

The CLUB

of the
GOLDEN LION

PUBLISHED BY AND FOR

*The Veterans of the
106th INFANTRY
DIVISION*

Vol 52— No. 4

JUL - AUG - SEP 1996

Witness to a Bloody Past

"... The sunlit foxhole partially covered with snow in the Ardennes, as photographed by Chris, is certainly worth a thousand words.

If there is to be any beauty in that horrid period of time, one might find it as such today."

Sam Popkins, A Company,

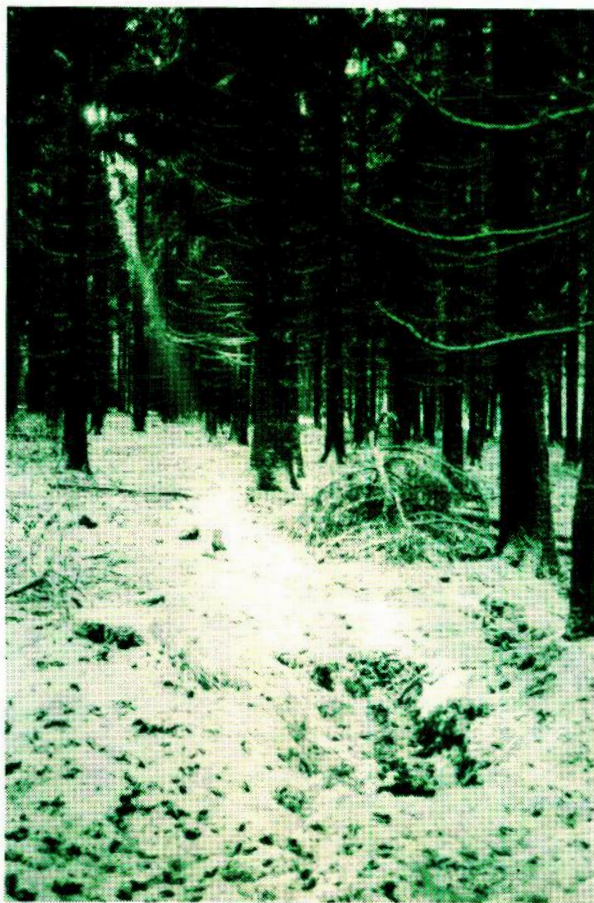
271 Inf Regt, 69th Inf Div

25 Sept, 1992

photo by Chris Van Kerckhoven
Westerlo, Belgium.

LIFE ASSOCIATE

In gratitude, to the 106th Infantry
Division Association
(See page 5 for Cover Story)



The CUB

*A quarterly publication of the
106th Infantry Division Association, Inc*
5401 U. 147th St. West, Apple Valley, MN 55124

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This being my final written report to the membership demands that I give thanks to the devoted, long standing and enduring work of the officers, directors and committeemen who have kept me apprised of all happenings.

My thanks also to the past presidents to whom I have relied on for suggestions and particularly advice. They are Tom Riggs, Ed Prewett, John Gilliland, Gus Agostini, Russ Villwock and Jack Sulser.

The Roanoke reunion is being well attended with over 300 rooms reserved as of 28 June 1996. While on the subject of the reunion, this is my only chance to thank Elizabeth Bowles, chairlady of the reunion, in writing, who in spite of an auto accident and a death of a committeeman, has persevered and successfully prepared for us.

While on reunions it is most pleasing to note that John Gilliland is so well prepared for our reunion in Nashville next year. He has already submitted an agenda to us for comments and suggestions. Good work John.

John Kline, our editor, called and informed me that a wife of one of the 81st Engineers, Anita Collins, wife of John Collins, Co. "A", 81st Engineer Combat Battalion has submitted an article on the "women's side" of the story of going to war.

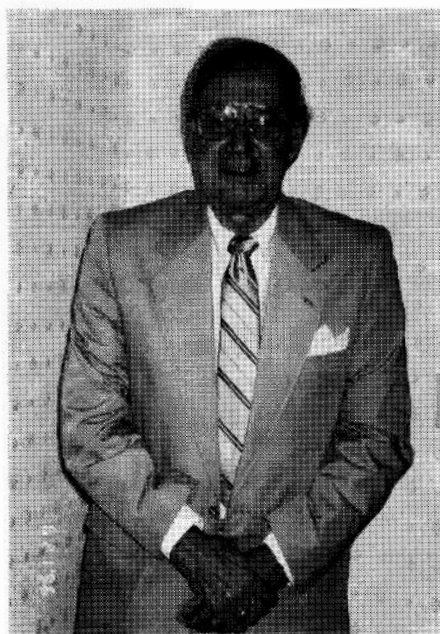
Kline also suggested I keep this report short since we have two lengthy articles of great interest for this CUB, one by Colonel Alan Jones, formerly Operations Officer, 1st Battalion, 423rd Regiment. The other by Colonel Donald "Tommy" Thompson, formerly Commander Third Battalion, 422nd Regiment in collaboration with Colonel Frederick Nagle, formerly Executive Officer, 423rd Regiment.

My wife Pat wishes for me to also pass along her thanks for the nice year and hopes that more of the ladies furnish stories for *The CUB*. We will see you all at the reunion.

The opportunity to serve you has been most enjoyable and hopefully productive.

I thank you one and all for a great year. Be sure to say hello to me in Roanoke.

Dick Rigatti



106th Infantry Division Association
Richard L. Rigatti, President - 1995-1996
"B" Company, 423rd Infantry Regiment



Rev. Ewell C. Black Jr., Chaplain
Order of the Golden Lion 1995
"A" Company, 422nd Inf. Reg.
212 Ridge S, Bishopville, SC 29010
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A Bus Driver and a Presbyterian Minister arrived at the Pearly Gates at the same time. When St. Peter greeted them he told them to wait while he checked the records. Returning in a few minutes, he welcomed the Bus Driver and told him to come right in. St. Peter said that they had been expecting him and had his welcome all planned - and the Pearly Gates opened to admit him.

The Presbyterian Minister was somewhat flustered by all of this, but stood and waited as St. Peter had told him to do. There followed a lengthy period of time, during which the minister heard much celebrating taking place inside. Finally, St. Peter returned for him. Curious, the minister asked why the Bus Driver had been welcomed with such fanfare while he had been left to wait outside. After all, the minister said, I spent most of my life serving God and he was just a Bus Driver.

St Peter explained it this way! When you preached many in your Congregation went to sleep, but when he drove that bus, everybody started to pray.

The Psalmist writes in Psalm 40: 1-3

"I waited patiently for the Lord; he turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear and in the Lord." Psalm 40:1-3

Most of us have raised many prayers to the Lord, both during the war and since and he has heard and answered. All of us have served the Lord in various ways, but we can never be certain of how our lives have been lived and the effect we have had on people with whom we have come into contact. Like the minister, some of us might be surprised at the effect someone else's life has had on the people whose paths we have crossed. You and I have been fortunate to have survived the experiences of war and the years since, may we have lived and used these lives which we had, so that those who have gone before us will not be ashamed to have been called our friends.

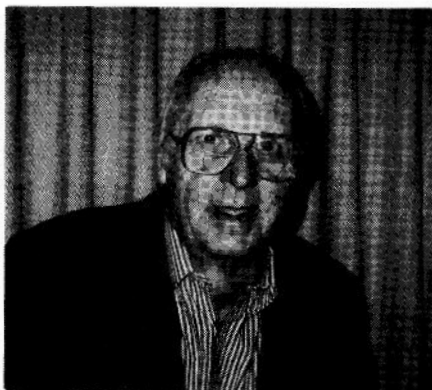
Father, God, so help us to live our lives that we might continue to service and glorify you. Help us to touch people around us in ways which will bring them to you. AMEN

World War II was "nearly over," I have been reminded many times, when hordes of teenagers were ushered into service early in 1944.

It was, I guess, except for the beachhead at Anzio, the Marshall Islands campaign, the D-Day invasion, the Battle of Normandy, the invasion of the Philippines, the Battle of the Bulge, the Battle of Iwo Jima, the landings and mop up fighting on Okinawa, the invasion of Southern France, the invasion of Dutch New Guinea, the assault on Rome, the "Bridge Too Far" airdrop in Holland, the invasion of Germany and street fighting on the way to the Elbe, the fighting in Leyte Gulf, the firebombing of Tokyo, the atomic bomb attacks on Japan, plus a few dozen other bloody ordeals en route to V-J Day in August, 1945.

I have genuine and profound admiration for the older men who went to war before I did, of course, but think the home-front observers were off base if they thought the GIs going into service as late as 1944 didn't see much action. They were right in thinking the younger guys missed the mayhem that happened in 1942-43 but wrong if they thought the final 18 months of the war weren't agonizing as well as pivotal to its outcome.

Over the years I've had dozens of people ask me "how long" I was a prisoner in Europe. There is no comment, as a rule, when I tell them it was "about five months." That isn't much time in this era but, as many of you know, it was almost an eternity in 1944-45 when a "kriegie" wasn't on the top rung of anyone's priority list as Germany went up in flames.



Dan Bied, "A" Co., 422nd Combat Inf. Reg.
108 Leffler Street, W. Burlington, IA 52655
Tele: (319) 752-5708

"We got some Red Cross stuff," I've tried to explain, "but not what we should have or would have if it had been earlier in the war." I've mentioned the bombing raids, which escalated toward the war's end and killed a lot of our prisoners, and otherwise tried to explain how much misery was crammed into a few months for, in particular, the guys nabbed during "The Bulge." We were on a death march, as I recall it, with no media along to people to tell our story in Stars & Stripes.

Once, a woman I worked with in an office told me she didn't think being a POW was "any big deal" compared with what a lot of other men endured during World War II.

"If you'd been with me," I told her.. "you'd know you had been through hell."

SOMEONE sent me an article by a syndicated columnist named Maggie Gallagher who, I suspect, was born after the war but had a good grasp of how so many of us from all walks of life teamed up to fight in it.

From West Burlington, Iowa....

In her article, titled "Portrait of JFK as a young man" she noted that military service has been "the great leveler of American social life, one that exposed even a sheltered rich kid from Hyannisport to the knowledge that in a hard, cold, dangerous world, ideas have consequence."

Her point, boiled down to a few lines, was that making sure the sacrifices of our fighting men, including one of his own brothers, were not in vain "came to dominate John F. Kennedy's ambitions (as he) turned from a life of teaching and scholarship he had contemplated and became a man of action. Sometimes, as in Vietnam, too much action."

In a book he wrote after a postwar tour of Europe, including cemetery tours and inspections of the damage, a young JFK wrote: "Prowess in war is still deeply respected (and) the day of the conscientious objector is not yet at hand."

Warfare was, as Gallagher wrote, a great leveler of our social life. Men I got to know and respect in the 106th were, in many cases, much more impressive than the luminaries I interviewed and photographed during my 40 years as a full and part-time journalist.

EMPATHY: I had to "feel" a bit for the young woman, Shannon Faulkner, who had to drop out of military duty after a week in ROTC at The Citadel in August, 1995. She was overweight, I noted, when exposed to military rigors in the South Carolina heat.

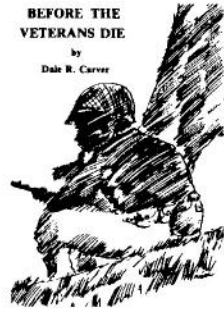
I was a portly kid, to put it mildly, when reporting to Camp Wolters, Texas, in January of 1944. I cut the mustard, in the cool weather, but am not sure I could have hung in if it had been mid-summer when I took those tough 20-milers.

Dan Bied

THE GOOD SOLDIER

First he oiled his rifle.
Next he cared for his feet,
then slowly opened a ration
and forced himself to eat.

BEFORE THE
VETERANS DIE
by
Dale R. Carver



BEFORE THE VETERANS DIE

from his book of poems
by: Dale R. Carver
424th Headquarters
A&P Platoon Leader
742 Druid Circle
Baton Rouge, LA 70808

COVER STORY....

Chris Van Kerckhoven, Westerlo, Belgium (see his photos on page 38) is an enthusiastic fine young gentleman who has an intense interest in the battles that raged over the country where he lives. He is a LIFE ASSOCIATE member of our Association.

The photo that appears on the cover of this issue in "black & white" is tremendously moving in its original color and size (approximately 8"x10"). The stream of light coming through the trees and highlighting the "fox-hole" is breath-taking. Unfortunately the cost of reproducing it in color would increase the cost of this issue about 50 cents a copy. As it is, the cost of The CUB uses up nearly all of the annual membership fee each year.

Chris presented me with the original color photo with the inscription on the backside that moved me deeply.

I am going to talk to Chris about reproducing some copies. If you would like one (adding cost) let me know. The more we order the less each would cost.

I will have the color photo with me and to show at Roanoke. J. Kline

LET'S DISCUSS DEADLINES AND SUBMISSION OF MATERIAL FOR THE CUB

Please observe these dates for submission of material to *The CUB*.

Reports, death notices and articles, photos, and New Members reported after the following dates will not be included in the current CUB.

FEBRUARY CUB January 1

MAY CUB April 1

AUGUST CUB July 1

NOVEMBER CUB October 1

Articles submitted will be used when there is space, and the material is of such subject matter to fit the theme of the overall subject matter in that issue, and the urge strikes me. Unfortunately, some material slips by to be considered later.....



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Memorial & Scholarship Fund Donations

From last CUB up to report # 53

Atiyah, Richard	20
Barnes, L. Preston	100
Bartholomew, Tom	5
Bickford, Florence	2
Breite, Victor	25
Janicke, Jack	5
Jones, William T.	10
Leibowitz, Samuel	10
Logan, Robert	50
Oelschig, A.C.	10
Phelan, William	15
Prescott, Eugene	10
Schober, Milt	15
Seevers, Ralph	8
Shudarek, Elmer	100
Wenslow, Marshall	15

WIVES OF DECEASED MEMBERS ARE URGED TO CONTINUE AFFILIATION

By Sherod Collins, Treasurer/Historian

Widows are always most welcome at our annual reunions and mini-reunions and many have chosen to continue to receive and enjoy *The CUB* by joining the Association as an Associate Member.

We want everyone to know that we are pleased to have these Associate members and it is the only way they can continue to receive the publication. They can continue to pay Auxiliary dues of \$2.00, but that gets them nothing except a sense of belonging.

Annual dues for an Associate Membership is \$10.00; Life Membership costs \$75.00. Those who have paid spousal Life dues of \$15.00 are entitled to receive two additional copies of *The CUB*, but they should let the editor know that they would like to receive them.

Our ladies are special to us and we would like to keep as many as possible as friends and as Associate Members.

If there are any questions, please write to the Adjutant, Treasurer or Editor. Their names appear on the inside cover of every *CUB* magazine....

Roger Maes, Belgium Attending Roanoke Reunion

Associate member, Roger Maes will be attending. He has searched the Ardennes for over 15 years and has some interesting stories to tell and artifacts to show.

He has been in touch with Gil Helwig and me, and I know with many of you. He is a very enthusiastic young man who has a passion for visiting with World War II veterans. He visits often with Willie and Adda RIKKEN, our Belgian friends.

He will probably have some of his artifacts in the Hospitality room. Let's show him a warm welcome. He is thrilled to be able to attend.....

Camp Atterbury Annual Memorial Service

by O. Paul Merz
Camp Atterbury Memorial Representative

John, I am sending a copy of the Camp Atterbury Veteran's Park Committee meeting of 15 April 1996.

The annual MEMORIAL SERVICE will be held 4 August, 1996. The ceremony will begin at 0930 to avoid the August Indiana heat.

The most important item on the report is that Lt Col Jack Noel, Camp Commander, stated that there would be overnight accommodations for persons attending.

Colonel Satchel (Ret) noted that guests may be accommodated on post if they come the night before.

Any person needing lodging should call Camp Atterbury, 1-812-526-1103 and ask for Lt Col Jack Noel or the Billeting Officer.

CYBERSPACE Report....

In the MAY Cub, I reported about the Home Page I have on the Web.

To fill out this column- since it is the last space available in this CUB before Press- I will update you on the success of my Web Pages whose Internet address is: <http://www.mm.com.user/jpk>

I have had, as of today 6 July, 1996, 1,389 hits (visitors) to my web site.

I have had several interesting contacts with 106th veterans who knew nothing about our Association. Among the Colonel Thompson and Colonel Nagle whose story appears in this CUB as well as several other 106th vets, some who have already joined as new members. I have had contacts from relatives of 106th soldiers KIA and from relatives whose father has passed away. Most were looking for names to contact who knew their relative. I was able to furnish lists of current Association members, who belonged to their relatives unit, and have heard back from some that they have had responses. More in next CUB..

J Kline, editor.

The **UB** *of the* **GOLDEN LION**

VOL. 3

APRIL, 1947

NO. 9

HOLD EVERYTHING! FIRST NATIONAL REUNION

*Monday - Tuesday - Wednesday
July 14-15-16*

INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA

**Take Our Word For It
BE THERE**

★ NORTHERN FRANCE ★ THE ARDENNES ★ THE RHINELAND ★ CENTRAL EUROPE

Vol 3, No. 9, April 1947 - 24 pages 8.5 x 10
Officers elected 16 September 1945 Camp Lucky Strike, St Valerie-en-Caux, France

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James Connell, Vice-President ---- G2-DHQ
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Victor Ladyka ----- Divarty
William Perlman ----- 424 Reg

H. B. Livesey, Jr. ---- Editor



THE GOLDEN LION ROARS

© Indianapolis Star

The above artist's rendition appeared on the cover of the September 1947 CUB. That issue, Vol 4. No 1 was dedicated to a review of the July 1947 1ST ANNUAL REUNION.

Read pages 431-462 of *The CUB of the GOLDEN LION: PASSES in REVIEW* for details of that first reunion which had an attendance of 500.

An interesting highlight from May-June 1947 CUB (page 434 CUB PASSES IN REVIEW).

"Letter to 40,000. One last mailing has been sent to every one of the 40,000 names on record with the Association. As it costs \$1,500 for such a mailing, this is the last contact the Association will ever have with those who have yet evinced no interest."

"As nearly as we can see from here, this is going to be the greatest convention of its kind ever staged. To miss it would be to pass up one of the opportunities of a lifetime.. Get your application in by July 1, 1947 with \$5 for each reservation....."

**SEE YOU ALL IN ROANOKE AUG 30 TO SEPT 3, 1996
AT THE 50TH ANNUAL REUNION.. J. Kline.**

A Brief Epoch in the life of a Soldiers Wife During World War II

by Anita H. Collins
wife of John P. Collins
Company "A,"
81st Engineer Combat Battalion
106th Infantry Division

At the time John and I were married on January 15, 1943, he was trying to enlist in the Merchant Marines. He was classified on his job "as necessary to the defense" category. (4F, -1A or some other classification) Being frozen on his job, he was not acceptable. However, they told him he would be acceptable if he obtained a release from his job and draft board. After obtaining releases, he was told by the Draft Board to report back in a few days to obtain his release papers. Upon reporting to the draft board, he was told that he was being inducted into the Army due to 4 years of previous Military training in the National Guard Engineers. - SO MUCH FOR TRYING TO ENLIST

Now we have started our newly married life in the Army!!!!

John was inducted in the Army at Ft. Leavenworth in February 1943 and after about 2 weeks, was sent to Ft. Jackson for training and assignment. As everyone was on a status of a "NEED TO KNOW" SSHH SHHH !!! — I only found out where he had been shipped from his first letter.

I was employed by the Federal Reserve Bank in Kansas City, but being young, in love and adventurous, we decided that I should join him in Columbia, South Carolina. I took an extended leave of absence which eventually ended up in termination. I arrived in Columbia, not knowing anyone and John was not there to meet me. I tried calling John but was told he was training in the field. (I later found out he had volunteered for Ranger school)



Corporal John P. Collins and wife Anita
Birthday or what?????

I had a very difficult time in finding a place to stay as housing of any kind was practically nil. After trying all organizations I was walking along the street and noticed a house with a beautiful yard with flowers and more flowers. I approached the house; knocked and an elderly man answered. I told him what a beautiful garden of flowers he had and in our conversation I asked if they had a room to rent and told of my problem. He told me they did not have anything but across the street the couples daughter had just returned to her own home and possibly I could obtain a room and then I could look at his flowers from across the street. Sure enough!! The couple rented us a room.

After picking up my luggage at the bus station I moved in and called John's company to let him know where I was staying. John did not appear until the weekend and until then I spent my time

A Brief Epoch in the life of a Soldiers Wife During World War II



Sgt. John P. Collins, 81st Engineers, Company "A"
and wife, Anita
Fort Jackson, S.C. 1943

in applying for work. John was only a PFC at that time so our finances were not to good. I applied at all the banks including the South Carolina National Bank which at that time was three stories (now 15 stories). John and I enjoyed our weekend visits and a couple of times during this two weeks I stayed at the Guest House located near his Company. We attended movies and danced at the USO. On weekends we rented bicycles and rode all over Columbia (too crowded now).

I continued to look for work but no one seemed to need a bookkeeper and after 2 weeks our funds were so short we decided that I should return to Kansas City and move back with my life long friend who also worked at the Federal Reserve Bank. So, reluctantly, I returned to Kansas City and to my old job. In about 2 weeks I received word from John that the South Carolina Bank would give me

employment if I arrived by the following Monday. I again gave notice and my boss told me if I returned again to be sure and come back to work. I arrived on Monday and went to work the same day.

This time I knew a little more about where to look for housing and in conversing with the bank employees I obtained us an apartment shared by a Lieut. and his wife. I really had Bankers hours, go to work at 11 AM off at 12 noon for one hour and then worked until 5 PM. If our books did not balance then we worked until it was accomplished. For overtime you received $\frac{1}{2}$ time, so I seldom worked overtime.

John took his soldiering very seriously and would not let me or my problems interfere with his training or his base activities. Many a night he did not show up but I had adapted myself to this Army life as many of my friends had done and we knew this type of life was harsh.

I had only been back a couple of weeks when John received word his Dad had fallen off a scaffold and was killed. We did not have the money for two of us to return home and not wanting to place my job in jeopardy we decided that only he should return for the funeral. He returned very shortly and our life continued as before. We had our good times and our bad times, but we had each other and felt very fortunate.

We made many friends and when possible we aided other wives in joining their soldiers for brief or longer visits. Sgt. Grannis and his wife were our friends. He joined us as part of the original Cadre for the Engineers and Division. He picked up an artillery DUD on the field and brought it home on the bus. After stepping from the bus he walked a few yards and the DUD went off in his

A Brief Epoch in the life of a Soldiers Wife During World War II

ns. He was killed instantly. This tragic accident served some purpose as the engineers had no more casualties such as this!

We all felt very badly about this tragic accident. All of us, wives and men, had become part of an. "ARMY FAMILY." As wives we shared the problems of ourselves and our Soldier husbands. The Wives stories would make for an extremely good book. (almost comparable to the *Battle of the Bulge*.) My story is very tame to what others went through. (A story that should possibly be written for one who has the information - John Kline - uh?)

John had graduated from the Ranger School and things became smoother. He also made Sergeant and we welcomed his pay raise. I visited Ft. Jackson quiet often and on weekends attended the parades and inspections which were scheduled. Sometimes there were as many wives as there were officers in the reviewing-nd. Wives and Spectators were at edge of the Parade grounds but we all enjoyed it - more than our men.

In January of 1944, John obtained a furlough and we went to Myrtle Beach to celebrate our first wedding anniversary on the 15th. Myrtle Beach was very small and deserted at this time of year. We had a glorious time for 3 days when he received orders to report back by reveille on January 18th.

Upon our return the division was preparing for maneuvers in Tennessee. After finding out what area the maneuvers were taking place (I had just found out I was pregnant), I quit my job and went to Nashville to stay with friends. John came in when possible and we both knew it was just a matter of time until they were shipped overseas. We had decided to squeeze as much time as possible to-



John P. Collins and wife Anita - 53 years later
106th Infantry Division Association Reunion
Orlando, Florida 1995

gether as we could in the short time allotted to us.

When the division moved out to Camp Atterbury, John and his Squad was left to evaluate the damage done to the farmers, etc. I moved in with a farmers family across the road from their bivouac area. We had a great time for the two weeks we were there then it was time to ship out again. I traveled to Camp Atterbury via bus and arrived in Edinburgh (near the Base) and at the USO I found an elderly couple who owned a house and would share the kitchen and we could rent it. Needless to say -we moved in.

About this time John was promoted to Platoon Sergeant (S/SGT). I was getting big and bigger. The baby was due about the first week in October so we decided that I should return home the latter part of August. This I did and again I moved in an-apartment with my life long girl friend. Between the landlady and my friend I had plenty of TLC. Being pregnant was not easy for me, however, I gave birth to John II, a healthy, hungry 6 lbs. 7 oz. squalling son, on October 6, 1944.

I did not know it at the time, but the 106th was alerted to move out to the port of embarkation anytime. John applied for

A Brief Epoch in the life of a Soldiers Wife During World War II

a three day pass and out of the goodness of Lt. Rutledge and Captain Harmon they gave him one. He arrived by train the 8 October and left the next day after spending about 7 total hours with us. I later found out he arrived back at Camp as his company was loading up for shipping out. His barracks bag and rifle was standing with the Platoon. He made it in time.

My next contact was from the port of embarkation but the V letter was riddled and very hard to read. Then came England with the same riddled letters. Just routine items but still interesting. All other communication came from Newspaper and Radio and the next time the news was received was a sad day for John II and myself. I was well aware of the break-through but had no idea of John's situation until -. a neighbor and friend came to the house and told me she had heard on the radio, that the 106th was involved, (all my friends and relatives or anyone else I talked with' knew John was in the 81st Engineers Combat Battalion. The next morning it was on the front page of the Kansas City Star. I was very concerned about everyone and especially the part about the 81st Engineers.

I was then notified that John was assumed to be captured and my hopes were revived and my prayers intensified. My heart went out to my friends and others who were in the same boat as myself. Nothing further was heard from John until about the last of March 1945 when I received a postal card from Stalag VIII-A. In the meantime, horrifying pictures came out showing the PWS and their condition. I felt I might be doing John an in-

justice in praying for his existence under those conditions.

When I next heard from John, I was bathing John II, my landlady came running up the stairs yelling my name and waving a V- mail letter. Needless to say it was from John who stated he was OK and would soon be coming home. He had given the letter to a GI who was being flown to the US, who in return mailed it to me. John was suffering from malnutrition (like everyone else) and in the Hospital in Oxford, England. He left England after VE DAY on a convoy. I grabbed the V-mail letter and ran down the street to my friends house. We were all standing out on the street crying on each others shoulders when I remembered I had left the baby in his Bathinette. I ran back to the apartment but I should have known my Landlady had everything under control. TALK ABOUT BEING EXCITED - really - there are no words that can describe the elation I had.

On June 12, 1945 just one day before John's birthday, we had a great reunion when he arrived home. All this happened over 50 years ago. We have had a very good life and the years after 1945 would make another fabulous story.

In the meantime I have met many of the fellows from the Engineers that I knew back in 1943/44. Some remembered and recognized me but had difficulty in recognizing my other half. Love and humility has held us together all these years and it gets better as time marches on.

Anita H. Collins

From the Papers of
Col. Alan W. Jones, Jr. USA (Ret)
Formerly
Captain Alan W. Jones, Jr.
Operations Officer
1st Battalion, 423d Regiment

Staff Department
THE INFANTRY SCHOOL
Fort Benning, Georgia
ADVANCED
INFANTRY OFFICERS COURSE
1949-1950

**OPERATIONS OF THE
423RD INFANTRY
106TH INFANTRY DIVISION
IN THE
VICINITY OF SCHONBERG
DURING
THE BATTLE OF THE
ARDENNES,
16-19 DECEMBER 1944
ARDENNES-ALSACE CAMPAIGN**

**Personal Experience of
a Battalion Operations Officer**

**Type of Operation described:
INFANTRY REGIMENT
DEFENDING, SURROUNDED AND
ATTEMPTING TO BREAK OUT**

**ADVANCED INFANTRY
OFFICERS CLASS NO 1**



Colonel Alan W. Jones, 3d Brigade, 2d Division
November 1966, KOREA
Photo by Div Photo Lab, 122nd Signal Battalion

Notations in the following story refer to numbers below eg: (A-3, p. 88) refers to page 88 of A-3.

- A-1** Report by the Supreme Commander to the Combined Chiefs of Staff on the Operations of the Allied Expeditionary Force, 6 June 1944 - 8 May 1945 (TIS Library)
- A-2** Crusade in Europe By Dwight D. Eisenhower, Doubleday and Co. Inc. 1949 (Personal possession of Author)
- A-3** First United States Army Report of Operations, 1 August 1944 - 22 February 1945 (TIS Library)
- A-4** VIII Corps After Action Report, 1 - 31 December 1944 Film D-75, 1st Item (TIS Library)
- A-5** The German Generals Talk By B. H. Liddell Hart, William Morrow and CO. 1948
- A-6** 106th Infantry Division G-3 Journal Notes, Period 5-31 December 1944, Film D-7, 1st Item (TIS Library)
- A-7** 106th Infantry Division After Action Reports, December 1944 - March 1945, Film D-9, Items 1345, A, B, C (TIS Library)
- A-8** St. Vith: Lion in the Way - By Colonel R. Ernest Dupuy Infantry Journal Press, 1949 (TIS Library)
- A-9** The 423d in the Bulge- By Colonel Charles C. Cavender, Commanding, The CUB of the Golden Lion, November 1946, (Personal Possession of the author)
- A-10** The War, Sixth Year-By Edgar McInnis, 1946 (TIS Library)
- A-11** Normandy to the Baltic- by Field Marshall Montgomery, Houghton Mifflin Co, 1948
- A-12** The War in Western Europe, Part 2 (Dec 1944 - May 1945), Department of Military Art and Engineering, US Military Academy, West Point, N.Y. 1949 (TIS Library)
- A-13** Strategy of the Campaign in Western Europe 1944 -45-Report of the General Board, USFET, 1946 (TIS Library)
- A-14** The Glorious Collapse of the 106th By S. Frank, The Saturday Evening Post, 9 November 1946- Personal possession of the author)
- A-15** British and American Army Group Commanders Discuss Von Rundstedt's Counterattack, Army-Navy Journal, 13 January 1945 (TIS Library)

INTRODUCTION

By October 1944 the Allied forces in Western Europe had swept across FRANCE and were generally poised along the western frontier of Germany (*See map A- NOTE, this map, left out for space requirements, was an overall view of Belgium, Luxembourg and Western Germany.* The rapidity of the advance across FRANCE and the resulting extended front, pressed to the limits of logistical support, had quickly reduced the impetus of advance. As the problem of supply became more acute, large scale advance became impossible and the front stabilized (A-1 p. 66).

Checked as they were at the fixed defenses along the German frontier, the mounting of a full scale assault became necessary and toward this end momentous efforts were directed. However, Allied commanders, determined to maintain the initiative and to continue the drive into Germany at the earliest opportunity, launched a series of limited attacks preliminary to operations which were to mean the final destruction of all German forces west of the RHINE RIVER. While maintaining a relentless pressure on the enemy, supply difficulties had to be solved, regrouping had to be accomplished and units had to be refitted (A-2, p. 323).

In mid October, it was decided by the Supreme Commander that beginning in November the First Army was to advance to COLOGNE from the vicinity of AACHEN while the Third Army struck at the vital SAAR BASIN (A-11, p. 269). To continue a sustained offensive, meanwhile holding a front of more than 500 miles, it was necessary to concentrate available forces, reducing to a minimum those forces holding relatively static positions. The largest of these sectors was the portion of the first US Army line stretching through the Ardennes region from MONSCHAU to TRIER, a distance of 75 miles held by VIII Corps (A-2, p. 338).

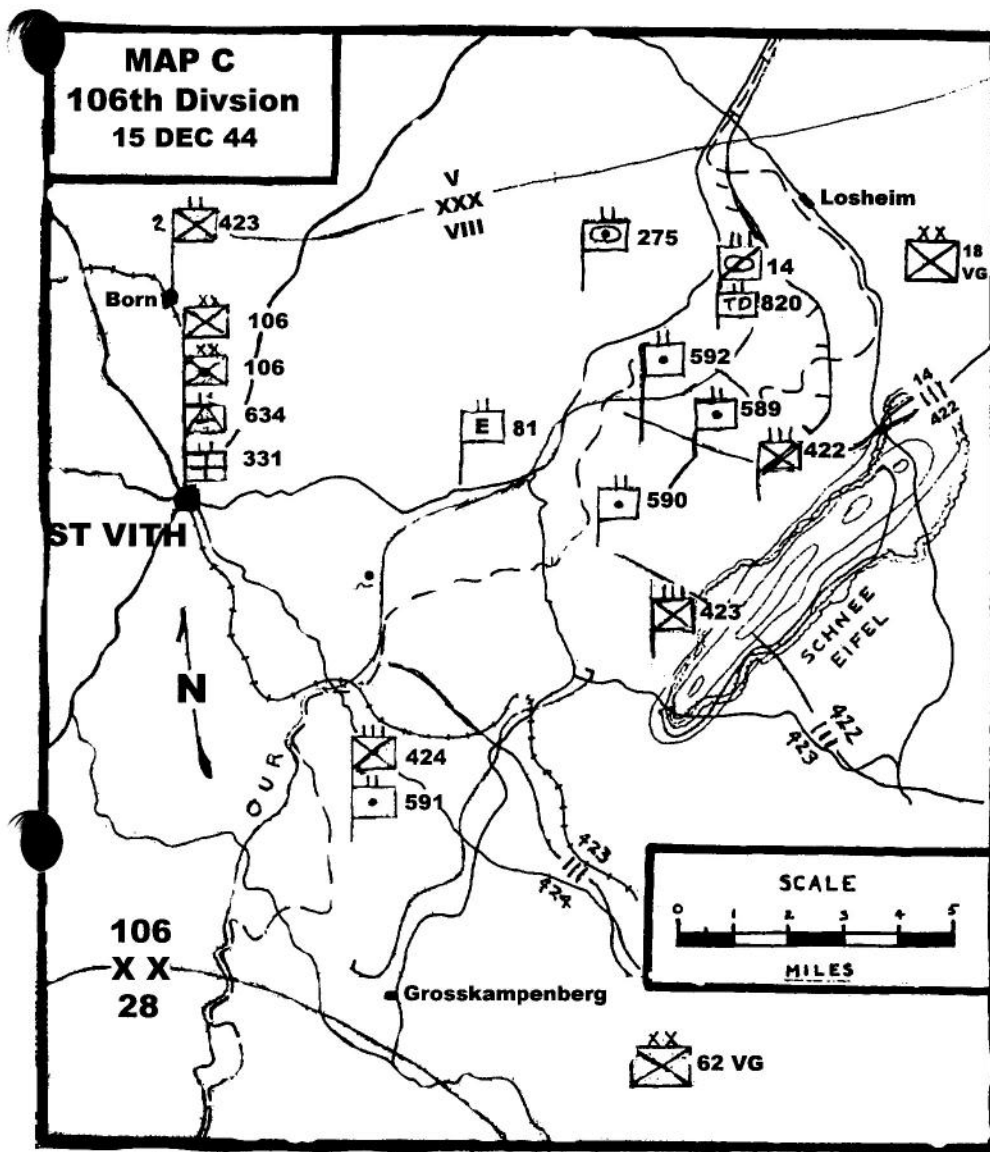
THE GENERAL SITUATION

On 6 December 1944, the First US Army issued orders for the continuation of its offensive to seize the ROER RIVER dams, the possession of which was essential before the attack could profitably continue toward COLOGNE (*See Map A*) VIII Corps, on the enemy south flank, was to continue on its previous mission of conducting aggressive defense within the Corps zone and be prepared to advance to KOBLENZ on army order when the main attack had progressed sufficiently to lessen resistance on its Corps front." The newly arrived 106th Infantry Division was to relieve the 2d Infantry Division on the VIII Corps front thus releasing it to the V Corps, to the north, to assist in the army attack (A-3, p. 88).

From north to the south, the VIII Corps front on 12 December was held by the 106th Infantry Division, 28th Infantry Division, 9th Armored Division less Combat Command B and Combat Command R and the 4th Infantry Division. Corps reserve was composed of Combat Command R, 9th Armored Division, and four engineer combat battalions (*See Map B- See map A- NOTE, this map, left out for space requirements, was an overall view of the VIII Corps area.*) (A-4, p. 6).

The ARDENNES region through which the VIII Corps front extended was characterized by rugged, difficult terrain. High plateaus intersected by many deep cut valleys and covered by numerous heavily wooded areas increased the difficulties of large scale tactical movements, while a restricted road net made both supply for defenders and axes of advance for attackers a major problem. Two vital road junctions controlled the road nets necessary for large scale operations in the area: ST VITH in the northern portion of the Corps sector, BASTOGNE to the south. Snow, sleet and rain added to the problems of maintaining narrow roads and made cross country movement through the area all but impossible (Personal Knowledge).

Supplies of all classes were generally adequate by mid-December with several notable exceptions. Winter combat clothing was



short or non-existent and badly needed. Ammunition was closely controlled, particularly 81mm mortar, 105mm howitzer, 155mm and 3" anti-tank ammunition.

These types were restricted in distribution and limited in use (Personal Knowledge).

Facing the VIII Corps were for German Volksgrenadier divisions: the 18th Infantry Division on the Corps north, the 62nd, the 352d and the 212th on the south. In general, these units had been regrouped or reformed during October and filled with personnel from naval and air force units as well as with

older men and those with physical defects.

Holding the Siegfried Line, except for the section which follows the ridge of the SCHNEE EIFEL, these divisions were in strong, well constructed, permanent defensive positions. Protected from the harsh winter weather by pillboxes, the troops were in good physical condition; while not of the highest, their morale was good (A-4, p. 3).

The 423d Infantry Regiment in the Ardennes, 16-19 Dec. 1944

SITUATION OF THE 106TH INFANTRY DIVISION (See Map C, Prior Page)

In accordance with the plan of the First US Army, the 106th Division was assigned to VIII Corps; and by Corps order, the 106th Division, with attachments, was directed to relieve the 2d Division in place and to assume responsibility for the defense of the sector. Attached to the division were the 14th Cavalry Group of two squadrons and one artillery battalion, the 820th Tank Destroyer Battalion (3" towed) and the 634th Antiaircraft Artillery (AA) Battalion. The attachments were similar to those of the 2d Division with the exception of the tank battalion attached to the later (A-7, p.2).

The 106th Division arrived at ST VITH on 10 December after a two day motor march of 270 miles; relief of the 2d Division began at once, one regimental combat team at a time, and was complete by 12 December. The 106th Division assumed responsibility for the sector at 111900 December (A-7, p.2).

After relieving the 2d Division man for man and gun for gun in compliance with Corps orders, the division was disposed with the 14th Cavalry group to the north (left. and three regiments abreast; 422nd Infantry, 423rd Infantry and 424th Infantry to the south. The 2d Battalion, 423rd Infantry was in division reserve (A-6, Part I).

The division sector extended from the vicinity of LOSHEIM across the LOSHEIM GAP to the ridge of the SCHNEE EIFEL, thence southward astride the Siegfried Line to the southern nose of the ridge. Here the line was echeloned some 2000 yards to the west of the Siegfried Line where it continued south following the high ground just east of the OUR RIVER to the vicinity of GROSSKAMPENBERG, a ground distance of some 27 miles (A-6, Part I).

From the east two major routes enter the zone, both converging on ST. Vith, the division command post; one from the north of the SCHNEE EIFEL down to the OUR RIVER VALLEY, the other south of the SCHNEE EIFEL.

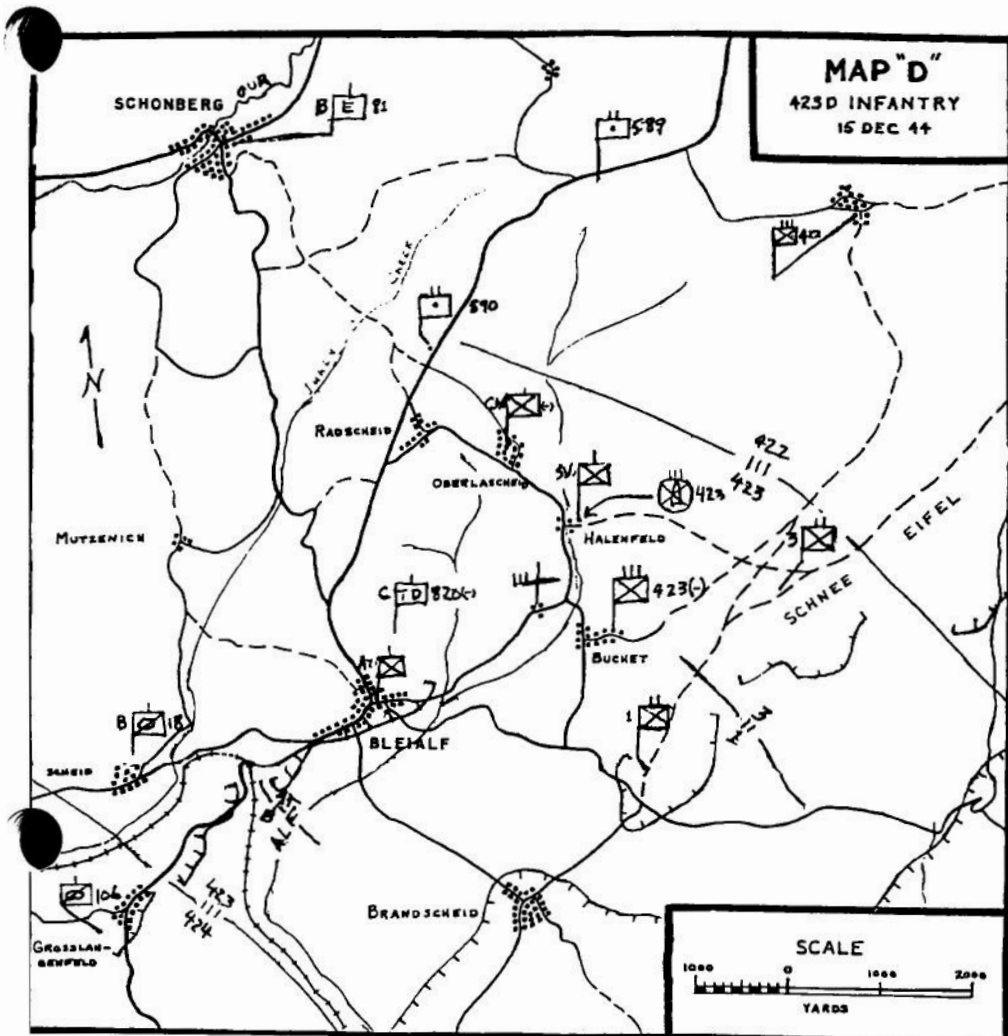
SITUATION OF THE 423RD INFANTRY REGIMENT (See Map D, Next Page)

By 111600 December, the 423rd Infantry less one battalion had completed the relief of the 38th Infantry, 2d Division and assumed responsibility for the defense of its sector. Troop B, 18th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron and Company B, 331st Medical Battalion were attached to the regiment. Company C, less one platoon, 820th Tank Destroyer Battalion, Company B, 81st Engineer Combat Battalion and the 590th Field Artillery Battalion were in direct support (A-6, Part I).

Holding the southern half of the SCHNEE EIFEL within the division lines, the 3d Battalion on the regimental left and the 1st Battalion, bent around the southern nose of the ridge, were in relatively strong positions. Along both sides of the ridge in the 1st Battalion area were under enemy observation, concealment was good, pillboxes were sufficiently numerous to allow their use as command posts down to and including platoons, and observation and fields of fire were relatively good (Personal Knowledge).

From the 1st Battalion right to the vicinity of BLEIALF the line refused some 1500 yards to the rear and west leaving a diagonal gap of about 20000 yards. The defensive positions then continued southward along the high ground just west of the narrow ALF RIVER for another 3500 yards. The Antitank Company with one platoon of Cannon Company and one rifle platoon from the 3d Battalion held the line from BLEIALF inclusive to the railway tunnel exclusive, all elements defending as riflemen. Troop B, 18th Cavalry Squadron, extended the front to the regimental right boundary. These troops were organized into a provisional battalion under command of the antitank commander. Company C, 820th Tank Destroyer Battalion was in the area of the provisional battalion (A-6, Part I).

Elements of Service Company and Regimental Headquarters Company were in regimental reserve (A-9, p. 2). To garrison a six mile front of the regimental sector, depth in



defensive positions had been sacrificed.

On the left contact was maintained with the 422d Infantry by patrols and on the right with the 106th Reconnaissance Troop, attached to the 424th Infantry, and occupying GROSSELANGENFELD, by patrols.

Wire lines existed to all units down to companies and lateral lines had been laid between regiments. While two channels existed between the division and regimental command posts, both were single cable; nor were alternate wire lines laid between other units. Teletypewriter communication was likewise available to the division. Radio silence was maintained among all units. Radios had been issued to all units in England, but since radio

silence had been imposed continuously no opportunity for proper calibration or testing had been available except such as could be done without actual radio operation (Personal Knowledge).

Class I and III supplies were normal and adequate while only a major shortage of winter combat clothing, previously mentioned, was present among Class II and IV items. The available rate of supply of ammunition per weapon per day was; 81mm, 8 rounds; 105mm (for howitzers of the Cannon Company), 5 rounds; 105 mm (for artillery howitzers), 42 rounds; 3 inch, 15 rounds. With the exception of artillery ammunition, only half of this daily available supply was authorized for use; the other half remained under regi-

The 423d Infantry Regiment in the Ardennes, 16-19 Dec. 1944

mental control loaded on unit vehicles kept near the regimental ammunition supply point. Other types of ammunition were unrestricted in use. The rapid movement of the regiment across FRANCE and into the lines had resulted in units entering the lines with less than basic loads of or no mortar or artillery ammunition. The 2d Division had generously turned part of their surplus stocks over to the 106th Division on position when relieved; and every effort was made at once to fill all basic loads of ammunition. Surplus stocks were not authorized (A-6, Part II). A request for anti-tank mines made on 14 December brought a curt replay from the army ammunition supply point that 48 hours advance notice was required (Personal Knowledge).

During the period 11-15 December the weather was cold and damp with temperatures generally ranging between 30 degrees and 40 degrees. Snow, sleet and rain fell intermittently maintaining 6 to 12 inches of snow over the area and making roads to the rear all but impassable. Added to those difficulties were almost daily heavy fogs which remained in the valleys until late in the mornings (Personal Knowledge).

On the day it entered the lines the regiment was at nearly full strength. Its training over a year and half period had been rigorous and thorough. However in the six months prior to the debarkation for overseas, the regiment had lost more than fifty percent of its riflemen as overseas replacements; its last shipment was made after the regiments itself had been alerted for overseas shipment. Their vacancies had been filled with men from miscellaneous units, good soldiers but not trained riflemen. In spite of the extreme discomfort of the cold, damp weather and inadequate winter clothing and the obviously extended and exposed positions, moral was high. This was a quiet sector where men could learn rapidly and safely. (Personal Knowledge).

OPERATIONS OF THE 423D INFANTRY, 11-15 DECEMBER

The relief of the 38th infantry on 11 December, although made during daylight, was covered by fog and was completed without

mishap or confusion. Every advantage taken of the opportunities presented to gain maximum experience. Patrolling was active, albeit initially over cautious, with maximum numbers of officers and men participating. Small unit leaders and staff rapidly settled into their jobs and routine operations ran smoothly. Detailed counterattack plans were prepared, minor fire fights occurred, and harassing fires were frequently laid down on the enemy lines. In short, the routine activities of a unit in defense in contact with an enemy on the defensive continued (A-9, p. 2, Personal Knowledge).

Commanders of all echelons were dissatisfied with the defensive positions which they had been ordered to occupy, a defense based in part on tank support, extra communications equipment and additional crew-served weapons, none of which the 106th Division had (Personal Knowledge). Every effort was made to obtain authority to make desired adjustments without success, although on 14 December division directed that list of additional weapons by type necessary on the present position be submitted." (A-6, 14 December).

During this period, enemy patrols were active; each night one or more infiltrated through the regimental line. Propaganda leaflets were found tacked to trees in the rear areas. Prisoners, however, indicated no new enemy units and higher headquarters seemed generally to view activities as those normal in any quiet sector. Wheeled and tracked vehicle movements were reported by patrols on the nights of 14 and 15 December; the comment received from Corps concerning these reports was that the sounds were undoubtedly from enemy loudspeaker systems (Personal Knowledge).

THE GERMAN COUNTEROFFENSIVE PLAN

Even as the Allies were striving to overcome the tremendous logistical problem facing them during October and November, the German Army, taking advantage of the temporary slow-down of the Allied advance, made Herculean efforts to build and train new units and to equip and supply them for a gigantic offensive planned to cut off the Brit-

The 423d Infantry Regiment in the Ardennes, 16-19 Dec. 1944

forces on the north from their bases and ultimately destroy them or force a withdrawal from the continent. To accomplish this, the major port of ANTWERP was selected as the main objective (See Map E, This Page) (A-5 p. 275).

The general plan was to break through the weak American forces in the ARDENNES with the Sixth SS Panzer Army making the main effort and striking toward the MEUSE RIVER between LIEGE and HUY, then driving on to ANTWERP. The Fifth Panzer Army on the left was to wheel northward to cross the MEUSE in the vicinity of NAMUR and push on to BRUSSELS, protecting the left flank of the main effort. To the north, the Fifteenth Army was to attack toward LIEGE protecting and assisting the main effort made by the Sixth SS Panzer Army. To the south, the Seventh Army of one Corps was to make a diversionary attack into LUXEMBOURG (A-5, p. 275).

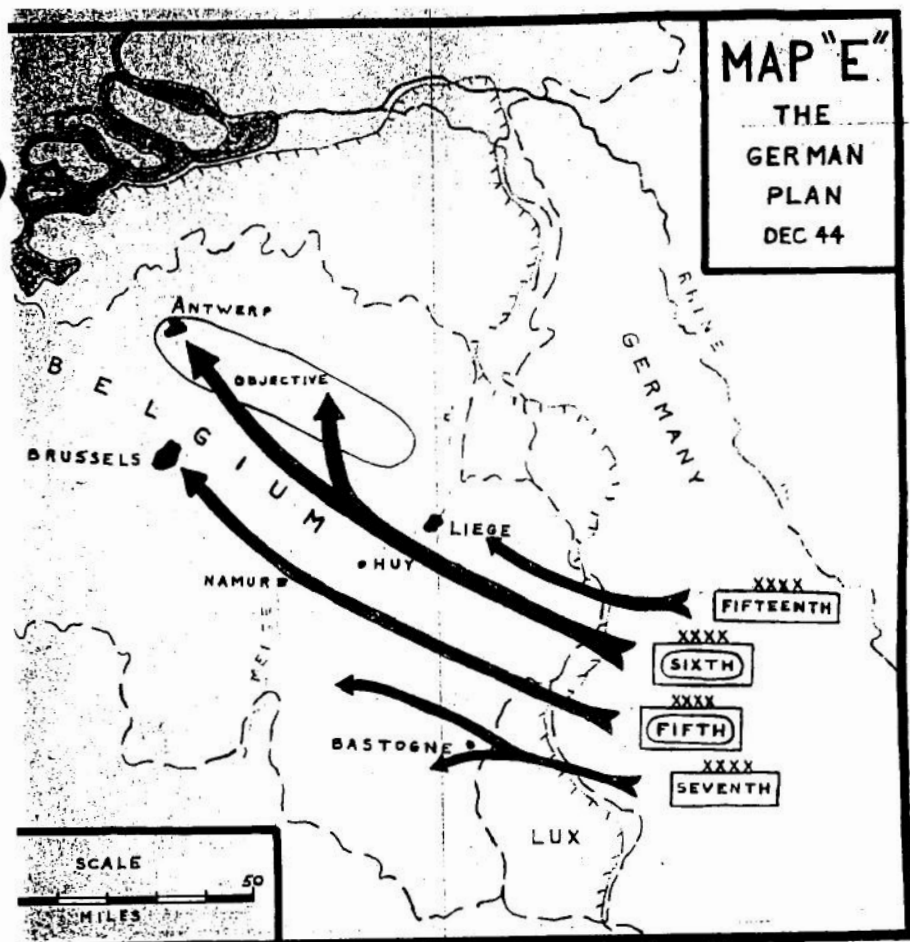
For this offensive, 24 divisions with supporting elements, including those on the VII Corps front were to be used. Training, re-equipping, and concentration in assembly areas were accomplished with the utmost secrecy: and favored by overcast and foggy weather which made aerial reconnaissance impossible, complete tactical surprise was obtained (A-2, p. 346).

NARRATION

THE GERMANS STRIKE

Heavy artillery fire, interspersed with mortar and nebelwerfer fire began to fall along the division front on 160530 December. The last German offensive had begun (A-6, Part II).

The 423d Infantry Staff immediately alerted all units. By 0600, wire communications with Antitank Company, Troop B, 18th



The 423d Infantry Regiment in the Ardennes, 16-19 Dec. 1944

Cavalry Squadron and the 590th Field Artillery was out. Radio nets were opened (A-6, 16 December).

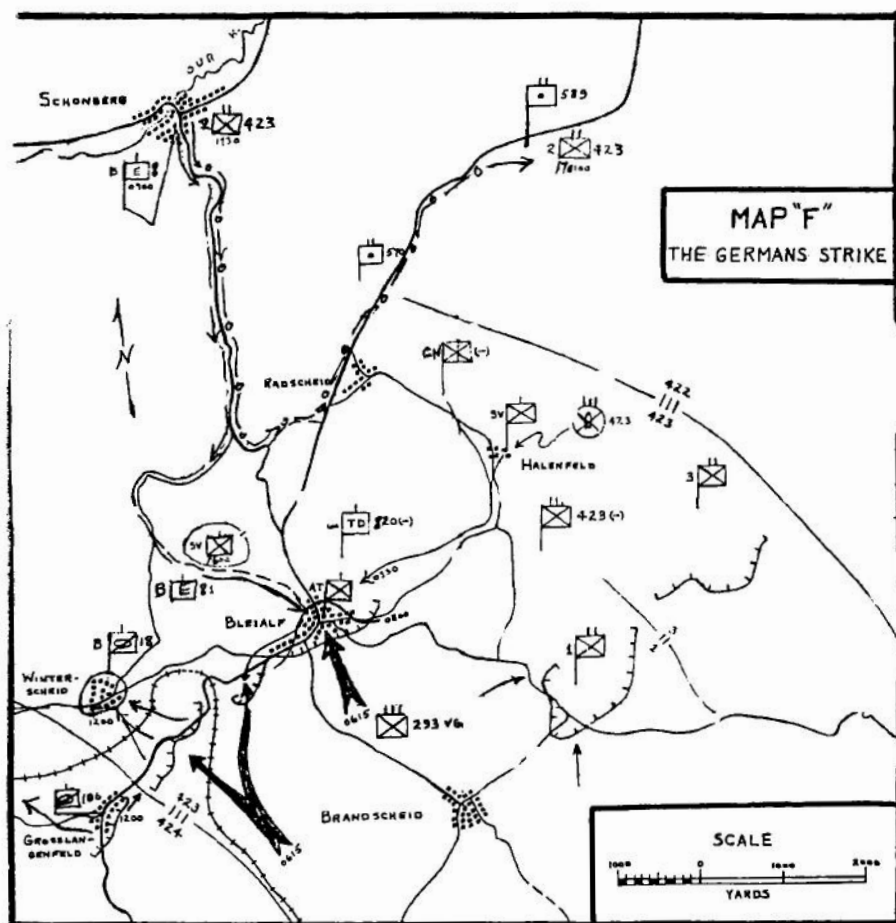
Particularly heavy fire in the area of Service Company and the regimental ammunition supply point in HALENFELD destroyed a large number of vehicles and much of the regiment's extra ammunition (Statement by Major Carl H. Cosby, then Executive Officer, 1st Battalion, 27 January 1950) (See Map F, This Page).

As the German preparatory fire began to lift shortly after 0600, German Infantry struck BLEIALF in force driving Antitank Company back through the village house by house. Assisted by the reflected light of searchlights playing against the low-hanging clouds, the enemy moved rapidly through the half light. The stubborn resistance of the somewhat disorganized element of the Anti-

tank Company, supported by preplanned artillery barrages and the fire of the Cannon Company, broke up repeated enemy infantry attacks toward and within the town (A-9, p. 2 Personal Knowledge).

Simultaneously, another enemy group had moved up the railroad on the regimental right and quickly pushed between the Anti-tank Company and Troop B cutting off and destroying the right platoon of Antitank Company and breaking contact between the two units (A-6, Part II).

By 0800 the enemy held most of BLEIALF; wire lines were still out between the regimental command post and the right flank; and pressure against Antitank Company seemed unrelenting. Service Company and Cannon Company were alerted and by 0930 had moved into BLEIALF. Here this force of about 100 men, all that were available, were commit-



The 423d Infantry Regiment in the Ardennes, 16-19 Dec. 1944

as part of the provisional battalion (A-6, Part II, Personal Knowledge).

Meanwhile authority from division had been requested by and granted to the regimental commander to use Company B, 81st Engineer Combat Battalion as a rifle company. The company was immediately ordered and moved from SCHONBERG to BLEIALF. Only 70 men were available.

Upon arrival, the company launched an independent attack against the west shoulder of the penetration with limited success before it was stopped (A-6, Part I).

With this addition force at his disposal, the provisional battalion commander was directed to clear BLEIALF and regain contact on the right flank. By noon with the forces on hand plus officers and men from the Regimental Headquarters Company whom the regimental commander subsequently moved to BLEIALF, a counterattack was launched with the fire support of Company C, 820 TD Battalion and the 590th FA Battalion which developed into a bitter house-to-house struggle. The enemy was gradually cleared from the village and by 1500 was driven out. Over twenty prisoners were taken, identifying the enemy assault as the 293d regiment, 18th Volksgrenadier Division (A-6, Part II).

The regimental commander placed his executive officer in command of the provisional battalion about 1300; it was he who reorganized the original defenses with the remaining elements of the Antitank and Cannon Company holding BLEIALF and Company B, 81st Engineers extending the line toward the railroad on the right. Service Company was held in mobile reserve north of BLEIALF. The enemy dug in 300-500 yards to the front (A-6, Part II).

Attempts to regain physical contact with Troop B on the right flank and through it with the 424th Infantry were unsuccessful. Attacked during the first German rush, Troop B had remained under constant pressure. By noon finding his unit running dangerously low on ammunition and attacked from the vicinity of GROSSLANGENFELD where the 106th Reconnaissance Troop had been, the troop commander finally was able to contact

the regimental command post by radio and requested authority to withdraw.

Knowing the situation on the right, the regimental commander granted this request. Troop B withdrew to WINTERSCHEID and organized a perimeter defense (A-6, Part II).

Throughout the day the 1st and 3d Battalions had been subjected to sporadic artillery and mortar fire; minor enemy attack, apparently patrols in force, had hit the battalion repeatedly. During the afternoon two tanks separately nosed toward the 1st battalion from the vicinity of BRANDSCHEID, but withdrew when fired on from close range (Personal Knowledge).

The 590th Field Artillery had rendered unflinching support, particularly in the BLEIALF area, despite heavy German counter battery fire and resulting losses including one battery commander and several howitzers (A-8, p. 51).

Still under divisional control, the 2d Battalion had been moved during the afternoon to the vicinity of SCHONBERG, there to block the roads running to the northeast and south and to hold this vital road center (A-6, 16 December). By 1730 defenses had been organized. Three hours later orders from division were received by the 2d Battalion to move to the northeast to relieve the left flank of the 422d Infantry and to protect the displacement of the 589th Field Artillery Battalion. Moving by motor under blackout conditions through sleet and mud via the circuitous route from SCHONBERG south to RADSCHEID and then north, the 2d Battalion reached the area of the 589th Field Artillery Battalion at 170100 (Statement by Captain Oliver B. Patton, then Platoon Leader, Company F, 24 January 1950).

At the end of the first day the 423d Infantry had maintained its original positions despite heavy enemy attacks and numerous communication failures. Wire lines had been interrupted by enemy artillery concentrations and radios had been unsatisfactory at best. Lack of previous calibration and adjustment, unfavorable terrain and weather and enemy jamming, had made radio contact fleeting or non-existent at all echelons (A-6, Part I, Per-

The 423d Infantry Regiment in the Ardennes, 16-19 Dec. 1944

sonal Knowledge).

Some eighteen hours after the German Army had launched its attack it had failed to reach its objective for the day - ST. VITH (A-3, p. 117). Division was informed by the regimental commander A(1) will hold present position until ordered differently." (A-6, 16 December).

THE BREAKTHROUGH

(See Map G, This Page)

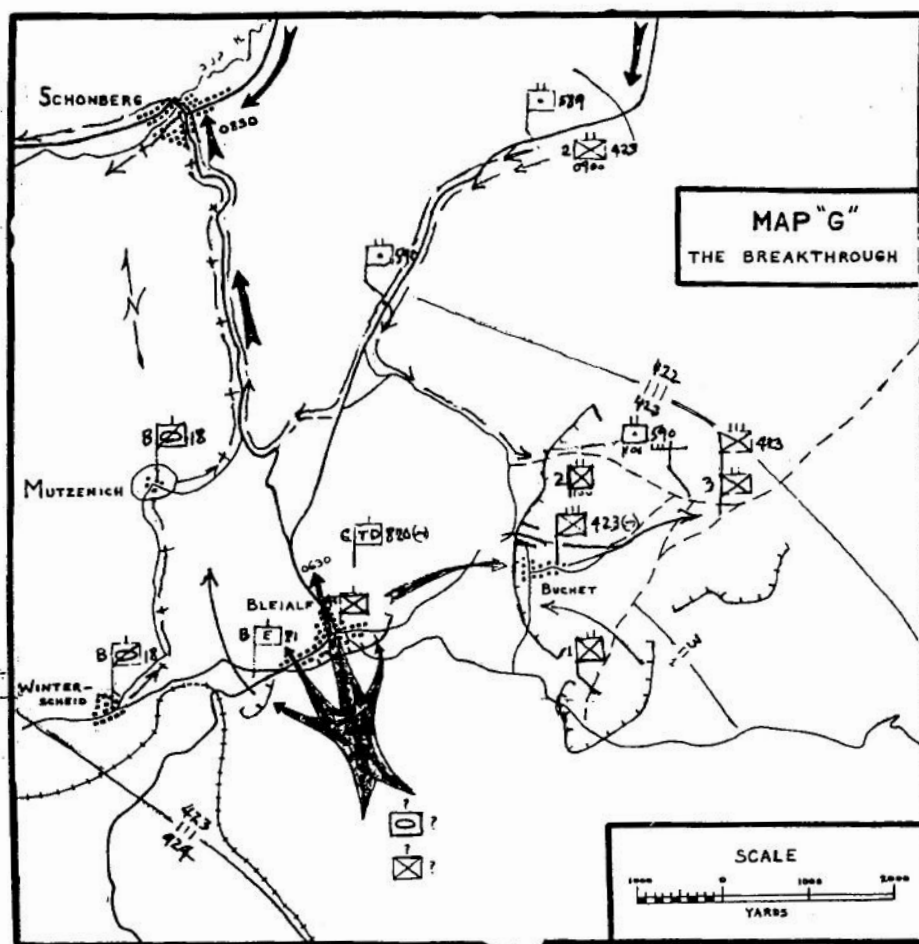
Artillery fire began to fall on BLEIALF again beginning at 170300; the provisional battalion reported armor followed by infantry approaching its positions. Communications with the 590th Field Artillery was again disrupted as was communications with the 423d Infantry to its north (A-6, 17 December).

Before dawn the enemy struck in force all along the front of the provisional battalion

overrunning defensive area and penetrating between Antitank Company and Company 81st Engineers. By 0630 enemy forces had taken BLEIALF and a large force rapidly moved toward SCHONBERG.

Within two hours it had joined another enemy infantry-tank column which had driven south to SCHONBERG after a breakthrough in the 14th Cavalry sector to the north. The 423d and 422d Infantries were surrounded, (A-6, Part I).

Forced back in disorder but fighting every step of the way with fire support of one platoon of Cannon Company, the provisional battalion withdrew to high ground just west of BUCHET. Regimental headquarters and defense platoon personnel joined the fight against scattered enemy groups as the regimental command post fought to disengage itself and displace. This was accomplished and



The 423d Infantry Regiment in the Ardennes, 16-19 Dec. 1944

The command post and regimental collecting station moved to the vicinity of the 3d Battalion command post (Personal Knowledge).

Troop B, 18th Cavalry Squadron and Company B, 81st Engineer Battalion were now definitely isolated, having physical contact neither with each other nor to either flank. Troop B, again in radio contact with regiment, was ordered to fall back to MUTZNICH and later to join the regiment if forced to withdraw again (A-6, 17 December). There, with remnants of the 106th Reconnaissance Troop from the 424th Infantry's left flank, Troop B remained until it was realized that the regiment could not be joined. Late in the afternoon the regimental commander authorized Troop B to withdraw toward ST. VITH if unable to reach the regiment. Withdrawing via SCHONBERG, the leading platoon broke into a column of American trucks moving toward ST. VITH only to find that they were loaded with armed Germans. Racing down the left side of the road toward the end of the column, firing at point blank range, this platoon was finally destroyed by enemy tanks. Regiment last heard from Troop B as the remaining elements prepared to infiltrate through to ST. VITH (A-8, p. 93). Contact was not to be regained with Company B, 81st Engineers. One platoon had been overrun and lost in the first German attack but the company continued to hold its position. Another enemy assault in late afternoon overran a second platoon and remaining elements withdrew only to be captured some two days later west of SCHONBERG (A-9, p. 2).

With the regimental right flank driven back towards BUCHET and a known gap of some 8000 yards open to the south, the regimental commander began organizing a perimeter defense. Company C was moved to extend the 1st battalion right to the high ground west of BUCHET. The provisional battalion was disbanded and the remnants pulled from the line. The gap left between 1st and 3d Battalions by Company C's move was filled by the Ammunition and Pioneer Platoon, cooks helpers, truck drivers and headquarters personnel of the 1st Battalion organized into a provisional company (Per-

sonal Knowledge).

Meanwhile the 2d Battalion in the 422d Infantry rear area to the north had been heavily engaged since dawn protecting the displacement of the 589th Field Artillery Battalion from the German drive toward SCHONBERG from the north. By 0700 its radio in the division command net had been hit. The battalion destroyed seven enemy tanks but continuing enemy tank-infantry attacks were forcing the battalion back. Supported by the 590th Field Artillery battalion the 2d Battalion began a daylight withdrawal (A-8, p. 84).

During the morning the 590th Field Artillery Battalion had received orders from the Division Artillery Commander to displace to the vicinity of SCHONBERG. Upon learning that SCHONBERG was filled with German armor. The battalion commander, contacting the 2d Battalion commander whose withdrawal he was supporting, decided to fall back into the SCHNEE EIFEL positions of the 423d Infantry with the 2d Battalion (A-8, p. 89).

By 1100 the 2d Battalion and the 590th Field Artillery Battalion, with three howitzers entered the area of the 423d Infantry (Statement by Major Cosby, then 1st Battalion Executive Officer, 27 January 1950). The regimental commander placed the 2d Battalion in position at once extending the perimeter defense some 1500 yards further to the northeast from the vicinity of BUCHET. The 590th moved into positions within the perimeter generally west of the 3d Battalion command post. Cannoneers who could be spared were put into the perimeter defense as riflemen. Informing the division of the arrival of these units, the regimental commander also stated, "Will hold perimeter. Drop ammunition, food and medical supplies until route open." (A-6, 17 December).

Shortly before 1500 a message from division was received, five hours after it had been sent; "Expect to clear out area west of you this afternoon with reinforcements. Withdraw from present position if they become untenable. Save all transportation possible." All in the command post felt that Combat Command R, 9th Armored Division was surely on its way (A-6, Part I, Personal Knowledge).

Enemy pressure slackened during the

The 423d Infantry Regiment in the Ardennes, 16-19 Dec. 1944

late afternoon and by nightfall the situation of the regiment was not too bad. True, the regiment was cut off, but a perimeter defense had been organized and the regiment had its three battalions again. Artillery support was available although the 590th had only slightly more than 100 rounds. Patrols were still in contact with the 422d to the north, still in position although its north flank was bent back to the east. Casualties within the regiment numbered about 250, 150 of which had been in units that had made up the provisional battalion. Troop B, 18th Cavalry Squadron, Company B, 81st Engineer Battalion and the guns of Company C, 820th Tank Destroyer Battalion had been lost. Mortar ammunition was running low, but small arms ammunition was on hand. About two thirds of a K ration remained per man (Statement by Major Cosby, 27 January 1950). Word had been received that the requested air drop would be accomplished within the perimeter the next morning and Combat Command R, 9th Armored Division was thought to be nearing the position. The 423d Infantry would hold.

THE THIRD DAY

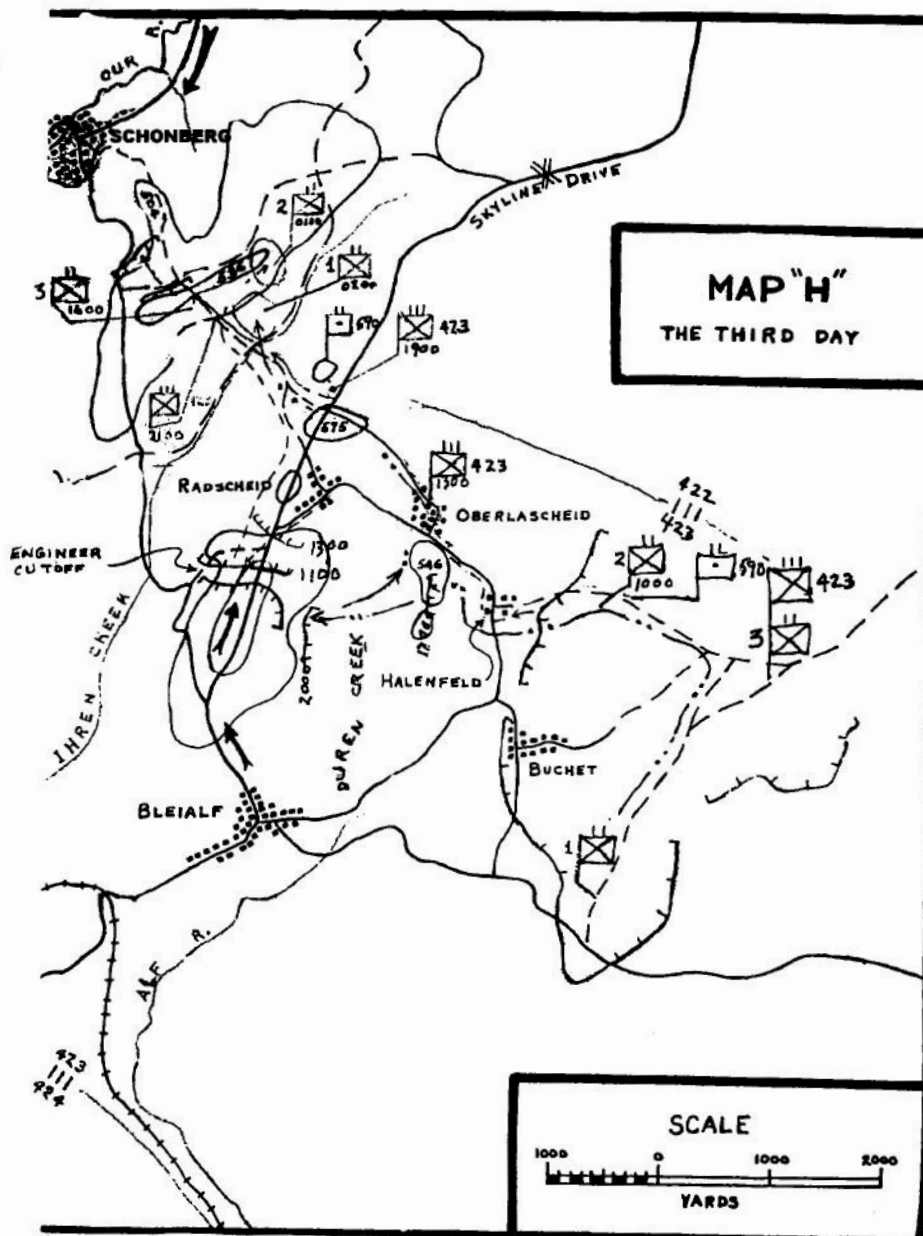
About 172330 the regimental commander had held a meeting with his battalion commanders during which the situation and conduct of the defense had been discussed including plans for the probable arrival of the 9th Armored Division. Plans were also made to receive the supplies to be dropped the next morning. During this a radio message initially sent some seven hours earlier was received ordering the 423d and 422d Infantry to withdraw to the line of the OUR RIVER evacuating all vehicles and equipment as possible. Relaying the message to the 422d Infantry not then in radio communication with division, the two regimental commanders agreed that this message was now obsolete and that they would remain in position since subsequent to its origination both had reported their situations and instructions had been received concerning the air drop to be made within the perimeter defense. However, some initial planning in the event of a possible future withdrawal, probably via SCHON-

BERG, was completed although such a withdrawal was now considered unlikely in view of the reinforcements and resupply expected shortly (A-9, p. 3, Personal Knowledge).

Orders were received about 180730, dated 180215 from division, which stated: "Panzer Regimental Combat Team on SCHONBERG-ST. VITH road—Mission to destroy by fire from dug in positions south of the SCHONBERG-ST. VITH road. Ammunition, food and water will be dropped. When mission accomplished move to area ST. VITH." (A-6, 18 December). The two regimental commanders agreed to move out together toward SCHONBERG with regiments abreast, the 423d on the left moving along an axis HALENFELD-OBERLASCHIED-SCHONBERG (See Map H, Next Page). After a map reconnaissance the regimental commander formulated his plan and at about 0800 issued the regimental order to his battalion commanders and staff. The regiment was to move out at 1000 in columns of battalions: 2d, 3d, regimental separate companies, 1st via HALENFELD- OBERLASCHIED-RADSCHEID- ENGINEER CUTOFF-SCHONBERG. The 2d Battalion was to be advance guard; the 1st battalion was to furnish the rear guard. Both the 1st and 3d Battalions were to leave covering forces in their battalion sectors. The 590th Field Artillery Battalion was to move by bounds within the column. All kitchens, baggage and supplies which could not be carried were to be destroyed and abandoned; and those command and communication vehicles and weapons carriers on position were to accompany the column. Non-transportable casualties were to be left at regimental collecting station with some medical personnel. (Personal Knowledge).

The 2d Battalion crossed the initial point at 181000. Elements of the 422d Infantry could be seen to the north about 1200 moving west as planned. As the 2d Battalion moved on through RADSCHEID and approached the BLEIALF-RADSCHEID road, known as Sky-line Drive, about 1200, it encountered heavy rifle, mortar and artillery fire from the left front. Its leading company was aggressively engaged and attempted to push the enemy to-

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ward the south to clear the route of march. Heavy mortar fire pinned this company down and the next company was committed on its right. Supported by the battalion heavy weapons company and the fire from one howitzer of the 590th still in position, the battalion pushed the enemy some 800 yards to the southeast where it was stopped (Statement by Captain Oliver B. Patton, then Platoon Leader, Company F, 24 January 1950; Per-

sonal Knowledge). The almost impossible radio contact and the need to conserve artillery ammunition rendered further support impossible (Personal Knowledge).

As the 2d Battalion was approaching Skyline Drive a radio message from division canceled previous instructions and ordered the 423d and 422d Infantries to seize SCHONBERG, then move west to ST. VITH. With this in mind, as the 2d Battalion

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pushed the enemy south the regimental commander ordered the 3d Battalion, then in OBERLASCHIED, to move to the right of the 2d Battalion and to cut the BLEIALF-SCHONBERG road (A-9, p. 3). Taking the right fork west out of OBERLASCHIED the 3d Battalion moved out, quickly crossed Skyline Drive and pushed across IHREN CREEK into BELGIUM.

As the battalion crossed RIDGE 536 its leading company was halted by heavy small arms fire and 40mm antiaircraft artillery fire from the vicinity of SCHONBERG. The battalion commander quickly moved a second company on line and with the supporting fires of its heavy weapons company the battalion attacked, still under heavy direct fire from antiaircraft guns, and gradually moved forward until the left flank company was astride the BLEIALF-SCHONBERG road. Here the battalion dug in 800 yards from the outskirts of SCHONBERG. Since noon the battalion had been out of radio contact with the regiment and messengers sent to the rear failed to reach the regimental command post. Late in the afternoon, patrols sent to the right to gain contact with the 422d were unsuccessful (A-6, 17 December; Personal Knowledge).

As the 3d Battalion cleared OBERLASCHIED about 1300 the regimental command post was established there. The 1st battalion, with the head of its column in HALENFELD and halted by the action of the 2d Battalion near RADSCHEID, moved off the road. As the covering forces left at the original positions drifted in, a hasty defense was organized by the rear guard to protect the regimental rear. Learning that the enemy facing the 2d Battalion was being rapidly reinforced by enemy troops from the vicinity of BLEIALF, the regimental commander at about 1600 ordered the 1st Battalion to attack toward the southwest on the 2d Battalion's left to assist that battalion and to cut off the flow of reinforcements from BLEIALF.

Moving rapidly, the 1st Battalion, less one company as rear guard, deployed along HILL 546 just south of OBERLASCHIED. Supported by its heavy weapons company, the battalion launched its attack at dusk,

about 1700, in what amounted to a night attack over unfamiliar territory, down into DUREN CREEK DRAW and up the lower slopes of the ridge extending south from RADSCHEID against a now heavily reinforced enemy. Against direct fire from German 88s, one of which was taken, and heavy automatic weapons and mortar fire the battalion drove some 1200 yards. Disorganized, nearly out of ammunition, and with about 70 casualties, the battalion pulled back to HILL 546 by 2200 (Personal Knowledge).

Shortly after darkness the regimental command post moved just north of HILL 575 to a house which had originally been the command post of the 590th Field Artillery Battalion. The regimental executive officer remained in direct command of the 1st and 2d Battalions then still engaged. The regimental commander sent patrols out to locate the 3d Battalion and to contact the 422d Infantry, and a motor patrol north along Skyline Drive to contact the enemy in that direction. The 3d Battalion was contacted and wire communication established; no contact could be made with the 422d Infantry; and the motor patrol sent to the north was badly shot up in the darkness by an enemy roadblock some 3000 yards from the command post on Skyline Drive (Personal Knowledge). Contact was again made with division shortly after 2100, the first since about 1600, through considerable interference and the regiment was informed that "supplies for you and the 422d to be dropped at bend of road one half mile south of SCHONBERG on 19 December. You will advise 422d." (A-6, 18 December). About 182230 division was informed of the regimental situation and instructions were received that "it was imperative that SCHONBERG be taken." (A-9, p. 3). This was the last radio contact between the division command post and the 423d Infantry.

Based on this information, the Regimental Commander decided that the 1st and 2d Battalions must be disengaged at once and concentrated in the vicinity of the 3d Battalion in preparation for a daylight attack on SCHONBERG the next morning (A-9, p. 3).

The 590th Field Artillery Battalion,

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which had displaced to OBERLASCHIED but 1600 was moved to positions just north of HILL 575 to support the next mornings attack. The remaining platoon of Cannon Company, which had been with the artillery, moved into position further down the IHREN VALLEY. The regimental command post with the remnants of the other regimental separate companies displaced to the southeast slope of RIDGE 536. The 2d Battalion, relieved of some enemy pressure by the attack of the 1st Battalion, was withdrawn and moved across IHREN CREEK to the assembly area northeast of the 3d Battalion and on the reverse slope of RIDGE 536. Leaving one company as a covering force to the south and east, the 1st Battalion withdrew along the north fork from OBERLASCHIED, picking up near HILL 575 the company which had been the rear guard, and crossed the IHREN VALLEY to an assembly area between the 2d and 3d Battalions and further down the slope of RIDGE 536. At 0300 its heavy weapons company was directed to occupy positions in the area of the 590th Field Artillery Battalion to protect this unit and the regimental rear. Seriously wounded had been left with medical personnel in the vicinity of OBERLASCHIED (Personal Knowledge).

During the day the 2d Battalion had lost some 300 casualties, including 16 officers. Five of eight heavy machine guns and four of six light machine guns had been destroyed, all 81mm ammunition had been expended and only 2 rounds per 60mm mortar remained. The 1st Battalion had lost 70 men including 3 officers. Mortar ammunition was negligible. The 2d Battalion had only moderate casualties but was also short of mortar ammunition. In all units small arms ammunition was low, rocket launcher ammunition was nearly gone, and machine guns averaged about 400 rounds per weapon (A-8, p. 125, Personal Knowledge).

THE LAST DAY

Before dawn 19 December, concentration of the regiment along RIDGE 536 was complete, as complete as is possible at night over strange terrain following a disengage-

ment with the enemy (See Map I, Next Page). Such extra ammunition as remained, about 8 rounds per rifleman, was distributed as battalions moved into their assembly areas. Although an effort was made to have men dig in for the remaining hours of darkness and until the attack order they knew was coming could be issued, little was accomplished. The men were wet, cold, hungry and exhausted. Except as previously mentioned, security consisted of listening posts only to the northeast, northwest and southwest. There were no patrols sent to SCHONBERG or to the flanks to maintain contact with the enemy and such security measures as were taken were not coordinated by the regimental staff. The I&R Platoon was maintaining a roadblock just south of RADSCHEID and was therefore of no other use to the regiment. Contact had not been gained with the 422d Infantry on the right (Personal Knowledge).

As dawn broke, the regimental commander made a rapid reconnaissance and completed his plan of attack. At 0230 the battalion commanders were assembled at the regimental command post and orders were issued for the attack on SCHONBERG (A-9, p. 3). For this attack the 423d Infantry could muster about half of its rifle strength. The 2d Battalion on the right was about half strength in officers and men. The 1st Battalion in the center had two rifle companies, each at about two-thirds strength. The company left near OBERLASCHIED to cover the regimental rear had not been heard from. The 3d Battalion was the strongest having suffered only moderate casualties to date. The regimental separate companies were hardly to be considered after their losses of the first two days in BLEIALF. Mortar ammunition was nearly nonexistent, small arms and machine gun ammunition was limited, rocket launchers had little or no ammunition, and slightly less than 100 rounds of artillery ammunition were available. Medical supplies were critical and evacuation impossible. There had been no aerial resupply.

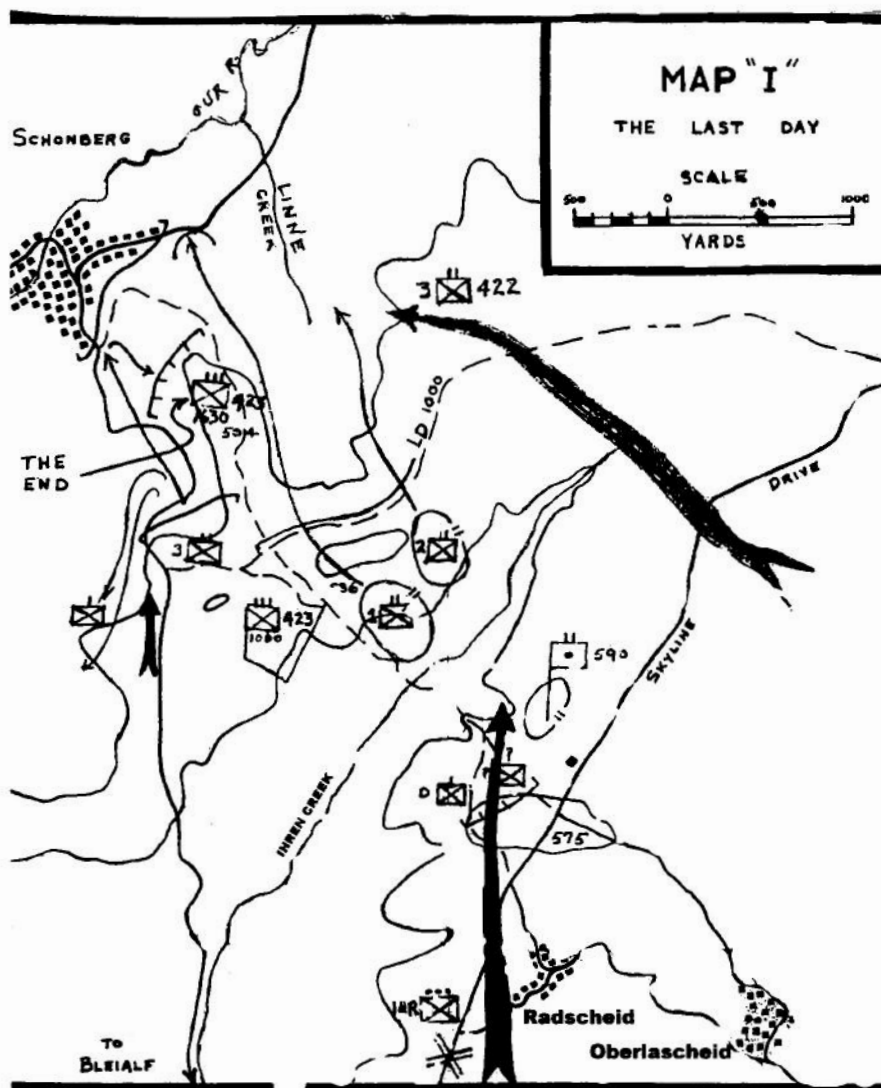
The regimental plan of attack envisioned battalions echeloned to the right rear, the 3d Battalion on the left making the main effort with its left generally following the BLEIALF-

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SCHONBERG road. The trail running north-east along the crest of RIDGE 536 was to be the line of departure for the 1st and 2d Battalions. Time of attack: 1910000. The 590th Field Artillery Battalion with one platoon of Cannon Company was to support the attack by fire. All remaining vehicles were to be destroyed.

As the regimental commander completed issuing his order about 0900, heavy artillery fire began to fall in the area from the vicinity of Skyline Drive. Much of the initial concentration landed near the regimental command post; and in his attempt to return to the 1st Battalion, the battalion commander was mor-

tally wounded. For some thirty minutes heavy fire of various calibers continued to blast the southeast slope of RIDGE 536, greatly interfering with reconnaissance and the preparations for the attack within the assembly area. As the fire lifted German infantry were seen sweeping over the positions of the 590th Field Artillery. The attack would have to be made without artillery support. Company D had been decimated, six of its eight officers killed or wounded, the company commander killed. Company M commander was killed. Casualties continued to occur in all units; vehicles in the IHREN VALLEY were destroyed (Personal Knowledge).



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With the enemy rapidly closing in to the rear, the regiment could only drive forward. All remaining vehicles were ordered destroyed. The regimental commander pushed the attack and in spite of the interference from enemy artillery fire, the 3d Battalion jumped off in good order at 1000. The Battalion left quickly ran into heavy direct fire from enemy antiaircraft artillery and was stopped. An American tank came up the road from SCHONBERG, fired on attacking platoons and then withdrew. At this time the left company, along the BLEIALF-SCHONBERG road, became further engaged with an estimated German rifle company moving from south towards SCHONBERG. Counter-attacking to the south with part of the assault platoons the company commander drove the enemy back but became separated from the battalion, was attacked again and by 1330 had been captured. The battalion continued to push forward. Both remaining rifle companies reach the southern outskirts of SCHONBERG where they were stopped by intense direct antiaircraft artillery fire. By 1500 the Battalion Commander began pulling the remnants back up the slope of HILL 504 (Personal Knowledge).

The 1st Battalion added little to the attack from the beginning. Because the battalion commander had taken none of his staff with him to receive the regimental order, valuable time was lost while the executive officer learned of the battalion commander's wound, assumed command, and was rapidly given the essentials of the attack order. Properly sending his staff forward for such reconnaissance and coordination as was possible, the new battalion commander was able to lead the battalion across the line of departure only five minutes late. Already less one rifle company lost at OBERLASCHIED and the heavy weapons company lost along Skyline Drive that morning, another rifle company was pulled out of the battalion as it moved toward the line of departure to become the regimental rear guard. The 1st battalion, in reality now Company B and part of Battalion Headquarters Company, pushed through the heavy woods along the eastern slope of HILL 504

under constant mortar and artillery fire, finally reaching the road running north from SCHONBERG. Here Company B remained under constant fire, until enemy tanks overran their positions. By 1400 the 1st Battalion had been eliminated.

The 2d Battalion, on the regimental right, crossed the line of departure as ordered; but as its advance progressed it became separated from the 1st Battalion by a deep, rugged, wooded draw. Unable to contact the regimental commander, the battalion commander decided to attack SCHONBERG from the northeast. As the leading elements moved down into LINNE CREEK DRAW they came under heavy small arms fire from the right. Contact had finally been made with elements of the 422d Infantry. While this error was quickly corrected by aggressive action on the part of small unit leaders, both units were temporarily disorganized. Coordinating with the elements of the 422d present, one battalion plus miscellaneous elements under command of the regimental commander, patrols were sent out to the north and northeast. By mid afternoon it was known that 1500 yards to the northeast 30 enemy tanks were forming, apparently preparatory to attacking; that in the OUR VALLEY there was a strong enemy force to the front; and that enemy artillery could be seen going into position west of the OUR RIVER (Personal Knowledge).

In the meantime the 423d Infantry command post, now on HILL 504 with the 3d Battalion, had also made contact with the 422d Infantry by patrol. With one battalion eliminated and one out of his control, with heavy enemy forces and artillery forming, his remaining elements raked by artillery, mortar and automatic weapons, and with casualties increasing and unaided, no food and only 5-10 rounds of M1 ammunition per rifleman remaining, the regimental commander decided that "it was apparent that further resistance was a useless sacrifice of life." Small groups were selected and sent out in several directions to attempt infiltration though to ST. VITH; few escaped (A-9, p. 3). At this time with the enemy armor moving towards his northern

flank the regimental commander of the 422d had independently reached a similar decision.

At 191630 December the remaining elements of the 423d Infantry were surrendered (Personal Knowledge).

Within the short period of four days the 423d Infantry had been engaged with the enemy in a defense, a counterattack, a withdrawal, a meeting engagement and an attack. While it is not known how many Germans were killed or wounded during this period, large numbers vitally needed in the battle for the critical ST. VITH road center were deflected from this main German objective and delayed as they contained the surrounding regiments at a time when the Germans could ill afford to delay.

ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM

1. THE BATTLE POSITION

The defensive positions occupied by the 423d Infantry had been previously organized by another unit and were taken over without change. Few of the companies had support platoons; neither of the front line battalions had a reserve company and the regimental reserve was meager and composed of troops not primarily riflemen. With such seriously reduced reserves and a rather wide frontage for a regiment less one battalion, the defense was cordon and, of course completely lacked depth. In reality, the positions of the 1st and 3d Battalions were not extensively extended with frontages of about 2000 yards each.

Well constructed pillboxes, concealment and well dug in positions added to the natural defense of the area. The heavy woods covering the SCHNEE EIFEL, however, had required maximum use of units in front line positions. South and west of the 1st Battalion was a 2000 yard gap to BLEIALF. For another 3500 yards, the line was held by units neither trained nor equipped to hold a position against a determined attack. Yet it was this area through which the best road net entered the regimental sector. During the winter months, with accompanying adverse weather, the road net assumed increasing importance; but these approaches were the most lightly held. The Germans

apparently were familiar with the organization of the defense for they properly selected the weakest sector for their initial penetration.

The combination of the weakest unit holding the least desirable defensive position, which controlled an important avenue of approach, could have resulted only in success of the enemy's attack. The lack of reserves to eliminate such a probable penetration could have resulted only in a complete enemy breakthrough.

2. COMMUNICATIONS

Throughout the period, communications were erratic or non-existent. Wire lines, taken over intact during the relief, were in single cables and alternate lines had not been installed. Heavy enemy artillery fire and later enemy tank movement in the rear areas resulted in frequently cut lines. Weather conditions. Adverse terrain and enemy jamming made radio contact infrequent and unreliable. Radio operators not fully experienced in combat communications problems were often unable to break through the interference that might otherwise have been overcome. The radio silence imposed from the time radios had been issued until an emergency required their use allowed no previous testing and resulted in perhaps one third of the radios being unable to enter the assigned nets. As a consequence, artillery fire as well as that of other supporting weapons was often delayed at a critical time. Command control was also interrupted. Troop B, 18th Cavalry Squadron and Company B, 81st Engineers could have been employed more effectively on 16-17 December if the radio contact had been continuous. Contact with the 3d Battalion on the afternoon of 18 December might well have speeded concentration of the regiment. Contact with the 422d Infantry during 18-19 December would have made possible a coordinated effort against SCHONBERG. Contact with Company A on 19 December would have warned the regiment of a pending German attack that overran the 590th Field Artillery. Careful staff supervision of communications during periods of planning and during later periods of execution would have overcome most of

the serious omissions by assuring that alternate methods of communications were available and that primary means were operative.

3. SUPPLY AND EVACUATION

The supply shortages effecting the regiment before the German offensive, were relative minor at that time. Because of its recent arrival in the lines, trench foot was not a problem with the regiment in spite of the shortage of winter clothing. The available supply rate for ammunition established by First Army was sufficient for a quiet sector, especially as ammunition was badly needed by troops attacking elsewhere. It would be provident to authorize troops in defense in an exposed position with only weak reserves to have on position ammunition over and above basic loads. It is to be expected that the enemy will cut supply routes if possible. Expenditure might still be controlled except in emergencies. The basic loads certainly should have been available to the gun positions; the shelling of the Service Company area caused serious losses of badly needed ammunition. Rations were last drawn on 14 December.

No rations of the K or D type were required on hand. Little could be done by the regimental commander or his staff to remedy this subsequent shortage. Similarly the extreme shortage of medical supplies by 19 December could not be corrected. Evacuation of wounded was not possible. Those who could not walk could only be left with medical personnel as each aid station was displaced. If the planned air resupply drops had been accomplished on either 18 or 19 December the ultimate outcome would certainly have been delayed. Reasonably continuous resupply would have maintained the fighting strength of the regiment at a higher level. In spite of the difficult weather and later discovered heavy enemy antiaircraft defenses near SCHONBERG, it seems that a calculated risk might well be taken to resupply a surrounded force of two infantry regiments and one field artillery battalion.

4. COORDINATION

Insufficient attention was paid to the coordination of plans and sections among commanders generally. The initial attack of Company B, 81st Engineers against a west shoulder of the enemy penetration in BLEIALF was made without coordination with the provisional battalion commander and was only partially successful. In contrast, however, coordination between the 590th Field Artillery and all elements regiment was superior in spite of communications difficulties and resulted in each case in the infantry being greatly assisted. Most important and most neglected was the staff coordination necessary for the simultaneous assaults of the two regiments on SCHONBERG. As a result contact between the two regiments was lost during the critical period of the advance on SCHONBERG; and the final attack became a series of piece-meal attacks by small units rather than a coordinated attack of two regiments. The two regimental staffs should have made every effort, to include continuous personal liaison and to maintain the closest possible coordination.

5. SECURITY

Prior to the German attack and during the following days security was well handled at all echelons. The actions of advance and rear guards were aggressive and rapid. The operations of the covering forces left by the 1st and 3d Battalions on the original positions were properly executed. Twice, more aggressive security measures might have been profitable. Few efforts were made to regain contact with Company A south of OBER-LASCHEID early 19 December. While it was not intended that Company A remain in position longer than was necessary to cover the withdrawal, it seems logical to assume that if nothing had been seen or heard from Company A within a reasonable time that something had happened and that every effort should be made to reestablish contact. The lack of security elements sufficiently far to the rear the morning of 19 December exposed the regiment to surprise, direct fire and the resulting casualties. Lack of security on the left

flank of the regiment on 19 December allowed an enemy company to launch an attack on the left company of the 3d Battalion eventually eliminating it.

6. NON-RIFLE UNITS IN DEFENSE

Antitank Company, one platoon of Cannon Company and Troop B, 18th Cavalry Squadron were on the main line of resistance of the 423d Infantry as rifle units, each responsible for the sustained defense or assigned zone. It was, of course, this section of the front selected by the Germans for their initial penetration. These non-rifle units lack the training and equipment to maintain a sustained defense. Although trained in necessary supporting roles, they may be used effectively as riflemen for short periods in emergencies. It is felt, therefore, that an extended front might better be defended by organizing strong points supported by mobile reserves. If supporting units must be used in other than their primary role, they might well be used as part of the reserve. If this operation, their part in cordon defense against an aggressive attack resulted in such losses that their further use in their basic missions was considerable curtailed.

7. FAILURE TO KEEP

STAFF OFFICERS INFORMED

Upon being ordered to the regimental command post on 19 December to receive the regimental attack order, the battalion commander, 1st Battalion failed to take a member of his staff with him. The heavy artillery fire which mortally wounded him was completely unexpected; therefore, the battalion commander's loss with the attendant confusion and lost time resulting the 1st battalion crossing the line of departure almost on time but with its company commanders on partially oriented with the barest of information, unit disorganized and confused, coordination with adjacent units hasty and incomplete and control sketchy. Had a member of the staff accompanied the battalion commander it is felt that the new battalion commander would have received the attack order in sufficient time to formulate his plan, issue his order, verify control measures, and properly supervise the activities of his companies.

LESSONS

- 1A. In defense of an extended front, extreme care must be exercised in the selection of positions and of units to defend those positions.
- 1B. Every effort must be made to have available an effective reserve, especially when the position cannot be covered properly by defensive fire.
2. Constant command and staff supervision of communications is required at all times under all conditions.
3. Ordinary quantities of supply and routine methods of resupply must be freely and quickly modified to fit special combat situations.
4. Coordination between adjacent units must be continuous.
5. Security elements must be far enough from the main body to warn it of enemy activity in sufficient time for countermeasures to be taken.
6. Units trained in supporting roles should not be used as rifle units except in emergencies and then only for limited periods.
7. Commanders must assure themselves that in the event they become casualties, their current information, plans and orders are immediately available to their successors.

Captain Alan W. Jones, Jr (1949)

ANDREACCHIO, COL NICHOLAS

USA (Ret)

LIFE ASSOCIATE

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(Editor's Note - I met the Colonel (call him Andy) through my Web Page display on the Internet the later part of May. His e-mail address is "tanker_six@wow.com" and he has an intense interest in *The Battle of the Bulge*. I could write a book about this man and the e-mail conversations that have flowed between us. Little did I realize what a source of information and friendship would follow. We have exchanged well over 60 pieces of e-mail and I have downloaded from him seven chapters from an unpublished book that he wrote while he was an instructor at the ARMORED SCHOOL (those chapters pertaining to the 106th Infantry Division in the *Bulge*, plus twenty 106th position maps). I hope to, over a period of time, to reproduce some of his material in *The CUB*. Unfortunately, this issue is so crowded that I can only pay tribute to his "discovery" and to express my enthusiasm, and thanks, for him joining our Association. When I ask him about his "Military Career" he answered as follows:)

My father enlisted in the Army in 1922, when he was 15 years of age. I spent the first eight years of my life on a horse cavalry post - Fort Myer, Virginia. The sound of a bugle or the smell of horse manure still gives me an instant flashback. Trying to avoid stepping on horse manure is good preparation for a military career (laughter).

My desire to become an officer came from listening to my father and his fellow NCOs. I enlisted two days after I graduated from high school, and spent the next three years in the AAA, made Sergeant, then went to Infantry OCS and was commissioned Armor. I have served in Germany, Thailand, Viet-Nam (got my CIB), Uruguay and Panama [where I commanded the School of Americas]. I Commanded a tank battalion and Brigade in Germany. Retired after 32 years - loved it all. Been married to a lady from El Salvador for 41 years, have three kids and five

grand kids. That's it, except for spending a good part of my life writing a book, that no one wants to publish.

I have great admiration for Colonel Thomas Riggs, Jr. CO of the 81st Engineers. When I was preparing my class at the Armored School, which I taught for two years, he was one of the few who responded. What he and his 81st Engineers did was truly outstanding. When you read my book, I think the admiration for him comes thru. Superb performance under impossible conditions - and no credit, not even a Combat Infantry Badge. I used the radio messages that flowed between the units as a basis for presenting the situation to the students of the class. From the situations that the messages provided they, the students, would have to come up with the strategy to counteract the endangering situation. My class was voted as the **Best Class**. I used the experiences gained from those classes to write my book.

Oh yes, I forgot. I was co-author on "Schwarzkopf, an Insider's View." It was published in paperback, in the US, Germany, France and Israel I have also had two poems published. You can use whatever you want in *The CUB*, just try to explain my concept.... Andy

(Editor's Note - I haven't gotten into Andy's story too far. I find the method he uses very interesting and informative. He uses three "fictitious soldiers" - a couple officers and a non-com in the basis of his story. These characters, which the story revolves around, are faced with a dearth of situations as the battle develops. Those situations, as I said before, were the springboard for the Armored School students to appraise the situation then to formulate plans to counteract the enemies thrusts. It is so real, that you recognize many of the situations that we were in. Other parts of his book relate to the 99th and the 28th and several other units that were in support of the defense and counter-attack of the American troops in the Bulge. I have a half-ream of paper, just in the seven chapters, that I downloaded from him. We'll try to pass some of this by you in another issue. Thanks Andy, nice to know that you are now one of us, and we have some Armored support.... J. Kline)

New Members ...

BALLOWE, THOMAS G. 423/K

7802 CANYON RD
JUNCTION CITY, KS 66441-8348
913-238-7026

To Gil Helwig, I was captured on 19 December 1944 I was incarcerated in Stalags 4-A and 4-B. I worked at Kommando 557 in Stalag 4-A. I was liberated by the Russian Army 8 May 1945, linked up with the Americans in Karlsbad on or about 11 May. Evacuated by Air to Camp Lucky Strike, boarded ship for USA 17 May. I was processed through Camp Kilmer, New Jersey. I remained in the Army, retired 30 Sept 1972 at Fort Riley, Kansas as a Command Sergeant Major. 29 years active military service, Civil Service employee, Chief of Protocol, First Infantry Division and Fort Riley, Kansas. Retired from Civil Service 1 January 1991. Now fully retired.

Gil, I was so glad to hear from you and happy to rejoin my old outfit. I hope to see you all at the reunion in Roanoke.

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COHN, BERNARD J. ASSOCIATE

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John, find my status report on the search of the archives. Here is my membership fee as an Associate member. I'll get back to you later.

(Editor's Note - Bernard is a member of the

84th Infantry Division. He is also on the Internet. His e-mail address is, laurenzo@aol.com. If you're into CYBERSPACE, give him a jingle via e-mail. He is very active in searching the "Archives" in Washington. He could be of great help, and we will hear more from him later.. J. Kline)

COLBY, KENNETH C. 424/M

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(Editor's Note - Ken contacted around the first of May when he found my Web Pages on the Internet. His e-mail address is "caycee@ix.net.com." I sent him a return e-mail with a list of the 424/M Association members. He immediately joined the Association. Some of the on-going correspondence via e-mail follows. Welcome back Ken... J. Kline)

John, got your information and a copy of *The CUB*. I was really thrilled to the list of names from my old outfit. I know about one-third of them, including my Company Commander and a 1st Sergeant I was with. Great News!!!

(In another e-mail): Went to Fort Jackson about 20 March 1943. Was assigned to the 2nd Platoon. Company M, 424th Regiment and stayed with that platoon until my separation at Fort Lee, NJ in September 1945. I missed a number of POEs for one reason or another and am a little mixed up about who was with me at Jackson. I remember an influx of ASTP. I almost made it to that Specialized Training Course. I also almost made it to Air Force Cadet School, until they stopped transferring men from the infantry. I was 2nd gunner, 1st gunner, Jeep driver, company runner, loaned out Battalion runner and general jack-of-all-trades. In all of this I was never hurt bad enough to be hospitalized or sent back. Avery Luck Guy, to say the least.

(In another e-mail): I can't believe that the person you mention, William Mueller, can be the guy I think it is. If it is, he and a guy from New York names Bob Oppenheim and I spent a lot of time together and became very close. My main objective in getting on the

met was to try and track them down. the service we nicknamed Bill "Wimpy" because he had a man-sized appetite. It must be the same guy.

(Later he e-mailed.): Thanks for responding to my joining the Association, also for being so thoughtful in keeping in touch. I have written "Wimpy" Mueller and hope to hear from him soon. Just sent for the *CUB of the Golden Lion: PASSES in REVIEW*.

(Editor's Note - Ken, you just solved a mystery. When Mueller was with us in Germany in September 1995 - I always wondered where all those nice German "morning buns" disappeared to. - Now I know... All kidding aside Bill Mueller is one great guy... J. Kline)

DENNIS, GEORGE D. ASSOCIATE

154 MILL ST
EAST HAVEN, CT 06512

(Editor's Note - George D. Contacted me through my Web Pages, stating he was the son of a 106th Infantry Veteran. After passing Son George a list of 422/K veterans that belong to the 106th Infantry Division, George F - whose membership follows below - joined and Son George D. Followed suit. Nice to see a Father/Son membership. It appears that George F. 422/K was a medic (attached). I think he might have been, according to the e-mail, attached to the 66th Inf Div at one time, and also the 167th General Hospital in Paris. For a minute "167th" struck a bell - I was, as I looked at my old diary, in the 197th General Hospital, in Paris from 4/26/1945 until 5/4/1945, when I was flown home. Welcome to both Dennis' ... J. Kline)

DENNIS, GEORGE F. 422/K

81 HOUSTON AVE
BRIDGEPORT, CT 06606
203-473-5317

George, I'm happy your son contacted me. Nice to see you aboard... J. Kline

DOVELL, CLARK W. 422/M

8304 RAYMOND LANE
POTOMAC, MD 20854-3729

GOLDSTEIN, ELLIOTT 589/HQ

191 PEACHTREE NE 16TH FLOOR
ATLANTA, GA 30303

(Editor's Note - Elliott comes to us from Colonel Kelly, who had the great story about the 589th in the last CUB. Welcome back to the 106th... JK)

GRENNIES, VINCENT 592/B

317 W 7 MILE RD
VALPARAISO, IN 46383

(Editor's Note - Vincent come to us as a compliment from our old friend "PAPPY CONNER." Thanks Pappy and welcome to Vincent... J. Kline)

FISCHER, JOSEPH A. 81st ENG/A

96 KING ARTHUR DR
NOKOMIS, FL 34275
941-484-7734

(Editor's Note - The following from a paper Joseph included with his application for membership which is dated 8 February, 1946 - Princeton University)

My unit was billeted in Auw, Germany On the 16th of December 1944 we were forced to withdraw from Auw. We eventually ended up in positions outside of St. Vith, Belgium in "foxholes." My partner's name was T/5 Hedico and our job was to operate a light 50 caliber machine-gun. Towards the evening of 21 December our position was under intermittent German artillery and mortar fire. Around 7 p.m. I was struck in the back by the top section of a tree which had been blown off by an artillery shell. I was carried to the aid station by T/4 Lehtones and Sgt. Brooks of my outfit, along with two aid men. From here I was to another aid station then to the 28th General Hospital in Liege. There I was put into a body-cast, shipped to Paris, France by train. Within the week I was flown to England. There I was placed in the 106th General Hospital. After several weeks I was shipped to Boston, USA and landed there on 24 February 1945. I was taken to the Woodrow Wilson General Hospital, Staunton, VA.



Joseph Fischer, 81st ENG/A
during Tennessee Maneuvers.

I stayed at this hospital several months during which time my cast was taken off and a steel brace substituted. My last stop was at the Convalescent Hospital and Station Hospital, Fort Story, Virginia. From which I was discharged on 7 July 1945

HUNTER, CHARLES F. 422/CN

805 GLASCOW DR
WACO, TX 76710

I was Mess-Sergeant for the Cannon Company, 422nd Regiment. I was captured 19 December 1944, held in Stalags 9B, Bad Orb and 9A, Ziegenhain. I remained in service and saw combat in the 10th Corps Artillery in Korea. I was involved in the Inchon Landing, left Korea after the cease-fire. Retired 30 May 1959 as CWO-3.

JONES, WAYMAN M. DIV/HQ

12019 PARADISE VALLEY DR
HOUSTON, TX 77066-2717
713-537-9707

I was a T/4 in Division Headquarters. I have not been in touch with the 106th for many years, but I hope to attend the Nashville Reunion next year, at which time I

hope to meet you all.

I was in Nashville a few weeks ago and played golf with Lyt Anderson, an old friend of mine from our college days at Vanderbilt University. He gave me a copy of *The CUB*, which I look forward to receiving regularly now. I retired some years ago as a Lt. Colonel, U.S. Army Reserves.

NAGLE US(Ret), COL FREDRICK 423/HQ

84-273 HOLT ST
WAIANAE, HI 96792
808-696-5939

(Editor's Note - Colonel Nagle was brought to us by Colonel Roland Keller USA (Ret) a younger retired US Army Officer, after Keller saw my 106th Infantry Division Web Pages. Keller had been editing a story by Colonel Donald F. (Tommy) Thompson, CO of the Third Battalion, 422nd Combat Infantry Regiment. Thompson's story was added to (collaborated) by Colonel Nagle. We of the 423rd remember Colonel Nagle as the Executive Officer of the 423rd Infantry Regiment. It was his duty, under order, to deliver the flag of surrender to the Germans on Linscheid Hill, 19 December 1944. Just as all of us was happening (our recent contact) I learned that Colonel Thompson had passed away. You will see Thompson and Nagle's story, as a feature story, elsewhere in this CUB. Thanks to Colonel Keller we have renewed contact with Colonel Nagle. Welcome back Colonel Nagle and thanks for your part in an excellent story... J. Kline)

PHILIPSON, HERMAN L. 423/H

1545 W. MOCKINGBIRD LN.
DALLAS, TX 75235

(Editor's Note - Johnnie Beaver has sponsored the membership of his good friend Herman Philipson. Beaver writes, "During the day on the hill in Germany, he (Philipson) went mortar hole to foxhole giving us encouragement right up to the last. This young Lieutenant and three of us finally left the hill, only to be knocked out across the road. He and I were wounded and captured. I cannot give this man enough praise." ... J Kline)

RESCOTT, EUGENE L. 422/H

740 WESTON RD APT 411
HOT SPRINGS, AR 71913
501-767-9424

I was discharged from Camp Hood, Texas, on November 30, 1945, as a Tech/Sgt. While at Camp Hood, I served as IRTC Base Supply Sergeant.

I worked for the South Central Bell Telephone System for 39 years and retired on July 1, 1984. I have been blessed with a good wife, Lorene for 52 years. We have two sons, two daughters-in-law and four grandchildren.

ROSS, REECE M. 423/A

57 COCO HOLLOW RD
ELKVIEW, WV 25071
304-965-0631

I was assigned as a Pvt to the 2d Platoon, then transferred to the 3d Platoon as a squad leader (S/Sgt). Then while on Tennessee Maneuvers was given Platoon Guide of the 3d Platoon, replacing S/Sgt Bill Lane. Platoon Sergeant of the 2d Platoon was T/Sgt [redacted] and 3d Platoon was T/Sgt Bob Mills.

I stayed in the 106th until Camp Atterbury then requested transfer to the Paratroopers. I was transferred, in rank (S/Sgt) and was a Platoon Sergeant at Benning, up for Platoon Sergeant - T/Sgt. Sickness at home, my wife 43 days in hospital - Red Cross approved emergency leave. This and personal problems got me reduced to rank of Private. This was all caused by a snafu of Red Cross orders. I went to Europe via the

Queen Elizabeth and was assigned as Security for an Artillery Battalion, then on to the 1257th Engineers, then the 172nd Combat Engineers. I was soon promoted to Corporal and remained with the 172nd until discharge 26 February 1946.

I have six sons, one daughter. I worked in the West Virginia coal mines for a couple of years. I then went to driving buses with West Virginia Transit, Consolidated Bus Lines, Greyhound and others. Moved back to West Virginia. Have been tour Bus driver since 1986. I love to play golf (shot in the mid 70's) do woodwork. Send me all you got about 423/A.

(Editor's Note - Reece, in the meantime you have received your membership, the most recent CUB and a list of the 423/A members that belong to the Association. Hope to see you at Roanoke. Welcome back... J. Kline)

UCCHINO, DR. JOSEPH ASSOCIATE

2838 HOWLAND-WILSON RD NE
CORTLAND, OH 44410
330-856-1074

Sherod, I have been talking with John Kline and am joining in honor of my brother memory, Sergeant Domonic M. Uchino, a member of "I" Company, 423rd Infantry Regiment. Domonic lived a very full life. He was captured in the Bulge. Thanks to you and John for all the help you have given.

(Editor's Note - An announcement of the death of Sergeant Domonic Uchino appeared in the memorial section of the MAY 1996 CUB. Thank you Doctor and thank you for joining in memory of your brother... J. Kline) \$\$\$

IMPORTANT NOTICE

TO PAST DUE ANNUAL DUES PAYING MEMBERS

(Annual Memberships run from July 1 to June 30 next year)

PAY NOW!

On 4 July, we had 650 ANNUAL FEE MEMBERS "NOT PAID"

Chris Van Kerckhoven, Associate Member- Belgium



Chris Van Kerckhoven
and Rosa.

EJ Van Gansenstraat 21
B-2260 Westerlo
BELGIUM

Thanks to Chris for the
beautiful photo that
appears on the front
cover of this CUB.

Chris and Rosa in front
of Panzer 401,
Houffalize, Belgium.
Chris a professional
photographer works
closely with LTC John
Greene, Waterloo,
Belgium. Both Chris and
John are LIFE
ASSOCIATE Members.

In front -
Jagdpanzer
"German Tank
Hunter"
often taken for a
German Tiger in
the Ardennes.

Chris and
American
Sherman,
mid-picture.

Bastogne
Mardasson
Cemetery and
Historical Center
in background



In background,
Bastogne
Mardasson
and Historical Center.

All photos furnished
by Chris Van
Kerckhoven
Life Associate
106th Infantry
Division Association





KALEIDOSCOPE OF MISERY

Edited by: Lt. Colonel Roland A. Keller USA (Ret), who says he is a relatively "young pup" and is a friend of Colonel Thompson who was the best man at his (Keller's) mother and father's wedding. Keller's father, Lucien Keller commanded an Infantry Battalion in the 65th Infantry Division, WWII.

(CUB Editor's note - On 4 May 1996 I learned through Colonel Roland Keller, via his reading my Web Page, that Colonels Thompson and Nagle had collaborated on this story. Colonel Keller e-mailed it to me on 6 May 1996. I sent Thompson and Keller information about the Association, inviting them to join. On 24 May 1996, Colonel Keller informed me that Colonel Donald F. (Tommy) Thompson died of double pneumonia. Colonel Nagle has since joined the Association. His name is listed as a new member in this CUB. We dedicate the inclusion of this story to both men, especially in honor of Colonel Thompson, in his untimely death. He was anxious to make contact with his former soldiers. May he Rest in Peace. Story follows, Thompson writing:)

I am 80 years of age now and things that happened 50 years ago tend to blur around the edges at times. I remember there being four of us in the Non-Coms' room of what had been a German troop barrack. LTC Fred Nagle, formerly Regimental Executive Officer of the 423d Infantry, 106th Division, and I, LTC Donald Thompson, of late, Commander of the 3d Battalion of the 422d Regiment of the 106th Infantry Division, were old friends. We had received our Regular Army commissions in 1936 under the provisions of the Thomason Act and had then met in Hawaii where we had spent nearly two years in the grade of 2nd Lieutenant. In with us were two former members of the 28th Division, Colonel Ted Seely, of late commander of the 112th Infantry Regiment and Major "Buck" Payne, heretofore an Artillery Battalion S-3. It was January, 1945, and we, as POWs, were interned in Oflag Hammelburg, XIII B.

The days following surrender were a kaleidoscope of misery. I was caught in a British night bombing



By: Col. Donald F. (Tommy) Thompson
Infantry, USA (Ret)

(deceased 24 May 1996)
Formerly Lt. Col.
3d Battalion
422d Infantry Regiment
In Command

with contributions by:
Col. Frederick Nagle
Infantry, USA (Ret)
Formerly Lt. Col.
Executive Officer
423d Infantry Regiment



while entrained for movement to Hammelburg. One blast tore the door off our boxcar and I, along with others, took off, only to be brought up short by small arms fire from the guards. Following that incident, our first real stop was at a camp in Bad Orb where the officers and enlisted men were separated. Here, Fred Nagle and I, he with a bullet wound in his thigh, met for the first time since our departure from Camp Atterbury in October. Fred was obviously somewhat worse for the wear but otherwise considered himself lucky to be alive. Following the surrender of the 423d Regiment, Fred, who under orders personally delivered the surrender of the 423d, was mistaken to be the commander of troops. Along with his interpreter, a Lieutenant, the two were then taken away in a staff car, supposedly for interrogation. After several hours of travel, they arrived at a farmhouse in use by the Germans as a local headquarters. There, the Lieutenant overheard the Germans discussing whether or not they should be shot. The decision made, Fred and the Lieutenant were taken

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out back and stood up in front of a wooden fence. Just as they were agreeing to rush their guards, a German staff car pulled into the yard and from it, a furious German officer erupted, berating the guards until they were completely cowed. Fred and the Lieutenant were then placed into another staff car, taken away, and the next day joined with the PW procession for the final leg of their journey to Hammelburg.

If capture and the movement to Hammelburg weren't bad enough, the Germans proved to be ill equipped to handle the thousands of prisoners generated by the events of the Ardennes Offensive. By foot and train, they had removed the Americans into various PW camps (Officers into Oflags - for Offizier Lager) as far away as Posen, Poland. Most of the Officers of the 106th were moved to Lager Hammelburg. Situated some 50 miles east of Frankfurt a.m., the camp was of permanent construction and large enough to accommodate, though not with any degree of comfort, the nearly 6,000 POWs that it was to eventually hold.

The barracks Fred and I were in had been built to accommodate some 30 to 40 men, or double or triple if double or triple bunks were installed. The Lager (compound) was built before the war as a permanent camp for training of German troops. On this day, it housed principally some 4,000 Officers of the former Yugoslavian Army, separated by the usual barbed wire fences from the newly arrived American PWS. Given the devastating experience of having been so overwhelmed in the Ardennes, we, along with the majority of the American PWS were a dispirited lot with no

real appreciation of how to fight the utter desolation of being prisoners of war. As such, we quickly degenerated into an unshaven, unkempt rabble, lost to the dignity of our uniforms. To add to the misery, many of the junior officers held their seniors in contempt. Such was the regard for Colonel Charles Cavender who, along with Colonel George Deschenaux, made the decision to surrender the remnants of the 422d and 423d Infantry Regiments. Bereft of artillery support, without their vehicles, fighting only with what the individual could carry on his person, and out of communication with higher headquarters, these two men came to the toughest decision any commander could face. Not all agreed. I have only dim memories of our last day on the Schnee Eifel. I received orders to send all my vehicles to Service Company and to move overland to the Our river, taking only what we could carry. Regimental Headquarters joined the tail of my column. I thought we resembled a column of Mexican bandits - belts of ammunition for the machine guns slung over the shoulders and the 81mm mortars broken down to manhandling pieces with rounds protruding from carrying vest. I have no recollection of food during our two day march but on the second day, I remember being called back down the line to face a sticky situation. The men of "I" company had somehow taken about a half-dozen German prisoners - home-guarders from their looks -for whom we were in no position to either manage or care. What to do? The Lieutenant in charge wanted to shoot them. Shades of Malmédy. I set them free.

I remember that before conceding to surrender, Major Stub Oseth,

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Executive Officer, proposed that attempt to evade capture by taking off through the woods. The question then became: "Suppose we made it back to General Jones (Commanding General of the 106th Infantry Division)?" What would we say when he asked: "Well, here you are...now, where are those 800 men with whom you were entrusted?" We stayed.

Daily life in the lager was monotonous in the extreme. The Germans prescribed two roll call formations - one at 0800 and the other at 1700. Lacking the wherewithal to do otherwise, a favorite pastime became the imaginative "building" of Dagwood sandwiches, the fantasy of the truly resilient. The four of us established a routine whereby, lying in our bunks, each in turn provided the elements of the sandwich - the bread, the first layer, the second layer, and so on, and so on - one sandwich a night. Such were the mental and physical circumstances under which life was simply endured.

Then, about 9 March, we were surprised by an influx of American prisoners who were being evacuated from a camp in Poland where capture had been threatened by the oncoming Russians. As Fred Nagle was later to recall, there were approximately four hundred in this group of arrivals which reportedly had numbered roughly 1,400 when it left Poland, about six weeks previously.

Of this new influx, the senior officer was a venerable old Colonel by the name of Paul "Pop" Goode. Accompanied by a gaggle of hardened veterans from North Africa and Normandy, "Pop" Goode made the inmates soldiers again - shaves every day and Retreat formations each eve-

ning. Thanks to him and the teaching of those who came with him, we who had not been in captivity for very long learned to take the nicks off a safety razor blade with an ordinary drinking glass by working the edge of the blade against the inside surface of the glass. After that, every man shaved daily - often over thirty days with the same blade and sans shaving cream.

Staying healthy was difficult. Our normal fare consisted of ersatz coffee and black bread for breakfast, bread and little else for lunch, and bread and some watery soup for dinner. A staple was "Green Hornet Soup," so named for its pastel color. It was made from reconstituted vegetables of some sort, with an occasional lump of meat and a smattering of weevils of some sort (also reconstituted.) Most simply regarded the weevils as an added source of protein (the alternatives were to either laboriously pick each weevil out or retreat to a dark corner and eat blind - a choice commonly accepted of necessity.)

After a month or so we learned that the Yugos were receiving a regular supply of International (mostly American) Red Cross parcels containing food, candy, and cigarettes. In some fashion Pop Goode prevailed upon the Germans and the Yugos to cut us in and after that, twice over the course of what remained of our captivity, we were treated to half a parcel per man - what a treat! Concentrated oatmeal, chocolate, and cigarettes, the value of which cannot be overstated. Non-smokers traded their cigarettes for other items while the smokers were in seventh heaven for weeks. (It was not uncommon at all for an enterprising smoker to

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build new cigarettes from the butts of old in order to stretch each ration as far as possible.) Two inmates built a dish consisting of chocolate from the Red Cross parcels and water. Calling the concoction "bread fluff," according to them it was guaranteed to satisfy the hungriest, as there was no limit to the volume that could be achieved. All one had to do was whip vigorously and the combination would increase accordingly.

Card Games were a mainstay. My roommates and I played gin; the stakes were a brandy each, to be settled in Paris after liberation.

Seely and I met in the Phillippines in 1948, but were unable to run the tab to completion.

Keeping warm was another problem. We enjoyed the luxury of a pot bellied stove and enough charcoal briquettes each day to keep water from freezing. This is where Buck Payne - whom we generally regarded to be the most fabulous pack rat in captivity - brought new meaning to the term enterprise. Daily he "found" scraps of wood which he would secrete under his clothing and bring in to be hidden. The favorite hiding place was under the bed clothes and over weeks of inspections, the guards were never to notice. The inmates almost came to grief however, when Buck dismantled and made off with the frame from the camp bulletin board. Incredibly, the guards were convinced that some of the Lieutenants were the only ones likely and agile enough to perform such an endeavor and they therefore gave the more senior POW's only a cursory search.

Notwithstanding the marvels of Buck's exploits, one of the most astounding accomplishments of "Yan-

kee ingenuity" occurred when Pop Goode and his contingent from the Poland camps neared Hammelburg. Upon their arrival outside the camp, the Germans sent out a small advance party - in which there were two American prisoners - to greet the newcomers. Although the incoming POWs were kept at a short distance from the advanced party, they managed to convey the fact that within the group was a radio, broken down into individual parts, and concealed on the bodies of some of the most trusted. Each such person had a bit of white cloth outside his body, either in that person's hand or displayed in some manner on clothing or gear. In what was one of the most amazing feats of hide-and-seek ever attempted, the transfer of every radio part from its carrier to a trusted camp resident was successfully effected in the less than 100 yards which separated the front gate of the lager from the "strip-and-search" barrack through which all the newcomers first passed. (As a precaution, a decision was made not to operate the set; but, soon enough they were tuning in to BBC once a day to get the war news.)

In the latter part of March, the camp was visited by a Swiss Red Cross delegation inspecting to verify that the Germans were abiding by the rules of the Geneva Convention. The head of the delegation told Pop Goode that we would be well advised not to attempt escape. According to him, the end was near and Hitler had issued orders that escapees were not to be re-captured but were to be "shot while attempting to evade recapture." Then, one morning not too many days thereafter, we heard gunfire and shortly afterwards, the lead

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...k of an American Task Force
...ke through the barrier fence. It was
27 March, 1945 and from all appear-
ances, Lager Hammelburg was liber-
ated.

Task force Baum, named for it's leader, Captain Abraham "Abe" Baum, - was a lone force from the Fourth Division's Combat Command B. The task force had been personally dispatched to Hammelburg by Gen Patton for the purpose of liberating the "estimated" 300 or so PWS. Unbeknownst to most at the time, General Patton's son-in-law, Colonel John K. "Johnny" Waters (in later years to serve as Chief of Staff of the Army) was a PW at Hammelburg. I believe it is generally acknowledged that Patton's reason for sending the task force in the first place was to rescue Johnny Waters. Unfortunately, in the process of attempting to surren-
... the camp to the approaching
... American Task Force, Waters who
was in the party sent outside the
camp to arrange the transfer, was al-
most killed by a German rifleman
who had not been informed by his
highers of the Camp surrender, and
shot Waters in the lower torso
shortly after he exited the front gate
of the compound. Waters underwent
surgery in the POW hospital and was
still there when the camp was finally
liberated by elements of the 7th
Army's 14th Armored division. By
the time task force reached the camp,
however, it was depleted in force due
to the severe fighting it had encoun-
tered on its trip of some sixty or so
miles from Aschaffenberg. It ap-
peared to Fred that Cpt Baum, the
task force commander, was dismayed
by the number of prisoners he found
at Hammelburg but no more so than
were we, the prisoners, upon our dis-

covery that the task force was so
small and that there were no friendly
troops due shortly in follow-up. Never-
theless, to most, this task force was our
ticket to freedom.

It was almost dusk by the time
we were organized and ready to
march out of the camp toward the
west. As Fred was to later recall,
about one mile west of camp a halt
was made by the task force while
Baum and his team leaders met to de-
cided upon a route. It was at this
time that the full impact of the situ-
ation appeared to strike Pop Goode
for he then called a meeting of his
leadership. The full situation, as best
he knew it to be, was explained and
everyone given a choice of either (a)
accompanying the task force to fight
its way back; (b) attempting to escape
on foot in small groups; or (c) return-
ing to the camp. Fred and approxi-
mately 200 others decided to stick
with the task force and they began
finding vehicles upon which to ride.
Of the remainder, a few small groups
started off on their own while those
left, including me, returned to the
camp. Fred watched Pop Goode re-
turn to camp with the majority, and
was moved by the image. Knowing
Pop Goode to be the type of person
who in all likelihood would want
nothing more than to join the task
force and fight his way back to allied
lines, he realized that as the Senior
American Officer, Pop Goode must
have felt his responsibility was to the
majority who could not hope to over-
come the difficulties of escape and
were therefore returning to the com-
pound and whatever fate might
await them there. Fred could only
imagine Pop's feelings of frustration.

By the time the task force again

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began to move it was dark and movement, very slow. Almost immediately, the lead tank, upon which Fred was riding, was struck by a panzerfaust fired at point blank range. The survivors, suffering from shock, were rescued and the column then continued on, by-passing the disabled tank and heading into the woods in the hope of avoiding any other road blocks.

The next morning, and after being once more engaged by highly accurate tank and anti-tank fire, Fred and several others determined that no favorable decision could be derived from their situation and that they personally could no longer be of assistance to the task force. They therefore decided that the only choice left was to escape on foot and, if possible, reach allied lines on their own.

Not long after Fred left the remnants of the task force (which by then was only hours from total destruction), those of us who had returned to lager were formed up by the Germans and moved out on foot. We assumed that we were headed for the "Bavarian Redoubt" a final destination where we had heard we were to be held for bargaining purposes.

From Hammelburg to Nuernberg, the road march went reasonably well. The first days march was of about 25 kilometers and Colonel Seely and I finished my cigarette that day. Generally, we were billeted in barns and food was somewhat irregular. For most, feet were extremely painful. Buck Payne ultimately lost most sensation and control of his left foot which flopped loosely at the end of his ankle and made walking all but impossible. Nevertheless, when the Germans decided to move the more seriously inca-

pacitated by rail, Buck demurred. Having no desire to be blown to bits by strafing Allied planes, he continued with his comrades. Our guard contingent consisted of about 40 old men, with a Colonel and Captain in charge. The column was a matter of great interest to the villagers. At one village, a woman engaged me in conversation. With my limited German and her limited English, we did fairly well. Her son was a prisoner of the Americans and she learned that he was in a place called Texas; we had quite a gabfest. As the column approached a village, word was passed down to shape up and march smartly. From the obvious interest that could be read on the faces of the villagers, the most striking of the prisoners was a Negro 1st Lieutenant, who, over six-feet in height and presented an aura of manliness and presence of command. The march to Nuernberg took nine days.

At Nuernberg our column was halted for instructions and refurbishing. The weather was lovely and mild and the stop uncharacteristically dragged on for hours. Suddenly, air raid sirens erupted. As it turned out we had been resting near a railroad marshaling yard on the city's outskirts that was about to become the target of an American Flying Fortress raid.

As an audience at the theater, we watched. Formation after formation passed - "V" shaped and unswerving despite the billowing white clouds of anti-aircraft shells exploding all about them. As each "V" reached the proper point, from the belly of the lead plane a white smoke flare would exit and immediately, each aircraft in the "V" would release six 500 pound bombs. At that height the

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Bombers appeared as mere toys, perhaps a foot long. After the drop the planes would execute a seemingly leisurely turn to the North and soon would follow the mighty crunch of the explosions, shaking the earth while we cheered lustily. It went on, seemingly forever, until finally the last "V" appeared. By this time we had become experts on the procedure being followed by the Bombers. When the familiar white smoke flare did not appear on schedule however, we began to fidget. When the "V" began its final turn, not to the north away from us, but to the south, directly overhead, we did more than fidget. At exactly the worst moment, out came the flare and its followers.

In our midst were some old bomb craters, souvenirs of previous excursions to which some made a futile dash, seeking what seemed the best of a poor lot of choices. Others, I thought, clawed at Mother Earth, face down, and arms hugging. The sensation at burst was of being lifted up in the air and then buffeted in one mighty wallop by a six foot long two by four. As I lost consciousness I'll never forget thinking: "what a hell of a way to die".

When I came to, I discovered that Buck Payne, was one of 29 PWS killed in the bombing. Col Seely and I were bleeding, bruised, and barely able to move. Nevertheless, we decided we had to get out of the area in the event more bombers were on the way. We managed to move a few hundred yards when a German civilian took us in tow, led us to the basement of his home, and gave us each a glass of schnapps, all the while commiserating with us as with no hint of the castigation we had somewhat ex-

pected. When the all clear sounded, and after much deliberation, Seely and I returned to the scene of the bombing only to again be taken prisoner. From there, we made it to the next stop but by that time I was so immobilized that the German commander directed I be transported to a hospital on the outskirts of Nuernberg.

I had no way of knowing it at the time, but Fred Nagle, once again a PW, was only about ten kilometers south of Nuernberg during the Flying Fortress Raid. When Fred left the task force, he and those with him, traveling mostly at night, spent the next seven days attempting to make it back to allied lines. On one occasion, forced by circumstances to cross a long bridge at night, they were halfway across the bridge when a German squad began moving toward them, in a formation of sorts, from the other end of the bridge. Upon closing, Cpt Avery, formerly regimental communications officer for the 423d, gave the approaching squad a casual salute and shopworn "Heil Hitler." That greeting was returned in bored fashion and both parties continued on their respective ways, unmolested.

On the seventh day since his escape, Fred and three others, LTC Barney Ladd, (As was the case of both Fred and me, Barney Ladd entered the Army under the Thomson Act and knew both from having served together in Hawaii) the 423d's Comm officer, CPT Avery, and a Major Kelly from another outfit, reached a deep woods situated on high ground overlooking a German defense position. From their observations, they estimated that they were between the German main line of resistance and the German's reserve.

From the Ardennes to Hammelburg, Moosburg and Nuernberg

Given the heavy volume of firing that was coming from their west, it appeared that the Allies could be advancing rapidly and, if so, should overrun their position within a days time at most. They therefore decided to stay concealed and hold tight until rescued by the advancing Allies. It was not to be.

By noon of that same day, as a German skirmish line moved back. Fred, Maj Kelly and Cpt. Avery, the only ones in their position at the time, were stumbled upon and recaptured by the Germans. (Barney Ladd, being in better condition, fled on foot as soon as it became apparent that the Germans were about to stumble upon them. The sounds of his hasty departure were assumed by the Germans to be that of a deer. Reportedly, Ladd made it safely to friendly lines the next day). For days thereafter, they were shunted from one German command to another, each one trying to get rid of them as soon as possible. Though they were obviously escaped prisoners, the apparent disintegration of control had reached such proportions that instructions on such matters could no longer be transmitted from SS Headquarters. It was therefore ostensible that no one wanted the responsibility for trying and executing them. Finally, after seemingly endless hand-offs, suffering from malnutrition and the effects of his travels, Fred wound up interned in Moosburg at the large Luftwaffe controlled camp located there. Incredibly, the three comic opera weeks he spent at this camp proved to be a tonic.

The German form never varied at Moosburg. Each evening, the Adjutant, with an impressive coterie of guards,

would march into camp, turn out all "guests" and announce seriously in official proclamation that "appel" (revue) would be at 0700 hours and that all officers would be in ranks for roll call and a count at that time. This announcement was invariably greeted with hushed cries of approval and acclaim, "O-Boy, - just what this camp needs", etc. Invariably, the next days results would be similar to those of the day before, but with a twist -necessarily, in the form of a few new ideas put in effect by the PWS. The average day would go somewhat like this:

The German guard detail under camp Adjutant would march into camp promptly at 0700 to be greeted by silence, unbroken except for an occasional snore. The shocked guards would then route out the American bugler who would blow his version of reveille. Nothing would happen. By this time, the Adjutant would start to turn red and order the guards into the barracks to waken the prisoners. This was always carried out by the guards with enthusiasm. Threats were made as per routine, and vague motions made with rifle butts. At this point, interest picked up. This was especially interesting, since most of these guards understood English and could, therefore, appreciate most, if not all, of the comments made. There were always cries of consternation at the lateness of the hour by several innocent PWS; others remarked at the salubrious nature of the Bavarian climate, and promises were made by all that they would "immediately" present themselves for roll call. The guards would depart and everyone would go back to bed. Fifteen minutes later, the guards would be back, voices curlier, gestures more threatening and many

es of "aus". More profuse apologies PWS about "Just dozing off for a minute", a few would even begin to dress. After what was felt to be a sufficiently violent exhibition, the guards would leave with everyone apparently engaged in dressing. A few PWS by this time would begin to drift out for formation. Explicit instructions would then be given to the effect that four ranks must be formed and that it was very important that each man "cover" behind the man ahead of him to facilitate the count. The "uniform" for this formation was carefully prescribed in camp regulations but it was the lack of uniformity that was the attention-getter. Although taste varied widely in such matters, the favorite dress seemed to consist of pajama top, dirty pink trousers (with a length of rope in lieu of braces or belt), combat Boots, unbuckled, and one trouser leg tucked into boot top. It was also considered to be good form to have a long hank of hair hanging in one's eyes and to enjoy the first cigarette of the morning while in this formation. As time progressed, the Adjutant's face turned from red to purple, his voice grew higher and his motions more violent. The guards were directed to use any means to clear the barracks. At this point, a few of the guards who had been "indoctrinated" would try the art of gentle persuasion: "Come on now, please, the Hauptman is furious—We will all get in trouble—Please come to the formation—Soon this will all be over, etc." Others of a more martial type would cock their weapons and threaten to shoot if all did not leave immediately. With many protestations of injured feelings, all PWS would leave the barracks. Many, at this point were

forced to feel the call of nature and the waiting line in front of the latrine soon exceeded the number in formation, for, by this time, the first arrivals had grown bored and sauntered over to the fence to chat with someone in the neighboring compound. This, of course, destroyed the count already in progress and it was necessary to make a new effort to get a "correct" formation. By this time, the Adjutant would be in a state of despair, imploring the senior officers to use their influence to correct this "regrettable" conduct on the part of officer-prisoners and pointing out that the 'formation' could not be dismissed until a correct count was obtained. At this, more PWS would drift into formation, but others, less concerned with not being dismissed would have their small "cookers" alight, brewing a pot of tea. This jockeying would continue until mid-morning. The Adjutant would arrive at some figure for those present and would inquire of the senior American officer of the compound if the figure was correct. Invariably, the answer would be "yes". The figure varied daily and was never more than a close approximation of the number present. Thus the first business of each day was concluded.

Each officer had some pet project or projects to occupy him throughout the remainder of the day. For many, this consisted of getting firewood for the small "cooker" over which all meals were prepared or re-prepared to suit the individual's fancy after the daily issue of "slum" from the camp kitchen. Since no issue of wood for this purpose was forthcoming, the barracks presented the only ready supply. All non-essential bed slats, joists and rafters were the first to go. This continued into the "less essen-

From the Ardennes to Hammelburg, Moosburg and Nuernberg

tial" class, and ceased only when the buildings took such a pronounced lean that one was afraid to enter for fear that an unwary action would collapse the entire structure. Getting wood then became an acute problem until it was discovered that the fence posts could be rooted out, detached from the wire, and cut into unrecognizable splinters by many eager hands in a matter of moments. This was a favored sport because it involved team play, had to be carried out under the noses of the armed guard, and then had to be disposed of before one of the German "stooges" might discover it. Soon all compound wires drooped sadly, supported only by an occasional post.

Clearly, the ingenuity displayed by the average PW was amazing when it came to "goofing off", upsetting the Germans' orderly scheme of things and completely "fouling up" every project initiated by the camp authorities. When one considers the methodical and precise mold descriptive of the German character and their passion for exactitude, it is only short of a miracle that all those exposed to this subtle torture from American PWS did not turn into gibbering idiots.

Finally, liberation was near at hand. In mid-May, Fred witnessed a brief fight put up by a company of die-hard SS troopers after which Moosburg was liberated and two days later, the majority were on their way to reception centers. For me, however, there was yet to be another harrowing, albeit in retrospect humorous, episode. Still hospitalized in Nuernberg, I had just returned to an ambulatory status and was sitting on the side porch of the Hospital when out of nowhere an American tank appeared and rolled right up to

the porch. Out of the hatch popped a burly Yank, who, following cordiality's, asked me if I would like a drink. Not knowing what he had in mind, I nevertheless responded politely that I would. To my utter astonishment, the Yank produced a bottle of whiskey and poured what must have been the best Bourbon I've ever tasted! The tanker told me to stay put and he'd have an ambulance dispatched to pick me up shortly. He did, but the ride turned out to be an experience. We became lost and, fearful of being recaptured, I got hostile with my liberators. Finally, and in response to my exaggerated conduct, the young soldier serving as my escort finally turned and said "Oh, shut up, Colonel, I am as scared as you are."

Needless to say, we finally reached a field hospital and I was at last, free.

The field hospital was literally in a field, with no local security. While lying out in the sun, awaiting the aircraft which was to move me and others, I was entertained by two aircraft which the more knowledgeable identified as German Jets -although no one had seen one before. The two planes took one look at us and left. Soon thereafter, a DC-3 touched down. We were placed on board for an uneventful, though long awaited, flight to Paris..... §§§

In Memoriam

Herson, Haskel "Andy" T. 422/E*10462 Coss Rd, Hillsboro, OH 45133*

Carroll Rahn informed us that "Andy" passed away on 4 June 1996. He is survived by three sons. Thomas, the oldest son informed Carroll.

Barlow, Franklin S. DIV/HQ

Franklin's son Bryon advised that his father died on 11 April, 1996. He is survived by his wife Betty, brothers Dr. Harold E. And Donald C.; sons Bryon and Donald; daughter Hester Barlow McCarthy, three grandsons and a granddaughter.

Cox, Evert Glen 423/HQ 3Bn*2111 S. Pearl St, Janesville, WI*

Donald Betlach writes, "Evert, my good friend, was a cook with me. He was a member of our Association for a year. He suffered a lot from his incarceration. May his soul rest in Peace.

Evert died 13 May 1996 at the age of 73. He married his lifetime love, Ella Mae in 1942. Survivors include his wife, nine children; 27 grandchildren, 13 great-grandchildren, two sisters; five brothers; and many nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents; a sister; two brothers and a granddaughter."

Hatch, H. M. (Jim) DIV/HQ*%Sherill Piotraschke, 5248 Abbott Ave So., Mpls, MN 55410*

Sherill, Jim's daughter informed us of his death. He died 8 April, 1996 at the age of 83. He was a President of the Association, serving his term 1960-61. He did not attend reunions in later years because of the health of his wife. Jim gained notoriety when a 1945 letter to his daughter became a Father's Day Classic, published several times in Cedric Adams column. In recent years, Jim prided himself with his 12 years service as a volunteer (6,200 hours) at the Abbott-Northwestern Hospital, Minneapolis. Preceded in death by his wife Helen, his brother Stuart; granddaughter Lynne Piotraschke. He is survived by sister, Lesley Willis; daughters Sherrill Piotraschke, Minneapolis, Kathy Allengrone, Paris; son Richard Fort Lauderdale, and a host of grandchildren, their spouses and seven great-grandchildren.

Lorah, Mary E., wife of Elwood, 592/C*548 Mohns Hill Rd, Reading, PA 19608*

Mary died May 1996, reported in a 21 May article sent by John Gallagher. Survived by Elwood; two sons, Leslie and Terry, a brother, four grandchildren and two step-grandchildren.

Maw, Sr., Thomas J. 592/A*PO Box 727, Rockland, MA 02370*

Ben Britton advises us that Tom died 8 May, 1996. Retired from Greyhound Bus Lines. A former Board member, Co-host at the Worcester, Mass. 1983 Reunion. Tom is survived by his wife M. Elaine; son Thomas; daughter Paula and sister Nancy.

Miller, Franklin 422/M*12813 Lakeshore Dr, Green Harbor, NY 14098*

Bothy, his wife, notified the Adjutant that Frank died 1 May 1996. He was a member of our Association and American Ex-POW. He was held at Stalag 9-B.

Perkins, Lawrence C. 423/E*RR 1 Box 1481, Shell Knob, MO 65747*

Dean Sandahl notified the Adjutant that Lawrence died 7 April 1996. Survived by his wife Barbara, three daughters, two sons, a brother, two sisters, 16 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

Post, Lawrence W. 422/H*4510 Goldfinch Dr., Madison, WI 53714*

Date of death 8 December 1995, survived by Virginia his wife. No other details known.

Edmond, Dean T. 422/HQ 3Bn*611 N. Center St., Statesville, NC 28677*

Date of death reported as 5 April, 1996, survived by Peggy, his wife. No other details known.

Sharpe, Thomas W. 423/C*Box 27, Blythewood, SC 29016*

The Adjutant was informed that Thomas passed away 1 April 1996. He is survived by his wife Barbara, a son, daughter-in-law, grandson and sister.

Summers, Gerald R. (Shady) 424/F*8605 Belleview, Kansas City, MO 64114*

A retired Sr. Vice-Pres. Of Kansas City Bank and Trust, Shady died on 26 May, 1996 at his home. His great loves were his family, baseball and golf. A proud member of our Association, a patriot in his life and teaching it to his children. Surviving is wife Shirley, sons Garrett and Stephen; daughter Stephanie and three beautiful granddaughters.

Tester, Wilbur J. 422/C*107 Oakes St., East Tawas, MI 48730*

Arriving late for the May CUB, we were notified that Wilbur died 24 August 1995. Survived by his wife Mildred

Thompson, Col. Donald F. USA (Ret) CO 3d Bn, 422d Regiment*135 Claywell, San Antonio, TX 78209.*

Date of death 24 May, 1996 - see his story, collaborated with Col. Nagle (423d) on page 39 of this CUB.

Vastine, D.D.S., Frederick 423d (Unit unknown)*50 Philadelphia Dr., Wernersville, PA 19565*

Frederick had just joined the Association 13 April, 1996. Mary, his wife, wrote that Frederick died 11 May, 1996.

Wilson, Glenn R. 423/I*2381 Remington Rd., Green Bay, WI 54302*

The adjutant was advised that Glenn died 4 May, 1996. A native of Milwaukee, he moved to Green Bay when he retired from the Chicago & Northwestern Railroad in 1979. Survived by wife Lorraine, two children and three grandchildren.

May They Rest in Peace



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