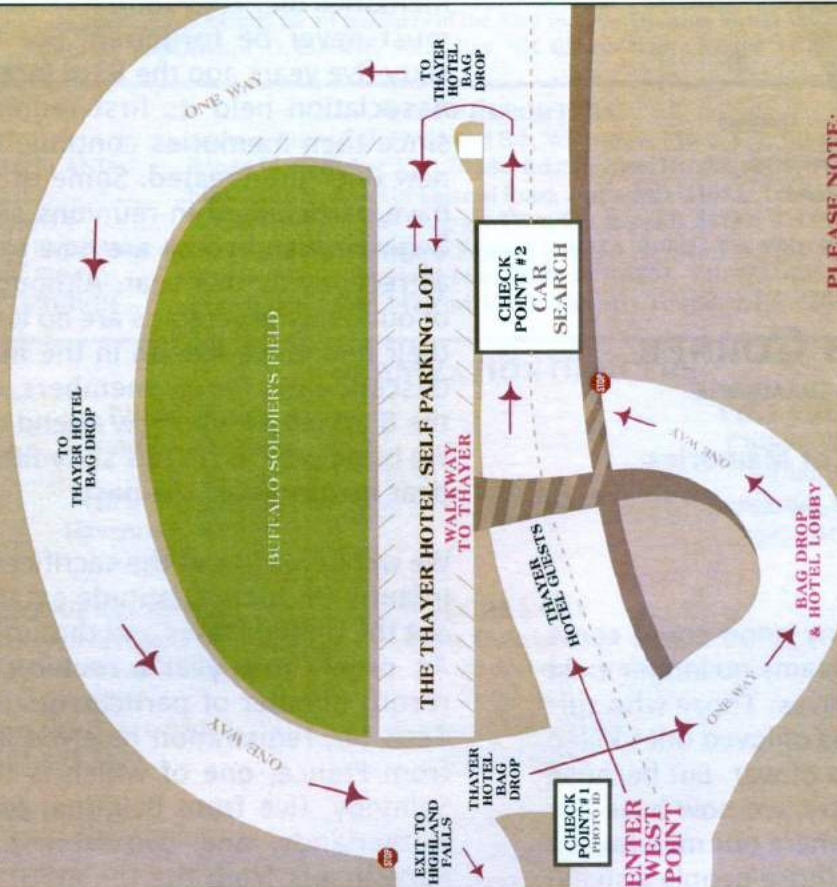
Safe travels!
Carmella Catrambone

Dear Guest of The Thayer Hotel:

Accessing The Thayer Hotel requires following a few simple procedures. As you enter the grounds of the USMA at West Point, there is an initial checkpoint at which you and any passengers will need to show photo ID. You will then proceed onto the grounds. The hotel will be to the right on the hill just beyond the gate, however, first you must stay in the left lane and proceed to the main security checkpoint at which you and any passengers will be asked to show your photo IDs and the driver will be asked to open the trunk for a visual inspection.

Once cleared, you make an immediate left turn. At this point you may choose to either go directly into The Thayer's self-park lot or continue on the loop road and proceed to the hotel entrance at which you may unload passengers and luggage. There is limited parking available at the hotel entrance. If no spaces are open, the driver will again pass through the main check point and go to the self-park lot. The hotel entrance is a short walk from the lot. However, whether you choose to go directly to self-park or drop-off luggage and then go to the lot, you may call our bellman at (845) 446-4731, press 0 and ask for our shuttle to pick you up. The bellman will be pleased to come to the parking lot to assist you with any luggage and drop you off at the front door of the Hotel.

Thank you for choosing The Thayer Hotel. We look forward to providing you with a great experience while you are staying with us.



**PLEASE NOTE:
DROP BAGS
ONLY AFTER
CLEARING
SECURITY**

For Shuttle Service
From Parking Lot
Call 845-446-4731
& PRESS 0



THE THAYER
Hotel
AT WEST POINT

FROM THE CHAPLAIN

ELLSWORTH MASSIE

A prayer for our organization.

Let us keep each other in mind and remember in prayer each in good times and in the time of old age and the inability to do what we could when we were younger! This will strengthen our bond of fellowship with until our allotted day of our earthly stay are completed. Give those who follow us strength and foresight for the days ahead! In Christ's Name we pray!

— Ellsworth Massie

FROM THE EDITOR

CLIFF WOOLDRIDGE

Looking forward to see you all at West Point!

COMPANIES

Co. "A"– 330TH

CHARLES ABDINOOR

sgtchuck83rd@comcast.net

A Co. 330th. News

Hi Buddy's, sincerely hope all is well with ALL. I am sorry about the last issue, there was a mixup, and it was to late to put it in. In any case I hope all are ready for West Point. This is going to be one GOOD RE-UNION. I hope all is planning to attend. I am. Called up Neal Prussman and the Family are planning to attend. Neal is now semi retired, but he has his grandson working the farm. There is a lot of Wheat that they grow, besides other crops. Our Old timer Cookie is still at an assisted living community and is the oldest resident there. That is the story of his life, he was also the oldest GI in the Company, his job was Company Clerk. He and his son and daughter keep close tabs on him, as they did while htthey attended many re-

unions. Our TOP SOLDIER, Walt Pillion, just turned 90, but he is enjoying life, Pearl keeps an eye on him, and he is near his Son and Daughter. His hobby is restoring old tractors. He and his son work to-gether, GOOD for them. He was promoted to a Lieutenant, with a battlefield commission. Col. Campbell, 1st Battalion, 330th. He also earned many awards. He kept his head down, but he also forgot to at one point and was on a tank, but that is a long story. Hang in There.

Ed and Pauline Brown, are heading to Oregon, Relatives, Volunteer Work, they usually head to Alaska, and do Church Work for the summer. He is always volunteering, but I have a job for him at West Point. He is also a Maitre'D, and will show his talents at the Saturday Night Banquet. We tried to get through to Steward and Nellrita, because of the Tornado warning in Colorado. Here we were worried about them, and where were they, they had decided to go to the Grand Canyon for a vacation. The Tornado hit Colorado, where they live, but that did not worry them, they were safe. In any case it did a job there, but they did not have any damage. Hope to see them at the Point. They usually go to the Re-unions. Looking forward to seeing them. We cannot forget our Dancing Buddy, Earl and Phyllis Dunn. He had some ailments, but hopefully we get to see them. We also lost Shorty Glasser, this year. He was our jeep driver, and had the only 50Calliber mounted on his Jeep, which was a no no, for a Rifle Company. We also lost my buddy, and Friend Paul Reed, Jr. He was our Platoon Leader in the Third Platoon, and kept us on our toes, and brought most of us home safely. I did not know this but him being an Attorney was also the Commissioner of all the Jails and Lock Ups in Maryland. We always stopped to see Dolores and him, on our way to and back from Florida. He was also the founding member of the Irish Club of Baltimore, Md. At one time he also had JFK, when he was a Senator, as the Keynote Speaker, at their Banquet. He always had a hand in political business. That is about ALL. Hope to see All at West Point.

— Chuck Abdinoor, B & A Co. 330th.



EUROPEAN FRIENDS
AND
LEGACY CHAPTER MEMBERS

WELCOME TO THE
65TH ANNIVERSARY REUNION
OF THE
83RD INFANTRY DIVISION
ASSOCIATION!



To - Cliff Wooldridge

From - Hal O'Neal;

Many years ago I was Editor of a Newsletter and had the usual problems of late arrival of promised input, made up my own fillers until I got a filler book, filled vacancy with cartoons and got requests for more in the next issue.

Over the years, I have sent articles to previous 83rs Editors articles on the Division and WWII. My present opinion is that the Rhunderbolt is too much buried in the past. This results in declining input and interest.

To encourage more input and gain more readers, you might try some of the following -

Ask for input on -My Family and the Military

Give us a chance to brag

Example - I have a daughter who was in the first class of women at Annapolis and retired as a Captain -equal to an Army 2nd colonel. She out ranks me since I only made Major.

A grandson is a 2nd Lt. on active duty studying Farsi - the tongue of Iran. If he gets there he will be able to read the street signs, the menus and ask for a date.

How I support our Troops here and overseas -

Our American Legion Post has parties for returning soldiers.

Our AmVets Post is collecting Ditty bags and phone cards .

The VFW Boxes for Troops is in its sixth years and has sent hundred hundreds of boxes. We get letters, E-Mails, coins, flags and even T-Shirts with Arabic writing - it says Thanks or Drop Dead, Yanks.

I may reenlist. A grandson on duty at Ft Gordon, GA lives in a two star hotel with room service and commutes to the fort. And he is only a second Lt.

Take Care and God bless,

Hal O'Neal

September 6, 2010

83rd Infantry Div. Assn.
P.O. Box 406
Alton Bay, NH 03810 - 0406

Dear Mr. Wooldridge:

I noticed in the 2010 Issue of Thunderbolt, the story of Joe Robbin almost missing the war. (The 908th FA history). What a priceless little story this is and how I did enjoy reading it.

I was chauffeur for Col. Thompson on this day of Joe Robbin's story and I remained his chauffeur until his death. I was with the Colonel when he was killed and I consider myself to be a privileged man to have served under him. Every August 10th my heart aches anew when I recall these days of driving for Col. Thompson.

Very interested to know if Joe Robbin is still living and if so, if allowed, could you please send me his address?

Proud to say I have my copy of "Thunderbolt Across Europe" and "908 Field Artillery Battalion 83 Thunderbolt Division" that was sent to me after being discharged in 1945.

I am 88 years old now, be 89 September 28,th.
and not a day goes by that I don't think of
all my buddies I lost during the war. Makes
me realize what a blessed man I truly am.
God made it so!

Thank you for everything you do for "Thunderbolt"
magazine!

Very sincerely,
Stanley E. Blanchard

P. S. Enclosing a copy of my war stories for you
along with my 2011 membership dues.
Thank you!

Stanley Blanchard Stories

I want to dedicate these stories to Mattie Lee Ausley Blanchard and Floyd Stanley Blanchard, my beloved parents. Mama and Daddy were my heroes during the time of war. I survived because I knew they loved me and I loved them, and therefore, I was nurtured, strengthened and sustained in that knowledge. I believe that of the many hardships in life my parents suffered, watching me go to war was one of the greatest.

For a little background, in our family, there were seven girls. I was the only boy. My sisters' names are Gertrude, Ruth, Hilda (deceased), Louise, Florie, Iris Jean and Jo Ann. I was known by most of my family members as Edward, but my grandfather, Henry Blanchard, nicknamed me 'Jack'. Nowadays, some folks call me Stanley, some call me Edward (which is my middle name), and some call me Jack. And many of my younger nieces and nephews just make it short and call me 'Unk'. I like that.

While I was overseas, Mama would go to the mailbox every day looking for a letter: and worrying and fretting when one didn't come. One of my sisters later told me she couldn't

understand why Mama worried so about me. Now that she has a child of her own, she understands why.

If there were a long time between letters from me, Daddy would get so upset. One day, he said he would slide all the way to Lillington on his stomach if he could just get some word from me. That would have been a slide of about eight to ten miles.

My parents let me grow up in a home where there was love, safety, guidance and acceptance. They allowed me to develop into the person I was destined to be by providing a strong, stable and loving family life. Although they are now deceased, they remain close to my heart and will continue to be my heroes. The things they taught me about living are a great part of my life today.

Now, I want to mention my wife. Rachel and I have been married for more years than she wants me to mention. She has been a great inspiration as my partner in life, and her love and support have blessed my family and me. She is worthy.

Pvt. Stanley Edward Blanchard
Hdq. Btry.
908th Field Artillery Battalion
83rd Division

Pvt. Stanley Edward Blanchard was drafted into the United States Army on [he 17th of October 1942, and he left Harnett County and headed to Fort Bragg, North Carolina. From there, he transferred to Attabury, Indiana for basic training, and then to Tennessee for maneuvers.

He was sent to Camp Breckenridge, Kentucky for more training and then to Camp Shanks, New York where he boarded ship, *The George Washington*, For England. From England, he crossed the canal into France. Pvt. Blanchard served in five campaigns of the war:

Normandy
Northern France
Ardennes
Rhineland
Centnil Pairope



This picture was taken as he stood by one of the jeeps he drove while serving in Germany. He is wearing German Officer boots, and carrying a German Lugar at his waist. His Commanding Officer told him, "if you ever get captured, they will hang you from the nearest tree."



"If the Germans had had more gasoline than the United States, the war probably would have lasted longer, or even worse, could have had a different ending", he reminisced. "Horses were used to move the German's guns because of the limited fuel supply. When the US troops moved into certain cities, horses would be hooked up to the apparatus they used to haul the guns to the battle points. Some of the horses would be near to the point of death and some of them were dead still hooked up. They had died from pure exhaustion. It was evident the horses were overworked, underfed and deprived of resting time."

In describing the adverse weather conditions, he recalled the snow, mud, and bitter cold. The bad weather was in addition to the presence of danger in battle and to the preparation for meager comfort and safety. He said, "when I first started basic training, I always thought it was so foolish digging so many foxholes. When I got over there, I can tell you that I experienced the importance of 'digging in' first. Every time we changed positions, or moved any distance at all, the first thing we did was to 'dig in'. We were just trying to find a safe and warm spot away from the dangers of the enemy."

Stanley describes an event that happened that to this day saddens his heart. "The Colonel I drove for was inside a building shaving, and the rest of us soldiers were outside digging in. A shell came through the room where the Colonel was shaving. It hit one side of the wall and bounced back across the room to where he was, and killed him instantly. It struck him so violently that his teeth were literally knocked out of his head and he did not have false teeth. This was another thing that helped me to really understand the importance of digging the foxhole first."

While Stanley was on a seven-day rest period in a little town in Germany, he was caught by his Commanding Officer for several offenses. In fact, three serious offenses; one of which was the unauthorized use of a military jeep.

Another time, he creatively propped his helmet on top of his rifle and leaned the rifle against the building while he went out in the nearby wheat field following after a little German girl. Needless to say, he got caught. The second time his Commanding Officer caught him, he told Stanley, "if I have to stay in this Army the rest of my life, I will, just so I can catch you one more time. Then I will court martial you." Stanley said he never got caught again and he never propped his helmet and rifle against the building again, either. Stanley made no more explanatory comments about his unauthorized use of the jeep, nor of his fraternizing with the girls.

His first assignment in Germany had been to drive the jeep for the Colonel, but after he was killed, he was assigned to drive for a Major. To his recollection, each of the officers liked his driving. He did not drink. He had a good sense of direction, and could get around really good at night. So he was good at transporting the officers where they wanted to go and getting them safely back.

"About that first time I was caught with the helmet and rifle trick, the Major put me to stringing wire. I told him I was real happy stringing wire and didn't really want to go

back to my old job of driving. That is when I was ordered back to driving for the Major. I was really happy to get back to driving and back with the Major. It was when I got caught the second time that I got that stern strong ultimatum from the Commanding Officer about how he was going to catch me so he could court martial me."

One night, Stanley was to drive a Captain to some destination. He noticed that the Captain kept striking matches so he could see to read his map. He asked Stanley if he had any matches, and then it was clear to both of them that he and the Captain were lost. When asked about the matches, Stanley replied, "no sir, and if I had a pocket full, I wouldn't let you have them because you are going to get us killed out here striking so many matches." Stanley then told the Captain that he thought he knew where they were and if he could be allowed to drive, he was sure he could get them out of that place and to their destination. The Captain agreed. Stanley said, "I sat on the back of the jeep seat, almost standing up, and looked between the trees at the light of the sky. I also saw the lights from the big guns firing and got my bearings: an idea of just where we were. Finally, I drove the Captain to his destination."

The following are snippets that Stanley remembers; some relate to the foregoing stories and some are just a few of his memories.

THE DAY THE COLONEL DIED: after the Colonel was shot we all hid out in a cornfield where fodder from the cornstalks had been stacked up in large stacks for drying. I remember that it was a hot August day. We stayed under these fodder stacks all that day, and moved out to safety after it got dark outside.

CAPTURING A GERMAN SOLDIER: one day we tried to catch a German soldier who was hiding in a bunker. (Some of the bunkers were large enough to put a bed in). The soldier was a member of the German Panza group and he refused to surrender. Finally, someone had to throw a grenade in on top of him. Rarely, if

ever, did anyone from the Panza group surrender.

GERMAN AIRPLANE: one day, my buddy and I came across a German airplane that had crashed. We decided to look around for a while and suddenly, an American fighter plane swooped down and started firing at us. Boy, did we evermore 'get out of Dodge' that day and as far away from that airplane as we could get. We got away from that place, fast.

ABOUT THE JEEP: my jeep was equipped with armored plates on both sides and underneath, plus the windshield was armor plated with a 1 x 5 slit to see through. I had a wire catcher on the front bumper just above the windshield so it would cut the wires the Germans had strung across the road. They sure did like to string wire.



THE BARN: one day, we chose to hole up in a barn. Our goal was to sleep in the barn close to the horses that were kept there. The horses radiated a lot of heat. The barn was located out in an open area. During the day, we played cat and mouse games with the Germans who were camped just at the edge of the woods, probably 400 yards from us. We would all run out of the barn, they would fire on us and we'd run right back in again. They did that every time we ran out, so we would just run right back in. I realize now just how dangerous that game was. Looking back, I

measured danger then different from what I do now. I was 20 years old then; a lot of time has passed.

HOLLAND, DURING A REST PERIOD: four of us decided to take the jeep and go into town to see some girls. The MP's promptly caught us. They got us good. But those little Dutch girls literally drove me wild – they were just pretty as a tulip. This time; I had my one stripe taken away and we all were given seven days of hard labor digging slump holes, (garbage). We pulled about four days and then were told to rest the next three because we had worked so hard. Well, it was over then. I got my one stripe back and kept it until I was discharged.

THE TRAILER STORY: on several occasions, I had noticed a small abandoned trailer parked up against one of the buildings. Every time I passed this trailer, I thought about how good it would be to use this trailer to haul equipment behind my jeep. One day, I decided I was going to take the trailer, since no one else had. As I lifted the canvas top to investigate what was in the body of the trailer, I saw that it was filled with the bodies of dead German soldiers. I dropped that canvas top and got away as fast as I could. Then I tried to forget about what was in the body of that trailer.

MANEUVERS IN TENNESSEE: I was on maneuvers in Tennessee and five truckloads of us went into town to see The Grand Ole Opry. I was driving the last truck in the line of five and was stopped by an MP for speeding. I was so afraid to go before Colonel Thompson. He was a West Point man and was famous for going by the book and being strictly 'GI'. But you know, he was so nice to me. He let me go, saying since I was the last one in line, naturally I had to speed to keep up. Turned out, he was the Colonel I chauffeured overseas and the same one that was so tragically killed while he was shaving.

AFTER THE WAR WAS OVER: after the war was over, I received orders to chauffeur the Major over to an outfit that was shipping out for home. We had to travel about 300 miles

to the check out point. The Major had enough points to leave but I did not. We were given food tickets so we could eat at camps along the way, and we could sleep over at night if we needed to. When we arrived at the check out point and the Major had to leave me, we both cried like a little baby. (Weeping was nothing uncommon for us overseas.) It was a joyful time for the Major because he was going home, but I was staying over there and we both cried because we were being separated.

Stanley Blanchard. this country boy from Harriett County, North Carolina, who had never traveled far from home; who was raised on a tobacco farm, yet never smoked a cigarette; and never drank a drop of whiskey, saw sights he never dreamed of seeing. On returning to his base before being shipped back to the United States, he took some time to enjoy the beautiful scenery of Germany. He left North Carolina on October 17, 1942 to return on November 30, 1945. He received his honorable discharge at the Separation Center at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

"War is hell," Stanley says, and he doesn't think there is a man anywhere who went through the experiences of WWII and survived without some sort of psychological scarring! "You have to have some scarring after seeing those young boys shot up and bleeding and calling for their mama with their last breath! The ones who were fortunate to come back home after the war had something deep inside that drove them to want to keep on fighting so they could survive."

These are just a few of the stories that Stanley has given us, though he remembers more. The nieces and nephews never tire of his stories — they ask for them again and again. As Stanley tells the stories, his face betrays him, and watching him, you know his mind is taking him back to that time in his life, and again he relives some of the experiences of war.

This material was edited and arranged by Pat Nobles, Lillington, North Carolina, January 2002.

An Addendum to the booklet published and distributed at The Stanley and Matrice Blanchard Family 2001 Annual Christmas Dinner held on March 2, 2002.

September, 2003 — Here, Jack (nickname for Stanley), is remembering...

THE BASEMENT: one day. Jack and some of his buddies slipped away and walked into a German town to visit with the German girls. Jack had met his girl and was visiting in her home. All of a sudden, German soldiers rapped on the door. They had come by to search the houses for American soldiers. The family told Jack to hide in the basement, and he did. He hurried down and got behind a long rack of clothes they had moved from upstairs. Jack said he was really scared because they searched so close he could have reached out and touched them. Lucky for him, the rack of clothes was tall and completely hid him. His neck was saved again.

The German soldiers came and left and Jack got back to camp just as soon as it was safe to get out on the road. He saw the girl again and she scolded him good for coming into town without a gun. There were many snipers in that town, and it was dangerous to be about. Jack said he would rather listen to her scolding than to have to listen to his commanding officer.

THE TANK: Jack went out on a reconnaissance mission with one of his favorite officers. He usually drove this officer everywhere he went. This particular day, they rounded a curve in the road, and there right in the road sat a tank with a great big old gun trained directly on them. Jack said he rammed that jeep into reverse, backed up beside the hedgerow, did a three-point turn and gunned the motor, all before the enemy had time to fire the gun towards the jeep.

Both Jack and the officer were scared out of their wits. "But", Jack added, "You couldn't scare those West Point officers. Some of the others were not so tough. They got scared easy."

Jack remembers with great fondness all the officers he drove for, and particularly these West Point Officers. "They were good at everything they did. They never asked anyone to do anything they were not willing to do. The tighter the spot they were in, the stronger and braver they appeared to be."

"I guess the one that stands out in my mind the most is Colonel Thompson. He was the one that was killed while he was shaving," Jack continued. "You know", he says, "the date that happened was August 10th, and I'll never forget it. That date is burned in my mind and soul. Every year on August 10th, it just comes to me like a revelation, 'this is the day Colonel Thompson died.'" He really loved Colonel Thompson, and the time he spent with him remains to be one of the bright spots in his military career.

THE YOUNG GERMAN BOY/SOLDIER: the Germans inducted boys from ages 12 and up to men in their 80's in their army, and this is how this story came about. One day. Jack's outfit captured a 14-year-old boy, and they kept him with them for several weeks. They didn't feel like they could just send him to a POW camp because he was so young, and besides the boy liked being there with them. He ate with them, slept nearby, and shared in any goodies the men had there in their camp.

Turns out, one day they had to dig slump holes. There was one of us guys in the outfit who could speak German, so this guy told the boy they were digging a hole to put him in. The boy cried and cried, so they finally had to tell him they were just teasing. He liked the teasing because it meant that he was getting some attention, but he didn't like it when he thought it was a threat to his life.

Jack said he realized that it was a cruel thing to do to anyone, especially to a young boy who was asked by his government to do a man's job in a world that was so unsafe. No one knows what happened to that young boy - just another young human being that slipped through the cracks of war!

KP DUTY: this story tells how Jack was relieved of his KP duties while he was driving

for Col. Thompson. One day, the Colonel came looking for Jack to help him find his dog that had gone missing. Well, Jack was on KP duty. Jack was not available. Well, Colonel Thompson went right up to the Sgt. and told him he would like for Jack to be available at all times, and furthermore, he did not want Jack on KP duty anymore. No more pots and pans from now on — attaboy Colonel Thompson.

The Sgt. didn't like the Colonel's order, and every time he thought he could get back at the Colonel through Jack, he grabbed it. For instance, on the nights when he had to go out with the Colonel, the next morning he was usually allowed to sleep in the next morning, get up for a cup of coffee and then go back to his bunk for another nap. After the order from the Colonel, things changed. The Sgt. would make him get up and go for breakfast and no extra nap.

The order to keep Jack from KP did not die easy for the Sgt. but it sure did for Jack.

And, by the way, they found the Colonels dog.

TRAINING IN KENTUCKY AND INDIANA (Jack's own story).

While I was in training in Kentucky and Indiana, all of us would be out marching as a group, side by side, and we would sing a little song to each other.

"Oh, the battery on the left, the battery on the left, I'd rather be a horse's ass than the battery on the left."

Of course, we would get a quick reply from the battery on the left — same song. But we all enjoyed the singing; it helped keep us in step, and helped us to bond together as we marched along.

I won all the relays while we were in training, and the trophy I got was bragging rights. None of the boys could out run me. You see I had some good training at home running from a bull. I was out in the cow pasture early one morning before I went to school. I was

checking on my rabbit boxes; so I would run to one, check it out and then run to another. Well, the bull saw me and took out after me. What I did was to climb the closest pine tree. and I stayed up there in the tree until the bull lost interest and wandered away. Then I slipped down the back side of the tree, on the side away from the bull, and took off towards home, running like the wind. I was scared of that bull. I was tough as a lightered knot before I went into service and that was what helped me get through service training.

Back to the relays, I was almost as fast as Charlie Justice, but I was not as rich and famous as 'Choo Choo'. "You know, Charlie Justice was one of the three most outstanding football players that went to Carolina. The time he was there got to being called the Justice Era. His jersey number was 22. Choo Choo, his nickname, went to two Sugar Bowls and one Cotton Bowl. In 1947, his team beat Duke 21-0, and the next year beat Texas 34-7. He was a good old boy from Asheville, and could run like the wind."

STATISTICS OF WAR

This information is taken from *We Saw It Through*, published after the war on the history of the 83rd Division. These details relate to the division Jack served in during the war and represents some examples of action they endured.

- 15,000 men were in the 83rd Infantry Division, and 10,000 of the men in the 83rd Infantry Division were killed.
(This was Jack's division)
- 22,306 miles of telephone wire was laid and 25,000,000 gallons of gasoline was burned.
- 6,900,000 rounds of small arms ammunition were fired.
- 158,900 rounds of mortar were fired.
- 57,607 hand grenades were thrown against the enemy. ▼

Stories of Edwin F. Brown

FIND THE 83rd

When I returned to the US I often wondered where the men I had served with were. Were they OK and even were they alive. I moved to California and did not get to the East Coast often. I joined the VFW. and it was there that I learned about the 83rd reunion. I was thrilled to learn about it and our first reunion was at Myrtle Beach. We are looking forward to seeing all of you at West Point.

SILENT PATROL

Today our Platoon Sergeant called a meeting of two squads of about 15 soldiers each and he announced that we would be going on a silent patrol. All communications will be silent. We were told to keep eyes on each other for signals

The weather was cold with snow on the ground and it was foggy. The visibility was about 15 feet.

We walked for about 40 minutes in a wooded area and never heard a voice or a whisper. Suddenly the signal for a stop was executed and all of the patrol stopped perfectly. I looked to my right with no body movement and observed a German soldier dressed in white camouflage. Following the first German soldier were eleven more soldiers dressed in the same way. NONE OF THESE SOLDIERS APPEARED TO SEE US

To this day I can see the enemy patrol and I wonder if they chose not to see us. I thank God for a successful Patrol .

BIHAIN BELGIUM Januarys 8th 1944

It's 7 am and there is 8 inches of snow on the ground and my squad of 7 men are ready to try to eliminate the machine gun that is ahead of us. After checking on the 5 soldiers, I find

that only one is alive and bullets are continuing to hit the snow. I'm moving in the direction of the machine gun. Suddenly I felt something like a hammer hitting my shoulder. I knew that I was hit and that I should take sulfa, but found my canteen empty. Luckily there was plenty of clean snow to eat. At that point I passed out. When I awoke I heard German voices. One of the men tried to get me up on my feet, but was unable to do it. He then called his friend Wolly over to help and in a few minutes they had me on my feet. They took me to the medic station and helped me on to the gurney. I asked Wolly to fill my canteen. While filling it Wolly was shot in the buttock by a German sniper. His wound was minor and he and his friend gave them selves up to the Stg in charge of prisoners.

The German SS officer who was manning the machine gun was brought in and I was asked if I wanted to talk to him. I declined. On this day the 83rd Division lost 4 soldiers who had been in ACo. For almost two weeks. Two weeks ago they came to the 83rd from Florida where they completed their basic training.

HOSPITAL January 11th

I awakened in the hospital at about 6am and it was very dark. Two nurses were talking and I did not join their conversation. My nurse who was a First Lieutenant was talking to another nurse said that most of the nurses who became 2nd Lieutenants are now Captains. She said she was thinking of getting a GI back. My question to her was what is that? That is getting pregnant. I said have you talked to your Commanding Officer? I asked her what was that round thing taped to my arm. She replied that it was a souvenir. It was a bullet with the point broken off. I heard a noise that sounded like a two cycle engine. The nurse told me it was a buzz bomb and that it would be landing soon. It landed a minute later. It did little damage later in the day I learned that I would be transferred to a

Hospital in Paris. This very exciting news but when I entered the new Hospital I found it very crowded. In fact, my bed was located in a large hallway with a number of other patients. On our third day the hospital had a meeting off all injured patients. They wanted us to know what was available to us. About 3 nights a week we could sign up to see movies. I was scheduled to have exercise on my left arm 3 days a week. At one of my meetings with the Doctor he discovered that there was another bullet in my back. He removed it that day. For about 3 weeks hospital life remained the same day to day.

CIGARS

In 1944 I was an assistant Squad leader in Co. A. The weather was cold in Belgium. My Platoon Sergeant asked me to take three riflemen to a tank unit about two kilometers away. He said we would have transportation, and we were taken by Jeep to the tank company. We talked to the tank officer, who told us we were to ride the tanks. Our job was to assist in case of German resistance. He then instructed us on how to ride the tanks. He then excused himself and went over to the tanks. In about 30 seconds he returned and he gave each of us a cigar. He asked us if we had matches, and none of us did. The lieutenant instructed us to carry our rifles while on the tank. After about 5 kilometers he stopped. And he said there are no Germans today and offered to return us to our company. We declined his offer and decided to walk back to our company. We never saw the Tank Battalion again.

In 1946 I registered at West Liberty State College along with many other returning G.I.s. My room assignment was with two other G.I.s and as we were getting acquainted it became obvious to one of us that we had seen each other before. He said that his name was Ed Nogay and he wondered if I had been in the military. That's when the light came on. My

roommate was the Tank Commander who introduced me to cigars. During our time together at West Liberty we had many conversations about our time in Europe and the Battle of the Bulge.

MINE INSTALLATION

After the fourth day of receiving new replacements we had about 80 men in the 83rd division. Some of the platoons were almost full strength. Two of our platoon Sergeants decided it would be a good day to improve the mine field. It would change the route of the Germans who were camped close by. We assembled two platoons and my squad of eight men which gave us almost 40 men. The Sergeant showed us the road that the enemy used to get to their camp. Their camp was only 4 miles from our. We started planting mines less than a mile from our camp.

There is still 4 inches of snow. so we had to scrape the snow away and dig down 4 inches to plant each mine. We made progress until we hit some frozen earth.

Our Sergeant asked if I knew where there was a pick axe. I just happened to know where I could get one. While returning with the pick ax I saw this small German car heading right toward the mine field. I shouted MINE FIELD and they turned around. At that point our men started firing into the command car. Suddenly one of the bullets hit their gas tank and there was an explosion. The front section separated from the rest of the car and our soldiers killed the passengers. The Sergeants entered the vehicle and removed the weapons. I was still holding the pick axe I asked if we were going to complete the project and the answer was no. There was a Major a Lieutenant and a Sergeant. In the car.

— Edwin F, Brown CO. A 330th Reg. ▼

From Dave Hury



The group at Patton's gravesite: Barbara Hury, Leo Hury, Tom Hury, Carmella Catrambone, Marco Eifes, Theresa Harris, Constant Goergen.

(Leo Hury is the veteran. Tom is his son, and Barbara is Tom's wife. Theresa Harris is my sister. Constant Goergen is the President of the U.S. Veterans Friends, Luxembourg. Marco Eifes is a member of the U.S. Veterans and a past President.)

Older gentleman at Patton's gravesite: Leo Hury (330th, "M" Company)

Group outside Battle of Bulge Museum in Luxembourg: Back row: Tom Hury, Leo Hury, Marco Eifes, Carmella Catrambone, Constant Goergen. Front row: Barbara Hury, Eddy Montfort, Theresa Harris, Sharon (Barbara's mother—don't know her last name)



Picture with street sign: Leo Hury and Tom Hury. Tom is pointing to the sign showing that the street is named after his ancestors. This was taken in Luxembourg.

Deceased List

Our sympathy goes out to all the families of these veterans. We will miss all of them.

Name	Unit	Reported by
Laddie Lawrence	L Co., 329th	Anita Randall
Haran R. Martin, Sr.	Co. C, 331st	Bobbie White
John B. Merrell	308th Medics	Rosemary Rice Merrell
William Neese	Co. C, 331st	

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

JOHN B. (JACK) MERRELL

Jack Merrell died on February 7, 2010 at the age of 85 years.

Jack was born in New Jersey, and grew up in the town of Fanwood. He enrolled as a pre-medical student at Princeton in 1942, scheduled to graduate in 1946. While a freshman, he enlisted in the U.S. Army, and was called to active duty in July, 1943. After training as a medical technician, Jack was assigned to the 83rd Infantry Division in Europe. He served as a front line medic in all of the major campaigns in which the 83rd participated. He was wounded twice and was awarded the Silver Battle Star.

Following discharge from the military, Jack returned to Princeton from which he was graduated cum laude in the spring of 1948. He immediately entered the Wharton School at the Univ. of Pennsylvania where he was awarded an MBA degree in the fall of 1949.

Mr. Merrell was recruited by the Prudential Insurance Company to participate in its executive training program. Jack's work for Prudential focused principally on the design and execution of marketing programs for its agency force. After five rewarding years at Prudential, Jack joined McKinsey & Co., the management consulting firm, as an Associate in its New York City headquarters.

During his five years at McKinsey, Jack was engaged by such clients as Colgate, DuPont, New York Life, and American Greetings principally conducting large-scale organizational studies.

In 1959, Jack accepted an offer from another of his clients, Mobil Oil Corp., to join their firm. For the following 29 years, Jack served in a variety of executive positions: G.M. Marketing Planning, Treasurer North American Div., Ass't. Treasurer Mobil Corp., G.M. Public Relations. He derived his greatest satisfactions from his nine years as President, heading up Mobil Oil Credit Corp. Jack retired from Mobil in 1988.

Jack's retirement did not mean a diminishment of activity. Extensive international travel, especially to Europe where Jack retraced his WWII experiences, accounted for much of his time. Service on the Boards or Advisory Committees of commercial and not-for-profit activities played an important part in his life. And, of course there was golf: a game he played from childhood and from which he took great pleasure, especially in the close friendships he enjoyed with so many of his golfing companions.

In 1999, Jack was among the initial group to move into the newly-opened retirement community, Edgehill, in Stamford,

Conn. He became interested in trying to help organize community life in this new environment and was elected the first president of the resident association. Jack continued to play an active role at Edgehill for all his years there.

Jack is survived by his wife Rosemary Rice Merrell, a highly successful TV, stage and radio actress. They created a deeply loving union that has endured for 55 years. Mr. Merrell was the father of two children, Marcie Schonborn of Dallas, TX and John R. Merrell who resides in Shelton. Jack has three grandchildren; Marcie and Alan Schonborn's son, Joshua and John and Shari's two daughters, Maggie and Alexandra.

A celebration of Jack Merrell's life is scheduled for Thursday, February 18th at 2 p.m. at the Congregational church of New Canaan, 7 St. John's Place New Canaan. A reception will follow at Woodway Country Club 540 Hoyt St (Rt 106) Darien.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that you consider making donations to Visiting Nurse and Hospice Care of Southwestern CT, Inc. 1266 E. Main St., Stamford, Ct. 06902. Arrangements handled by Leo P. Gallagher & Son Funeral Home, Stamford.

The Thunderbolt Chronicles



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Historian*

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phone: 440-942-5030*

THE FORGOTTEN BATTLES OF NORMANDY

Rescuing the lost history of the 83rd Division

Popular histories of the Normandy invasion, portrayed in books and on television documentaries, have always revolved around D-

Day and the fighting to capture St. Lo. They describe the invasion with the same photos and film clips, seldom straying from the standard story line we have heard countless times. Indeed, huge sacrifices were made by the paratroopers and GIs on the beaches. But, unfortunately, the recorded history of Normandy seems to magically jump from the beaches of D-Day to the liberation of Paris. Lost in this highly abridged history of the invasion of Normandy is the down and dirty fighting that took place in the hedgerows south of Carentan, where many gave their lives to gain a few yards of ground. It is past time to rescue this story, which military historian Mark Reardon has called the "forgotten sacrifice" of the 83rd Infantry Division.

Although portions of this story have appeared in the pages of this magazine and on some of the 83rd Division websites on the internet, the combat history of the 83rd Division in Normandy during July 1944 has never been adequately documented. Now, there are several members of the 83rd Legacy Chapter involved in some exciting research to help bring the complete story to light.

Jean Paul Pitou has been researching the areas where the 83rd fought in Normandy for several years. He has traveled Normandy and pinpointed the important locations, including the



LeOrmeaux farm house where F Company/331st Infantry fought off repeated German counterattacks on 4 July 1944. Photo was taken by Jean Paul Pitou, who has visited this farm many times in his research of 83rd history.

areas south of Carentan, such as the village of Meautis, the locations of the 329th at the island battle and 331st at LeOrmeaux farm. Jean Paul continues to act as a guide and host for visiting 83rd Division veterans and their children. In June, he acted as guide for Carol Brockman, the niece of Lowell Eugene "Gene" Brockman, who was in F Company/331st Infantry and who was wounded on 4 July. We believe that he may have been at the LeOrmeaux farm

Jean Paul has also been able to obtain a detailed account of the fighting at LeOrmeaux. The document is a six-page, single-spaced typewritten memoir recorded by Sgt. Charles Rife while he was recuperating in an English hospital. Jean Paul has asked me to keep the information in the document confidential, but the memoir does confirm much of the material that has appeared on my website, and contains much greater detail. Rife said that there were as many as 21 F Company GIs fighting inside the farm house and defending it from German counter attacks.

Another researcher in Normandy is Glyn Nitingale, a British citizen who lives part of the year near Auxais. Glyn is a collector of militaria, and has, with the permission of French farmers, recovered many items. In his latest correspondence with me, Glyn tells me that he has found the position where the Germans fell back out of Sainteny and mortared the town. Glyn says that there were lots of clover-leaf shaped lids and bases of mortar tubes. He also found a U.S. canteen with the letter "B" etched into it and a parachute D-ring with the cords cut off. This was found at a location between the Chateau and the church at Auxais. He is closing in on the position



331st Infantry helmet and liner found in the area around Auxais. These and many other artifacts have been recovered by Glyn Nitingale.



Bruce Leininger produced this illustration by placing map overlay from 330th documents on a Normandy map. The result shows the positions on 6 July around the village of Coulot.

of Frank Monan, an 83rd veteran who was at Auxais, and he now has the permission of six farmers to visit and search their fields.

Here in the U.S., some major contributions to rescuing the 83rd History have been made by Jonathan Bernstein. Recently he scanned several hundred pages of the 330th documents that finally give details about the activities of the 330th during the Normandy campaign. Jonathan has made these documents available on Thijs Hodiament's Documents web site. Another major contribution is being made by Bruce Leininger, who has taken the map overlays in these documents and placed them over period maps. Bruce says that he really enjoyed doing this, as it is like watching a story unfold. He has converted his work to PDF (Acrobat) files, and they should be available on Thijs Hodiament's website by the time this information appears in print in the Thunderbolt.

None of Bruce's work would have been possible without the maps, which were originally sent to me by Gilles Billion, another of our European members who is part of the Ohio Group, a French association whose goal is to help 83rd veterans and their relatives when they visit France.

For those interested in obtaining these documents, Thijs Hodiament's website (<http://83rdinfdvdocs.org/>) has a mountain of primary 83rd Division research documents as

well as personal memoirs of 83rd veterans. At this time his website includes after-action reports for all three regiments, and many other units in the 83rd Division. The materials available on this website also include unit journals and unit histories, operations reports and overviews, and some very significant and large personal accounts, military papers, and maps. The site is a treasury of 83rd documentation available to anyone who wants to download it.

Other important efforts are being made on two Facebook pages. The first of the pages is the "83rd Thunderbolt Division-Database." This page was started by Remy Mortellete and it has many European contributors. Many of the postings are in French, but there are also a number of American contributors. The other Facebook page,

"United States Army 83rd Infantry Division," was started by Mark Miller. Both of these pages have lots of contributors, and you will find many interesting photographs and comments that cannot be found anywhere else.

There is also the 83rd Legacy Chapter Google Group. As this is written, there are 86 members, consisting of veterans, descendants, and many Europeans in Belgium, France, the Netherlands, and possibly some other countries. This page serves as a way for Legacy Chapter members to stay in touch with each other, and is also a tool for members to cooperate in conducting historical research. The group web page is an archive of emails that contain important details about 83rd Division research. ▼

DATE 6 July 1944 Hq 83d Inf Div
In the Field
062400B

NUMBER 9 Q-2 PERIODIC REPORT

MAPS: GSGS, 4347, 1/25,000

1. ENEMY SITUATION AT END OF THE PERIOD:

a. Enemy Front Lines: 352794 - 354798 - 360793 - 367793 - 371796.

b. Defensive Organization: No change.

c. Units in Contact: 17 ss Pz Gr Div - elements of 37 SS Pz Gr. Regt and 38 SS Pz Gr. Regt. NOTE: See IFW report No. 9 attached as Annex No. 1.

d. Reserves and Other Forces Capable of Intervention: Enemy reported yesterday moving NW from TRIBESOU to LE PORT is now revealed to be elements of the 38 SS Pz Gr. Regt. FW states that SS DAS REICH (238 Pz Div) is in rest area via ST LO. Report Unconfirmed.

2. ENEMY OPERATIONS DURING PERIOD:

Early in the period, enemy launched counter attacks against the 330th and the 329th Inf. Both were contained. Counterattacks were again launched at 1800 and 2100 in the vic of 352784 and 370785. They were broken up at 1820 and 2120 respectively by arty fire.

Run by I & R Plat. 330th Inf, of the ST GEORGES - LA SEMELERIE peninsula 365795 - 375797 indicated the area to contain many carefully prepared though generally unoccupied s/a emplacements. Some MG fire was encountered by the platoon along NW side of the peninsula commanding the marsh.

3. MISCELLANEOUS:

a. Tactics: Germans fire machine pistols from corners of hedgerows to draw fire and locate our flanks. Flanks are then marked with flares. Subsequently mortar fire is brought to bear. German technique in dealing with the infantry-tank team is to cause troops to withhold fire on tanks, permitting them to pass, and then firing at approaching infantry. The tanks are taken under fire by the next line of infantry.

b. It was reported by a German PW later killed by arty fire was wearing civilian clothes under his uniform. When directing mortar fire in forward areas he would remove his uniform and move about in civilian clothes.

c. The enemy returned ten (10) of our First Aid men to the front and released them to our lines. Our aid men state that the Germans declare they do not make prisoners of aid men.

d. A forward arty observer reported a haystack apparently being used as camouflage for a gun position at 362795.

4. CAPABILITIES: No change.

JOHN C. WILKINS, Capt. GOW
JULES H. DESHOTELS, JR.,
Lt. Col., GSO.
AC 28, Q-2

SECRET

This is one of several hundred pages of 330th documents from July 1944 recently scanned by Jonathan Bernstein, a member of the 83rd Legacy Chapter. These are important contributions to the Legacy Chapter's goal of preserving 83rd Division history. Previously, little was known about the combat history of the 330th in Normandy. This page, dated 6 July 1944, lists the German units that the 330th was in contact with, as well as the enemy's general location. It is also an interesting document because it reveals how the Germans located the flanks of US units attacking into the hedgerows. These files also contain numerous map overlays that show the position of the 330th during the fighting. Bruce Leininger has taken these overlays and placed them over maps of the period to illustrate the locations of the 330th

Boston Chapter Monument

Here are a few photographs of the 83rd's Boston Chapter monument in Bourne, Massachusetts. If you'd like directions, contact Cliff Wooldridge or Paul DiGiammerino (pictured below).





THE 83RD INFANTRY DIVISION WELCOMES MAYOR MICHEL LEPOURRY TO THE 65TH ANNIVERSARY REUNION AT WEST POINT



BIHAIN

JANUARY 11 - 1945

Photographs from the
MARCH TO
BIHAIN.
See Carmella
Catrambones
article entitled
"Who Would
Visit Belgium
In The Middle
Of Winter?"
in the Spring
2011 issue of
the *Thunderbolt*.

JANUARY 8 - 2011





BIHAIN

JANUARY 11 - 1945

Liberation
and surround



JANUARY 8 - 2011

Rallye and walking WW2
in homage to our liberators





On February 16, 2011, the Republic of France named Herbert L. Gibson a Chevalier of the Legion of Honor in gratitude for his personal contribution to the liberation of their country during World War II. The award was presented during a ceremony at the French Embassy in Washington, D.C. MAJ Neilson W. Wahab, United States Army, accepted the award on his uncle's behalf.

Mr. Gibson and his family are honored by this recognition.

Le 16 fevrier 2011, les insignes de Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur ont été décernés à Herbert L. Gibson en reconnaissance de sa contribution à la liberation de la France au cours la seconde guerre mondiale. Les insignes ont été présentés lors d'une ceremonie à la Ambassade de France à Washington, D.C. Major Neilson W. Wahab, United States Army, les a acceptés au nom de son oncle.

M. Gibson, ainsi que toute sa famille, reste fort reconnaissance de cet honneur qui lui a été décerné.

83rd ITEMS FOR SALE

83RD YELLOW SHIRTS (SHORT SLEEVES)

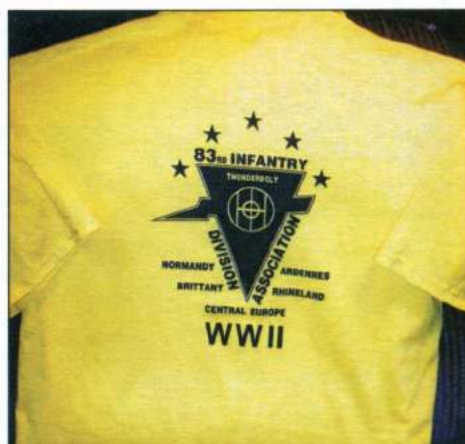
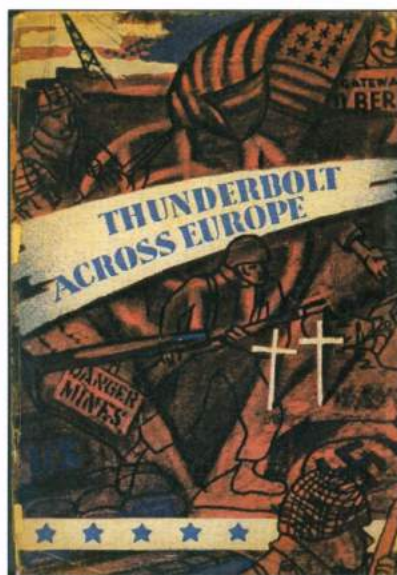
Left front pocket with small black 83rd Triangle
WWII; Back with large black 83rd Triangle WW II;
50% cotton, 50% polyester, Machine wash,
Tumble dry.

COST: \$26 ea. includes shipping



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Cliff Wooldridge

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Summer11

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