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# THUNDERBOLT

Volume 72 issue no. 2

Spring 2019



**Normandy 1944**  
A look back through the eyes of the 83rd

# 83rd Infantry Division Association Inc.

## The Thunderbolt

is the Official Publication of the 83rd ID Ass. Inc. The Thunderbolt is written for all members of the 83rd Infantry Division WWII and is published at 138 East Side Drive, P.O. Box 406, Alton Bay, NH 03810-0406

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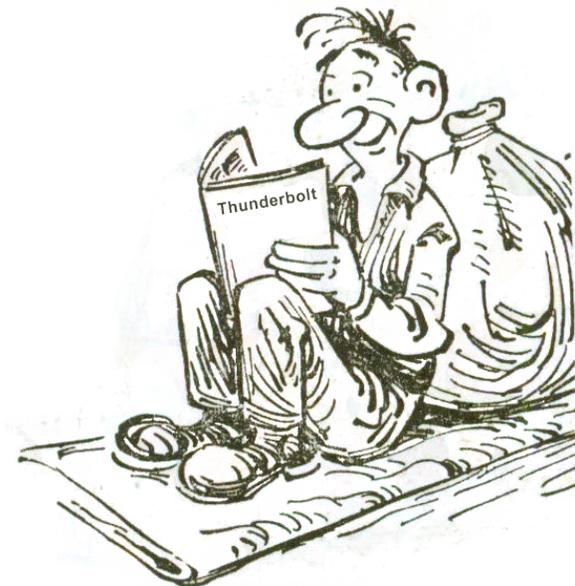
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**United States Army 83rd Infantry Division**

or go to

[www.facebook.com/groups/382509485859](http://www.facebook.com/groups/382509485859)





# President's Corner

By Dave Dimmick, President

---

*As many may already know, Larry Scheerer unfortunately had to resign as President for health reasons. Many thanks to Larry for all his hard work and dedication to the Association.*

Greetings from Downstate Illinois,

Hope this finds everyone recovering from a rather wild winter ride and in good health and spirits. This 75th Anniversary year of ETO - WWII has a lot going on for our members.

There are, that I know of, three groups of our members traveling to Europe this coming June and July. Retracing the movements of the 83rd Infantry Division from Normandy to the East side of the Elbe River in Germany. We have added a presentation by these groups during the reunion. Something I think all will enjoy and be able to reflect upon. I'm really looking forward to the presentations and wish them all safe travels.

I cannot forget, nor will I forget our European brothers and sisters who continue, each in their own way, to remember the 83rd American soldier's sacrifices during WWII. Their contributions over the years have helped personalize many veteran and descendant experiences. You're the Best!

Our 83rd Facebook site continues to grow in numbers and put descendants and veterans together again after 75 or more years. The stories I have heard are amazing. It turns out to be a very small world with Facebook and other connection tools associated with it. Very worthwhile.

At this time I would like to encourage all non-members to seriously consider joining the membership roster of our 83rd Association. Together we can do so much more to remember the service of our 83rd veterans. As my mentor 83rd veteran Cliff Wooldridge would say, "Pay Your Dues!!"

With the ongoing construction of the new National Army Museum in Virginia (just outside Washington DC) the 83rd membership has "stepped up" to have the 83rd Infantry Division remembered with honor and distinction within this world class Museum's walls and halls. Our past President Kathleen Powers who has headed up this effort, informs us that we are just a few hundred dollars short of our goal. Let's get there! Thanks to all who have made this effort a huge success. A most deserving endeavor.

The 73rd Annual Reunion of the 83rd Infantry Division Association has been planned. Reunion Chair, Marianne Rhodes has done a great job planning a reunion you will not soon forget along with

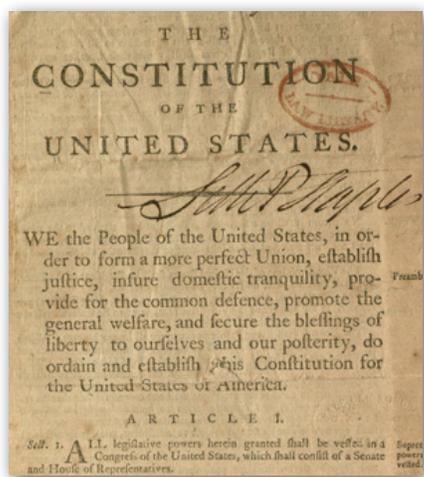


Larry Scheerer's assistance in preliminary legwork. I can't thank enough the scores of 83rd members and volunteers who have come forward to donate their time, talents and diligence to make this one of the best reunions ever. Judy Breen and John Markuns especially have my appreciation for their guidance. Plus I have a crackerjack of a First-Vice in Keven Smith. My hat is off to you all. An outline of reunion activities is in another section of this Thunderbolt.

It is ironic that last year, 2018, our reunion was in Boston. Where we stood on hallowed ground in Lexington, where it all started to begin our country's journey towards freedom and liberty. Now in 2019 we will stand in Independence Hall where our freedom and liberty was proclaimed in writing and walk in places our American forefathers made their stand. Maybe, just maybe, we should take the next step to Washington DC in 2020. Just thinking.

Please join us and enjoy the 73rd Reunion of the 83rd Infantry Division Association in King of Prussia, PA. Just outside Philadelphia. Wednesday July 31st to Sunday August 4th, 2019. What will be a proud tribute to our hard fighting, persevering soldiers of the Thunderbolt Division. Once known affectionately as "The Rag Tag Circus"

Respectfully,  
Dave Dimmick



### A salute to past presidents who have served us well

- |                               |                           |                           |                          |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1947 James C. Hanrahan*       | 1966 William M. Doty*     | 1985 Carroll Brown*       | 2004 Allison Shrawder*   |
| 1948 Jack M. Straus*          | 1967 Albert B. Belvedere  | 1986 John Hobbs*          | 2005 Ames H. Miller*     |
| 1949 Shelly Hughes*           | 1968 Vito C. Palazzolo*   | 1987 George Fletcher*     | 2006 Rudolph Zamula      |
| 1950 Julius Ansel*            | 1969 Pat DiGiammerino*    | 1988 Charles Schmidt*     | 2007 Robert Keck*        |
| 1951 Walter H. Edwards Jr.*   | 1970 Casey Szubski*       | 1989 Edward Reuss*        | 2008 Michael Catrambone* |
| 1952 Leo Schneider*           | 1971 Charles Atomari*     | 1990 Charles J. Lussier*  | 2009 John White*         |
| 1953 Finley Heyl*             | 1972 Harold H. Dopp*      | 1991 Edgar H. Haynes*     | 2010 Carmella Catrambone |
| 1954 Lawrence J. Redmond*     | 1973 Louis J. Volpi*      | 1992 Ned Smith*           | 2011 Carmella Catrambone |
| 1955 Lawrence J. Redmond*     | 1974 Bernard O. Riddle*   | 1993 Louis Sandini*       | 2012 Carmella Catrambone |
| 1956 Lt. Gen. Robert H. York* | 1975 Robert G. Taylor     | 1994 William M. Minick*   | 2013 Carmella Catrambone |
| 1957 Harry W. Lockwood*       | 1976 Mike Skovran*        | 1995 Casey Szubski*       | 2014 Kathleen Powers     |
| 1958 Raymond J. Voracek*      | 1977 Manlius Goodridge*   | 1996 Floyd Richmond*      | 2015 Kathleen Powers     |
| 1959 Charles Abdinoor*        | 1978 Joseph A. Macaluso*  | 1997 Keith Davidson*      | 2016 John Markuns        |
| 1960 Joseph F. Minotti*       | 1979 William J. Chavanne* | 1998 R. C. Hamilton*      | 2017 John Markuns        |
| 1961 Frank J. McGrogan*       | 1980 Samuel Klippa*       | 1999 Pat DiGiammerino*    | 2018 Lawrence Scheerer   |
| 1962 John W. Robinette*       | 1981 Michael Caprio*      | 2000 Salvatore Scicolone* |                          |
| 1963 Manuel C. Martin*        | 1982 Ralph Gunderson*     | 2001 Pat DiGiammerino*    |                          |
| 1964 Julius Boyles*           | 1983 Arthur Doggett*      | 2002 Bob Taylor*          |                          |
| 1965 Samuel Klippa*           | 1984 Bernie Cove*         | 2003 Salvatore Scicolone* |                          |



*Welcome to*  
**Philadelphia**  
Host city of our 73rd Reunion



It is with great pleasure that we invite you to attend the 73rd Annual 83rd Infantry Division Association Reunion Wed. July 31 – Sat. August 3, 2019 Crowne Plaza-King of Prussia, 260 Mall Blvd, King of Prussia, PA, less than 10 minutes from Valley Forge National Historical Park

**Mark the date: July 31 - August 3, 2019**



# Current agenda

The focal point of our reunion will always be our veterans, who this year will mark 75 years since their historic part in the Invasion and Liberation of Europe in Operation Overlord. A big thanks to them, our link to the Greatest Generation! We are proud and humble to commemorate their sacrifices and accomplishments. Our current agenda:

- On **Wednesday**, Registration will open at noon. We're hoping for a surprise Philly Welcome and a travelogue program hosted by some of our members who traveled to Normandy and Europe to follow the Division's battle route. The hospitality rooms will be open with plenty of opportunity to meet, greet, and visit with old and new friends.
- **Thursday** begins with a trip to historic Philadelphia featuring Independence Hall, the Liberty Bell Pavilion, and other nearby sites. Lunch will be at the City Tavern, or on your own. Nearby afternoon options include side trips to the National Constitution Center, the Independence Seaport Museum, the Reading Terminal Market, or a sightseeing bus tour. The day concludes with our first General Session with past year updates.



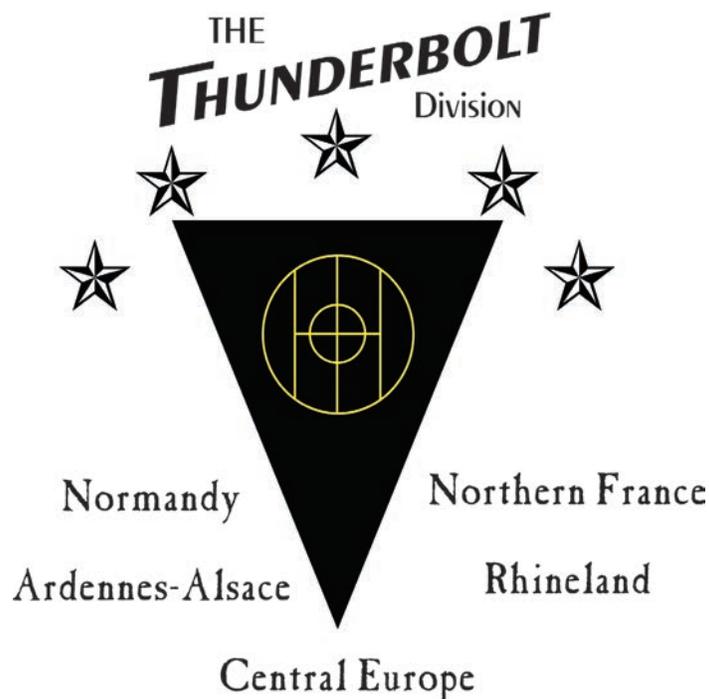


- **Friday** finds us at nearby Valley Forge Military Academy and College. We'll have a campus tour and lunch, and will conduct our Memorial Service at VFMA's Battle of the Bulge Monument. An optional tour will take us on a tour of Valley Forge National Park, site of the George Washington's winter camp in 1775.
- **Saturday** features the second General Session, including election of officers, recognition awards, and another special surprise! Rounding out the day, after the Catholic Mass, we'll celebrate at our Saturday evening Banquet



*We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.*

See you in Philly!



# Hotel and Registration Information

Hotel reservations may be made now. Please make your reservations early. Our block is limited and expires June 29, 2019. The hotel rate is \$129 per night double occupancy plus tax with free parking. Hotel rooms will be in demand!

## Telephone Reservation

1-610-265-7500 (reference 83rd Infantry Division Association to obtain conference rate)

## Online Reservation

Book online through the reservations link on our website: <http://www.83rdassociation.com/reunion/>

*Note: The conference rate may also be extended up to 3 days before and 3 days following the reunion, subject to availability.*

## Hotel information & Transportation

The hotel is full service with a newly renovated restaurant, with 10% discount vouchers for our group. The hotel is also located adjacent to the King of Prussia Mall, the 2nd largest mall in the United States and there are many other dining options. If driving, the hotel is a short distance off I-76. If flying, the closest airport is Philadelphia International Airport. The hotel is 29 miles from the airport and there are a variety of options for getting from the airport to the hotel, Uber being one of the least expensive.

We hope to have some volunteer drivers to assist groups coming from the airport with first preference to veterans and their families. If you have travel questions or may need assistance, please contact Dave or Becky Dimmick at [dmdimmick@gmail.com](mailto:dmdimmick@gmail.com) or (217) 473-3284.

As space on our tours is limited, we highly encourage early registration. The last date for Hotel and Reunion registration is June 29, 2019. Use the registration form in this magazine or download the form at [www.83rdassociation.com/reunion](http://www.83rdassociation.com/reunion)



King of Prussia Crowne Plaza,  
260 Mall Blvd, King of Prussia,  
Pennsylvania 19406

# 83<sup>rd</sup> INFANTRY DIVISION ASSOCIATION – 73<sup>rd</sup> REUNION

## Activity Registration Form – July 31 –August 4, 2019, Philadelphia-King of Prussia, Pennsylvania

Below are all registration, activity and meal costs for the reunion. Please enter how many people will be participating in each event and total the amount. Send that amount payable to 83<sup>rd</sup> INFANTRY DIV. ASSN. in the form of a check or money order (no credit cards or phone reservations accepted). All registration forms and payments must be received by mail on or before **June 29, 2019** after which reservations will depend on availability. Hotel rooms will be in demand – ask for \$129 discount rate! *Philadelphia-King of Prussia Crowne Plaza, 260 Mall Blvd, King of Prussia, Pennsylvania 19406, 1-610-265-7500 (reference 83<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division Association to obtain conference rate) or book online <http://www.83rdassociation.com/reunion/> Free hotel parking and 10% discount vouchers to Stirlings restaurant and Lounge!*

**We suggest you copy this form before mailing to: Dave Dimmick 1714 Coal Creek Rd., Murrayville, IL. 62668**

**Questions? Call: Dave Dimmick 217-473-3284**

<b>Registration Package</b>				
REGISTRATION FEE: includes Saturday Night Banquet	\$95.00 per person	#		\$
	\$80.00, per child (3-12)	#		\$
	No Fee, WW 2 Veteran	#		\$ -
Please select your entrée for Saturday Banquet:	<i>Roasted Prime Rib of Beef</i>	#		
	<i>Pan-seared Boursin Chicken</i>	#		
Please specify special needs:	<i>Vegetarian/Gluten Free</i>	#		
	<i>Child's Meal (ages 3-12)</i>	#		
THURSDAY: Day tour Philadelphia: includes morning guided tour Independence Hall and visit to Liberty Bell or other Mall attractions (includes round trip transportation). If no option below is selected, may tour in afternoon on your own, including Reading Terminal. Pick up at 3:15 p.m. at designated sites	\$49.00 per person; No Fee WW 2 veterans	# #		\$
Lunch at City Tavern (salad, choice of Turkey Pot Pie or Filet of Salmon, Fresh Fruit cobbler, coffee and tea)	\$34.00 per person	#		\$
THURSDAY AFTERNOON DAY TOUR OPTIONS:				
Option 1 National Constitution Center	\$9.00 per person No Fee Active military/veterans No fee (child 5 or under)	# # #		\$
Option 2 Independence Seaport museum (includes transportation from Independence Mall)	\$11.00 per person No Fee WW 2 Veteran No Fee child 2 and under	# # #		\$
Option 3 Guided bus tour of Philadelphia	\$11.00 per person No Fee WW 2 veteran	# #		\$
FRIDAY: Tour of Valley Forge Military Academy, Memorial Service and cold buffet lunch (including bus transportation)	\$64.00 per person	#		\$
	No fee WW 2 veteran	#		
FRIDAY AFTERNOON: Guided Tour Valley Forge National Park	\$11.00 per person	#		\$
	No fee WW 2 veteran	#		
	<b>TOTAL</b>			\$

**PLEASE PRINT**

Name (for name tag) \_\_\_\_\_ (Veteran \_\_\_) (Descendant \_\_\_) (Active Duty \_\_\_) (Associate \_\_\_)

Veteran's name (if descendant) \_\_\_\_\_

Unit (example: B Co; 329<sup>th</sup> Inf.) \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse Name (for tag) \_\_\_\_\_ Guest Names (for tags) \_\_\_\_\_

Accessibility: Are you confined to a wheelchair? \_\_\_\_\_ Do you use a walker/wheelchair to assist w/mobility? \_\_\_\_\_

We will have a limited number of travel wheelchairs available. I would like to request the use of a travel wheelchair \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship \_\_\_\_\_ Emergency Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Arrival Date \_\_\_\_\_ Departure Date \_\_\_\_\_ Are You Staying At The Reunion Hotel? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

If Flying, Airline \_\_\_\_\_ Flight # \_\_\_\_\_ Airport \_\_\_\_\_ Arrival Date \_\_\_\_\_ Arrival Time \_\_\_\_\_

OFFICIAL USE ONLY					
CK# _____	Amt _____	Date _____	1 _____	2 _____	Tag _____
Beef _____	Chicken _____	Spl Menu _____	Wed _____	Thurs. _____	Fri. _____



# Battle of the Bulge

75th Anniversary events

From Wilfried De Backer in Belgium

In a few weeks probably some of you will be visiting the Normandy Beaches to witness the 75th Commemoration of D-day. It will be spectacular with fly overs from 40 Dakota's from all over the world, droppings of paratroopers to festivities, marshes and WWII vehicle parades in all the little towns at Utah, Omaha, Sword, Gold and Juno Beach.

This also means that the Ardennes are making themselves ready for their 75th Commemoration of "the Battle of the Bulge". Some of you already visited the area, for others it is an opportunity to see how their fathers, grandfathers and beloved ones had to fight in the most terrible conditions against the sometimes gruesome SS Nazi forces. For the 83rd I'm aware of 2 events that are in preparation.

One is at the little town of "MANHAY" where Eddy Monfort and his "Ardennes History Remember" are organising a huge reconstitution with 250 soldiers, German (StugIII, Panzer III, SDKFZ) and American Tanks (Sherman M-7, Tankdestroyer M-10, M-8, Sherman M-4), halftracks, Weasel, Long Tom gun and more than 170 other WWII vehicles from December 13 till 15th. It will be the first time since WWII that so many vehicles and soldiers are dominating again this little town in the Ardennes. If the weather is good WWII planes will fly over the area and during the nights "The Manhattan Dolls" will sing and bring you back to the past of WWII. You need more info? Please contact Eddy MONFORT at e.monfort@belgacom.net

The other event starts in Bihain on January 11-12 2020 near the 83rd museum (Au bois de Roches) and is organised by Robert Van de Wiele and the people of Bihain, Otré and Petit Langlir. auboisdesroches@skynet.be

Over the years I had the luck to talk to dozens of veterans of the 83rd during visits and reunions and they all had one thing in common. They first didn't like to talk about this black page of January 1945. The cold, the struggle, the friends they lost brought back to many bad memories. But finally they talked so we would never forget what they had accomplished. I have been doing these "Mars of the 83rd" through Bihain, Otré, Petit-Langlir and the other small towns for several years now and I always mark the next one in my agenda. Why? When I walk this 15 km, surrounded by the greatness of nature and the weather elements the respect for the 83rd veterans keeps growing every time. If you want to experience that same feeling what your father, grandfather or 83rd friend did than mark January 11-12 2020 in your agenda. Reenactors, singers and the nice people of Bihain, Otré and Petit Langlir are ready to welcome you. More info will be sent shortly and if you have questions of any kind please contact us at widb@stabe.be or auboisdesroches@skynet.be



# A Warm Welcome

Colonel Steve F. Egan - 83rd ARRTC

During a Change of Command ceremony on May 3, 2019 command of the 83rd Army Reserve Readiness Training Center was passed on to Colonel Steve F. Egan. He replaces Colonel Kathy Porter who has done a wonderful job furthering the relationship between the association and the 83rd ARRTC. We wish her much future success & good fortune in her Army career and family life. The COC ceremony was attended by our President Dave Dimmick who wrote a few words.



*Photo by: US Army*

*Becky and I and Tom Thomason attended the 83rd ARRTC Change of Command Ceremony at Ft. Knox KY this past Friday. It was our small way to reciprocate the support that our 83rd Association has received from the 83rd ARRTC. We were honored to attend.*

*The COC Ceremony was most impressive and very well organized in fine Army tradition. COL Kathleen Porter will stay at Ft Knox in another leadership capacity and wished her much future success. COL Steven Egan brings a wealth of leadership experience from which the 83rd ARRTC will benefit greatly. The 83rd is in "Good Hands".*

*Proud of the 83rd ARRTC soldiers!  
The Thunderbolt Goes Rolling Along!*

*Respectfully,  
Dave Dimmick  
President, 83rd ID Association*



*Colonel Kathy Porter at the 2017 Reunion in Cleveland*





# Hedgerow Hell

## Memories of Normandy

This issue of our Thunderbolt Magazine is dedicated to the 75th Anniversary of the Battle of Normandy. In June 1944, the 83rd Division got its first introduction to battle trying to push through the infamous Normandy Bocage. On the following pages you'll find the history of the campaign as well as the personal recollections of the men of the Thunderbolt. Some accounts reprinted from prior editions of the Thunderbolts magazine. And a special thank you to our Association Historian, Dave Curry for his invaluable contributions



# Landing at Omaha

From the personal memoirs of SGT Harry J. Kirby, Jr.

June 1944, Shavington Hall, Shropshire, England

We had [many] cans of gasoline. They loaded up the trucks. [We] were strictly rationed on gas. That's when we were getting ready to get into the invasion.

We got all of the battalion together. We started down the length of England. That was surprising. All along the main road, there would be line after line after line of weapons, artillery, four or five deep, and on the other side, same thing with tanks, stuff like that. It ran for miles. They had stuff stockpiled like you wouldn't believe. We got to where we were headed, went into [a building], and were locked in there. We weren't allowed out, couldn't send any letters or anything else.

We stayed there for a few days. We had no idea what was going on anywhere else. While we were there, the invasion started. That was on the 6th of June. Then we got the word. We drove down to the docks of Portsmouth and they had a ship waiting to load our equipment. On the 9th, we left.

Finally, they took us out and we started across [the Channel]. We were out there chugging across with other ships on both sides. We were about ready to land when a storm came in. The heaviest storm in seventy years. The ship rattled back and forth. Guys were getting seasick and we were running out of food. Then we got word to move in.

When our Liberty ship moved from one place to another [nearing the beach], they would pull up the anchor. When the anchor came up, there were a couple of bodies that floated up with it. There were a lot of [bodies] there. Every time the tide would go in or out, you'd see more bodies. They were picked up by Graves Registration and taken care of.

[By the time we landed] they weren't shelling the beaches; [the Americans] had pushed the Germans back some so we didn't get shot at much.

*That's some of the stuff you get used to.*



*Harry J. Kirby served with C Company, 308th Engineer Battalion. Picture taken somewhere in Europe.*

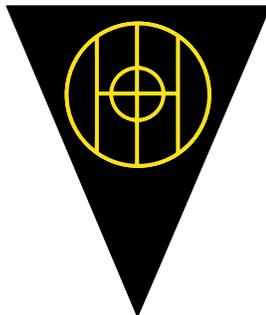
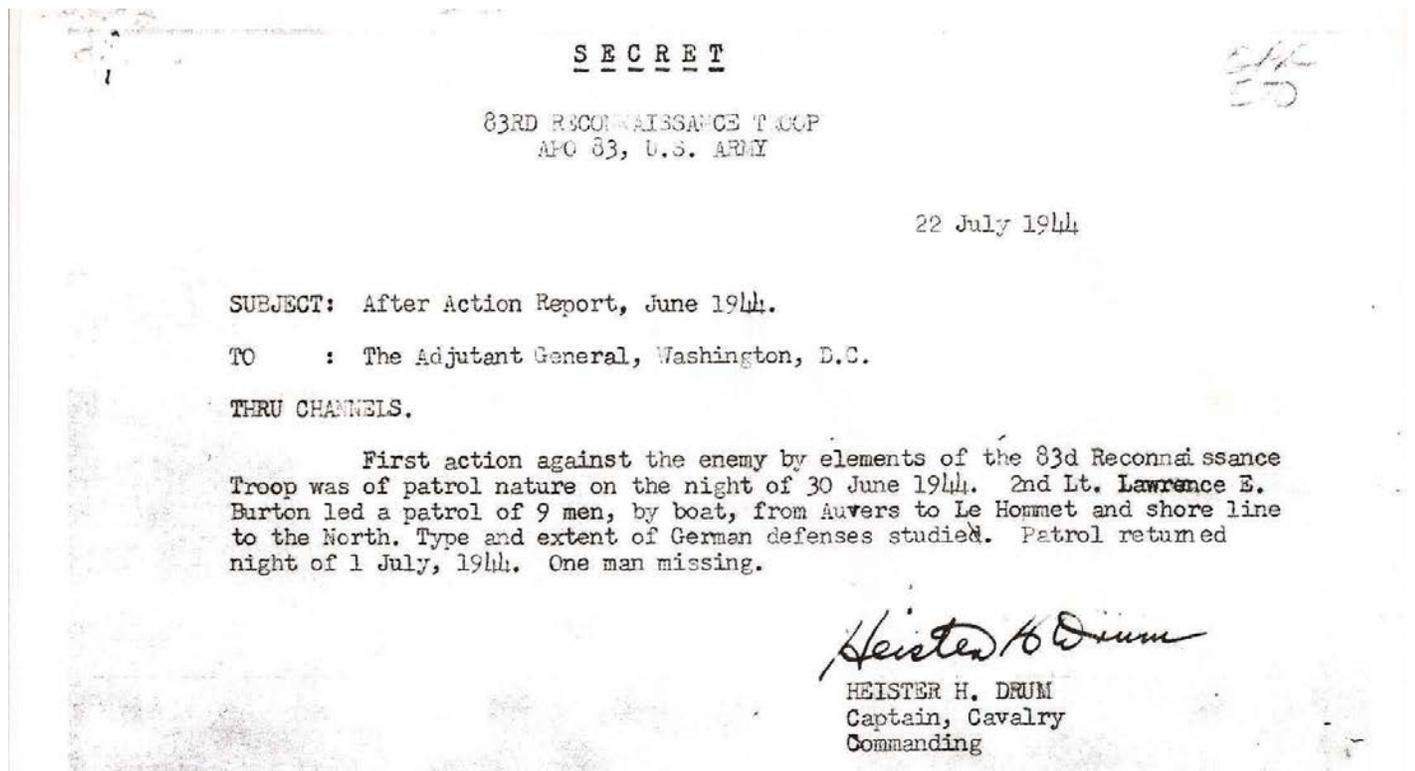


# The First Patrol

## 83rd Recon Troop

Text: Dave Curry, Ernie Gatten

Some time ago, I received a very interesting and lengthy letter from Ernie Gatten. Ernie was in the 83rd Recon Troop, and his letter contained an amazing story about a nine-man patrol that was sent out on the night of June 30, 1944 to see if there was a practical way across a very large swamp for the 83rd Division. An examination of maps of this area show that the 83rd was in a very tough position from which to advance against the German defenders, and the top brass of the division were looking for a way to carry out their mission over horrible terrain. The After Action Report of the 83rd Recon Troop for June 1944 reads as follows:



Captain Drum's report is very brief--one short paragraph, and not very informative. The true story of what happened on that patrol was recalled to me by Ernie Gatten in a very long letter that he sent to me last summer. Ernie was in the 83rd Recon Troop and he was one of the members of that patrol. What follows here is Ernie's recollection of those days. It is a revealing report from a number of aspects. First, it reveals that the 83rd top brass knew they had been placed in a lousy spot on the front lines of Normandy, and they were desperately trying to find a good route south through the swamps and hedgerows. The truth of the matter was that there was no way through the swamps or around the hedgerows. Secondly, Ernie's recollections show that the 83rd Recon Troop was a tough bunch of soldiers. It is amazing to look at a map of this area of Normandy and realize how big the swamp was. Ernie and his patrol actually traversed the Prairies Marecageuses de Gorges. Ernie does not exaggerate about the swamp--It is easily visible on maps of Normandy, and the area that Ernie and the patrol crossed on the evening of June 30, 1944 is a good two and a half miles in length. The patrol would have been a challenge for Navy Seals, but the Recon Troop managed to pull off the mission with only one loss! It's an incredible tale., which follows here:



During the last days of June 1944, the 83rd Infantry began relieving the survivors of the 101st Airborne Division, who had dropped on D-Day. The "front" in that area was nearly stationary. Some patrol action from both sides, and a daily exchange of artillery fire. The Recon Troop was bivouacked in a little apple orchard. There were literally hundreds of little orchards in Normandy, all surrounded by a hedgerow, ranging from 8 to 15 ft. in height. Several foxholes were already dug. I never learned if they were dug by the advancing Paratroopers or the retreating Germans. I claimed a very deep foxhole beside our parked armored car. No one challenged my possession. In the evening of June 30, someone walked through our bivouac area, calling out names, including "Gatten." Report now to CO tent! In the tent was our Troop CO,

Capt. Drum, our platoon leader, Lt. Burton, and seven others from his platoon. The Captain briefed us. "Division is preparing for a major attack, they want to know if there are any possible pathways through the swamp on which the Infantry might advance in their attack. Lt. Burton then briefed us. "No ID, no jewelry, no cigarettes!" (he was a heavy smoker!) "Meet here at 2300 hours." I gave my wallet and ring to a buddy who was staying in bivouac. I went to my foxhole for an hour of prayer and rest, no sleep. I dropped the heart-shield testament my parents had given me in a shirt pocket, a bar of concentrated chocolate in the other. I fastened two hand grenades on my front shoulder straps. I was ready!

We walked the short distance to the edge of the swamp. In a narrow, shallow canal were three black rubber boats, with

paddles, tied with ropes, waiting for us. A full moon in a clear sky worried us. Too much light for a night patrol! We were committed, so three in each boat, we pushed off. Hey! We had no boat training, this is for the Navy! We soon learned the swamp was a series of small canals, criss-crossed with no definite pattern. We paddled for some distance, then to stay on course, we had to walk on soggy ground until we came to another canal where we could launch our boats and paddle again. This went on for some time. Many times we slogged through ankle-deep water until we came to another canal where we could use the boats again. Years later, I read the book written by the official historian, Martin Blumenson, "Duel for France, 1944" I copied excerpts from this description of the swamp--"Numerous streams and springs, mudholes and stagnant



pools, a network of canals and ditches, some intended for drainage, others originally primitive transportation routes keep the earth moist and soft. Crossing the swamps on foot is hazardous, passage by vehicles impossible.”

Around 0400 hours, clouds hid the moon, a light rain began to fall. As we paused for a brief rest and check of our course, Lt. Burton gave a horse laugh and said, “What the hell is the U.S. Cavalry doing in a place like this?” The original plan called for us to cross the swamp, the Lt. Burton and five men would go into hiding, to observe enemy activity during the day. I was assigned to be one of the three “boat people.” We were expected to return to our lines, then return the next night to pick up the six “observers.” When we finally reached solid ground the sky was lighting for a new day. So that called for a drastic change of plans. Where we landed our boats was near the rear of an old farm house. It appeared to me that there had once been a room or porch built on the rear of the fairly large house. This addition had long been neglected and had deteriorated to rubble. A thick and tall growth of weeds had taken over the site. Lt. Burton ordered us to crawl into that patch of weeds and stay until he returned. He took off with his tommy gun and grenades. As we lay there in the semi-darkness of dawn, I heard a “clip-clop, clip-clop” down from the front of the house. I was raised on a Pennsylvania farm, so I recognized the walking of a farm horse. I was certain the horse had stopped in front of

the house. A few moments later I heard voices, male and female. I didn’t know which language was used. I assumed it was a mixture of French and German. Then the horse moved on, out of my hearing. I was certain it was a German soldier, buying milk or eggs from a French house- wife. From their brief exchange of words, I assumed she had been expecting him to stop at her door. Time passed, the sun came out, warming our wet bodies. Very difficult to keep from dozing off.

I could hear occasional artillery fire. It sounded fairly close. As combat was a new experience to me, it took several minutes to realize the different sounds of war. There was no whistling sound or loud explosion. Then came the terrible realization. This was out-going artillery. A near-by German gun was firing what they called harassing fire across the swamp into the American zone! Long after this event, the thought came to my mind. Our artillery was much superior in number to the Germans.

Why wasn’t our artillery answering these harassing shots? Was it because the word had been passed that an American patrol was out there in the swamp? It was much later before the full and frightening realization came to me. We were so far behind the enemy lines as to be a few yards away from an artillery piece. Many times since, I have tried to put that situation in perspective. This is what I assume:



The German defense line was probably solid up to both edges of the swamp. They apparently didn’t consider anyone would attempt such a stupid move as trying to cross the swamp. So, we waited what seemed like hours, probably only two, for Lt. Burton to return. He did return, puffing with words, “Get out of here quick!” So we didn’t hesitate, we ran for the boats and began rowing furiously in the canal. We probably rowed 200 or so yards when a machine gun opened up behind us. Our instant reaction was to tip the boats side-ways and be spilled into the water, which was nearly neck deep. I had been rowing, my carbine laid in the bottom of the boat. It slid to the bottom of the canal. It is probably there yet. I righted the boat, began pushing it in front of me as I tried to walk in the water. I sensed that the others were doing the same. We kept walking in the deep water until we were exhausted. We climbed the bank onto solid ground.



Fortunately, the grass was waist high. Back from the direction we had come was the black smoke of an exploding mortar shell. A few seconds later came another, then another. Each one coming ever closer to us. "Walking" our mortar men called it. Each shell in a straight line, each one coming nearer. The last was about a hundred yards short of where we lay, then the shelling stopped. Apparently the Germans couldn't see us, and we had traveled farther than they realized. We lay scattered in the high grass for probably half an hour. We started walking, widely spaced apart, dragging our boats behind us. A few minutes later, a machine gun opened on us from the side. It was a long distance from us, but still could be fatal. so we hit the ground and lay quietly for several minutes. As we tried again, it was a repeat performance. This deadly cat and mouse game went on for probably an hour or more, take a few steps, then hit the ground again as the machine gun fired.

It was probably mid afternoon when we realized friendly eyes were also watching us. We heard an artillery blast. Burton said it was direct fire, probably from one of our tanks. One round was all, and it silenced that pesky machine gun. Now we could walk freely. From the time we left the canal we kept distance between each other as we had been trained to do. So we stayed walking several yards apart. We had walked probably an hour or longer

before anyone noticed one of our men was missing. No one could remember when or where he dropped out. It was too late to return to find him. Little "Smitty," the smallest member of the patrol. We walked steadily, through the tall grass, we were able to avoid the canals. An hour before sundown we reached an outpost of the 83rd Infantry. The sentries didn't challenge us. They seemed both surprised and pleased to see us. One of them led us back to a large stone farm house. This was the Headquarters of one of the regiments. I had never seen so much brass; colonels and majors in one group. The GIs gave us greatly appreciated rations and cigarettes, the first in nearly 24 hours. Lt. Burton was taken to another room for an hour long briefing with those high ranking officers. They seemed to have a great interest to learn what he had observed that morning. While this was happening the Germans opened up a violent artillery barrage. Some of the enlisted aides advised the

officers to lie down on the floor. They did. It was amusing to me that some of them cursed like "drunken sailors" because the Germans interrupted their meeting. Darkness came. An infantryman loaded us into a small truck, drove us back to our bivouac area. I dove into my foxhole, slept like a baby until I saw morning sunlight again.

That morning I retrieved my personal items. Then I found the supply truck. I asked for a carbine. Question--"What happened to the one you had?" Answer--"I dropped it in the swamp." No more questions, nothing to sign, he handed me a carbine. The enclosed copy of after action report for June 1944 reads Lt. Burton led a patrol of nine men. The nine included Burton, three men in three boats. Three was the boat capacity. One man missing. I mentioned on a previous page--In July 2004, I visited the American St. Laurent Cemetery on the flat land above Omaha Beach. I found and photographed the grave of our buddy, missing on our first patrol. I copy the words exactly as inscribed on his headstone: BERTON L. SMITH, TEC 5 83 RCN TRP 83 DIV, VIRGINIA, JULY 4 1944

I said to the cemetery attendant. "He died earlier than that." (June 30 or July 1.) He replied, "That is probably the day his body was found."

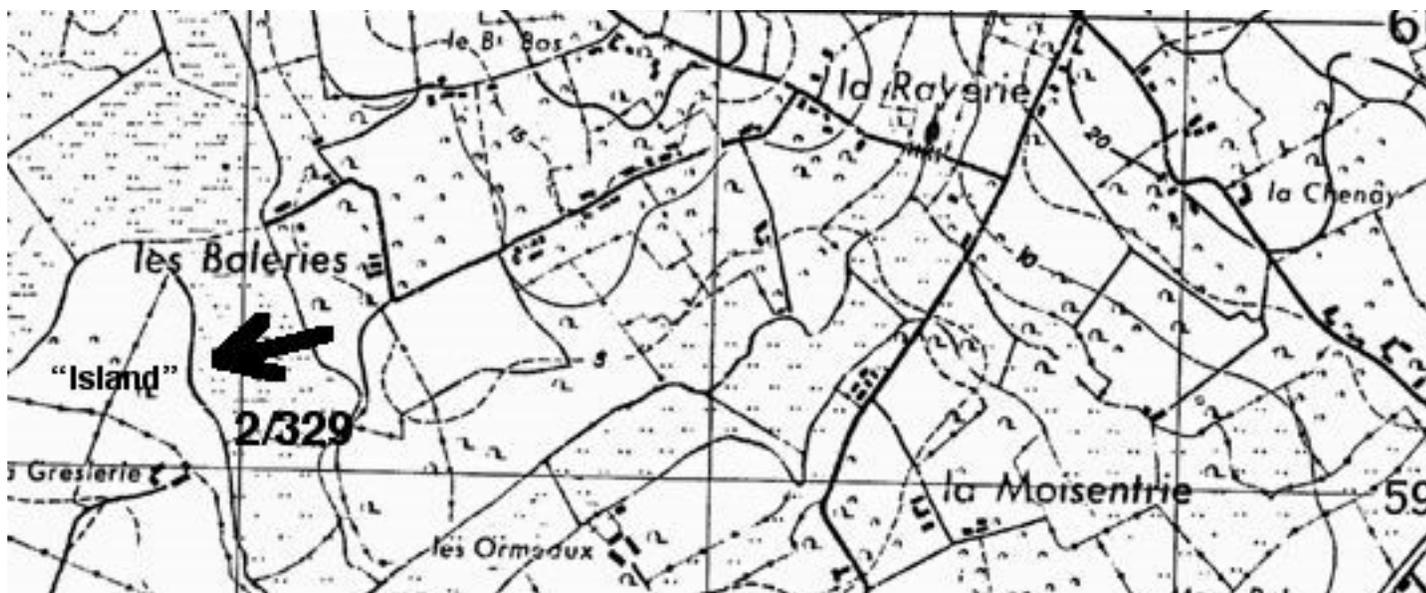


# The Island Battle

329th Infantry • July 4, 1944

Text: Dave Curry, association historian

Much of the information on this page came from a monograph written by Clarence P. Ziegler, who was a platoon leader in the 2nd Battalion/329th Infantry Regiment. Some supporting material came from the memoirs of Col. Granville Sharpe (“Sharpe’s Battalion” by Col. Sharpe’s daughter, Charlotte Sharpe Daly). My friend, Jean Paul Pitou, provided all of the time-consuming legwork in Normandy that was absolutely necessary for the telling of this story. Jean Paul was in charge of the exhibition at Sainteny celebrating the 60th Anniversary of the liberation. He is an expert on the 83rd Division in Normandy, and has personally visited all of the areas where the 83rd Division began their campaign on July 4, 1944. Through these efforts, he was able to identify the “island” where the 2nd Battalion of the 329th fought, as well as the farmhouse at les Ormeaux where F Company/331st fought several battles.



On July 4th, 1944 the 2nd Battalion of the 329th Infantry was nearly decimated in an attack on the far right flank of the 83rd line. Captain Richard E. Randall, the Commanding Officer of F Company, although wounded three times during the fighting that day, managed to hold together the remnants of two companies to continue the attack against a hardened enemy force. After hours of fighting to continue the advance under enemy artillery, mortar, and machine gun fire, Randall and his group of survivors from E and F Companies held off successive counterattacks.

At the end of the day, Randall asked for reinforcements so that they could continue the fight, but instead was ordered to withdraw. The information that follows is a brief account of that day.

On the morning of 4 July, the 2nd Battalion of the 329th Infantry was ordered to move into position at the far right flank of the 83rd Division, opposite the 2nd Battalion of the 331st Infantry. The 329th was to attack westward across a swamp to an “island.” The “island” actually was a peninsula, which can be seen on the map. Its



western edge was defined by the Prairies Marecaugeuses de Gorges, a large marshland. The northern tip and opposite side of the peninsula were defined by the swamp, which extended from the "Prairies" and came down the eastern edge of the peninsula. It then turned northeast toward the village of Meautis. Essentially, this gave the swamp a shape like a large V, and it dominated the geography in this area.

Just to the east of the "island" peninsula is les Baleries, the location of the 2nd Battalion/329th assembly area on the morning of 4 July. The peninsula was reported to be about 900 yards long and 500 yards wide, with the northern tip about 200 yards across. All around the peninsula was a ditch about two feet deep and filled with water. The peninsula was covered by small fields enclosed in hedgerows, and was cut lengthwise by a dirt road that ran southward to Raffoville. At Raffoville, the road intersected with another road that ran east and west. This east-west road was an obvious objective, and was about half the distance to the Carentan-Periers highway further to the south.

The 2nd Battalion's plan was to attack in a column of companies. F Company would lead off with two platoons abreast, and upon reaching the first phase line, E Company would cross the line of departure following behind F Company to the dirt road. At that point, both companies would reform, with the road acting as a boundary between F Company on the right and E Company on

the left. G Company, in reserve, would cross the swamp if needed to protect the left flank of the battalion and maintain contact with the 331st further to the left.

What sounded like a solid plan of attack was encumbered with some serious problems. The recon was bad: the only information on the enemy said that the island was held by remnants of a company and some Russian volunteers and conscripted laborers. Captain Sharpe of G Company recalled that a later G-2 report, filed after the battle, showed that the 2nd Battalion had actually made their attack against much superior forces. These were most likely the 2nd Battalion/6th Fallschirmjaeger (parachute) Regiment and elements of the 17th SS Panzer Grenadiers. The swamp also was a major obstacle. It ran from north to south in this area, preventing an attack directly to the south to the objective. Instead, it was necessary to first attack west across the swamp over 300 yards of open terrain under direct fire from the enemy. In some places, the ground was too spongy to support a combat loaded infantryman, and prevented the use of tank support.

Finally, the lack of communications was also a serious problem, and Captain Sharpe remembers that the Germans were jamming the radios with a "dispy-doodle high and low tone." During the advance, battalion HQ did not seem to know what was happening beyond the line of departure, and platoons

were moving without any coordination or direction. This added more confusion to an already bad situation.

The operation began at 0300 hours, when the battalion was alerted for movement to the forward assembly area. It moved from its bivouac area at La Granvallerie in the order of F Company, E Company, H Company, Headquarters, and G Company. Upon reaching the forward assembly area at Les Baleries they halted and consumed a breakfast ration. Then, as soon as the supporting artillery concentrations started falling, the battalion moved to the line of departure, with F Company going to the line of departure, and E Company just to the east. While F Company was waiting for H-Hour, Lt. Smith, the battalion S-2, came to the battalion commander with a new aerial photo of the objective, indicating that a lot of new digging had been done by the Germans. But, it was too late to change the plan of attack as H-Hour had arrived.

F Company crossed the line of departure with the 1st Platoon led by Lt. George W. Stahley on the left and the 2nd Platoon led by Lt. Donald L. Richardson on the right. They had a perfect formation and looked like they were on a blank fire problem. But something happened immediately that they hadn't planned on; there was already slight fog in the area, daylight hadn't arrived, and the smoke from artillery concentrations settled between the line of departure and the objective. It was impossible to see anything.



The two assault platoons disappeared into the fog and smoke. Not wanting to lose contact, Captain Randall decided to follow them across, and took along the artillery forward observer, a group of engineers, F Company's light machine gun section, Lt. Frank R. Yukl, and two runners. The group was halfway across the swamp when the enemy opened fire with machine guns, mortars, and artillery. The enemy machine gun fire was mostly in the 2nd Platoon's zone (to the right of the 1st Platoon). The engineer officer was severely wounded, one runner was wounded, and Lt. Yukl and Captain Randall were both slightly wounded.



When he reached the island, Randall found that the 2nd Platoon had immediately veered to the right when they came under the enemy machine gun fire. Its two lead squads became pinned down in the swamp. The support squad managed to knock out the machine guns, and this allowed them to get up and move to the first hedgerow. In the process, the platoon leader Lt. Richardson was hit by machine gun fire and killed, and the platoon was now at about half strength and morale was broken.

The 1st platoon had about 25 men left, so Randall decided to spread out their support squad along a thin line to fill in gap between the two platoons. He then notified Lt. Yukl, who

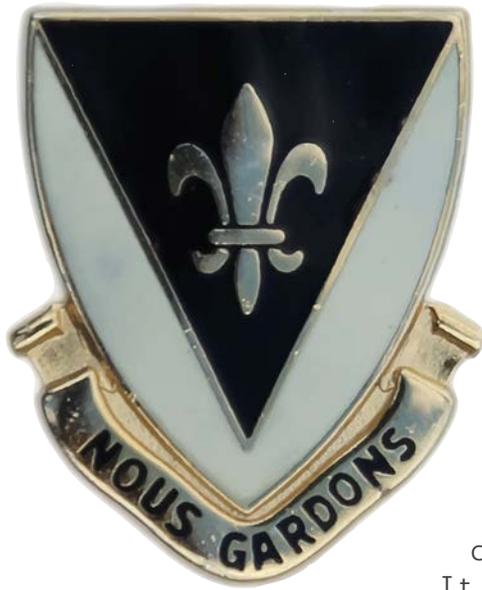
was now in command of the Platoon, of what he had done. After a brisk fight, the first hedgerow was taken, and Randall was wounded about the face and left arm by a potato masher grenade. Members of his company insisted that he go back to the aid station. He refused, and accepted first aid from a company aid man.

At this point, the lack of communications began to take its toll: without any orders, the weapons platoon decided to cross over the swamp. They were held at the first hedgerow for further orders. Then Lt. Hansel came across with the support platoon, even though he had been told by Captain Randall to wait for further orders. For some reason, someone at battalion HQ had told Hansel that Randall had been knocked out and help was needed.

A counterattack was expected at any moment, so Randall took one squad of the 3rd platoon and added it to the thinly held line. The rest of the 2nd platoon was shifted to the right. He then sent Lt. Hopley with the light machine gun section to the left to join the 1st Platoon, and placed the 60 mm mortar section behind the 2nd platoon. Soon after, Lt. Hopley was killed by mortar fire and Lt. Yukl suffered severe concussion. Randall was wounded again, for the third time.

At about 0800 Captain Randall learned that E Company had crossed the swamp. They were not supposed to cross until F Company had reached the first phase line, but the battalion commander sent them over anyhow to help drive the enemy back. E Company suffered heavy losses in crossing





*329th Infantry Regiment  
Unit insignia*

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artillery fire from self-propelled 88s. This forced the 2nd Platoon of F Company to withdraw back to the last hedgerow in a daze. Then, about an hour later, a second counterattack was launched, this time on the left. The enemy drove back Lt. Bialek's flank and caused about 40 casualties. Lt. Bialek was killed and Lt. MacMurphy severely wounded. The machine gunners were removing the bolts from their guns. It was obvious at this point that unless reinforcements were received, it would be necessary to withdraw. Randall contacted Col. Bowen and informed him of the situation. Bowen told him to begin a withdrawal.

It was decided to send Lt. Yukul and Lt. Hansel back first with what was left of E Company and F Company under the cover of heavy smoke. Some of them were reluctant to leave, and elected to stay and infiltrate back during the night under the cover of darkness. Most crawled back across the swamp, either singly or in groups of two or three. Lt. Yukul was killed, but Lt. Hansel made it safely, taking advantage of a small canal ditch. He then began placing the men in firing position on the right of the line to cover Captain Randall and Lt. Zender who were withdrawing with the 3rd Platoon of F Company.

Randall returned across the line supporting the 1st Sergeant with one arm and a blinded rifleman

with his other arm. He then rounded up all the men of the two companies and led them to the Battalion aid station. Col. Bowen ordered Randall to be evacuated as a casualty, but he was later found by battalion and regimental commanders back at his company. They finally had to place him in an ambulance to make him leave his men.

During the fighting that day, one of the G Company medics obtained permission from Captain Sharpe to help evacuate the wounded from the field. He then walked out into the middle of the swamp to a severely wounded rifleman, and noticed many others either wounded or dead. At that point he called to the Germans and asked for medical assistance and a truce. Two German parachute medics appeared with a white undershirt on a stick. They helped to improvise leg and arm splints for one of the casualties, but refused to assist in carrying the wounded soldier to the American side. The G Company medic then asked one of the other German officers if he would permit a litter and a few more American medics to come out and help carry the wounded. A truce was made, and the Germans allowed personnel from the 2nd Battalion aid station to help evacuate the wounded.

In his memoirs, Captain Sharpe recalled that "once the medics had done all they could, they took down the white flags and the front reverted to firing at everything that moved. It was a fourth of July which most of us would never forget."

the swamp including the Commanding Officer, Captain Raymond Poore who was taken out by concussion. Those that had managed to make it across bumped into F Company. The result was mass confusion.

Randall tried to separate and reorganize E and F Companies and get the attack moving forward again. Repeated attempts were made to straighten out the line and move forward, only to be stopped by enemy machine gun fire. Finally, heavy mortar and artillery fire was requested to prevent the Germans from mounting a counterattack. There were only about 100 men left in the two companies. At one point Randall told battalion HQ that he would try to move forward again, but was told to dig in and wait for assistance from G Company.

Then came a series of German counterattacks. First, the Germans hit on the right flank with infantry supported by



# Fallen Heroes of the 331st

## The story of July 4, 1944

Text: Dave Curry, Association Historian

On the morning of 4 July 1944, the 331st Infantry moved into position along the front line south of the village of Meautis in the hedgerows of Normandy. To the south of them, the crack German paratroopers of the 6th Fallschirmjaeger Regiment were well dug in and waiting on the other side of a swamp. The 331st was supposed to jump off at daylight, with the Second and Third Battalions on the line and the First in reserve. They moved up along the roads accompanied by a company of medium tanks which would supply direct covering fire from a ridge above the swamp. In the Second Battalion, F Company, on the right, faced south towards the Les Ormeaux farm, and E Company was on the left facing open marshland.

At 0430 hours, the pre-dawn sky lit up as seven field-artillery battalions and three infantry

cannon companies fired a 15-minute preparatory barrage. At 0445 hours, the Second Battalion moved across the line of departure with mortars firing in support. The infantrymen had gauze strips tied to the back of their helmets so that they could be seen in the pre-dawn morning haze. As they moved out, artillery fired on prearranged targets about 700 yards in front of them. The first sign of enemy resistance was when the sun's rays lit up the swamp, reflecting its rays in bright streamers over the murky terrain.

In E Company, Lt. Ned Burr, a forward observer for the 908th Field Artillery, and his radio operator had been hit by shrapnel about three minutes after they crossed the line of departure. This left E Company without any way of calling in artillery support. In F Company, another forward observer, Lt. Cobble, had reached a point about 75 yards



Charly DiDominic was born 10 February 1922 in Detroit, MI, the son of Assunta and Tony DiDominic. Charly entered service in March 1943, and became part of the 83rd Division on 16 July 1944 as a replacement in E Company, 331st Infantry along with 43 others. He was with E Company for nine days before he was killed in action on 25 July 1944. A single bullet hole in the brim of his helmet may have been caused by machine-gun fire or a sniper. Originally buried at Blosville, France, his body was returned home for burial in May 1948 at Holy Sepulchre Cemetery in Detroit. He is one of nearly 4600

men lost by the 83rd Division during the month. The hedgerow campaign began on the 4th of July and ended on the day that Charly died. On the first day of fighting, "the division gained 200 yards, took 6 German prisoners, and lost almost 1400 men." You can read the story of that first day here.



from the U-shaped farmhouse at Les Ormeaux. Heavy machine gun fire had caught him and he lay pinned down in a ditch. Soon the enemy was firing heavy artillery and mortars. Two high-velocity weapons fired round after round into the ridge behind the swamp.

Somehow, H Company (the heavy weapons company) had managed to make it across the swamp and past the farmhouse. There, mortarman John Aller recalled that they were in plain view of the house which was sitting above the bank of the swamp. "Despite heavy concentrations of enemy automatic weapons and mortar fire, some of the battalion had made it, only to find that all hell broke loose behind us. The enemy had let us cross over or in between them, as they had been well camouflaged and we had passed them up." Aller realized that they were surrounded and were in clear view for the Germans to take "pot shots" at them.

To the left of F Company, German snipers and patrols had caught most of E Company off guard near LaRayerie. Lt. Col. Henry Nielson (who had temporarily taken command of the regiment after Col. Barndollar had been killed by a sniper) learned that E Company had become badly disorganized. He directed Lt. Col. Faber, the 2nd Battalion commanding officer, to relieve E Company and pull it back across the line to reorganize. The

situation was actually much worse than Nielson realized. E Company had gone about 200 yards when they were stopped by heavy machine gun and mortar fire. When Col. Faber and his party managed to make their way to E Company, they learned that there was only one officer left, and only about 50 men were known to be alive. For all practical purposes, E Company had ceased to exist.

Meanwhile, F Company was pinned down about fifty yards from the U-shaped house. To assist them, Col. Faber brought up six tanks to the observation post, where they started firing directly across the swamp. The enemy returned fire on the tanks, and started shelling them with mortars and heavy artillery. G Company, which had not yet moved out of reserve, was about 500 yards to the rear, and was caught under this rain of fire and received as many casualties as the troops out in the swamps.

The 3rd Battalion, near La Chenay, made up the left flank of the 331st line along the Carentan-Periers Road. They had made no progress and, in fact, had lost some ground. Unlike the swamp in which the Second Battalion was operating, the ground here was thickly crowded with hedgerows. The troops had moved out only a few yards, where they were cut down by the enemy every time they made a move. The Germans had stopped the 3rd



Battalion cold. K Company had been mauled and had a lot of the fight taken out of them, and only L Company on the right had made any advance. Lt. Col. Schuster, the battalion commander, decided to contact L Company personally as there were no other communications. He crawled out of the observation post and started along the hedgerow. He reached a point about fifty yards from the observation post when he was hit. A few of the men rushed to his side and brought him back to the aid station. His executive officer, Maj. Brown, took over the front lines.

In the Second Battalion, Capt. Fleming had the only communications to the rear. All other wire and radio communications were out and runners, who were sent out in an attempt to contact the regimental command post and the other companies, never came back. From the observation post Fleming could see the men crumple over and fall to the ground.

F Company launched a new attack, and in the resulting battle, killed and wounded scores of Germans and secured the U-shaped house. Lt. Cobble got into the house with his radio and remained there for about half an hour when the enemy counter-attacked in force, preceded by direct fire from high velocity guns. This forced the men of F Company back to their former positions about fifty yards from the house. The Germans moved back into the house, and one of them started up a phonograph which was inside. The voice of Al Jolson could be heard singing over the din of battle.

One platoon of F Company, which numbered only about twelve men by now, pushed in against the German counter-attack and retook the house. They brought a heavy machine gun with them, which they set up just inside the door. About fifteen minutes later, forty enemy troops came down the main road toward the house. Lt. Mitchell, who was in command of the platoon, kicked open the door and the machine gun mowed down the Germans in the line of fire. The enemy then started to lay direct fire into the house killing or wounding many in the platoon. The survivors destroyed the machine gun and withdrew from the house.

F Company's casualties had been severe and it was decided to throw G Company into the line on the left flank of F Company, with the mission of storming the objective on the opposite side of the swamp about 1400 yards away. Platoon leaders and scouts reached the objective through a sheet of enemy fire, but were then killed. The rest of the company had become strung out in a thin line all the way back to the line of departure. Then four enemy tanks rumbled down a road, firing as they came. One of the tanks turned left while the others pulled up on a line in a field and faced the narrow ribbon of men that made up what remained of G Company. This was about 1100 hours. Artillery set one of the tanks on fire. Two of the tanks then withdrew and another was abandoned by its crew.

John Aller with H Company realized that their position beyond the farmhouse was precarious, and they had to get back across the swamp if they were to survive. Two "ducks" were sent in to help them evacuate, but they got bogged down and stuck in the swamp. Finally, with casualties increasing by the minute, Aller and the others decided to make a mad dash back across the swamp under artillery and small arms fire, a distance that Aller figured must have been about 200 yards.

Aller managed to make it back across without being hit (which he attributed to his high-school cross-country experience). When he reached the other side, he spotted a hole and dove into it headlong. All through the evening other survivors straggled across the line, and by nightfall it was apparent that the first round of the battle had been lost. The only advance that had been made during the day was along the Carentan-Periers Road where the 1st Battalion moved out late in the day after a 15-minute artillery preparation. In the semi-darkness of evening they managed to move forward about 650 yards to Le Varimesnil before being stopped by German artillery and machine-gun fire.



*The morning guns in serenade brought down a fiery hell  
And it seemed to us as though the mighty heavens fell  
Shrapnel ripped and scarred the ground  
The red earth shattered, groaned in horrid sound*

*Gauze streamers on our helmets marked us  
As we moved out across the line  
Machine gun tracers found us and mortar shells burst round us  
And when the morning mist had burned away  
There were only fifty of us left to save the day*

*We were too young to fade away so soon  
this far away from home and those we loved  
So save us in the thoughts that you keep near  
Protect us in the memories that you hold dear  
We never had the chance to say goodbye*





“It was the most god forsaken,  
unforgiving, murderous terrain  
that I ever encountered and  
fought on.  
The body count testifies to that.”

*Colonel James Shonak passed  
away on March 7, 2003.*

James Shonak was  
commander, Anti-Tank  
Company, 331st Infantry. Col.  
Shonak contacted Dave Curry  
in 2001 and in subsequent  
letters recalled his memories  
of Normandy. These letters,  
startling in their clarity and  
detail, tell it like it was. They  
testify to the sacrifices made  
by those who served, and add  
immeasurably to the history  
of the 83rd Division.

# The Shonak Letters

Normandy Recollections of a Company Commander

Text & photos: Dave Curry

January 04, 2001

Mr. Curry: Greetings Sir and Happy New Year.

From Col. James D. Shonak, former Commander Anti-Tank  
Company 331st/ 83rd Division. For the past 87 years, I have  
made Springfield, MA my home. After the war, although Col. York  
wanted me to reenlist and take over the regiment, I declined and  
resigned my command after the hell we had been through. The  
Army instead requested that I take over command of a reserve  
school in Chicopee, MA, which I ran for 42 years.

If interested, Shonak is 5th from the right in the front row in  
the photo taken at Camp Breckenridge, Kentucky.

I appreciate all those who I served with. My men were the very  
best. You sir can be very proud of Tom. I am. Those boys of the  
83rd are heroes not only to this country...but of the entire free  
world. Their sacrifice will live on forever after we are long gone.  
They will never be forgotten, ever.

Regards

Shonak

## The Beginning of the Beginning: Experiences of the 83rd Division

April 18, 2001

Dear Mr. Curry:

Apologize for so long in returning a response. I have been ill for a long time and am not getting better. I am pushing myself to do this. My son-in-law is taking my dictation. It is impossible to remember back then...old age and things you're not allowed to remember...I can't begin to explain it all...so God awful horrific...so permanent...our lives changed completely moment to moment. Staggering loss of life. Afraid to make relationships just to protect yourself because you knew your job was to give yours up.

We (331st - F Company) received orders to proceed to France from England to relieve the paratroopers (101st Airborne). They had landed by air and were holding the area...and we were supposed to land by boat to relieve them pronto and use the element of surprise. Then we were supposed to organize for the attack and obliterate the enemy and proceed on attacking forward without stopping. We encountered a big storm in the English channel for 6 days and we could not land. Most of the men were sick as dogs...they couldn't or wouldn't eat. Instead of preparing (psychologically), we were becoming physically worse. Losing weight, and strength...tossing out food...all the while the paratroopers were trying to hold on to their position and needed us there. The men were sick although a few could eat. Then of all things...we started running out of food for the few that could eat! What a mess...and we had not even landed yet! Christ! I contacted regimental HQ and told them in no uncertain terms "Get me food or get me the hell out of here immediately!...My men are in lousy condition...I got to get off this damn floating sick bay. I've now got the healthy ones getting sick because everyone around them is sick with so much vomiting taking place." I received word back from regimental HQ and they got us into small boats that carried 10 per boat. Finally after 6 days we landed...the element of surprise of our arrival was completely lost.

We got out of the boats and walked through water to get to the sand. Everything in sight (wharves) had been destroyed by the storm. Soaked to the knees, we walked to the secure location where they were holding their position. We had to attack through them. We did have air support but suffered casualties. As infantry company commander, I had 200 plus men I was responsible for. Every time I lost a man, a piece of me went with him. Going through town after town, the losses mounted. We encountered sniper fire, booby traps, artillery fire but the Germans were withdrawing because we were overwhelming them. We reorganized after we had taken multiple towns and received additional support units. We became under the command of regiments. We received 12 anti tank guns, and additional artillery along with supplies and more replacements.

They were using damn air bursts and slaughtering us. They shot an air burst at my jeep with my driver in front with me and a rifleman in back. They blew us out of the jeep and I received shrapnel in my leg. The driver had his hand ripped open by the shrapnel and the rifleman got thrown out as well and headed for cover. Under the cover of darkness, we discovered that the jeep was a total loss and we ran into the woods and proceeded to headquarters and requested another jeep to get back to the unit.

The rifleman needed permanent rest and was sent back and replaced. We were always very careful to cover our rank due to the sharpshooters. Any group of 3 or more was an inviting target...and they always opted for the rank. I tried to keep my men no closer than 8 feet from me. I covered myself with mud...and nothing that shined. 'm not feeling very well...need to take a break. This is tough and exhausting.

All my best for now.  
Shonak



## To the Hedgerows

May 24, 2001

Dear Mr Curry:

Please give First Sergeant Terhanko my best...the name sounds familiar but I can't picture the face. Sorry for the confusion...I'm trying to piece together events that I can remember that I believe you might be interested in that your father was directly involved with and sacrificed for.

I was ordered to take over the Anti-Tank Company while it was being formed at Camp Breckenridge. When we headed for England we were with a number of companies that we supported in the regiment... and F Company was one that we were with. The ships we crossed on were large...so it was natural that many different companies boarded together on the same boat. We crossed with and supported among others F Company. When we hit France, they split my company up (both of which I was still responsible for) to support two forward battalions, which contained 3 or more companies each...one of which contained F Company.

Although we attempted to train for the hedgerows back in the States, it was of questionable usefulness. IT WAS THE MOST GOD FORSAKEN, UNFORGIVING, MURDEROUS TERRAIN THAT I EVER ENCOUNTERED AND FOUGHT ON. THE BODY COUNT TESTIFIES TO THAT. The Germans were intelligent, cunning, strong willed and resourceful. Nobody was ready for what lay ahead of us... including upper command. Each individual hedgerow was in and of itself it's own separate battle. Nobody seems to get this right Dave. It could take a day to control and secure the next row...or it could take 3 days...depending on what was on the other side and how established the territory was the Germans were occupying. Dave, understand that when we entered a strong occupied area (many times unaware), we were dealing with snipers, mines, booby traps, strong artillery and...GERMAN TUNNELS all over the goddamn place. One minute they are in front of you and you're preparing with recon to advance forward...and the next minute, all hell is breaking loose because you suddenly realize you're surrounded and artillery is pouring down on you and you're getting slaughtered screaming for support with no idea how badly you have been hit and who and what you've lost. In fact, many times whole areas were set up by the Germans for us to come into and take us out by priority. First... heavy armor; second...anti tank guns; third...jeeps and movables; fourth...machine gunners and fifth... everything and everyone else. God we lost a lot of men. My worst nightmares are still in those rows.

To say that the hedgerows were difficult to maneuver through (as TV documentaries do) is an understatement to say the least. They were high rows of whatever the farmers had planted (corn, apple trees, bushes and vines of grapes, grain and vegetation, etc.), with rows between each to barely drive through. There were row upon row of hedgerows. Miles of them. They could be 10 feet or 30 feet wide... thick with vegetation...and you did not know what or whom was on the other side, and only feet away. You can be on top of the enemy and not even realize it. You listen for sounds and sense for human. And they're doing the same. So, even to be safe, you would lob over hand grenades to wipe them out. Grenade launchers were also used. Airbursts were also used to shoot over the hedge to shower hot metal. We had to be careful that we didn't hit any of our own reconnaissance men. If you're fortunate to have accurate air reconnaissance to find where they are first, you can more quickly advance...but you still run into small pockets of enemy without armor or anti-tank that would take you by surprise and lead to the loss of some your best men up front. We tried to get a soldier in a tree to scope the area if we could keep him secure and protected.

Dave, you didn't go around hedgerows because they went on and on and on and on. You have to go through. Here's how...you reconnoiter and find an area of least enemy resistance or occupation...or you guessed. You quickly and quietly plant explosives in the hedgerow to blow an area up big enough to get movables through. Please remember...when you detonate, you give your position away to the



enemy so you better have a good plan and support because enemy heavy artillery will be moments away. You get machine gunners and riflemen on both sides of the position to be blown with heavy armor and anti-tank hidden by brush and bramble in back ready to take out an unsuspecting Nazi tank(s). After you blow the area, you move immediately and push into the next row after it is secured. And quickly move armor and anti-tank positions because they are targets. When you meet up with German tanks, you shoot at the flank of the tank, or shoot out a tread. The underbelly of the tank, the weakest point, was generally taken care of with a mine.

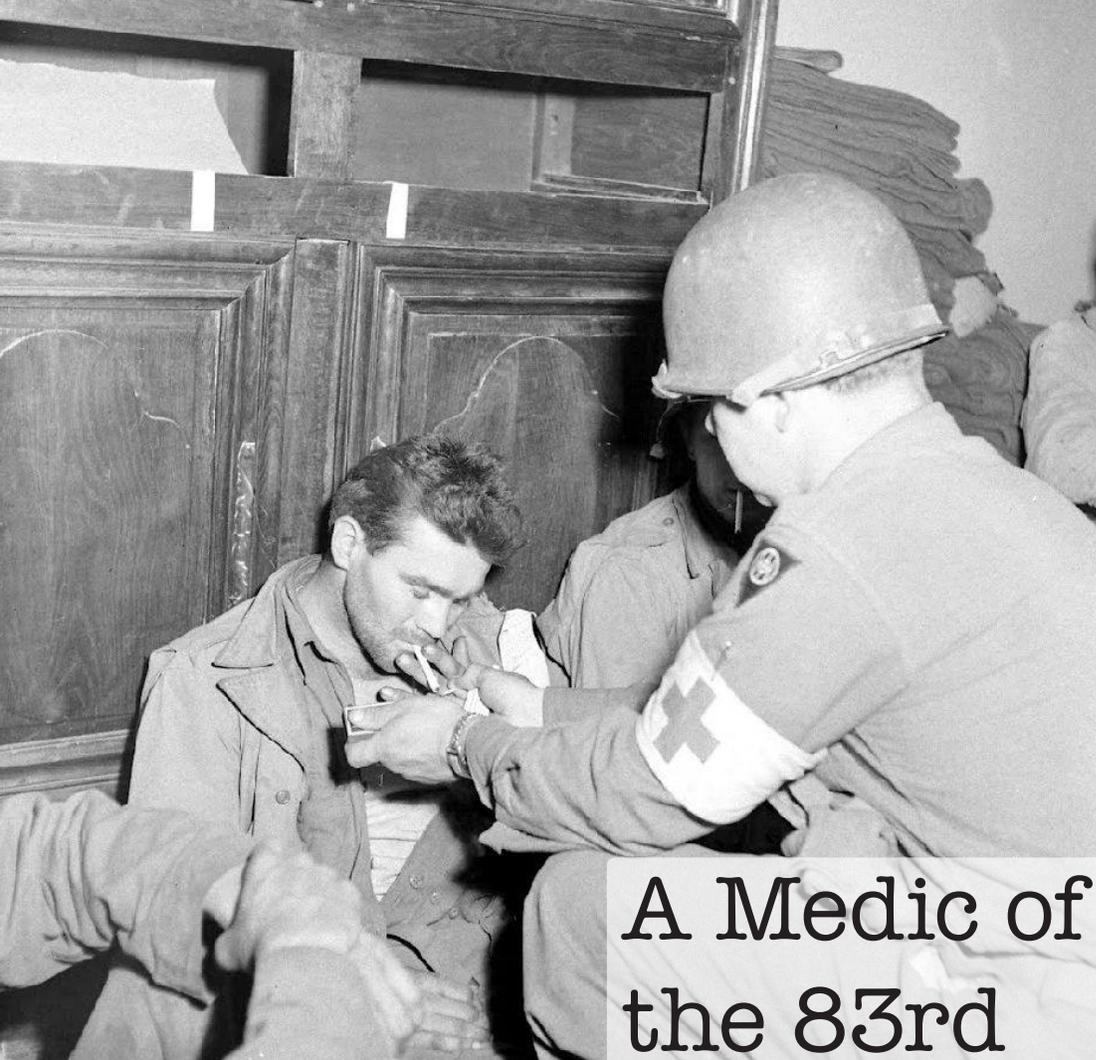
You ALWAYS tried to protect your flank and rear with reserve squads or a platoon including machine guns, to keep the Germans from sneaking up on you from behind..which they tried over and over. You might need a company (200 men) or a platoon (60 men), depending on what the circumstance was. You might need a squad to go out and reconnoiter. I had big, high velocity anti-tank guns that we would use often.

When dealing with enemy on foot, we blow away part of the hedgerow to cut through, you then send over airbursts or artillery, or set up a machine gun on a hump or behind brush, to fire at the German soldiers scurrying or under cover before our men would go through. If we suspected Germans to be in the trenches or behind a wall, we would send airbursts and/or artillery fire would be called. You can explode it with a cannon or a bazooka. Once the area was cleared, the riflemen would go first(quicker), with support from machine gunners. Then the grenade launchers would go next. Anti-tank would go if they suspected any tanks or vehicles with armor. When we didn't want to be seen by anybody, we would also use smoke to hide where we were and what we were doing. Your dad and the rest of us moved on our hands, knees and bellies and lived and slept in trenches for cover and lived on cold rations. Having the enemy so close was nerve racking. It tested your head and worked on you like nothing else. They were so close.

I am tired. This is difficult to relive. I hope this helps. What do you want to know more of? Let me know.

All my best.  
Shonak





## A Medic of the 83rd

The story of Henry Hauser

This is written on behalf of all the medics, who along with the infantry, moved through the hedgerows of Normandy, from Omaha Beach to St. Lo, a distance of about twenty miles. All the news was about D-Day, but very little about the daily life, living in the hedgerows.

*The account presented on the following pages was first printed in Thunderbolt Vol 59 No 3 and is reprinted here to honor our combat medics during the Normandy campaign.*

*The author, Henry Hauser (2nd Battalion, 330th) passed away April 23, 2015.*

As a medic I worked alone, but on one particular night a survivor of a 20 men patrol came in from our left flank, calling for a medic. Our riflemen led him to me, as I was the last medic in the area, the other either wounded or killed. He informed me that the patrol he was with got shot up, and many soldiers were too wounded to get back to our lines. It was now dark, just the moonlight to guide us through the hedgerows. He led me two hedgerows left (east), and then two hedgerows south. There was a crossroad of paths, and we turned east again, we crossed a large bomb crater located on the southeast corner of the hedges. We went one more hedgerow east and turned right (south). As we moved south, we had a three-foot mound running along our left side. We came to the end of the mound and saw a flat opening about the width of a street. As we paused, tracers came flashing through this opening. The Germans knew the layout. My guide returned to our lines, promising me that he would send out a





Top: The WW2 Combat Medic Badge. The Combat Medical Badge Medal was established to recognize the important role and service of medical personnel assigned or attached to infantry units and who daily shared with the infantry, the hazards and hardships of combat while at the same time providing essential medical assistance to wounded and injured personnel. First introduced in January 1945, it was made retroactive to December 6, 1941.

Below & opposite page: Medics of the 83rd at work in Normandy

few litter bearer squads to help me evacuate the wounded. I waited a short while, and when no small arm fire was heard I dashed across the opening and reached the eight or nine wounded soldiers. I checked out all of them, and using my Carlyle bandages, morphine surettes and sulfanilamide powder, patched them up the best I could. I promised them that I would return and took one wounded soldier who was shot in the leg. I carried this soldier on my back, and when I came to the opening in the hedgerow I hesitated and moved across the opening as quickly as possible. Carrying this soldier was very difficult, as I had to pass that large bomb crater. There was about three feet between the hedgerow and the edge of the crater. I finally reached our lines and had a few riflemen take him to the aid station. I asked our sergeant to get me two litter squads, about eight men, to help me evacuate all the wounded. I think they came from our band members. As we met at our left flank I gave them a quick orientation speech, saying such things as stay 20 feet apart, single file, and hit the ground if you hear the whistling sound of the 88's. The mortar's coming are never heard, so you just take your chances of surviving.

As we moved east and then south, then east, we passed that large bomb crater, one



more hedgerow east and then south toward the opening of the hedgerow. I told all the litter bearers not to talk as sound travelers far at night when the artillery stops. I crossed the opening, and one litter bearer came across with me. We carried one soldier across the opening, and one squad of litter bearers took him to the aid station. This procedure went on through the night. On one occasion I sent a litter bearer to check on a soldier, located about 30 yards south, and he returned to inform me that he was dead. I moved south looking for more wounded and discovered that this soldier was still breathing. I crossed back past the flat opening end brought back a litter. My helper and I carried this soldier across the opening, and our last litter squad got him back to the aid station. There were no more tracers coming through the opening, so I figured the Germans were getting some sleep. I made one more search for wounded men and saw a body with his face in the ground. I turned him over and discovered half of his face was gone. I returned him to his original position, not knowing why I did this. Maybe I didn't want any other soldier to see this.

We finally got the wounded out, but I was left with two wounded soldiers. The litter bearers did their job and did not return, so I was left with two wounded guys who could not walk. One soldier has his abdomen shot

up, and the other one had been hit in his neck. I bandaged the abdomen so his intestines remained tightly held by a Carlyle bandage. The soldier with the neck wound bled pretty badly, so I covered him up as tightly as I could. I picked up the soldier with the abdominal wounds and carried him baby style, my left arm under his knees and my right arm under his shoulders. The Soldier with the neck wound got behind me, and hanging onto my web belt, walked behind me, keeping his head perfectly straight, trying to prevent more bleeding. This is the way we moved, crossing the opening and then toward the bomb crater. It was impossible to go any further, so I jumped into the bomb crater and carried each soldier into the bottom of the crater. I informed them that I would get a few litter squads and get them back to the aid station.

When I got back to our infantry line I leaned against a tree and fell asleep. I woke up suddenly and picked because I did not know how long I slept. I looked down our line and saw Major Allen kneeling down talking to a few soldiers. I ran to him to inform him that I left two soldiers out in no man's land. Major Allen proceeded to give me hell for abandoning wounded soldiers. I told him what I did through the night, evacuating eight or ten wounded soldiers, and that I need a few more litter squads to get those two to our aid station. Major

Allen apologized to me and immediately got me some help. It was getting light, so I must not have slept very long. I led the litter bearers to the bomb crater. As I remained on the northwest corner of the hedgerows, I called out quietly asking if they were all right. They answered me, so we crawled over to the crater. We managed to get both soldiers on litters and started our trip toward the aid station. As we were moving north, I heard the whistling sound of an 88 coming in our direction. I told everyone to lower the litters and hit the ground. Mortars started to explode around us, but after a few seconds we continued on. One of our litter bearers yelled out that his litter handle had been blown away, but no one was hit. That is typical of how strange war can be. On our way to the aide station, our two wounded buddies told us that during the night some German medics reached them in the crater and asked if they would like to return to the German line. Our wounded said they would like to return to the American line, and the German medics said "O.K." and left.

The handle of the litter must have been blown away by a tree burst, with fragments coming straight down. The large crater was made by one of our 500-pound bombs. When we finally got everyone back to the aide station, I re-supplied myself with all the medical supplies I needed and returned to the riflemen, who were spread out



along the hedgerows. We continued moving from hedgerow to hedgerow, with heavy casualties, until we reached the outskirts of St. Lo. Capt. Mitchell, M.D., my commanding officer, checked up on me periodically, until I was wounded, on July 17, 1944, just outside St. Lo. I remember coming through the aide station and talking to Capt. Mitchell. He worked on my wounds, and then we said goodbye, wishing to see each other once again. I never saw him again.

The Germans were making a last stand to hold St. Lo, knowing well that after St. Lo our tanks would move through France on to Paris. I was sent to the 1st General Hospital, located in Oxford, England, and spent three months as a patient. I was hit in my lower spine, by mortar fragments, and hit by a bullet in my right butt. I was working on a wounded soldier when I got hit. Around November 1, 1944, I was sent back to Europe and assigned to the 101st Division. Fortunately, I survived the War and ended the war in Bavaria, Germany, returning home in December, 1945.

I often thought about my buddies from the 83rd Div., and I did find one dear friend, a fellow medic named Jack Merrill. Jack traced me down, around 1972, and we keep in close contact. In fact, we, with our wives, traveled through Normandy together. Nothing was familiar.

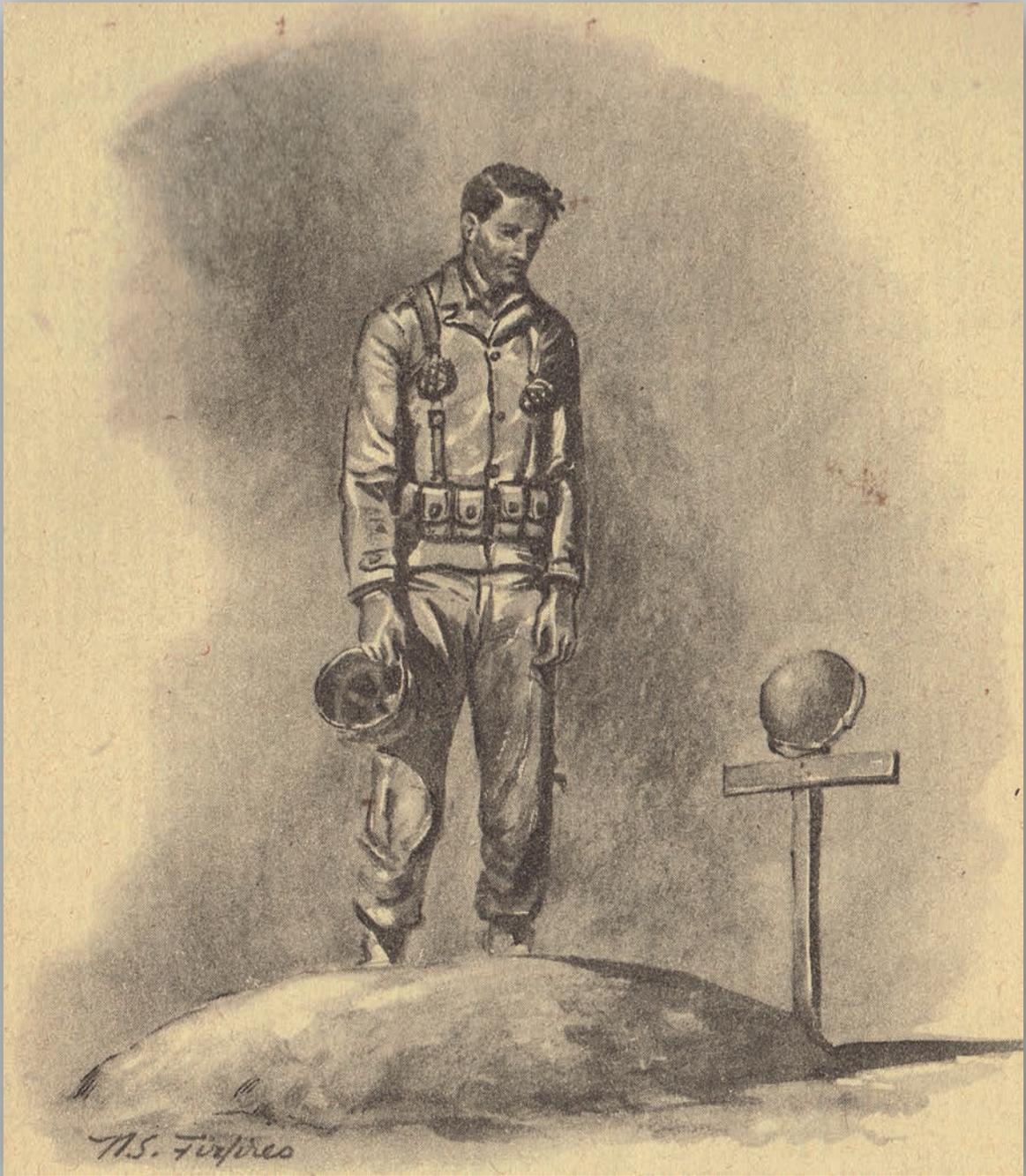
The sad part of this story is that when I finally found out where Capt. Mitchell lived, in Scranton, Pennsylvania, he had already passed away, but I had a nice talk with his wife. Then I found out that Major Allen was retired and living in Atlantic Beach, Florida, but when I finally called him, his wife informed me that he passed away just a year before. I guess we should never wait, in calling our World War II friends.

In closing, I would love to hear from anyone who participated in Normandy, 330th, 2nd Btn. If I could hear from any of the litter bearers or wounded, it would be so exciting. Please contact me at:

Henry Hauser

P.S. Why did I write this story? I did it because World War II soldiers are getting old, and most stories will disappear with the passing away of good old soldiers. Most soldiers would do anything to save their fellow soldiers. The tragedy of war is that in most cases when soldiers are saving their buddies, no one else ever sees or knows about these heroic efforts.





# Remembering those who passed away

## Deceased members of the Thunderbolt family

Our sympathy goes out to all their families. We will miss all of them.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Unit</b>	<b>Reported by</b>
Manny Epstein	Company K, 331st Inf. Reg.	Deborah Schneider
Phyllis Keck	Widow	Rob, son
James Cook	83rd MP	
Vernon Leasure	Company H, 330th Inf. Reg.	Kay Voorheis, daughter
Raymond Morrison	Hq Battery, 332nd FA Btn.	
Jules Herman Sitruck	Company C, 331st Inf. Reg.	Ron, son
Robert Trunk	Company B, 331st Inf. Reg.	Phyllis, wife

*Memorial Day 2016  
Henri-Chapelle American Cemetery  
Picture by Jelle Thys*

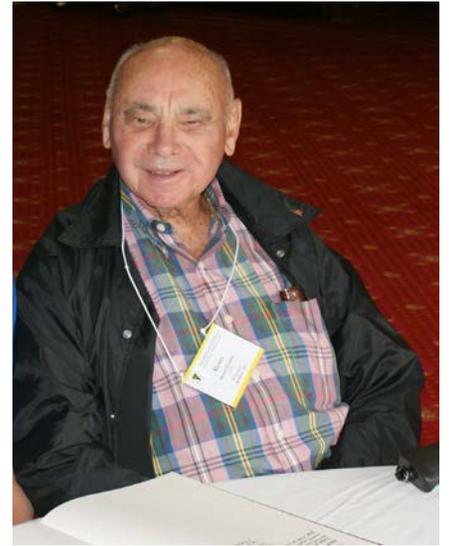
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# Emanuel ‘Manny’ Epstein

Manny passed away on January 7, 2019

Emanuel “Manny” Epstein passed away peacefully at his home in St. Pete Beach, Florida on January 7, 2019. He was 95 years of age. He was interred on January 19, 2019 in Beth David cemetery, Elmont New York on January 19, 2019. As a tribute to Manny, we reprint from Vol. 61, Issue 1 (Fall 2005) Manny’s message to the Association upon his election to the Executive Board in 2005.



I am Manny Epstein and 82 years old, born in Brooklyn, NY and attended Ohio University and then went into the Army, basic training in Ft. McClellan, Ala. I then went to the 63rd Infantry Div. and later was transferred with many other 63rd men to the 83rd Division at Camp Breckenridge, KY



In England I was moved from “I,” Co. to “K” Co, 331st Infantry Regt. In Normandy after a while was assigned as an aide to Col. Sheals the 3rd Bn. Commander. I later joined the 331st Marauder Platoon which was eventually disbanded as the war was winding down after about

4 or 5 months. I was then sent back to “K” Co. after the war was over and during our occupation an accident occurred when our driver turned over our jeep and I wound up in a hospital with a broken shoulder and was later shipped to a hospital at Fort Devens, Mass. After recuperating and being discharged I went back to college at New York University.

A few years later I opened up a men’s wear retail store and eventually retired and then dabbled in

real estate. I now live in Brooklyn but spend the winters in Florida and some time in Colorado.

I joined the 83rd Div. Association when it was first being formed and co-chaired with Harty Lockwood the convention in New York City. I have attended all the conventions except two. One being when my Dad passed away and the other when the 911 disaster occurred in N.Y. and all the flights were cancelled out of N.Y.

The 83rd has been part of my life and I am dedicated to its continuation. I helped in getting our next convention in Nashville, Indiana. I am now working on getting the 2007 convention in Washington. D.C. which I think we will be absolutely great. I have formed lasting friendships - Stan Bielen, Larry Leonardi, Leo Schneider and my buddies of Co. “K” over the years The camaraderie developed amongst us fellows cannot be duplicated in any other phase of life. It has also been my pleasure to attend the dedication of General York’s Plaque at the entrance of the Infantry Museum at the request of Col. Ashmore in Fort Benning, GA.

We live in precipitous times but the members of the 83rd and their descendents will rise to the occasion, for we truly epitomize the heart and soul of America. We are extremely fortunate to have as our Editor and Treasurer the hard working and conscientious Cliff Wooldridge who keeps us informed on what’s going on in our Association.



# Phyllis V. (Smith) Keck

Phyllis passed away on January 8, 2019

Phyllis Vivian (Smith) Keck, 91, of Mountville, passed to her heavenly home on Tuesday, January 8, 2019, at St. Anne's Retirement Community. She was born in Columbia, daughter of the late Paul R. and Charlotte Bard Smith. She was the wife of the late Robert Keck for 65 years before his passing in 2014.

Growing up in a loving home, she developed a love of people, her church and community. Helping others was her role in life. She cared for her mother-in-law, who was stricken with Parkinson's disease, for 9 years, in her home. For 20 years, she was the caregiver of her mother, Charlotte, who was challenged in the aftermath of a stroke. At age 18, she, along with her mother and sisters became caregivers to her infant brother upon the untimely death of her father. Her life focused on caring for her family, friends and her church, Concordia Evangelical Lutheran Church for 65 consecutive years where she played the organ continuously. Also she played on Sunday afternoons at St. John Herr Estates, for 15 years.



As a member of Concordia Evangelical Lutheran Church, Phyllis served in various capacities of the Church. She played the organ for many weddings, funerals and church events for more than 6 decades.

Mrs. Keck graduated from Columbia High School in 1944 where she was a commencement speaker. Phyllis was a member of the Lancaster Musical Arts Society, Director of Music for Job's Daughters, Bethel 7, for over 40 years, an Honorary Permanent Member of the Grand Guardian Council, and the recipient of the Pennsylvania Masonic Youth Foundation's HODEGOS award, recognizing exemplary volunteer leadership. Phyllis was also a member of the Ladies Auxiliary VFW Post # 8757, and a Diamond Life Sponsor member of the NWTF.

Among her hobbies included, baking, cooking, canning, helping her husband with their vegetable garden and many others. She liked to spend time traveling with her husband to Germany, Alaska and South Carolina. Most of all, she loved to spend quality time with her family and friends.

The family would like to express their appreciation for the excellent care received from all of the staff at St. Anne's Retirement Community. Dr. Robert Shultz, and Hospice and Community Care. Thanks also to Pastor Mary Anne Kingsborough and Pastor Tom Rundell and the whole Concordia family. We are indeed grateful for the kindnesses and the care from each and every one.

Surviving are two children: Rob (Susan) Keck, Edgefield, SC; and Carol (Jeff) Gill, Lancaster. Three grandchildren: Carolyn (Curtis) Wright, North Augusta, SC; Heather (Charlie) Reynolds, Greenville, SC; and Ryan (Angela) Gill, Lancaster. Five great-grandchildren: Cadence and Kellen Wright; Hank, Coleman and Hays Reynolds. Phyllis was preceded in death by her brother Paul and her sister Eleanor.



# James Rollie Cook

James passed away on January 6, 2019



James Rollie Cook, the son of Elza Sylvester and Lillie Ann (Maness) Cook, was born December 22, 1922, in rural Rock Port. He attended Lone Cedar country school, north of Rock Port, Missouri. On January 10, 1943, Rollie entered the United States Army and served his country during World War II in multiple European Theatres. He was honorably discharged on December 18, 1945.

In March 1946, Rollie was united in marriage to Kathryn Marie Noble and they became the parents of Dorothy and William. They later divorced. On August 13, 1955, Rollie was united in marriage to Gladys Evelyn Stevens and they became the parents of one daughter, Sheila. Following their marriage, Rollie also became the father of Evelyn's three daughters, Rose, Judy and Linda. They made their home in Tarkio, Missouri, and in 1957 moved to Maryville, Missouri.

Rollie was employed by Wolf Brothers as a farm hand, then by Missouri Service on the tree trimming crew. A few years after moving to Maryville, Rollie became the mechanic for the newly named Kansas City Power and Light, retiring in 1984.

Rollie was a member of the Community of Faith Church in Maryville, then transferred membership to Assembly of God Church in Tarkio. He was also a member of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. Evelyn passed away April 21, 2017. Rollie passed away Sunday, January 6, 2019 at Nodaway Nursing Home at the age of 96.

In addition to his parents and wife, Evelyn, Rollie was preceded in death by son, William Cook, granddaughter, Staci Leigh Ann Lee, siblings, Howard and Harold (Buss) Cook, Betty Lininger, Dorothy Cook, Clydie Perkins, Mary Lee and George Cook. Survivors include children, Rose (Roy) Munsey, Rock Port, Judy (Richard) Woody, Tarkio, Dorothy Benson, St. Joseph, Missouri, Linda (Danny) Pankau, Jameson, Missouri, and Sheila Wilson, Springfield, Missouri; numerous grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren; siblings, Irene Turner, St. Joseph, and Shirley Driskell, Claycomo, Missouri; and numerous nieces and nephews.



# Vernon L. Leasure

Vernon passed away on February 6, 2019



Vernon L. Leasure, age 96 of Mogadore, Ohio, died on Wednesday, February 6, 2019 at Akron City Hospital, his skilled hands and compassionate heart are now at rest.

He was born on September 28, 1922 in Caldwell, Ohio, the son of the late Joseph L. and Anna (nee McElfresh) Leasure. Vernon was an honorably discharged U.S. Army combat veteran of WWII.

Mr. Leasure was a fleet manager for the U.S. Postal Service for 30 years, retiring in 1984. He was a man of many skills and various interests, foremost, family, and helping others when he could. He especially enjoyed restoring two military jeeps with his sons and attending parades and veteran's events. He was especially proud of the trophies he won from the LCPL Nate Deyarmin Memorial Car Show and the Bantam Jeep Festival.

Survivors include his children, Roger V. Leasure, Rodney E. (Valerie) Leasure, Kay L. Voorheis, Joseph C. (Erin) Leasure, Brenda J. (Antonio) Catalano; his grandchildren, Michelle (Jody) Barnes, Carl Leasure, Cissie (Robert) Morrice, Sayra (Jeff) White, Jennifer (John Stantz) Voorheis, Nicole (Robert) Hogensen, Allegra, Brogan, and Anthony Catalano; his eight great-grandchildren and one great-great-grandson. His sister, Mildred Leasure is also surviving.

Other than his parents, Vernon was preceded in death by his wife of 68 years, the former Catherine Forshey on February 20, 2010, they were united in marriage on April 11, 1942; one granddaughter, Caitlin Leasure; and one brother, Irvil Leasure.



# Raymond L. Morrison

Raymond passed away on January 5, 2019

Raymond L. Morrison, 96, widower of Mary Betty Linville Morrison, passed away January 5, 2018 in Lexington, Kentucky. He was born December 2, 1921 in Scott County, Kentucky to the late Earl and Sarah Frances Marshall Morrison.

Raymond worked 50 plus years of banking in the community. He was past President and Chief Executive officer at First National Bank (now Whitaker Bank). He was a Board Member and Chairman of the Board, he served as CEO of the bank three different times, and was a member of the Kentucky Bankers Association Fifty Year Club.

He served in the U.S. Army for 28 months, during World War II in the European Theatre. He received three battle stars with the 83rd Division in the 322nd Field Artillery Battalion in France, Belgium, and Germany. He was a member of the unit that liberated the Dachau Concentration Camp. He was discharged with the rank of Staff Sergeant. He was a member of the 83rd Infantry Division Association- Kentucky Chapter, and lifetime member of both the American Legion and V. F.W.

He was a member of Oxford Christian Church, a member of the University of Kentucky Alumni Club, Lifetime Alumni Member of Scott County F.F.A., a current member of Scott County Farm Bureau, and of the Kentucky Historical Society. He was a past Vice Chairman and past Board Member for 12 years at Georgetown Municipal Housing Authority. He served for 12 years as Scott County Treasurer, and was a past member of the Advisory Council for the Georgetown Post Office. He was a past Chairman of College Associates and Co-Chairman of the Associates Fund Drive at Georgetown College. A past Chairman of annual fund drives, ten year Board Member, and Chairman of the Local Allocation Committee of Scott County United Way. He was a past Member of the Development Council at Midway College, a past Member of the Board at the Georgetown & Scott County Museum. He was past President, Treasurer, and Member of the Board at Scott County Chamber of Commerce. He was awarded membership in 1974 as a Kentucky Colonel, and was a member of Georgetown Rotary Club for over 50 years.

Raymond is survived by his children, Lee (Lucy) Morrison of Dry Ridge and Linda Kay (Don) Hall of Louisville; grandchildren, Cole Morrison, Katie Morrison, Aaron Christy, Zachery Christy, and Nicholas Hall; sister, Jean Wilcox of Terre Haute, Indiana. He was preceded in death by his wife, parents, and sisters, Ruby Ashurst and Dorothy Bramlett.



# Jules Herman Sitrick

Jules passed away on January 12, 2019



Jules Herman Sitrick, 93, who single-handedly captured 21 German soldiers during World War II and in 2017 received France's highest military award for non-French citizens, The Legion d' Honneur, died on January 12 from complications of a fall in his home. His loving sons Michael, David and Ronald Sitrick and daughters-in-law Nancy Sitrick and Shelly Smith were with him at the time of his death. At the time of France's award, Sitrick said that receiving it was a bittersweet moment. He was heartbroken that his wife of 71 years, Marcia, who had comforted him through nightmares immediately after the war, was too ill to attend. Marcia Sitrick died in October 2017.

Sitrick met Marcia at a dance in Rock Island, Ill., shortly after returning from combat with two boxes of service medals. "I danced with her most of the night, and the next night we went out to dinner and I asked her to marry me," Sitrick told the Chicago Tribune in a 2017 interview. "She said, 'Is it alright if I tell you tomorrow night?' And the next night she said, 'Yes, I'll marry you.'" It was a love affair that lasted more than 71 years. Lt. General USA (ret) H Steven Blum, who was among those nominating Sitrick for the Legion d' Honneur, said, "Herman Sitrick is an icon of the greatest generation that is too quickly vanishing."

Sitrick, who was born and raised in Davenport Iowa, but lived most of his life in the Chicago area, was a well-known broadcast and advertising executive, having worked as an executive at WGN Radio in Chicago, put one of the first all-news radio stations on the air - WNUS Radio in Chicago - and managed a number of radio and television stations around the country before forming J. Herman Sitrick Advertising in 1981. Sitrick's clients

included the Chicago Cubs for 26 seasons, the Chicago Bears, and RE/MAX Realtors for many years. Current clients include Darwin Furniture, a client for over 30 years. Condolences from current and past clients, television networks, business leaders, and others were filled with praise, affection, and sadness. "There wasn't anyone I ever spoke with that didn't say what a wonderful person, husband, father, grandfather, and great grandfather, our father was," said Ronald Sitrick. "He cast a shadow hard for



anyone to fill-viewing honor and doing the right thing as far more than words.”“Our father not only had strong principals, but great judgment and business sense,” Michael Sitrick said. “Since entering the business world, I spoke with him nearly every day. People often ask who my mentor was: it was my father.”David Sitrick said, “Our father was truly an extraordinary man. He was caring and considerate and will truly be missed by all who knew him.”

Jules Herman Sitrick is survived by sons Michael, David and Ronald and daughters-in-law, Nancy, Miriam and Shelly, his grandchildren Julie Sitrick Fahn and her husband Terry Fahn, Sheri Sitrick Field and her husband Kevin Field, Alison Sitrick Grasse and her husband Jesse Grasse, Greg Sitrick, Suzanne Sitrick Sosnowski and her husband Matt, and Arielle Sitrick and great grandchildren, Sarah, Hannah and Matthew Fahn, Oliver, Stella and Layla Field and Anabelle Grasse, Spencer and Summer Sitrick, and Jule’s brother Joseph Sitrick. Memorial services were held at Hillside Memorial Park in Los Angeles, CA on January 20, where he was interred beside his wife Marcia.

In 2017, after receiving the French Legion d’Honneur the extraordinary story of Jules Sitrick was published by several Chicago news outlets. The below quote was taken from an article on [www.chicagojewishnews.com](http://www.chicagojewishnews.com/2017/07/quiet-war-hero-chicago-jew-herman-sitrick-who-never-talked-about-his-service-in-world-war-ii-recently-received-frances-legion-d%CA%BChonneur-for-single-handedly-capturing-21-german-soldiers/). We encourage all to take some time and find the full article to read at [www.chicagojewishnews.com/2017/07/quiet-war-hero-chicago-jew-herman-sitrick-who-never-talked-about-his-service-in-world-war-ii-recently-received-frances-legion-d%CA%BChonneur-for-single-handedly-capturing-21-german-soldiers/](http://www.chicagojewishnews.com/2017/07/quiet-war-hero-chicago-jew-herman-sitrick-who-never-talked-about-his-service-in-world-war-ii-recently-received-frances-legion-d%CA%BChonneur-for-single-handedly-capturing-21-german-soldiers/) or looking up: “Jules Sitrick Quiet War Hero”

*“...Such is the case of Jules Herman Sitrick — known to most as Herman — of Morton Grove. He has been the ultimate mild-mannered man to his family and friends for the majority of his 92 years. “He’s a real gentleman — I never, ever, ever heard him use profanity,” said Chicago Blackhawks president John McDonough, who worked with Sitrick the better part of three decades. Sitrick carved out a satisfying career in sales and management in broadcasting, then in 1981 opened his own Skokie-based advertising agency that he still runs today.*

*But almost out of the clear blue, an incident in which Sitrick seemed to rise far above himself surfaced. During the Battle of the Bulge early in 1945, infantryman Sitrick, a nice Jewish/Middle American boy from Davenport, Iowa, singlehandedly captured and disarmed 21 German soldiers. One Jew holding 21 Nazis all by himself for hours before George Patton’s Third Armored Division could take the POWs off his hands sounds simply staggering when first processed in the consciousness.*

*“If they were SS troops, fanatics, I probably wouldn’t be here,” Sitrick said matter-of-factly recently in his agency office. But these Germans weren’t crazed elite killers, just merely draftees looking for shelter in the middle of a snowstorm. Sitrick did his GI duty beyond what anyone could have expected. He has enjoyed long life as the ultimate bonus...”*



# Robert J. Trunk

Robert passed away on January 6, 2019

The Mass of Christian Burial will be Wednesday, January 10, 2018, at 12:00 PM at Christ Our Light Catholic Parish, Princeton, for Robert J. Trunk, 91, who passed away peacefully at his home on January 6, 2018, while surrounded by family. The visitation will begin at 11:00 AM.

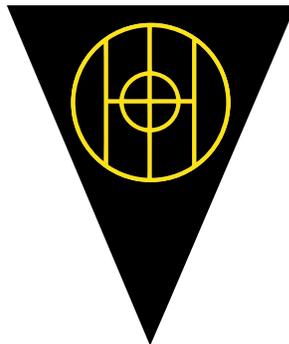
He was born to Earnest and Gertrude (Heath) Trunk on April 1, 1926, in Baldwin Township. He spent his entire life in Princeton, MN.

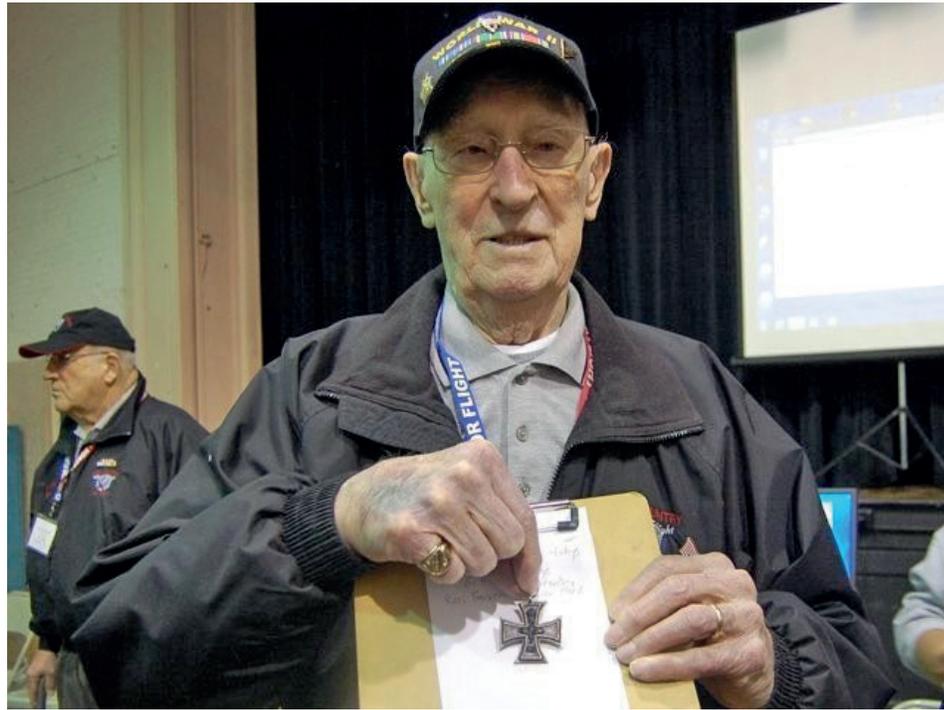
Robert joined the Army from 1944-48 and served overseas during World War II where he received the Bronze Star. After the war, he moved back to Princeton and met the love of his life Phyllis Boyn. They were married in Princeton, MN, on April 17, 1950, and raised three sons, Steven (Kate) Minneapolis, Paul (Deborah) Clearwater, FL, and Michael (Marilyn) Princeton.



He worked for many years delivering propane gas for Federated Co-op. He also worked for Princeton Power Plant and spent many years delivering milk for Kemp's Dairy and Marigold Foods. Robert served on the American Legion Color Guard for 30 years. He also was a dedicated volunteer at Sherburne Wildlife Refuge and was Volunteer of the Year. He loved nature. He was a life-long active member of Christ of Light Catholic Church.

Robert is preceded in death by his parents; an infant daughter; an infant son; and siblings, Loren, Clair, Mary, Adeline, Delores, and Ed. He is survived by his wife of 67 years; sons; sisters, Kathryn (Wahlen) Stay, Helen Bergman; brothers, Joe (Kay), David (Marlene); and sister-in-law, Marvel Trunk. He is also survived by two grandchildren, Jonathan and Ian; eight step-grandchildren, Jennifer, Jackie, John, Jeremiah, Josh, Jill, Erin, and Conor; five great-grandchildren; and 11 step-great-grandchildren; and many nieces and nephews.





# 83rd vet receives posthumous honors in hometown

**Ross Bouyea**

written by Elizabeth Izzo for Sun Community News

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A bill naming the Plattsburgh Post Office after local veteran Ross Bouyea, pictured here, has passed the House and Senate and was signed by President Donald Trump just before Christmas.

PLATTSBURGH | With the signature of President Donald Trump last month, the post office at 10 Miller St. in Plattsburgh has been named for a local war hero.

The Ross Bouyea Post Office Building was designated just before Christmas, Dec. 21, after a bill introduced by Rep. Elise Stefanik (R-Schuylerville) passed unanimously in the House and Senate Dec. 11 and Dec. 19, respectively. "I am thrilled that my House colleagues from districts across the nation supported my legislation to honor North Country war hero Ross Bouyea," Stefanik said in a statement.



Stefanik said that over the course of his service with the U.S. Army's 83rd Infantry Division, Bouyea "played a role in some of the most pivotal moments of the Second World War." Bouyea was 21 years



old when he landed on Omaha Beach. He fought for 244 days alongside his fellow soldiers, invading Normandy and fighting in the Hurtgen Forest and the Battle of the Bulge.

He also participated in the liberation of the Langenstein, a subcamp of the Buchenwald concentration camp, according to Stefanik's office. The Buchenwald camp was one of the first concentration camps established in Germany, where an estimated 56,545 people died.

"By the end of the war, Mr. Bouyea's unit had received seven distinguished unit citations and he personally had earned three service medals," Stefanik said. "Mr. Bouyea's service to his country did not end when he was honorably discharged in 1945, however, as he continued to play a significant role in his community in the later years of his life."

Bouyea was described as a "very kind and generous man who helped out anyone in need" by his niece, Judy Stevens. "He talked about the history of World War II at many of the schools in the area and the kids loved him," Stevens said in a statement when the bill was first introduced in the House on Sept. 27.

Bouyea also worked with North Country Honor Flight to help fly veterans to Washington D.C. to view war memorials. "He fought for the love of his country and freedom for all, and is sadly missed as a true American war hero," said Stevens.

"I am grateful to my colleagues for supporting this legislation and to the entire New York House delegation for supporting it from the very beginning," Stefanik said. "I am humbled by the opportunity to honor this North Country hero's life and legacy."

*Ross Bouyea passed away last March at the age of 94.*

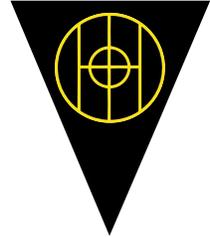


# Thunderbolt at the National Museum of the Army

## Update on plaque donations for the museum

Text & photos: Kathleen Powers

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the veterans, descendants and friends of the 83rd Infantry Division Association for the success of our fundraising efforts for the Veterans' Hall and the Unit Tribute Plaques honoring the 83rd.



As of our most recent update, **we have achieved our first \$5000 goal** for the Veterans' Hall Plaque and are \$855 short of our goal for the Unit Tribute Plaque.

I also asked for an update on any 83rd Commemorative Brick donations. The list provided specifically mentioned service with the 83rd:

- Emanuel Epstein
- Francis Markuns
- John Wesenberg
- Joseph Macaluso
- Hadley Caulder
- Thomas Baer
- Willie Greenawalt
- Barney Marshall
- Thomas Roberts
- Allen Minton

Again, these only mentioned the 83rd in the application.



I am aware that there are some descendants who are not members of the association. If our members know of any 83rd descendants who are not on the 83rd Facebook page or are not dues-paying members, please spread the word about the brick program. This is a way to honor your father, uncle, brother, cousin, etc.

In my last contact with the fundraising staff, I mentioned that I had recently gone past the museum construction site and was amazed at how well the construction was going. They sent me 2 current aerial views of the museum:

The Unit Tribute Plaque will be located on the Path of Remembrance which will lead to the entrance of the museum.

Again, we are just less than \$1000 shy of meeting our goal to have the 83rd Unit Tribute Plaque a reality.

If you are interested in donating to the Unit Tribute Plaque or in donating a Commemorative Brick, the information is posted on the 83rd Association website: <http://www.83rdassociation.com/news/>

We are so close to truly honoring our 83rd.

Kathleen Powers





# KIDS' SECTION



## Childhood Memories of D-Day

Excerpted from WW2 People's War: An Archive of World War Two Memories – written by the public, gathered by the BBC

**This is a story from John Jones of Crowhurst, Surrey**

"I was 12 years old attending Merle Common School, Oxted. After morning assembly, on the 6 June 1944, the head teacher called the whole school outside the school and lined us along a boundary fence of a house next to the school.

The gentleman of that house opened his doors and windows. He turned his wireless [radio] up to full volume to enable the school to hear John Snagg announce that our troops had landed in France.

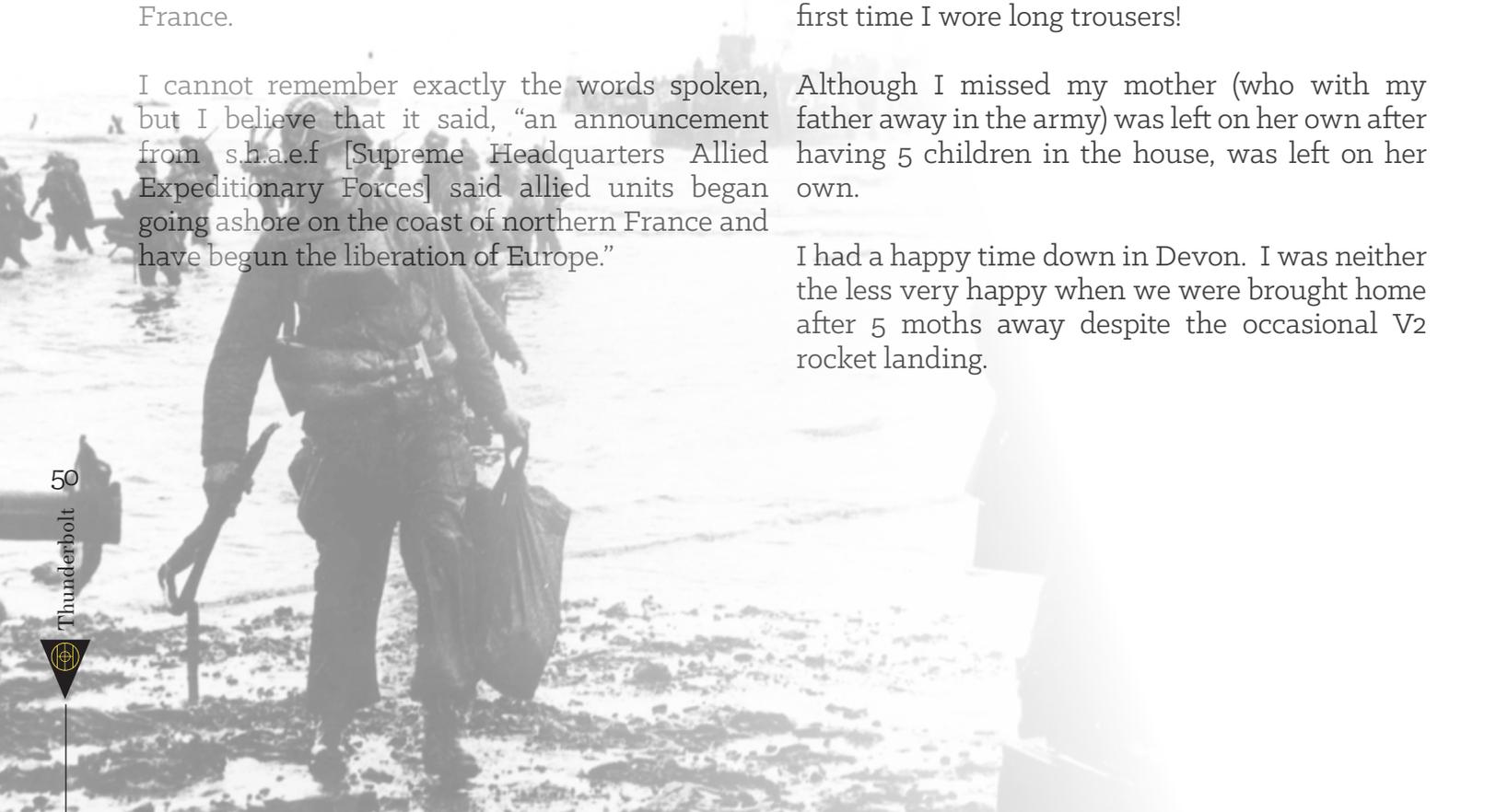
I cannot remember exactly the words spoken, but I believe that it said, "an announcement from s.h.a.e.f [Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces] said allied units began going ashore on the coast of northern France and have begun the liberation of Europe."

I did not realize the importance of what we were being told, but about a fortnight [two weeks] later, we heard strange noises in the sky which signaled the arrival of what we now call "doodlebugs", i. e. V1 rockets. Within a short time, the whole area had hundreds of barrage balloons in the sky which were bringing down many of the doodlebugs.

Two weeks later, we were evacuated to Devonshire, an experience I was very excited about – also the first time I wore long trousers!

Although I missed my mother (who with my father away in the army) was left on her own after having 5 children in the house, was left on her own.

I had a happy time down in Devon. I was neither the less very happy when we were brought home after 5 moths away despite the occasional V2 rocket landing.



# Make a Ration Kit

Excerpted from "World War II For Kids: A History with 21 Activities" by Richard Panchyk, Chicago Review Press, page 77

When soldiers were in one place for a long time, the army was able to set up field kitchens to serve the men their daily food. Otherwise, they had to rely on rations – prepackaged food that was designed to stay fresh and not take up too much room. Actual ration kits contained items including powdered coffee, biscuits, corned beef, and chocolate.

In this activity the goal is to make a daily ration package for yourself that takes up as little room as possible and has just enough calories, carbohydrates, protein, and fat to keep you nourished and energized the whole day.

## **MATERIALS:**

Prepackaged foods or foods that you can wrap up that won't spoil (cereal bars, beef jerky, candy bars, peanut butter crackers, pretzels, snack pudding potato chips, nuts, raisins or other dried fruit, cookies, hot chocolate mix tea bags, canned meat, instant soup mix)

- Plastic storage container or small box
- Ruler
- Scale
- Calculator (optional)

Reading the nutritional labels, select compact and lightweight foods to total about 1,800 calories, about 50 grams of fat, about 40 grams of protein, and about 250 grams of carbohydrates. Try to stay below 200 mg of sodium or you will be too thirsty on the battlefield. This is not as easy as it sounds. For example, you will find that including only candy bars will take you past your total for carbohydrates, fat, and calories, but will be far below your protein requirements. Including mostly nuts will bring up your protein total, but will also bring up the fat total.

Fit all your selections into the smallest container possible. Measure the three dimensions of the container in inches or centimeters (height, width, length) and multiply the numbers to find the volume of the daily ration you have created in cubic inches (or cubic centimeters). Now weigh your package.

Try this activity again until you have reduced the volume and weight of your package as much as possible, then ask your parents' permission to go an entire day eating only the rations. How do these rations compare to your normal daily foods in taste? Do you feel hungry? Is this food as satisfying as regular food?



L L M F X F N V V R P L E I E  
 U S O F A H R V T K K N N B G  
 X E S I S T H O V O I Z G T N  
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 D I R Y M E C H T E R N A C H  
 S S E R P X E Z N O K S F R L  
 Y E R I A Z A N T S X R B O W  
 O F T T Z X Z I T O Q V D Y W

# 83rd word search

Loire Valley - Luxembourg

Echternach

Moselle River

Ehnen

Nantes

Fay de Bretagne

Remich

Grevenmacher

Siegfried Line

Konz Express

St. Nazaire

Loire River

Wormeldange

Luxembourg

Mondorf



## **Echternach**

Part of the district of Grevenmacher near the border with Germany. Served as the southern point on the battlefield of the Battle of the Bulge. Site of an 83rd memorial.

## **Ehnen**

A small town on the left bank of the Moselle River in the commune of Wormeldange.

## **Fay de Bretagne**

28 km from Nantes. On 2 Sep 1944, units of the 83rd dispersed Nazis who attempted to enter.

## **Grevenmacher**

Located on the left bank of the Moselle River from which the 83rd launched an attack on 7 Oct 1944.

## **Konz Express**

Konz was a train switchyard west of Trier. The allies would shell the area with artillery by day and German slave labor would repair the rails at night.

## **Loire River**

The largest river in France which Intelligence and Recon Patrols would cross by boat at Nantes to check and report on enemy strengths and positions.

## **Luxembourg**

A Grand Duchy invaded by the German forces on 10 May 1940. The 83rd arrived in Luxembourg in mid-September 1944.

## **Mondorf**

A spa town on the Moselle River in southeastern Luxembourg. In early Nov 1944, units of the 330th Regiment moved into the town for employment in counterattack on German units.

## **Moselle River**

Twists and turns from Trier to Koblenz forming a “tri-point” of France, Germany and Luxembourg near Schengen.

## **Nantes**

The 6th largest city in France. Was the site of the Advanced Command Post to assist with civil administration for the 150,000 civilians who

remained. With St. Nazaire, it is a seaport on the Loire Estuary.

## **Remich**

Located with other towns on the left bank of the Moselle River in a deep valley. Captured by the 331st Regiment on 28 Sep 1944.

## **Siegfried Line**

German defensive line east of the Moselle. Built during the 1930s – 390 miles long with more than 18,000 bunkers, tunnels and tank traps.

## **St. Nazaire**

A major harbor on the right bank of the Loire River reputed to be the most damaged town in France during WWII. The 83rd protected the right flank of the Third Army and “bottled up” 60,000 German troops.

## **Wormeldange**

A commune located in eastern Luxembourg and part of the canton of Grevenmacher on The left bank of the Moselle River. On 6 Oct 1944, the 83rd launched an all-out coordinated attack by air, artillery and infantry to force the Germans into retreat

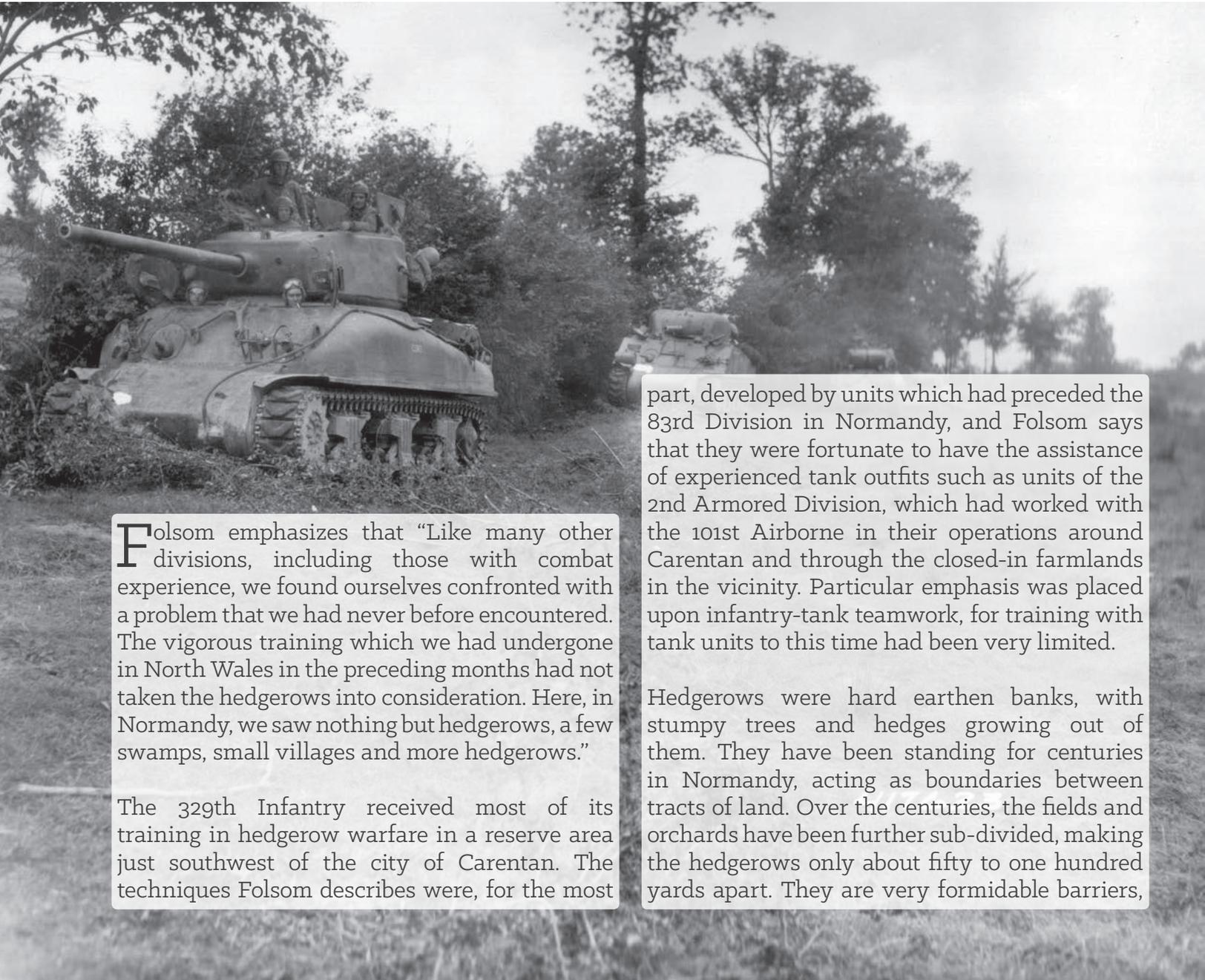


# Hedgerow Warfare

## The technique of fighting through the bocage

Text: Dave Curry, association historian • sketches: Folsom Report

I have in my Normandy files a report written by Captain Charles D. Folsom, 329th Infantry Regiment, written for an advanced infantry officers course. In his paper, Folsom provides in detail the practical methods developed to capture hedgerows. It is an interesting paper that emphasizes the teamwork necessary between infantry soldiers and tanks in order to succeed in the hostile bocage country of Normandy.



Folsom emphasizes that “Like many other divisions, including those with combat experience, we found ourselves confronted with a problem that we had never before encountered. The vigorous training which we had undergone in North Wales in the preceding months had not taken the hedgerows into consideration. Here, in Normandy, we saw nothing but hedgerows, a few swamps, small villages and more hedgerows.”

The 329th Infantry received most of its training in hedgerow warfare in a reserve area just southwest of the city of Carentan. The techniques Folsom describes were, for the most

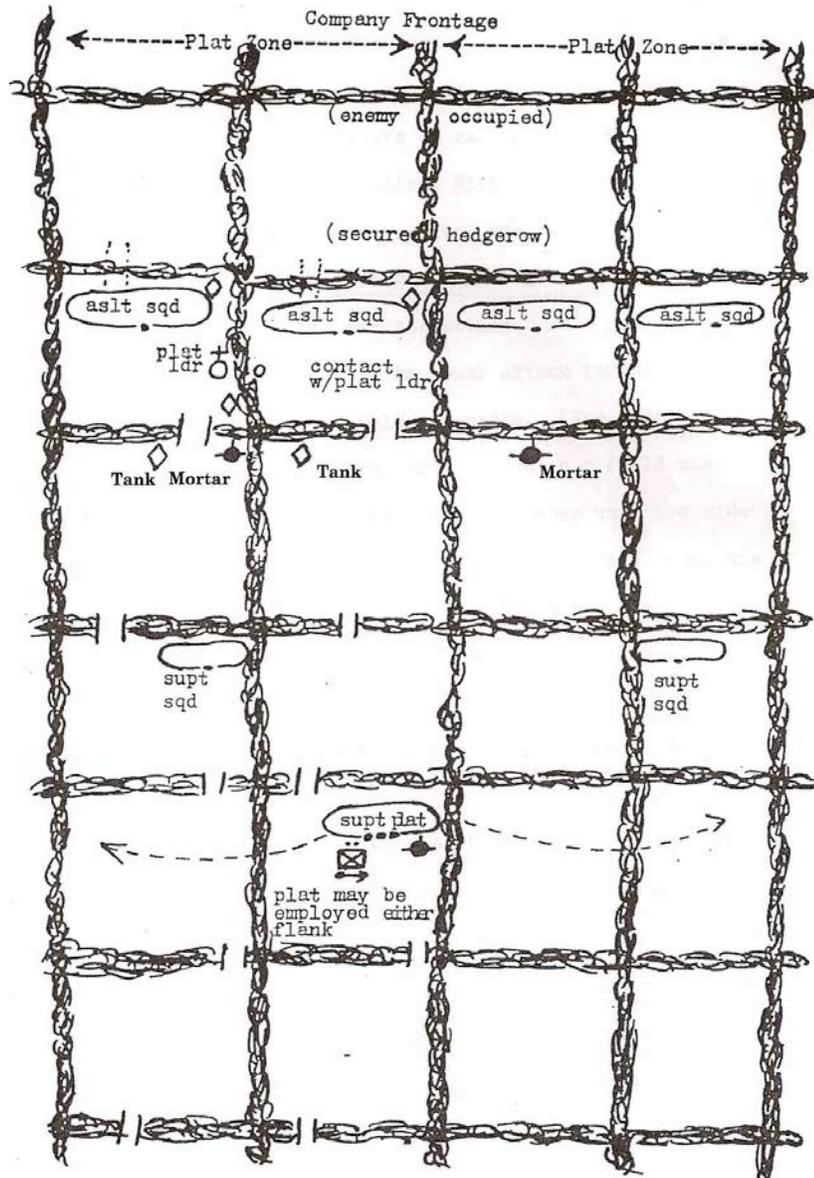
part, developed by units which had preceded the 83rd Division in Normandy, and Folsom says that they were fortunate to have the assistance of experienced tank outfits such as units of the 2nd Armored Division, which had worked with the 101st Airborne in their operations around Carentan and through the closed-in farmlands in the vicinity. Particular emphasis was placed upon infantry-tank teamwork, for training with tank units to this time had been very limited.

Hedgerows were hard earthen banks, with stumpy trees and hedges growing out of them. They have been standing for centuries in Normandy, acting as boundaries between tracts of land. Over the centuries, the fields and orchards have been further sub-divided, making the hedgerows only about fifty to one hundred yards apart. They are very formidable barriers,

and the earthen portions of the hedgerows range from three to eight feet in height, and anywhere from three to ten feet in thickness at the base.

The only way through a hedgerow was straight ahead. What they met on the other side of the hedgerow was a small field defended by the Germans from the opposite side, usually with machine gun positions at each corner and rifle pits and mortar emplacements in between. These were well prepared positions, as James Shonak, CO of the 331st Anti-Tank company, recalled in his memories: "It was the most God forsaken, unforgiving murderous terrain that I ever encountered or fought on. The body count testifies to that."

According to Folsom, the usual method of attacking a hedgerow was to spread a rifle company, in attack formation, across a zone four fields in width (sketch 1). This varied in some instances where a field was triangular in shape or, rarely, where the fields were too wide for a single company. The assault platoons were assigned two fields each, and the formation was further broken down by the assignment of one field to each assault squad. Each of these squads was supported by reserve squads near the center of the zone about two or three hedgerows to the rear. The attack and support squads leapfrogged each other as they advanced from hedgerow to hedgerow. The attack was initiated by supporting tanks, that sprayed the hedgerow with machine



gun fire and by firing the tank cannon on German weapons positions that had been located in the hedgerow. If the German positions could not be determined, the cannon would be fired into the corners of a field as a likely place for automatic weapons.

Heavy and light machine guns, when used by the infantry, were fired in conjunction with the co-axial machinegun on the tank. These guns were fired without mounts, and were simply placed across the top of the earth embankment and traversed freely. After firing about half a belt, the machine gun was moved to a new position, as the bursts could be picked up easily by an alert German observer. At the same time mortar and artillery observers were directing fire on known enemy positions. The use of smoke was most effective in these close operations, with an added

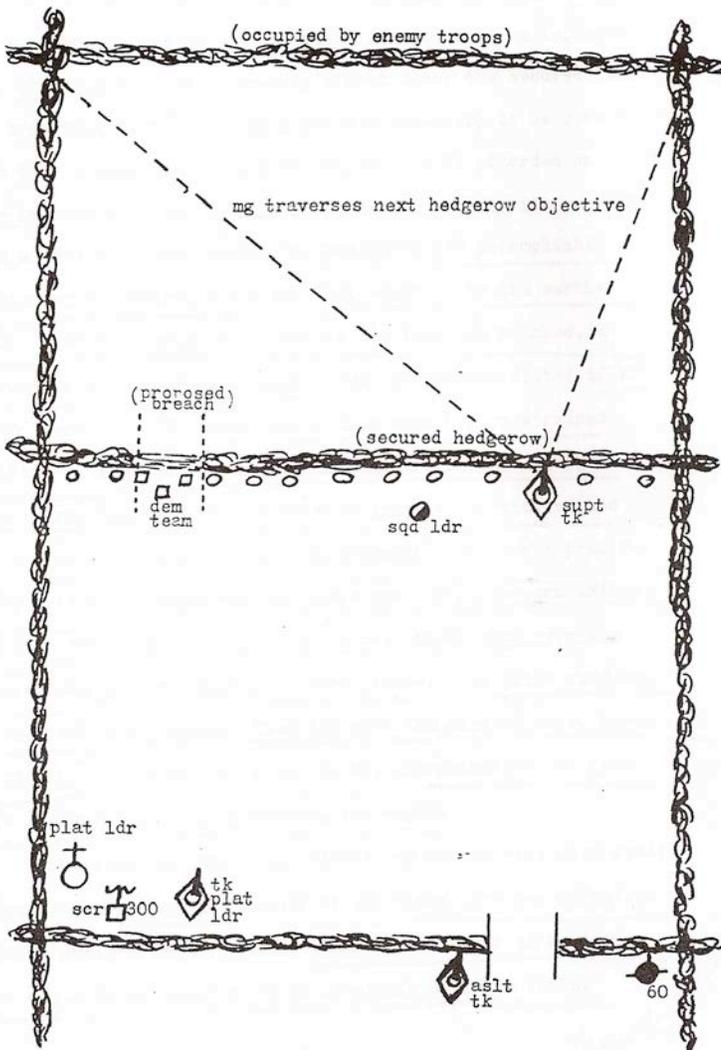
ratio of white phosphorous to increase German casualties.

Scouts would then move forward under the cover of smoke to the next hedgerow, searching the paralleling hedgerows as they moved forward, being particularly watchful for any exposed mines or trip wires. The advance of the tank and scouts was covered at this time by the tanks and troops still in position along the secured line. Upon reaching the next hedgerow, the scouts would methodically search it for mines and gun positions, and then signaled the remainder of the unit forward.

The infantry then moved across the field as skirmishers, keeping the maximum interval between men. (In instances where the squad or platoon had to advance simultaneously without the scouts, they covered their own advance by a steady volume of fire from all available weapons.) when the hedgerow was secured by the infantry squad, a team of two or three infantrymen or engineers moved forward and prepared a spot along the secured line for breaching (sketch2). This breaching job was necessary to allow a tank to move into the next field to provide support for the attack against the next hedgerow. The team dug two holes, about six feet apart, into the earthen bank and when the center of the bank was reached, a charge was placed in each hole.

These charges consisted of 20 to 25 pounds of TNT blocks placed in a sand bag or strapped together in a manner similar to an engineer satchel charge. Each charge had four or five feet of prima cord attached and had a single block of TNT and a non-electric cap for a primer. As soon as the charges were in place the loose earth was tamped back over the charges and the two lengths of cord joined. The prima cord was ignited and a gap blown. This produced an opening approximately ten feet wide and capable of accommodating the tanks.

After the detonation of the two charges, the lead tank proceeded through the breach and advanced with the infantry scouts, covering them by firing into the next hedgerow, and the entire process would be repeated by the support infantry squads which had been to the rear, and

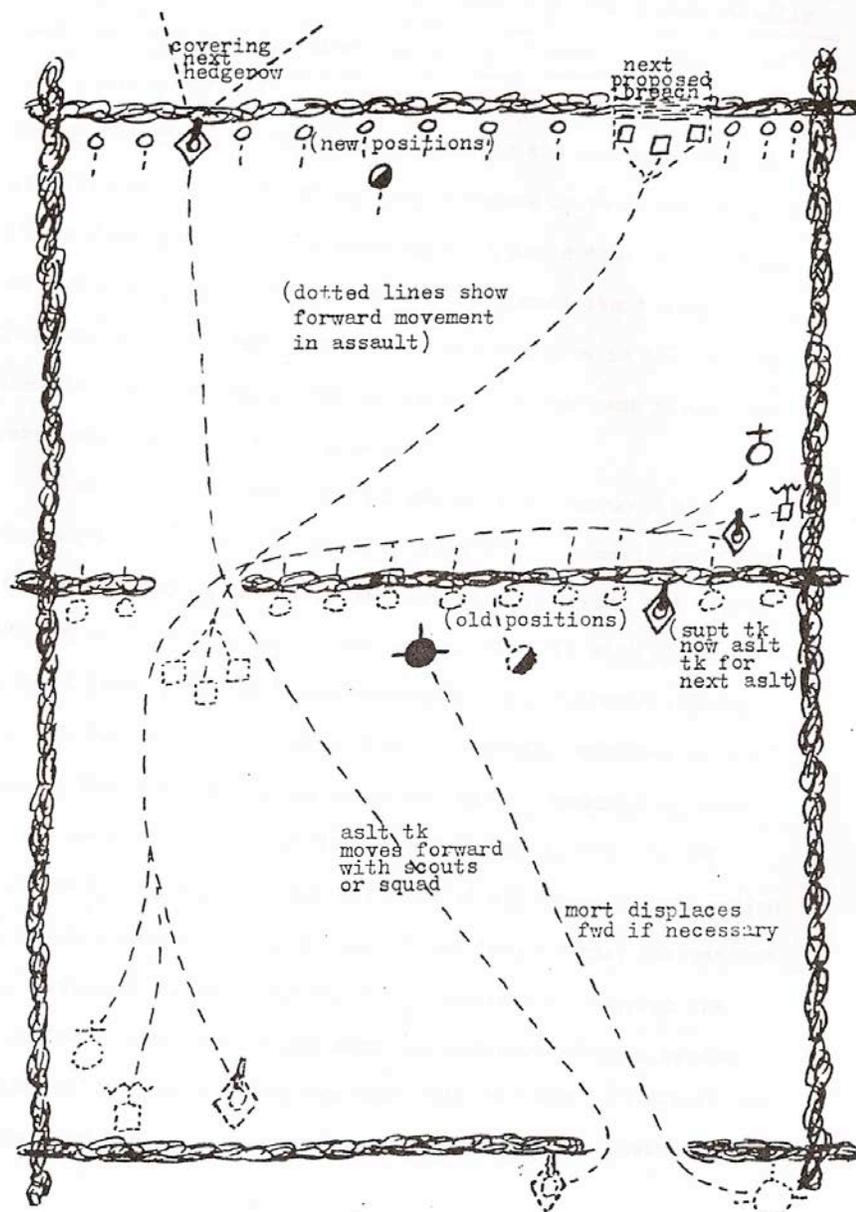


Sketch 2



now moved up to attack (sketch 3). The infantry platoon leader was able to maneuver his platoon in two separate fields by positioning himself near the center hedgerow in one field and maintaining visual and voice contact with an observer in the other hedgerow. Contact with the tank platoon leader was accomplished through the SCR300 radio or through an EE9A field telephone, attached to the rear of the tank and connected to the tank inter-phone system. It was extremely important that the infantry platoon leader keep the tank platoon leader informed at all times of the action as it developed and the position of his lead troops, for without this information the tanks could not effectively support the operation.

Folsom reported that the advance through the hedgerows of Normandy was not spectacular. There were days when the 329th was lucky to gain two hedgerows. During one operation, the 3rd Battalion attacked for three days to capture an orchard which was held by a die-hard unit of the 17th SS Panzer Division. Folsom said that the fighting was always for limited objectives. However, once the advance was begun on July 4th, the regiment pushed relentlessly until the breakout on the 25th of July.



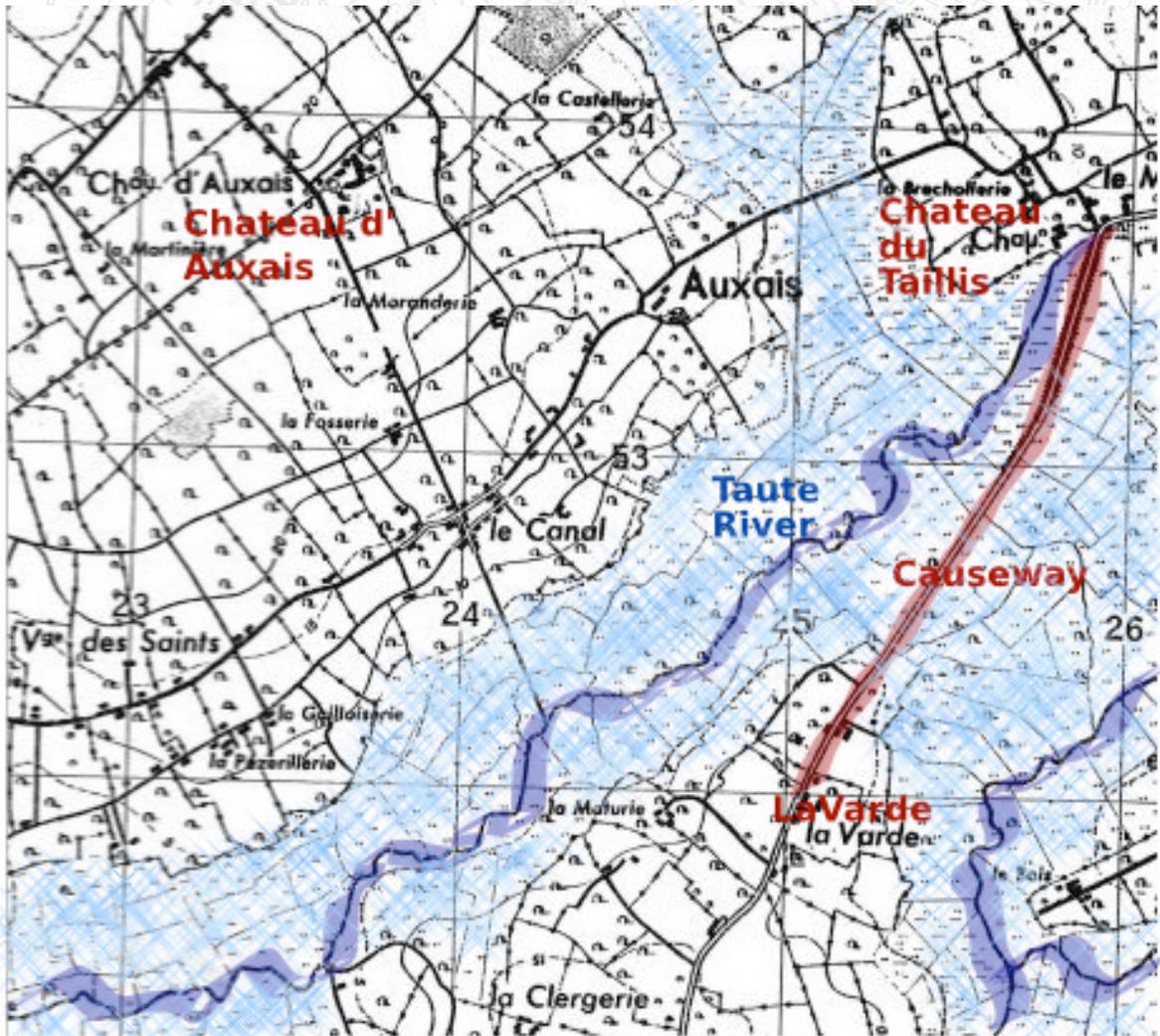
Sketch 3



# Stalemate at LaVarde

The difficult fight to cross the Taute River

Text & photos: David Curry, Association Historian



On the 12th of July 1944, the 331st Infantry came under the command of Col. Robert H. York. The 331st, along with the 329th and 330th Infantry Regiments, had lost most of the front-line soldiers in their infantry companies, and the 331st had lost several commanding officers since it began its combat just south of the city of Carentan on July 4th. Some of these COs were killed in action, and some relieved of command. York had served as 1st Battalion CO of the 18th Infantry, 1st Infantry Division, and he had led his battalion in North Africa, Sicily, and had landed with them on D-Day in Normandy. He had the leadership abilities and combat experience needed to forge the 331st into an effective fighting unit after so many losses of front-line soldiers. The 331st had fought its way south beginning on the 4th of July through swamps and hedgerows to capture the town of Sainteny on July 10th, and then moved southeasterly to the area around Bois Grimot. The 331st had just lost its most recent Commanding Officer Col. James E. Bender on the 11th of July when his jeep took a direct hit from a German 88-mm shell. Progress was slow: German tanks supported by small infantry units made it almost impossible for the bazooka teams, anti-tank guns, and tank destroyers to get within striking distance.

No sooner had Colonel York assumed command than he was ordered to attack. According to Vernon Bobo, who was an assistant squad leader in I Company in the 3rd Battalion, York persuaded the division

commander to postpone the attack in order to give the GIs some needed rest and so that York could visit each company and reorganize all of the combat elements.

The next day, July 13th, the 2nd and 3rd Battalions attacked with the Taute River as the objective. A coordinated regimental attack was planned, with all three battalions attacking. The 1st Battalion on the left fought through the village of LaLande and the point of land to its south, then reverted to regimental reserve. The 2nd Battalion in the center of the line and the 3rd Battalion on the right cleared Bois Grimot, and by noon were in position on the edge of the open, swampy ground south of Bois Grimot, preparing to cross it.

In the fierce fighting that took place that day, Bobo was awarded the Silver Star for taking out a German tank near Chateau d'Auxais. When I Company was subjected to intense machine gun fire from the enemy tank, Private Bobo took an anti-tank launcher and an extra round of ammunition and advanced along a hedgerow under machine gun fire and artillery bursts. Finally, when he was close enough to hit the tank, he stood up in direct view and fired his first round. As the tank began to turn he fired his second round and made a direct hit on the turret.

By nightfall the 3rd Battalion had pushed about 1,000 yards south of the Chateau d' Auxais and the 2nd Battalion was south of the village of Auxais, on

the 3rd Battalion's left, with its flank on the Taute River. The 3rd Battalion received a strong tank-infantry counterattack on its open right flank, and part of the Battalion was forced to withdraw to the Chateau, where it was cut off for the next two days.

On the 15th and 16th, the 2nd and 3rd Battalions pushed forward along with the 329th Infantry on the right to reach the cut off portion of the 3rd Battalion. The 2nd Battalion reached Village des Saints but was forced to pull back under a heavy counterattack.

Then on 17 July, the soldiers of the 331st were ordered to force a crossing of the Taute River near Le Canal and Auxais. At 1800 hours, the 1st Battalion attempted a crossing of the river to the LaVarde Peninsula, but was unsuccessful. Another crossing was planned for 0300 hours the next morning, 18 July, and an engineer patrol was sent out at dusk to scout the main stream for crossing sites. It was found that the 1,000-yard wide flood plain of the river, which had recently been flooded by the Germans, had almost completely dried out except for the main stream of the river in the center. It was about six feet deep and 18 feet wide with perpendicular banks--more like a canal than a river. There was a trail which could move one-way traffic, but no bridge existed over the river. No bridging equipment was available for the planned attack from LeCanal, but in the meantime a platoon of the 308th engineers began placing a 50 ft Bailey bridge





were to clear the peninsula because it was thought to be a possible German observation point with a view of the highway that Patton would be using to launch a large-scale tank attack. Their intelligence report informed them that the peninsula was defended by “fifty cooks and bakers.” They were also told that the canal was less than 10 feet wide and, at best, only four feet deep. Relying on this misinformation, the Battalion commander decided to make the assault with one rifle platoon and a section

with their heavy loads, but in the muck of the canal, had to abandon their guns or drown. As the rifle platoon reached the wooded area on the other side of the stream, there was small arms fire and then silence. Gravelyn and his men waited for word from Lt. Voght, who commanded the platoon. But as the morning stretched into hours, they heard nothing from the platoon, and were forced to accept the fact that the mission had failed. Colonel York had moved up to the OP to observe the initial assault. If everything had worked according to plan, it should have been an easy victory. Not knowing what was happening on the other side, and receiving no word from Lt. Voght, the 1st Battalion CO suggested that a platoon of machine guns be sent across to help Lt. Voght’s platoon hold the area. Reluctantly, Gravelyn passed the word to his 1st platoon sergeant, Sgt. Haught. Neither of them were happy with the new plan, and they decided to scout the area a few hundred yards from where the initial attack had been made, and where the distance across would be shorter, but more open. It was not a good location. The woods on the far side looked ominous and were deadly silent, and the machine gun platoon would have to make a run for it, wade the canal, and hope that there were some friendly rifleman on the other side to help out. It was a suicide mission.

across the Taute at the north end of a causeway leading from LeMoulin south to the LaVarde Peninsula. It was planned to use this bridge and the causeway to cross tanks and anti-tank guns to support the 1st Battalion once it had made its crossing from LeCanal

of Company D machine guns. The plan was to first cross the canal, and then the mortars would begin a “creeping” barrage that was 100 yards ahead of the attacking platoon.

The problem with the flood plain was that it offered no cover for the 331st. According to military historian Martin Blumenson, not many Germans held LaVarde, but the level ground of the flood plain permitted the enemy to cover the area with only five machine guns. According to one source, it was as if the Germans were “shooting across a billiard table.”

The assault began in total darkness with the Battalion observation post at the edge of the swamp, 150 yards in front of the German positions. The men were provided with long heavy planks on which to cross the canal rapidly and then cross the open area on the other side before daylight. Unfortunately, the canal was found to be much wider than the length of the planks and the assault team began to get some sporadic fire from the Germans. The GIs took to the water, and were forced to swim to the opposite side. The machine gun section tried to walk the bottom

Gravelyn reported to the battalion OP and informed the CO that the platoon was ready, but if they were to go, he was going to go with them. Col.



York, who was listening, said “You don’t like this idea, do you Gravelyn?” Gravelyn replied, “No sir,” at which time Col. York cancelled the mission. Gravelyn tried not to show his relief, but could hardly wait to get back to Sgt. Haught and pass on the good word. His respect for Col. York had never been higher.

The longer Gravelyn served under York, the more his respect grew for the Colonel, and he is certain that if the plan had not been called off he would have lost his entire platoon. After the war, Lt. Voght told him that the Germans were well armed with tanks and personnel, and the intelligence, most likely gathered from prisoners, was a falsehood. Voght’s platoon was wiped out when the German’s ambushed them in the wooded area, and Voght was hit by a concussion grenade that broke nearly every bone in his body.

The final attack on the peninsula was made on the night of 19-20 July. At 0330 hours, the 3rd Battalion was sent across the swamp astride the causeway from LeMoulin to the peninsula. The surprise attack allowed the battalion to gain a foothold on the peninsula, but as the battalion reached the end of the 1,500- yard causeway it was discovered that there were two gaps where bridges had been blown. Treadway bridge was immediately sent in to close the gaps, but they were damaged by fire and also needed to be replaced. Then the Bailey Bridge at the LeMoulin end of the causeway was destroyed by the Germans who set off demolition charges that been placed by the engineers as a preventive measure against counterattacks. This deprived the infantry of support from tanks and anti-tank guns, and a counterattack on July 21st forced them to

withdraw from the peninsula with heavy losses.

Said Vernon Bobo, “We were overrun on the LaVarde Peninsula and my platoon had 33 killed.” He was one of only two survivors in his platoon. The campaign to cross the Taute River had ended, and the 331st dug in on the west bank of the river to wait for the massive carpet bombing of Operation COBRA on July 25th.

### History

a chronological record of significant events affecting a nation (or institution) often including an explanation of their causes

*Merriam Webster Dictionary*

Help us to continue developing the 83rd’s history

**Join us** at our History Roundtable Friday evening, August 2nd at the Reunion!



# Fifteen band members missing

George A. Yon account

When the shelling stopped, the stillness was like death. I looked out the door with a numb feeling as I saw three German Tiger Tanks facing the doorway, a couple soldiers holding Burp Guns, one waving a potato masher, and one who seemed to be the Officer in charge waving a Luger. I felt sick. I scrambled back and mentioned the fact to one of our Doctors in charge that there was an enemy patrol out in the courtyard ready to blow us all to kingdom-come. After about five minutes he came back in and told us that we had to go out with our hands in the air. Just before this incident happened, I was holding a bottle of blood plasma for one of our wounded.

It seemed like I was having some kind of a bad dream. This happens in the movies. The farm building we were in at the time was set up as an Aid Station by the Medical Company. I was there only as a temporary employee. Fourteen other members of our Infantry Division Band and myself were there as temporary replacements. We had put Red Crosses on our helmet by using adhesive tape and mercurochrome. They gave us a Red Cross Arm Band to wear on our sleeve - no weapons were allowed to be carried. The Band had some Medical training back in the States.

The Aid Station was probably zeroed in by the enemy artillery; which their shells couldn't miss. They began shelling the area from the time we had arrived. Those of us who could walk went out with our hands in the air. The wounded who could not walk were left behind. They took our Medical supplies and Jeeps, lined us up, and marched us down the road single file. I tried to hum to myself; it didn't help. Maybe they would let us go because our job was to pick up the wounded and the dead,

friend or foe. Such was not the case.

As we were led down the road with guards on all sides, their tanks rumbling in the back, I noticed German Infantrymen in the fields. It is my belief that our Aid Station was set up too close to their lines, perhaps even in back of their lines. The German Patrol had the SS on their collars which meant they were Hitler's Shock Troops. Our first stop was at one of their Aid Stations. Even though they had Red Cross markings on top of their buildings, they kept their tanks hidden in them - a good place to hide from our planes. This was in violation of International Red Cross Regulations. That night we were locked in a small building with standing room only. One can sleep standing up, believe it or not. if he is tired enough. But alas, we were under American artillery fire now; the shells were close but luckily there were no direct hits.

Early the next morning we started the long miserable trip to Stalag 7-4 near Munich. It took us three months to get there by walking, riding in trucks, and riding in box cars. I didn't

know which method of travel was worse. We had no belts or any shoe strings! Try walking sometime without them and see what happens. Food was a scarcity; sometimes we blacked out due to weakness- When I say food, I am using the term loosely. It consisted of Ersatz bread which was sour; it made us sick and gave us diarrhea. One day I had the diarrhea while marching; we weren't allowed to stop for a rest. I was miserable. We went without food. We thought the War would soon be over. We had been captured in Normandy.

When we were being marched down the street in Paris, the French spat on us. There is nothing like a friend in need. Sometimes we would stop at temporary prison camps. Washing facilities were practically non-existent; no beds - just old straw to lie upon; a shave was a rare luxury. The train rides were a delight - some box cars had Red Cross markings on and some didn't. They crowded as many of us in one car that could possibly fit. Of course the doors were always locked; and because it was July and August the cars were



*Members of the 83rd Band at  
Camp Atterbury*

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stifling hot. Our own planes would come down in day time and strafe the cars that were not marked. There was no place to turn. One group had broken out during the strafing and had been machine gunned down. Horse meat was the ration for these trips.

After three months the long trip ended in Mooseburg, a little town outside of Munich; they make cheese in Mooseburg. Everyone, of course, lost weight in those three months - perhaps twenty or thirty pounds. Starving is a fast way to lose weight although not the best. Our favorite pastime was talking about food; it became a game. We would take turns planning a menu for the day. We also thought of home and our families.



Stalag 7-A was located in Mooseburg; it might be called a camp. The Barracks were wooden with no foundation; so, the floors were very cold. One little stove in the middle was the central heating system. One or two dim lights hung overhead. I can't remember if there were any windows. The bunks were of the wooden variety - three layers deep. These luxurious apartments were jammed to capacity. We were not in a 'High Rent' area. There was one water spigot from which water trickled. This was the bathing facility; the water couldn't be

used for drinking. There were outside bathroom facilities with the latest plumbing, of course. Mattresses and pillows were forgotten luxuries. We had a total of one shower in ten months; there was one shower building in the camp. They did use it for giving showers and not for gas. The thought of gassing us had entered our minds; but as we stood in line waiting, there were groups coming out who actually had a shower. That was somewhat of a relief.

The daily menu went something like this: Breakfast - hot chicory

(with very little chicory): Dinner - rutabaga soup; Supper - one baked potato usually cold and rotten, and a piece of cheese. also, some sour bread. We were slowly starving; our insides took quite a beating. Once in awhile a Red Cross package would come through; these probably saved us. Each parcel would be divided among eight of us. Rumor had it that Germans kept most of the parcels for themselves. and I believe this to be - true. We were allowed to write one letter a week and should have received one a week. I received one letter in all. The rest of the



mail that had been sent was probably burned or destroyed in some manner. The people in the towns and villages knew of our own plight but did nothing whatsoever. During the Battle of the Bulge they really got mean. They thought they were still going to win the War.

If you were not an Officer, you were required to work. Reveille for the work details was at four in the morning, followed by a drink of hot water, or should I say chicory. We traveled into Munich by box car on a 15 mile train ride which took about 2 hrs. Work usually consisted of the pick and shovel variety. Perhaps it was better to work than to sit around; it kept us a little warmer and relieved some of the monotony. I wished I had a pair of shoes without holes in the bottom; the Winter was long and very cold. Our planes came over Munich every day at eleven; they were a welcome sight, but it got somewhat nerve racking trying to outmaneuver the bombs that came tumbling down. Most of the center of the city was in ruins from the pounding it got from the air. It was somewhat of a consolation to see that the German people were receiving some of the misery that they had been giving to others. Their War cry was (and still is) that they didn't know what was going on. or that they didn't have anything to do with what was happening. They were only too eager to reap the

harvest when the fortunes of War were going their way.

The vaunted Luftwaffe didn't seem to put up much of a defense; in fact, the only time that we saw them was when the skies were clear of Allied planes. We learned to identify the planes by sight or sound. To OUR surprise the engines of the Messerschmitts sounded like Outboard Motors. However, it was at this time that we saw our first Jets (German). I believe there was an underground Jet Plane Factory in Munich.

Dachau, a Concentration Camp, was located outside of Munich. There are no words in the Dictionary to describe the conditions that existed in this type of camp. These prisoners also worked in Munich. They wore tattered Black and White striped Uniforms and were always chained to each other or had a ball and chain on their leg. Some of them spoke English and were very intelligent; some spoke several different languages. Their bodies were emaciated; their cheeks were hollow, and their eyes bulged out. Their wrists were not much bigger than a round clothes pole. They talked like human being but didn't look human. They were shown no mercy.

Everyone wore some sort of uniform. The Gestapo wore black; the Nazis wore brown; the Army wore gray; and the Luftwaffe wore blue. Much of

their clothing was made from wood pulp. Most of the people walked or rode bicycles; there were few vehicles to be seen. Once the Gestapo searched our barracks; it seems they were looking for a hidden radio. They found none in our building, although there could have been one hidden in the camp somewhere. One day we refused to go to Munich to work, so they sent in their Police Dogs; the dogs, of course, were German Police Dogs. They were trained to do their jobs well.

On November 1, I was sent out on a farm detail. A boy from Poland and a girl from Russia were the slave labor on the farm where I was assigned. These two were teenagers: they always lived and worked on a farm. They worked very hard and very strong. Nothing was mechanized except perhaps the Threshing Machine. Franz, the Polish lad, did the plowing with the help of oxen. These animals were very slow but very strong. We picked potatoes by hand, put them in a basket, and unloaded the basket in an old wooden wagon. The wagon was drawn by an ox. Sometimes when our planes flew over they buzzed' the fields; waved to them, hoping they would land and pick me up. I would gladly have hung onto a wing or a wheel, just to get away. Kristine, the Russian girl from Kievgrad, took care of the cows. There was not a enclosed pasture for grazing, just open fields. One day





I drove the cows out to pasture. Everything was going along fine until they decided to join their neighbors in an adjoining field. I didn't know what cows belonged to whom. We 'gold-bricked' as much as we could and got caught sitting down on the job. We got fired from that job and were sent back to camp. Conditions in camp were slowly deteriorating and becoming more crowded. When Spring came, we had no building to stay in; the skies became our roof. Life became hopeless. The only thing that kept us going was the fact that the War would be over soon.

Early in April, I was sent on another farm detail south of Munich. I didn't want to go. The Americans weren't too far away. I had no choice. This farm was located near Salzburg. You could see the Bavarian Alps at a distance. Hermann Goering was living in the town nearby. Berchtesgarden was not too far away. German Soldiers were everywhere. Sometimes they would stop at the farm house

to rest. They all seemed to have relatives living in this country. One day everyone in the farm house became very excited and told me to hide in the hay loft. Adolf Hitler was coming for a visit. He didn't stay very long, and no one had told me why he had come or where he had come from. Maybe I had misunderstood what they had said.. I didn't speak German but managed to understand some of it with gestures.

In the beginning of May we could hear artillery in the distance. I had made it for ten months. Would anything happen now? Would I be killed by our artillery or planes? On May 3, our guards took us (there were about a half-dozen Americans on this farm detail) to work a camp nearby and told us that we could stay there until the Americans picked us up. The Germans were retreating down the road. Our planes strafed them, and naturally they strafed the building we were in. When it got calm, I ran out the back and found a potato cellar

which offered better protection. One of the guards told us that we were sitting on top of an ammunition dump. If any of the bunkers would be hit, there would be nothing left within a 20 mile radius. Such luck! About an hour later, which seemed like an eternity, an American Patrol came down the road and picked us up. We were hysterical with joy. We felt alive again and most of all we were free again after ten months of starvation and misery. Because of the fact that we live in a free nation, we do not realize the importance of freedom. There are those who would gladly take it away from us if they could; and so we have to fight to keep it - and perhaps die for it. I sincerely hope that those who have died for this cause have not done so in vain. In different parts of the world men are dying so that we may live (not just exist).

God was my refuge and strength during this experience- There are no Atheists in the fox holes nor are there any in the Prisoner of War camps.



# Normandy Experiences

T/Sgt Stephen Moravick Sr., 329th Infantry Regiment

Text & photo: Suzy Moravick

We thank Suzy Moravick for submitting this account of her father's WW2 experience. Mr. Moravick served with Company L, 329th Infantry Regiment and passed away on March 21, 2014

I was inducted into the Army on September 8th, 1943. I had 17 weeks of training in the 63rd Infantry Division at Camp Van Dorn in Mississippi. I was then transferred to the 83rd Thunderbolt Division at Camp Breckenridge in Kentucky where I was placed into the 329th Regiment. On March 24, 1944, I was sent to Camp Shanks in New York and then on April 1, 1944, I went to Camp Smith in New York, where I was given a new M1 Grand 30-06 rifle. I zeroed the rifle in for two hundred (200) yards and within three rounds of firing the rifle; I was ready to use my rifle.

On April 6th, 1944, I was put aboard the H.M.S. Samria, a British transport ship along with five thousand (5,000) troops, in which two meals a day were served to the troops. The ship's canteen also had tea biscuits and chocolate bars for the troops. While on the ship, an Easter Sunday mass was held for three thousand (3,000) men. We finally saw the coast of Ireland twelve (12) days later.

We docked at Liverpool, England then went by train to Wrexam, Wales. While in Wales, we trained in swamps and high mountains, where the ground

was our bed and we had only two woolen blankets for warmth. We left Wales for South Hampton, England on D-Day, June 6th, 1944. Unfortunately, due to storms in the English Channel, we could not land to help our troops. Once the storms subsided, we landed at Omaha Beach in Normandy, France.



During my first battles as a private, my fellow troops and I encountered the German 17th SS Division and the 6th Parachute Regiment. The battles were slow and hellish, as swamps, mortars and enemy artillery fire bottlenecked our advances.

The battles advanced and the 329th Infantry captured Culot, France and eased the pressure on the 330th Infantry, who had vigorous counter-attacks from the Germans. Artillery battalions also aided the Infantry, as several times the artillery saved the day by blowing up German tanks. The engineer battalion also helped to destroy mines and booby traps set up by the Germans.

As my experience increased, I was put in charge of a Platoon of men. I was now a technical Sergeant and with the help of an engineer, we destroyed a German tank with a mine and aided in the capture of two Germans. As the days progressed, we continued to destroy mortars and shoot and/or kill any German soldiers we confronted.

During my platoon leadership role, new men were sent to me everyday who would tell me that they had had no training

in Infantry basics. I would give each one of them a 30.06 M1 Grand Rifle and teach them how to use it.

While in battle in the hedgerow country of France, a shovel and pick were the best tools a soldier could have, besides a rifle. I showed the men of my platoon how to dig a hole about eighteen (18) inches deep and five (5) feet long under the hedgerow for protection. I would show the men how to dig at right angles in these holes, to make a covering for their heads, so when a shell would burst over their head, they would not get hit with the falling shrapnel coming down like rain.

While in France, on July 24, 1944, I was seriously wounded by a German sniper. The bullet entered my left side at the belt-line and remained lodged inside my abdomen. The bullet damaged my intestines and the doctors said that the bullet missed my femoral artery by only one quarter (1/4) of an inch. I was operated on in a field hospital and then sent to England where I remained for three months as the wound healed. It was now the fall of 1944, and after regaining my strength, I was sent to Antwerp, Belgium. I was the

acting First Sergeant in the 78th Port Company in the port of Antwerp, Belgium.

The Germans desperately wanted the Port of Antwerp, Belgium for shipping purposes therefore; the Germans sent buzz bombs into the city and dock of Antwerp, Belgium. During my time in Antwerp, Belgium, we were under buzz bomb attack for over three months, every day and every night. The people of Antwerp, Belgium were paid double wages for working the docks, as they called it "Shiver Pay," due to the daily and nightly barrage of buzz bomb attacks. Antwerp, Belgium became the city that the Battle of the Bulge was to gain.

The war in Europe ended while I was in Antwerp, Belgium, and I was told that I and thirty-six (36) other soldiers were headed to Japan. We were sent to Southern France to board the ship that would take us to Japan. Before we could leave for Japan, the United States dropped two Atom bombs on Japan, which ended World War II. I was finally sent home and returned to New York on Christmas Day, 1945.



## To Our Members and Friends,

It is once again time for our Annual Reunion which will be held in Philadelphia, PA, July 31st through August 3rd. This will be the 73rd Reunion of the 83rd Division. It is always great to visit with our veterans and their families, renew some of our old friendships and make many new ones, reminisce about those that are no longer with us.

This notice is about our “Recognition and Remembrance” book. This book is a very important part of the success of these reunions. It helps reduce the cost of the reunion to each person who attends. This year some of the money will help our veterans that are attending the reunion by defraying the cost of the registration fee and the banquet for them and rental wheelchairs. The prices for the ads are the same as last year. Maybe some of you would like to place an ad in memory of friends, families, veterans, etc. or just to say hello and good luck. We wish to give a special thanks to the widows who place an ad in memory of their loved ones.

We have a July 1st deadline, so please, while it is fresh in your mind, sit down and write your ad, include your check and send to the Association. Please see the form for all the information.

We have also enclosed a Descendants page form. Please join in honoring and thanking the members of the 83rd for their contributions and sacrifice. We are looking to continue what has now become a wonderful tradition, by including their names on special “Thank You” pages in the Book. Please see the form for all the information.

This 73rd Reunion is going to be a great time, we hope that you can join us in Philadelphia on July 31st through August 3rd. Your continued support is very much appreciated.

Sincerely,  
Judy Breen (Descendant) Financial Secretary





83rd INFANTRY DIVISION ASSOCIATION Inc.

RECOGNITION AND REMEMBRANCE BOOK FORM

# 73rd ANNUAL REUNION

Philadelphia, PA

July 31st to August 3rd, 2019

PLEASE CIRCLE SIZE OF YOUR AD

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\$95.00

HALF PAGE  
\$60.00

THIRD PAGE  
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**Type or print your AD in box below**

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*And pay with check, make payable to and send to:*

[thunderbolt@83rdassociation.com](mailto:thunderbolt@83rdassociation.com)

83rd INFANTRY DIVISION Association Inc.

P.O. Box 406

Alton Bay, NH 03810-0406

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## URGENT - ACT NOW

*As you know, this money is needed to help pay for some expenses for our 73rd Reunion*

## DEADLINE - JULY 1, 2019

*Please Type or Print Ad in box, and remember to circle page size.*

*If you also want your name on the AD, include it below.*



# Greetings to the Descendants of the 83<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division Association

**Over 75 years ago, the 83<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division came together as part of an effort that changed history, freed occupied nations and preserved our liberty for generations to come. Once more this year, for the 73<sup>rd</sup> time, we will all gather to honor our stalwart veterans and enjoy the camaraderie of family and friends new and old ... one more opportunity to honor all our veterans of the Greatest Generation and commemorate their sacrifices and accomplishments. This year we will re-visit the Philadelphia area and continue the journey that began in Boston to explore the founding of our nation.**

**Please join us once more in honoring and thanking the members of the 83<sup>rd</sup> for their contributions and sacrifice. We are looking to continue what has now become a wonderful tradition, by including your names on special "Thank You" pages in the Recognition and Remembrance Book for the 83rd Infantry Division Association's 73rd Reunion to take place in Philadelphia from July 31 through August 3, 2019. All names will be listed below the name of their special veteran under the following caption:**

On this the 73<sup>rd</sup> Reunion of the Thunderbolt Division, we offer all our love, respect and thanks for our freedom. We honor with wonder the bond you shared with your buddies, a bond forged in service and sacrifice for our country and for future generations. May we as descendants and our United States of America learn from your sacrifice. We remain forever grateful.

**Your name may be included for a contribution of \$10. If you would like to include the names of additional family members (for example spouses, grandchildren, great grandchildren, nieces, nephews etc) all we ask is another \$5 per name. We will print as many names as we receive, no matter how many pages! All proceeds will be used to help defray reunion costs. We will also include a display of this special thank you in the reunion hospitality room.**

## PLEASE PRINT

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Descendant of: \_\_\_\_\_

2<sup>nd</sup> Name \_\_\_\_\_ 3<sup>rd</sup> Name \_\_\_\_\_

4<sup>th</sup> Name \_\_\_\_\_ 5<sup>th</sup> Name \_\_\_\_\_

6<sup>th</sup> Name \_\_\_\_\_ 7<sup>th</sup> Name \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\* Attach sheet for additional descendants \*\*\*

Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to Member: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ email: \_\_\_\_\_

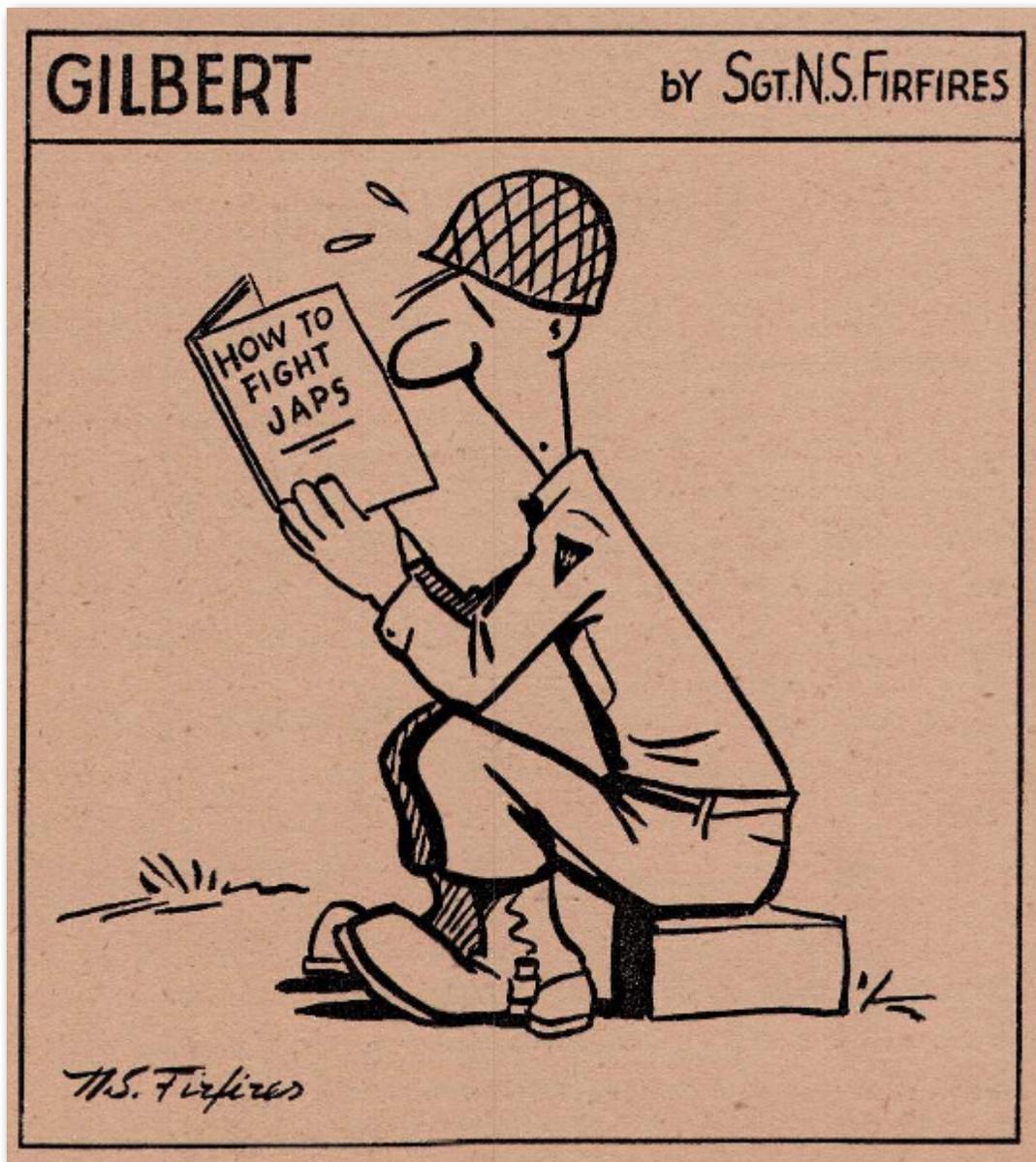
**Make check payable and send with form to:  
83<sup>rd</sup> INFANTRY DIVISION ASSN.  
P.O. Box 406  
Alton Bay, NH 03810-0406**

**Special Note:** Are you coming to the reunion? Would you like to give us a hand? We need your help with: Hospitality Room (3-hr. blocks) (e.g., setting up refreshments, serving, clean up) \_\_\_\_  
Transportation Assistance (assigned per trip) (e.g., monitoring a bus, assisting passengers in and out) \_\_\_\_  
Registration (3-hr. blocks) (registration, information, special assistance) \_\_\_\_  
Event Assistant (assigned per event) (Assistance at Banquet, Memorial Service, etc.) \_\_\_\_



# 74 years ago...

This is what was on the mind of our boys



Thunderbolt Newspaper

May 12, 1945

**Return Address-**  
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**TO:**