

The CUB

of the
GOLDEN LION

PUBLISHED BY AND FOR

*The Veterans of the
106th INFANTRY
DIVISION*

Vol 58 - No. 2

JAN - FEB - MAR 2002



Former POW pays tribute by donating memorial to VFW

Donor - Johnnie Beaver, "H" Company, 423rd Combat Infantry Regiment, shown here on the left with his wife Alma. To the right his two daughters Diane Sandage and Joanie Powell. The event, a dedication ceremony, 21 December 2001, at the Kingsland, Georgia VFW Post. Story and more photos in this CUB magazine page 7.

The CUB

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President's View . . .

We're planning the Hampton Reunion now. Donna Lee of AFR is working with the various venues in the Hampton area as well as the Holiday Inn and Hotel and Convention Center in Hampton, VA to assure a quality reunion for us all. Our Hotel rate will be \$79.00 plus tax. Of course that is for one or two in a room. Not bad for a shore area hotel.

I have personally been to most of the areas which I will list below and can assure you they are well worth visiting. It is too bad, because of world conditions, we cannot visit the Norfolk Naval Facility on the ground. I have been there as my son-in-law was stationed there. There will be a boat tour available to about 400 people who sign up early. Enjoy the tour and buffet while the Captain narrates.

So look for the Reunion "sign up" mailing soon. Please do not throw it away. You might decide to come, later.

Along with the boat tour of the base, wherein we'll see the aft end of the ships and subs, we'll visit the MacArthur Memorial the final resting place of the WWII General, as well as a summarization of the General's life and achievements.

If you wish an "All-That-You-Can-Eat" shore dinner, the trip to the Fisherman's Wharf for you. It is located on Willoughby Bay.

The Naval aviation was born when Eugene Ely first flew from the deck of the USS Birmingham. The Casement Museum along with the Virginia War Museum is a must when visiting Hampton. It is part of Fort Monroe an early 19th Century stone fort, the largest such fort ever built in the United States. Confederate President Jefferson Davis was held here after the Civil War. We also include a tour of the War Memorial which includes the largest collection of propaganda posters. The Museum outlines the history of America's wars.

You will have an opportunity to visit the Virginia Air and Space Center. This will be of particular interest to those who have not visited a space center in the past. The center has over 100 permanent exhibits, including NASA's many historic achievements. The Center has on display the F-84 Thunderstreak and the F-106 Delta Dart as well as the Apollo Command Module The East wing contains 17th Century artifacts of Hampton Roads.

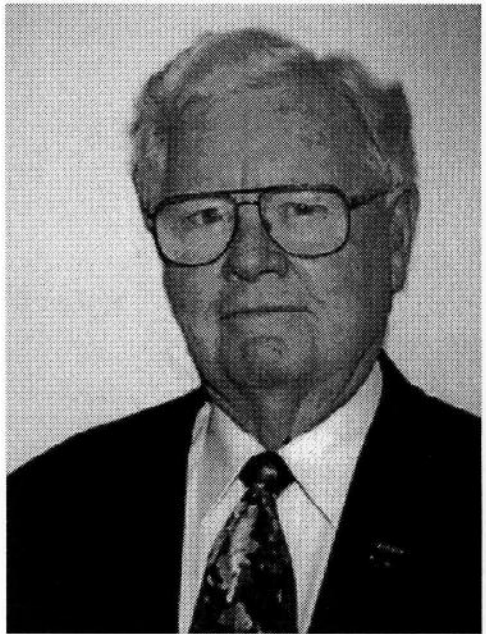
A tour to Colonial Williamsburg is offered for those who plan to arrive by early Thursday. This tour will begin around 8:30 AM. However for those arriving by car and wish to tour on their own, Williamsburg is but a ½ hour West of Hampton on I-64.

All of Colonial Williamsburg is walking as is the nearby Williamsburg Pottery a favorite tourist spot as well. There are many restaurants and fast food shops available. We will be including a more detailed description of the tours and other points of interest to those who want to go off on their own. Most of the points of interest in and around Hampton are but a short drive.

For now we want you to be looking for Information and registration which will be forth coming in a separate mailing. In the past we have had to mail separate mailings for those of you who changed your mind after throwing the original mailing away. Don't do it. It increases the cost and takes time away from other things. Put the original mailing under the magnet on your fridge look at it every day, until it is too late. Act upon it the next hour of your receiving the mailing. Save a lot of us grief.

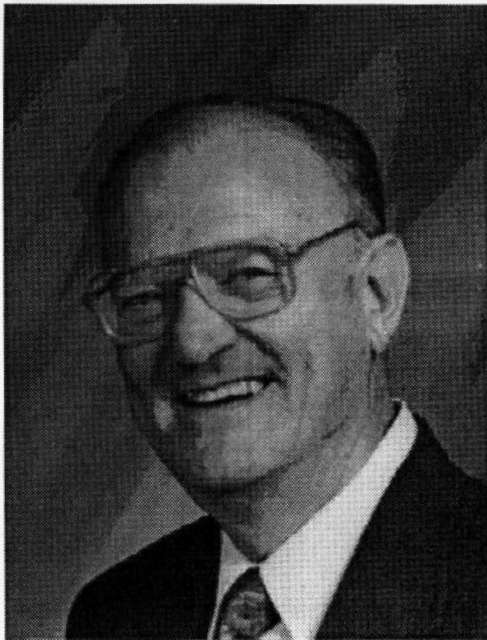
God Bless America and you too.

Joseph P. Maloney President 2001-2002



Joseph P. Maloney, President 2001-2002
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1120 Warren Ave, Arnold, PA 15068-6104
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Chaplain's Message . . .



Chaplain

Dr. Duncan Trueman, 424/AT
29 Overhill Lane, Warwick NY 10990
TEL: 845-986-6376 FAX: 845-986-4121

I came across, the other day, a poem that was sent to me some years ago by our friend and comrade, Richard Peterson 423/I.

It was written especially for the 1995 meeting, in Auw, Germany, between veterans of the 106th and their German counterparts from 18th and 62nd Volksgrenadier divisions. I'm sure Dick doesn't mind me sharing it with you.

*Combat veterans hold a secret about life
so deep within them*

*That not even they comprehend the
power of it's mystery.*

*This great secret cannot be understood
by anyone who was never there.*

They do not know the secret exists.

*So they cannot comprehend the strength
it gives to those who do.*

* *

*We are a part of a charmed circle,
That we keep tightly closed
Praying that no more will ever enter*

Somehow I'm sure that we all sense the existence of that secret about life to which this poem alludes. And we sense that it has a power over us, an inescapable power over us. Yet how difficult to define, how impossible to explain. But it has something to do with emotions and experiences of yesterday; with fear unimaginable and love indescribable, with fidelity indomitable and trust incredible.

How can anyone who was not there comprehend, for where else can the secret be found? It is a secret that somehow bears eternal qualities. Even death fails to destroy the bonds we share with spirits remembered - where the qualities of love abound.

Though he is gone now, I have a bond, still, with a sergeant named "Weaver" who came back to help me when, all alone, I was facing enemy soldiers too numerous to count. Just the act of writing this renews the bond, brings back his spirit and a tear.

Such are the secrets which cannot be understood. At the close of "Saving Private Ryan," an older Ryan stood at the Captain's grave and said, "I hope I have earned what you did for me."

The mystery is in what those secrets have empowered in your life and mine.

"Spirits remembered are not Spirits dead!"

Dr. Duncan Trueman, Association Chaplain

**55th Annual Reunion
VIDEO TAPES
Raines Video Productions
180 Golf Club Road, Ste 157
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523**

Several called and said you had not received your tapes. As of a couple weeks ago all tapes had been mailed.

There are still tapes available. They are approximately 5 hours long with many, bits of useful information. See yourself, or some of your friends. Our photographer covered the event well. Since each tape is five hours long and he does not have "mass production" equipment, he takes very great care and considerable time to copy the master tape for each and every one that he mails to our members. **The tape is a great keepsake for your family members and a great way to share your history with friends and family.**

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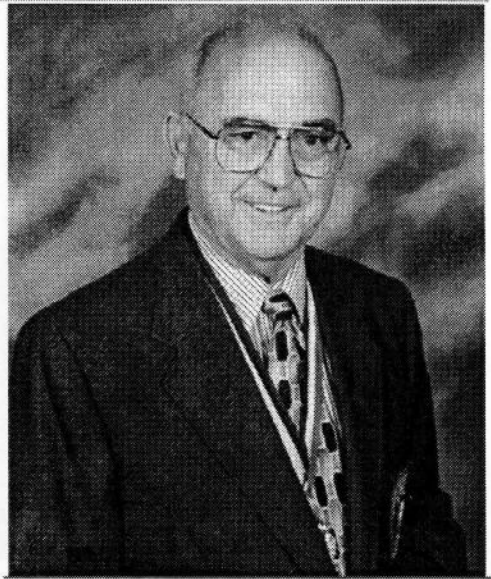
Add \$20.00 and get the three hour video from the 1999 Reunion in Schaumburg, Illinois..

ZITTAU SURVIVORS:

The ZITTAU SURVIVORS are still seaching for additional soldiers who were with us at the Camp located in Oberullesdorf, Poland near ZITTAU, Germany.

Seven of our living members were also 106th Inf Div soldiers. If you were in the camp at ZITTAU from February 1944 - May 1945 please contact

**Clifford Austin
125 Maple Street,
Vergennes, Vermont 05491
802-877-3451**



Editor's Report

John Kline, 423/M See inside front cover for mail address.

Web site: <http://www.mm.com/user/jpk>

Email: jpk@mm.com

Only once, since September 1987, when I took over as editor, has there been a CUB magazine with 52 pages. Even then, I have so much material that has been untouched. My target is 44 pages, but there is so much to say.

Thanks to you all for your support over these 14 and one-half years.

The 56th Annual Reunion registration/advertisement papers will be in the mail as soon as I get this CUB printed and sent. SEE BACK COVER - Please keep the registration papers in a safe place until you decide whether or not - you are attending. It will arrive in a separate 106th Association envelope. We had nearly 100 pitch theirs last year, then decide they wanted another look. John Kline, CUB editor

**Donations Since Last CUB
July - August - September 2001**

<i>Schaffner, John R. 589/A</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Szpek, Irvin Jr. Associate</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Tronco, Jay Associate</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Umsted, Hugh C. Associate</i>	<i>15</i>

Thanks to you all.

Donations are placed in the operating fund to help offset Association expenses.

Your generosity is appreciated.

The Fightin' 589th

by Colonel T. Paine Kelly
CO 589th FAB

Available through www.1stbooks.com

Thomas Paine Kelly, Jr.,
author of: *The Fightin' 589th*

The principal authors of this brief history of one unbelievably staunch and valiant fighting unit of young American civilians, recently turned soldiers by circumstances beyond their control, are the commander and one of the chief staff officers of that unit. The 589th Field Artillery Battalion, an organic unit of the 106th Infantry Division, not only prevented the invasion of its gun positions by the first onslaught of overwhelming German Forces during the first day of the "*Battle of the Bulge*", but for many days turned back the attack of full Divisions through one of the main crossroads in Belgium essential to their capturing Antwerp and accomplishing their mission. Both of the leaders of that divinely inspired battalion who collaborated in writing this book were, and unbelievably still are, lawyers practicing in the Deep South.

About the book:

The Fightin' 589th

You will read about how young civilian men and boys, in a democracy in time of war, are molded into fighting units and are hardened and inured to the raw brutalities of combat. There will be narratives of personal experiences of American soldiers during "*The Battle of the Bulge*" that are incredible but true, and unadulterated by the passage of time. The authors, some fourteen in number, are not trying to impress their readers; they are relating the experiences that they will never forget, of men and boys facing death every minute of every hour throughout the battle. What they relate is told to you not for your entertainment, but for only one reason: that those who read about, and thereby realize and personally experience the monstrous dehumanization that is warfare in our times, will do everything in their power to prevent another such disaster from occurring on this earth.

Preview of the book:

The Fightin' 589th

As advertised on 1st Books

The Battalion received its baptism of enemy fire in the "*Battle of the Bulge*", the last great offensive of the German Army on any front, inspired by Adolph Hitler and designed by his Chief of Staff, General Jodl, to advance through Belgium to Antwerp, driving a wedge between the British 21st Army Group and the American Armies to the south. The victorious Germans could then force the surrender of the British Armies and negotiate an armistice with the Americans that would permit them to turn all of their forces to the east and defeat Russia. To Hitler's distorted mind, this result seemed not only possible, but attainable. And there was a period of about thirty days when the Allies were not certain of the outcome.

This massive engagement was called the "*Battle of the Bulge*" because the attack by three German armies against a very thinly held sector of the American eastern front created a bulge covering hundreds of square kilometers of the sovereign territory of four nations (Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg and France) that had been overrun by the Allies in late 1944, and that had been envisioned by the American armies as the launching pad for a final drive to end the War.

The Battle was finally won by the Allies early in February, 1945, but it was initiated by the Germans on December 16, 1944, a very cold, overcast day that emulated a long series of days that had afflicted western Germany and eastern France in late 1944 (and were to continue to do so). The advance of German forces on that date and the succeeding three days led to the worst single-day catastrophe from the standpoint of casualties in the entire military history of the United States, a day upon which the 106th Infantry Division suffered more than 8,500 casualties (the exact number will never be known) or over 60% of its total strength. And the vast majority of these losses occurred in the relatively small triangle between Bleialf and Auw, Germany, and Schönberg, Belgium, and in an area that did not exceed three square kilometers (approximately two square miles).



Martin "Chic" Wenté, 423/1, far right, then his wife Donna, and to her right U.S. Congressman David Dreier, R-Covina, CA, with the Wenté's daughter Dr. Leslie Ann Wenté on the left.

Text by Rodney Tanaka, Staff Writer

WWII Medal Ceremony

San Dimas resident Martin "Chic" Wenté suffered shrapnel wounds and spent five months as a prisoner of war in Europe during his Army service in World War II.

The Walnut High School teacher looks back at his time as a prisoner, as a learning experience. "I learned that there were a lot more people out there besides myself," the 76 year old said. "I learned to look out for other people, to care for other people and to help other people when possible."

His skill with a machine gun and his ability to speak German made Wenté a valuable asset to the Army, but until Thursday his accomplishments had not been fully acknowledged.

He received a Purple Heart and some ribbons, but letters written by him and his daughter did not get the attention of the Army Review Board. Rep. David Dreier R-Covina and his staff helped Wenté receive 16 additional decorations for his service, including another Purple Heart, a Bronze Star and a Good Conduct medal. Dreier's letter got things moving, Wenté said, because the congressman has clout.

"I don't know why I am here," Wenté said,

"There's so many more people so much more deserving than I am."

Others would disagree. Dreier gave him a flag flown over the capitol. His daughter, Leslie Irwin, said Wenté is humble about his military accomplishments and kept his Purple Heart in the bottom of a desk drawer. She helped unveil a display of 13 of her father's medals.

"No one deserves this honor more than you do," she said.

Also giving their support were other former prisoners of war, Dominick Tripodi, part of San Gabriel Valley Ex-Prisoners of War, helped Wenté with his service review. "If we had to we'd be more glad to serve our country again," Tripodi said. "I'm glad to see he got what he had coming. His whole family feels better."

Irwin challenged Walnut High School students to turn off their TV and talk to their parents about their own stories. She also asked them to thank veterans they see for insuring their freedom.

Wenté teaches law enforcement and public safety. He retired as a detective sergeant after serving 33 years with the Los Angeles police department.

He was hit in the head by shrapnel burst on 17 December 1944 during the *Battle of the Bulge* and was captured 19 December 1944. During the three day march from the front-lines, he got frostbite because one of the German soldiers took a liking to his boots and stole them.

He said, "Seeing the medals brought back memories, this is a once-in-a-lifetime thing,"

**BEFORE THE
VETERANS DIE**

by
Dale R. Carver



In memory of Dale Carver

Order of the Golden Lion - Officer's Class,
Poet Laureate of the 106th Inf Division Association
Silver Star recipient 1945 - 424th Headquarters
A&P Platoon Leader
in care of Ruth Carver, 742 Druid Circle
Baton Rouge, LA 70808
225-767-3111 61 pages - \$8 ppd

Commemorating the Year 2001

106th Infantry Division Association - Mini- Reunions

(See Mini-Reunion Reports pages 10 - 27 this issue)

My First Reunion

We were there, that winter long ago
We survived: many of our comrades fell.
Twin enemies were the weather and the foe-
The never-ending cold and the bursting shell.
Conceived of this ordeal of fire and icy earth
this brotherhood of old men came to be;
a kinship stronger far than that by birth
was born when we were young, across the sea.
Of the ties that bind, others cannot know,
but we were there, that winter long ago.

- - - John Gilliland's 106th Post Exchange - - -

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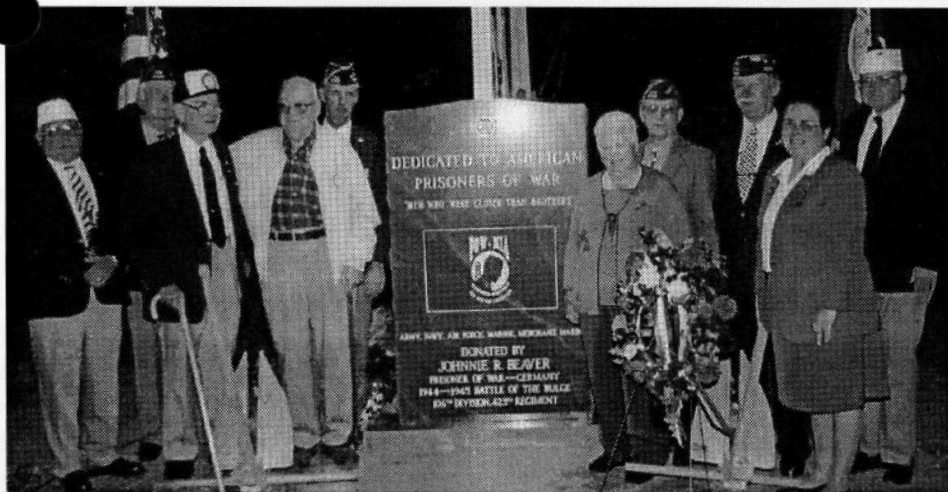
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Boaz, AL 35957-6060

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Former POW pays tribute - donates memorial to VFW



By Jill Helton, Staff
of the Camden County Georgia
The Southeast Tribune & Georgian

Former prisoner of war

Johnnie Beaver didn't know at the time, but his long lost brother was sitting across from him in his living room.

It was understandable that he might not recognize James Smith since it had been almost an life time since their paths had crossed.

It had been the *Battle of the Bulge* in World War II and perhaps the worst day in the lives of both men. That was the day they were captured by the Germans.

The two had been traveling in a group of four as they fled from the advancing enemy. When a bomb blast separated the group, Beaver and his Army lieutenant went one way; Smith and another soldier, went another way.

"The last time my father and James Smith saw each other was 57 years ago today," said Joanie Powell, Beaver's daughter, at a ceremony on Tuesday Dec 18 honoring American Ex-prisoners of War.

Smith, now a resident of Columbus, and Beaver spoke briefly on the phone on Sunday, December 16 after Smith's daughter, Elizabeth, had found Beaver's website on the Internet. Noticing that they had been in the same unit, she asked her father, if he knew Beaver.

That lead to the phone call and, two days

later, a surprise visit from Smith.

The timing was perfect. A monument bearing Beaver's bronze prisoner of war medallion was to be dedicated on Tuesday, Dec 18 at the *Veteran's of Foreign Wars Post 8385* in Kingsland, GA. It was donated, by Beaver, in honor of all American POW's and the sacrifices they made for America's freedom.

Smith had shown up on the doorstep of Beaver's St. Mary's home on the day before the ceremony. Beaver didn't even recognize Smith until he had been there for about 30 minutes.

"I thought he was one of the men from the [*Veteran's of Foreign Wars Post*]." Said Alma Beaver, Johnnie's wife, "Sometimes they come over to pay a visit."

Yet, it seemed to coincidental that he brought with him a book about Beaver's Army division. It was then that Beaver recognized he did, in fact, know that man, and what they shared was much more thicker than blood.

"With real brothers, you can grow apart. To go what we went through (in the war). You become closer than real brothers." He said, emotion choking his words.

Beaver and Smith stood shoulder to shoulder on Tuesday evening as they paid tribute to their captive brother's in arms.

Former POW pays tribute - donates memorial to VFW



(L) Johnnie Beaver, and his Army buddy, James Smith (both from 423/F) at the dedication ceremony for the POW Memorial that Beaver donated.

Many hadn't been able to return to their families as Beaver and Smith had.

After being captured by the Germans on December 19, 1944, Beaver had been forced march to march, at gunpoint, for weeks in the snow until finally ending up in a labor camp. Beaver battled the effects of frostbite and malnutrition while coping with the constant threat of violence.

For many prisoners of war, including Beaver, it is difficult to talk about everything that happened to them.

"His war experiences changed him, changed his life and my mother's life forever," said Powell in her speech at the dedication ceremony. "There are some war experiences that will remain hidden forever."

Even today, it hurts Beaver to remember. His wife and daughter, Diane, gripping him tightly, Beaver shook with each blast of the 21 gun salute at the dedication ceremony. Loud noises remind him of being under enemy fire.

But, despite his discomfort, Beaver felt his war experiences changed him, his life, and my mother's life forever. Years ago, with my mother's encouragement, my father did a tape attempting to tell about his war experiences. It is so heartbreaking to

listen to my father's voice breaking up and the tape stopping and starting. A couple of years ago I took this tape and did a web site for my father. **Editor's note: That website address is:**

<http://www.eagnet.com/edipage/user/joanie/index.htm>

During that time a little more of his experiences came out, still not all, but there are some war experiences that will remain hidden with my father forever. My father now spends his days answering his e-mail from his web site.

One of the people here today visited my father's web site. Mr. James Smith' from Columbus, Georgia. I want to thank James Smith for coming today and making this day ever so more special for my father. The last time my father and Mr. Smith saw each other was 57 years ago today. The date was December 18, 1944 and the order had been passed down "Every man for himself". My father, James Smith, Charles Dop and Lt. Philipson had jumped on a jeep and was traveling down a dirt road trying to escape. The jeep in front of them was knocked out. With a machine gun firing at them, Charles Dop and James Smith jumped out on the left hand side of the jeep and were able to crawl to a ditch and get away al-

Former POW pays tribute - donates memorial to VFW

gh James Smith was later captured. My father and Lt. Philipson jumped out on the right hand side of jeep about the time a grenade hit the jeep, wounding both

Lt. Philipson and my father. My father and Lt. Philipson were captured by the Germans, becoming Prisoners of War. This was the start of my father's living nightmare.

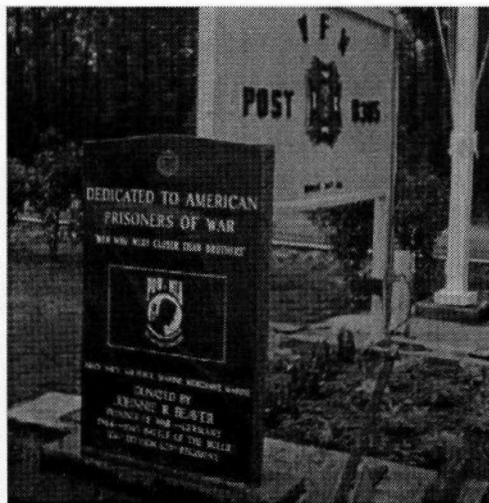
My father has always said he didn't know why God allowed him to survive when so many of his buddies died, I know why. My father has touched countless lives in countless ways. I know my sister, Diane and my life have been enriched because of my father. I thank God my father survived.

So to all Americans who have been prisoners of war, we dedicate this monument to you.

My parents would like to express their heartfelt gratitude to the VFW Post 8385 for accepting this monument.

May God be with all Americans as we stand up and show the world that the United States is still a force to be reckoned with.

Joanie Powell ◇ ◇ ◇



Beaver's donation to the Veteran's of Foreign War Post 8385, Kingsland, GA

you are one of the 29,000 former prisoners of war who do not belong to AXPOW, we need you!

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36-50	\$300
51-60	\$180
61 & Over	\$120
Spouse Life Member	\$ 40



Annual

Membership

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For information on who we are and what we do, please contact us at
American Ex-Prisoners of War

3201 E. Pioneer Parkway, Suite 40, Arlington, TX 76010

Fone: (817) 649-2979 * * * Fax: (817) 649-0109

email: pow@flash.net

Mini-Reunions . . .

From John R. Schaffner, 589/A

Mini-Reunion Chairman

106th Infantry Division Association

It is with a feeling of satisfaction that I am able to write about the "Mini-Reunions" that have, and are, being held around the U.S.A. There were 30 in the year 2000. Not bad, but we can do better. I think we did do better in 2001, but the final count is not yet in. Some areas are setting up their local "Mini-Reunions" in the Spring or Summer to keep out of the bad traveling conditions.

Here, personally, I have been sending out invitations to all of Maryland, Virginia and D.C. That is a lot of invitations and I realize that many live too far to accept. So, what is the solution to that? More of us have to decide to set up Mini-Reunion in our own area, especially since many of us tend not to travel as far these days. As an example: The State of Virginia. I know that we have folks on the roster from Richmond, Norfolk, Raleigh and further West, who would enjoy a get-together with their 106th comrades and families. If you would like to try, ask our CUB editor to send you a list of address labels for your area.

Another area is Florida where we have a large number of our members, especially in the winter. We already have some mini-reunions scheduled there, but there is room for more. You will feel very good, when your friends approach you, with their hand extended to "Thank You" for making the arrangements. Then you know it was a great "SUCCESS."

Read about the Year 2001 Mini-Reunions on this page and the pages following. Thanks to all of you for participating.

John Schaffner, 589/A, Mini-Reunion Chairman

Southern California - 2001 See details and other photos on the next page.



L/R: Dr. Richard Peterson, 423/I; Chic (423/I) and Donna Wente; Bella and Milt Weiner 424/M (Host)

Mini-Reunions . . .



Southern California - 2001

Milton Weiner, 424/M, 28121 Ridgethorpe Ct, Rancho Palos Verdes, CA 90275 - 310-544-0470

Standing L/R: Frieda and Eric Vanderhorst, 423/F; Ted Litvin; David Fournier, Associate;
 Greg Drumm, Associate; Leo Krueser, 81st Med
 Sitting L/R: Joseph Litvin, 423/D; Mary Lou and Randy Marsh.,



L/R: Al Siekierski, and Martha 592/C; Bob and Betty Weidlin 422/C; Bob and Martha Sowell 424/E



Northern California - 2001

Ed & Prewett, 424/B and Robert Bredlinger, 423/HQ

The Northern California 106 Vets held their luncheon at H's Lordship Restaurant at the Berkeley Marina hosted by Robert Bredlinger and Ed Prewett. Next year's host will be Col. T.M. Barrick, 424/I - 19907 Bonnie Ridge Way, Saratoga, CA 95070 Tele: 408-867-3161

Rear l/r: Col T.M. Barrick; Nancy Addis; John Stauff; Clarence Meltesen; Robert Bredlinger; Barbara Brendlinger; Mike Thome; Carol Bussell; Bill Fowler; and John Gregory.

Front l/r: Jean Barrick; Helen Meltensen; Paul Kinney; Fritz Kinney; Elaine Epling; Reddie Prewett; Shirley Gregory; James Twinn; Marte Mazone and Bob Jones.

Walter Tyler planned to come but didn't make it this year - hopefully next year.

Arizona - 2001

John A. Swett, 423/H 10691 E Northern Crest Dr. Tuscon, AZ 520-722-6016

The December 16 Mini-Reunion was held on Saturday 16 December 2001. As in the past two years our state reunion was held in conjunction with "*Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge*." Thirty-two invitations were sent to 106th vets. Many returned their regrets, being out of state or because of sickness. Seven sent their reservations and checks, of these on five veterans and two wives attended from the 106th. In total 76 veterans from both groups made the luncheon.

From the 106th came the following: Charles Moore and his wife; Mike Mill; James Stamm and John Swett. John and Anita Collins canceled due to health problems. Rain throughout the state probably kept others away.

The luncheon was a buffet at the Property Conference Center, in Casa Grande, AZ. The speaker was retired General John A. Wickman, Jr. formerly commander of the 101st Airborne and most recently Chief of Staff, U.S. Army. He delivered a very timely message not only covering the current military situation of the war against terrorism, but also outlining steps we civilians can take in helping our country and ourselves. Volunteerism was the major focus. The speech was well presented and I think most attendees stayed awake, even after the huge meal. *John A Swett*

Mini-Reunions . . .



Bradenton/Sarasota, Florida - 2001

Lester Helmich, 424/HQ, 2600 Belvoir Boulevard, Sarasota, FL 34237 941-955-3571

The Sarasota/Manatee area 106 Division minireunion was held at the Forest Lakes Country Club in Sarasota, Florida. This was the largest gathering ever held with 51 present including two from the 99th Division. Stories were exchanged and friendships renewed. This year our speaker was Brigadier General John McLain whose artillery unit participated in the *Bulge* near Bastogne.

First Row: Herbert Friedman, Ray Twardzik, Bill Mangold, Boris Stern, and Charles Fehnel

Second Row: James Edwards, Murrel Kelso, Bob Fisher, Calvin Wright, Robert Eldridge, Sam Tenbrink, Jack Schneider, Rocco Sergi, and Gene Saucerman

Third Row: E. Creel, Les Helmich, Morris Sykes, Bob Snovel, Milton Cram, Don Scholten, Frank Scales, Dick Brokaw, Nelson Charron and Herbert Karnes

First Row: Pat McLain, Margie Stern, Marianne Tenbrink, Doris Sykes, Maryann Scholten, Lael Snovel, Margaret Wright, and Isabel Twardzik

Second Row: Nellye Friedman, Lee Kelso, Lois Palmer, Pauline Fehnel, Brenda Schneider, Margurette Helmich, Laverne Sergi and Jodie Brokaw

Third Row: Sally Saucerman



Janesville, WI - 2001

Robert Homan, 424/D, 3rd Platoon - 1614 Holly Drive, Janesville, WI 53546 - 608-963-6028

I held my annual *Battle of the Bulge* Reunion at our local Elks Club. I invited any vet that fought in that battle. This year I had 86 people show up at this reunion. Nine widows of veterans of the *Battle of the Bulge* attended. This year I decided to honor veterans from the *Vietnam War*, 5 vets from that war attended the breakfast.

The guest speaker was John Solis, Rock County, Wisconsin, Veterans Service Officer. Vietnam veteran, Tom Stuhra and former Janesville, Wisconsin City Council member spoke for the Vietnam vets. Congressman Paul Ryan, from our district showed up a greeted everu one. He explained how he could help the veterans. The first reunion I held in 1994 had 45 show up. This year 86. Each year it seems to get bigger and bigger.

Camp Hill, PA - 2001

Trueman Christian, 424/D - 27 Center Drive - Camp Hill, PA 17011 717-763-4871

Sorry we have no photos.

On January 11, 2001, Norman Simmons, 424/D and his wife Betty; Ralph Coble of 424/A, me, Trueman Christian and my wife Anne, met at the Old Country Buffet in Mechanicsburg, PA to remember our 106th Infantry Division and *The Battle of the Bulge*. We talked about our experiences of those days and had a moment of prayer giving Thanks to the Almighty who never forgets any of his children and was graciously with us in those difficult days, and is still with us today. The five of us have met for this purpose three years in a row in January and twice had several others attending in addition to the five. Our larger group meets in May when several return from Florida and a couple from New Jersey attends. Last Mary and Bob Landis, 424/D from Albrightsville, PA joined us, as did Ruth-Alice and Arthur Potts, 424/K from Manasquan, New Jersey. Also, Elmer brice, Sr. 423/K and Janet were there. We will have our next reunion near Downingston. PA in May

Minneapolis, Minnesota - 2001

Howard (Howie) Flen, Associate, 1716 7th Street NE, Rochester, MN 55906 507-282-0409

The Minneapolis area 106th vets held their annual Mini-Reunion on Friday November 9, 2001 at the Cherokee Steak House a few miles south of the Mega-Mall of America. 21 people attended.

John Kline, CUB editor acted as speaker and gave a report on the 106th 55th Annual Reunion in Washington D.C., as well as on the Association and The CUB magazine. He also forgot his camera. Next year, 2002, John Kline will host the annual event.

Present were Al and Dorothy Swanson, 424/I; Charles and Dorothy Haug, 28th Inf Div, Associate.
Lex and Jeanne Schoonover, 422/HQ; Lloyd and Audrey Brunner, 424/A;
Richard Cartier and guest Joyce, 424/K; George Murray, and guest, 424/H
Robert Julson and Jeannie, 424/C; Duane Risberg, 423/HQ
John and Margot Kline, 423/M
Howie Flen, Associate - Mini-Reunion organizer.
Thanks Howie for the years you have hosted our event.



Nebraska-Western Iowa - 2001

Dean & Della Sandahl, 3041 N 61st Street, Lincoln, NE 68507 402-466-3546 sandydandd@juno.com

Saturday, 15 December, 2001 U.S.A Steak-Bufferet, Lincoln NE

We opened with a Pledge of Allegiance, a couple of Dale Carver's great poems and the Invocation.

We enjoyed a delicious steak/buffet with lots of visiting and reminiscing. Next meeting, same place, 16 December 2002 at 11 AM. You from Missouri and Kansas are welcome. You can get back by dark.

L/R; Dean & Della Sandahl (Hosts) 422/B, Lincoln; Earl & Louisa Kinney 423/B, Franklin NE; Charles & Jane Henning 424/B, Peru NE; Harold & Lorraine Hawkins, 423/D, Omaha and Leonard & Evelyn Tyser 423/I, Wilber NE. Also attending were invited guests Ivan and Patricia Schoone of Upland, NE (not shown) Ivan has authored two volumes of "OPERATION RECOGNITION - Honoring Nebraska War Veterans. His wife has served as Chief Editor on these books and other historical writings.



Washington - 2001

Myrton Dickerson 424/D, 2500 South 370th St, Federal Way, WA 98003 253-661-9325

Front L/R: Myrton Dickerson 424/D myrton@aol.com; Ken Corrigan 591/SV

Back Row L/R: Alvin Powers 422/HQ 1st Bn; Jack Watters 423/G; George Strong 423/HQ; Ray Johnston 423/H and Douglas Elms 424/AT

We had a great time going over old memories and talking with two new members; Jack Watters who moved here from Arizona. Douglas Elms was a 1st Timer at a mini-reunion and we hope he makes many more. Alvin and Dorothy Powers came from the farthest, Lapine, Oregon which is over 400 miles. The reunion was held at our home again this year, and great times were had by all. We hope to see them all, again next year. Wives not in photo - Beatrice Dickerson; Betty Corrigan and Dorothy Powers. They all helped prepare a fine lunch for us. Sorry Gals for not getting you in the photo.



Madison, Wisconsin - 2001

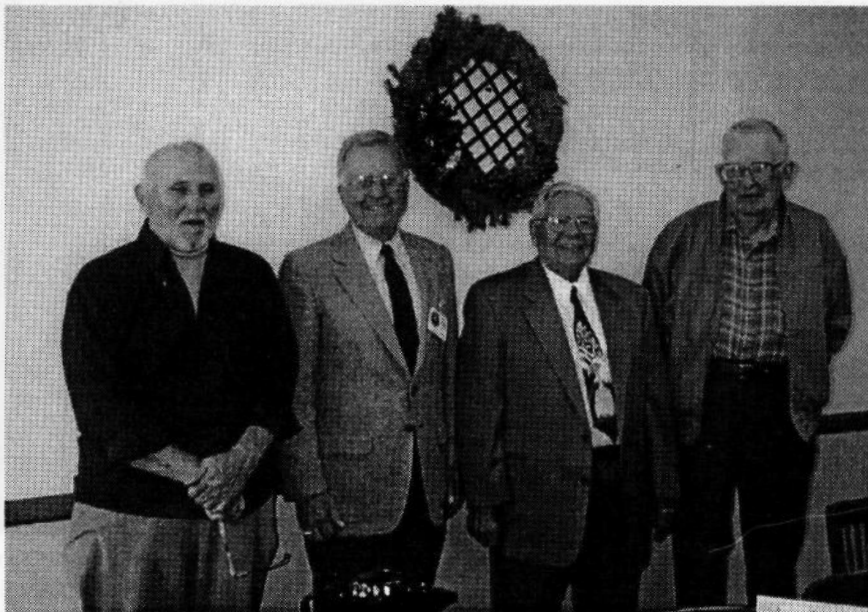
Charles Rieck, 422/H, 7316 Voss Parkway, Middleton, WI 53562, 608-831-6110

The Wisconsin 11th Annual Commemorative meeting of the *Battle of the Bulge* was held at CJ's East in Madison, Wisconsin, on October 20, 2001. We had 26 people in attendance and they were:

Mr. & Mrs. Ralph Moore; Mr. & Mrs. Al Kath; Mr. & Mrs. Lawrence Post;
Mr. & Mrs. Jerome Miller; Mr. & Mrs. Edward Nagle; Mr. & Mrs. James Tetzlaff;
Mr. & Mrs. Howard Jones; Mr. & Mrs. Edmund Podlaski; Mr. & Mrs. Raymond Kurth;
Mr. Fred Broussard; Mr. Donald Handel; Mr. Mike Cunningham; Mr. Charles Rieck
and Ms Kathleen Lundin.

The group spent the time socializing in lieu of a program. David Post was the photographer. By group action, the 2002 meeting will be held on October 19, 2002, at CJ's East in Madison, Wisconsin.





Albuquerque, New Mexico - 2001

Dr. Ralph J. Nelson, DDS 422/Cannon, 1 Acoma Lane, Los Alamos, NM 87544, 505-622-9787

The New Mexico contingent of the 106th Infantry Division Association, held its annual Mini-Reunion at a popular restaurant in Albuquerque, New Mexico on December 15, 2001. Four veterans and six guests were present. A very good time was enjoyed by all attending, socializing and remembering.

Veterans above l/r: Walter Peters, 331st Medical Battalion, Co B; Robert Soladay, 422 Service; Ralph Nelson, 422 Cannon; Louis Baca, 422/L; Robert Soloday, 422 Service

Below, l/r: Christine Nelson Lee; Helen Peters; Margaret Velasques widow of Armando, 422/K; Lillie Baca; Kate Neilsen, granddaughter of Ralph who was visiting from Denmark and Rhoda Nelson



Mini-Reunions . . .



Detroit, Michigan - 2001

Russell Mayotte, 424/F, 9628 Cavell Street, Livonia, MI 48150 - 313-421-4059

An excellent meeting of old friends and comrades. The meeting was held on 16 December, 2001.

Kneeling l/r: Russ Mayotte 424/F; Arthur Pope (*Guest Speaker*) impersonating and speaking as General George S. Patton. **Men Standing back, l/r:** H. "Woody" Woodring *Guest Speaker*. Woody" was driving General Patton at the time the General was killed; Jack Roberts 592/C; Harold Ortwine 592/C; Harold Kuizema 589/B; Tony Rand 589/B; Jack Gillespie 422/C; Herb Eidelman 424/SV; John Plotkowski 422/HQ 1st Bn; Stanley Kups 106/SIG; Milt Schober 424/F, a guest from Chicago; Charles Reeber 423/D; and Don O'Farrell 424/CN

Men Seated l/r: Paul Wasylon 422/HQ 1Bn; Rudy Aittama 106/REC; Bob Scranton 422/K Willard Keeber 424/G and Tony Goryl 424/SV

Women Standing l/r: Bea Keeber; Mary Lou Roberts; Mildred Scranton; Lenore Kups; Helen Goryl; Jessica Kuizema; Joan Plotowski; Norma Aittama and Arlene Schober, Guest from Chicago.

Women Seated l/r: Shirley Gillespie; Mary Reeber; Barbara Mayotte; Delphine O'Farrell; Ruth Rand



Mini-Reunions . . .



Reading, Pennsylvania - 2001

John J. Gallagher, 81st /ENG/C, 4003 Francis Street, Temple, PA 19560 Tele: 610-929-2887

The Reading area had a succesful Memorial Dinner, 7 December 2001

for the 57th Anniversary of *The Battle of the Bulge*.

Twenty-five persons were in attendance. Had phone calls and letters from some who could not attend. Gus and Alice Agostini, who sent us money for the Memorial Team, Joseph Scott, Sally Hill, Truman Christian, Erma Kowolski and Stan Wojtusik.

Our next gathering will be Friday, December 6, 2002 at the Dutch Colony Lodge, Reading, Pennsylvania.

Call John Gallagher 610-929-2887

Men:

Seated l/r: John Gallagher, Joe Trantino; William Harris; Fred Carr

Standing l/r: Daniel Elesenhard; Joseph Yorkovitch; Vince Sziber;

Jack McDevitt; Walter Shirk; Charles Datte; Steve Hudock; Bill Crossland

Ladies:

Seated: l/r: Stella Gallagher; Norma Crossland; Lillian Harris and Marie Hudock

Standing l/r: Muriel Sziber; Anne Mcdevitt; Ida Frank; Connie Tarantino; Nacy Datte; Betty Carr and Wanda Fava

In the inset photo: Donald and Robbie Showalter (Donald had a problem walking)



Mini-Reunions . . .



Parkersburg WV - Fairmont WV - 2001

Frank S. Trautman, 422/D - 9 Meadowcrest Drive, Parkersburg, WV 26104-9395

Our mini-Mini-Reunion was held as follows: On the 15 of December 2001 I drove over 70 miles to Clarksburg to meet with Edward Young, 590/A. We drove another 30 miles to Fairmont. While other activities were going on, our primary purpose was to meet to celebrate this well known day in the history of the 106th Infantry Division. I would have very much liked to have had

Robert Weber, 422/H to have joined us, but his ill health prevented that.

Edward E. Young 589/A, Mount Clare and Frank S. Trautman, 422/D, Parkersburg, WV met at Frankies Supper Club, Fairmont WV on December 15, 2001 for a "Mini-Reunion" of the 106th Infantry Division Association.



Ohio - 2001

Clem Kuhman - 155 Woodridge Drive - Elyria, OH 44035 440-365-5337

Vivian McCulloigh hosted our Mini-Reunion this year, as she has done for many years. Held at Mountain Jack's Restaurant in Elyria Ohio 2 December 2001. A good time was had by all, mostly socializing, little reference to the "Bulge." Our waitress took the photo with three cameras, luckily one turned out.

Standing l/r: Bob Gilder(1987 Commander Class Order of the Golden Lion); Charles Garn; Peter DiRenzo; Vivian McCulloigh; Herman Janse Jr.; Clem Kuhman;

Sitting l/r: Jean Gilder (1987 Companion Class Order of the Golden Lion); Willie Garn; Mrs. DiRenzo and Pat Kuhman



Long Island, NY - 2001

Ephriam Goldberg, 555 Franklin Blvd., Long Beach, NY 516-432-7136 Email: edg555@juno.com

We had a Mini-Reunion on Long Island on Memorial Day, Sunday, November 11, 2001. Last year was our "First" on Long Island, which was held in December, when, because of bad weather, we had last minute cancellations.

The eleven men are Back Row L/R: Julius Brandi; Irv Schrom; Sal Grasso; Charles Johansen

Middle Row: Preston Barnes; John Rosalia; Harold Hoffman; John Starmack

Front Row: Eugene Powell; Jacques Bloch; Ed Goldberg

Not in the photo is Alvin Sussman. His wife was in a hospital, he left early.

The ten women are: L/R:

Back Row: Rhoda Schrom; Mary Grasso; Grace Starmack; Rosemary Rosalia Devito

Front Row: Adele Johansen; Neva Powell and Ruth Hoffman





Speaker - Lt. Windsor Miller, 9th Armored Division - Remagen Bridge

Maryland, D.C. and Virginia - 2001

John Schaffner, 589/A, 1811 Miller Rd, Cockeysville, MD 21030 - 410-584-2754

The Mini-Reunion covering Md., Va., & D.C. area was held 13 December in the Club Meade at Ft. G.G. Meade, Md. **Windsor Miller**, veteran of the 9th Armored Division, and also a regular attendee of our Mini-reunion, was our guest speaker. (Lt.) Miller led the first platoon of Sherman Tanks across the Rhine on the Ludendorf Bridge at Remagen, and talked about experiences as a tanker in the 9th Armored Division, 14th Tank Battalion leading up to, and capture of the bridge. **Mike Pumphrey**, WW II Re-enactor, also attended and displayed a great amount of WW II Army personal equipment that was of interest to all. Mike was also at the Fairview Park Marriott in Falls Church for our reunion in September 2001.

Although tight security is currently in effect at all of military posts, the Club Meade arranged for a shuttle bus to transport all those not having military I.D. to the clubhouse. Happy to report that no problems were encountered. The club was very cooperative with the situation.

There were a total of 54 that attended, including the guests.

Stanley M. Backmurski, 401st FAB & family- Anne Marie, Jason Keech, Sarah Keech;
 A. Grayson Bishop, 424/L; Leo Bretholz & Charles Sussman 95th I.D.;
 Austin L. Byrd, Jr. 589/A & Doris E. Rathbun; Marbury L. Councell, Jr. 8th AF
 Clark W. Dovell, 422/M & Thelma Dovell; John F. Gatens, 589th/A & Mary Vandermast;
 Philip A. Hannon, 81st Eng/A & Jean Hannon; William G. Hemelt, 424/H;
 Rev. Edward T. Hill, USN Chaplain & Mrs. Norma Asendorf;
 Harry O'Neill, 91st I.D. & Joe Gunzelman; William Johnson, 424/K;
 Alan W. Jones, Jr, 423/Hq/1/Bn & Lynn Jones; BG (Ret) Oliver Patton, 423/F;
 Kay Kemp, Ray Kemp, Tom Kemp, Associates; Henry A. Lowry, Jr. 99th I.D.;
 Edward McGinty, 589/C; Donald Regier, 422/Sv & Catherine Regier;
 John R. Schaffner 589/A & Lillian Schaffner, Robert W. Schaffner, Barbara Schaffner,
 Jeanne C. Buchanan, Paul M. Schaffner, & Gina Houghton;
 Walter M. Snyder 589/A; Jack A. Sulser, 423/F; Richard W. Tennant, 422/K & Bettie
 Tennant; Earle L. Valenstein, 81st Eng; Ltc (AUS, Ret) John E. Valenstein, Associate;
 Curtis Vickery & Robert Mullauer, Baltimore Military History Roundtable;
 Charles Wehner, USMC & LtC. (USMC) Paul Wehner;
 Alan N. Yeater, (82nd AB vet) Chairman XVIII AB Corps Assn. & Gerlinde Yeater

Mini-Reunions . . .



Pittsburgh, PA - 2001

Joseph P. Maloney, 1120 Warren Ave, Arnold, PA 15068-4048 - 724-335-6104 maloney@salsgiver.com

We had 30 at the luncheon including the speaker Mr. William J. Schofield, III (U.S.N Ret.) and Bill and Dene Christy from an Airborne unit. From the 106th we had: Zane and Jamice Donaldson; Dave and Leona Hunter; Jim Wiggins; Bob Mattiko; Pete and Diana Yanchik; Dr. John and Pearl Martin; Bernard and Virginia Strohmeier; Dr. John and Marilyn Robb; Frank Lapato ; Dick and Pat Rigatti; Ed and Betty Huminski; Howard and Dorothy Lowenberg; Francis and Jean Langham; Al and Marge Yelochan and Joe and Viv Maloney. Our speaker brought us up-to-date on Veterans Affairs for Allegheny County, PA as well as improvements in the Soldiers and Sailors Hall and Memorial in Pittsburgh.

A fine Dinner and Fellowship was enjoyed by all.



Tri-State - 2001

E. Russell Lang, 423/I, 47 Pleasant Ridge Dr., Poughkeepsie, NY, 12603 - 845-462-1954 Russlangsr@AOL.com

The Tri-State Mini-Reunion held it's first gathering at the West Point Club, Friday, May 18, 2001. Association Chaplain, Dr. Duncan Trueman said grace and the closing prayer at the luncheon. Twenty-two members and guests attended. There was an exchange of ASTP, Bulge and POW remembrances, followed by a guided bus/walking tour of the historic Military Academy grounds, including the "million dollar" view of the Hudson River and the Chapel with it's beautiful stained glass windows.

Seated l/r: Estelle Zuckerman, Marguerite Levy, Neva Powell, Grace Trueman, Lillian Lang

Back row: Francis Kenny 423/HQ; Bob Smith 424/CN; George Spiegel 423/G; Evelyn Smith; Jack Zuckerman 423/C; Bernard Mayrsohn 423/CN; Louis Levy 423/M; Harry McCarthy 423/I; Russ Lang 423/I; Mario Checca 422/F; Dr. Duncan Trueman 424/AT; Charles Johansen 592/SV; Eugene Powell 422/A

Mini-Reunions . . .



Alton, Illinois - St Louis, MO - 2001

Marion Ray, 424/D, 704 Briarwood Drive, Bethalto, IL 62010 618-377-3674 Email: RayBugleboy@charter.net
December 14, 2001 was the date, 1:00 P.M. was the time. The Banquet Hall, in Wood River, IL was the place, for the annual December Mini-Reunion of the "Golden Lions," 106th Combat Infantry Division. Thirteen 106th Division Association members, one Associate member and a Veteran guest speaker, along with their ladies - gathered to hear a guest speaker and enjoy renewing friendships

Men, Front row, l/r: Victor D. Bauswell, 422/B; Jack C. Rain, 589/B; Briggs Hoffman, 589/B; Edward Paeltz, Guest Speaker; Emil Perko, 422/H; Glen Hartlieb, 592/SV; Gilbert DeGerlia, 422/HQ
Men, Back Row l/r: Don Hinrichs, 81st Eng/C; Carl Goering, Associate; George Foster, 423/HQ 2Bn; Kenneth V. Bryan, 423/HQ 1Bn; Paul Boschert, 590/HQ; Bill Daugherty, 424/G; Bill Kronmueller, 423/E and Marion Ray, 424/D

Ladies, front row, l/r: Nadine Hartlieb; Pat Hinrichs; Emma Boschert; Nancy Paeltz; LaDon Adams; Fran Ray; Betty Rain

Ladies, back row, l/r: Angela Daugherty; Jean Perko; Helen Kronmueller; Margary Bryan; Nelda Bauswell; Nancy Goering





Atlanta, GA - 2001

Sherod Collins, 423/SV, 448 Monroe Trace, Kennesaw, GA 30144, 770-928-3207

On Sunday December 9, 2001, twenty-two members and their guests gathered at the Steak & Ale Restaurant near Northlake Mall, Atlanta, GA. to enjoy the festive fellowship of the season as well as the good food and the atmosphere furnished by the restaurant. The group seemed to especially enjoy each other this year.

Shown are Earnest Earls, Bill Jenkins, Bob Howell, Carl Canup, Sherod Collins, George Moyer, Doug Coffey and Lee Darby

Ladies attending were: Frankie Burkes, Martha Brocato, Betty Turner, Isabelle Coffey, Jean Shirley, Louise Howell, Cathy White, Sue Canup, Elizabeth Morgan, With Ginnie Moyer and Peggy Kelly down front. Omitted from the photo was Elaine Darby.



Mini-Reunions . . .



Oklahoma Areas - 2001

Clint McClure 423/HQ - 8607 E 77th Place Tulsa, OK 74133-3710 918-252-7777

The area members and their wives attended a noon luncheon at the Fountain Restaurant in Tulsa, OK, on 17 December 2001. It was a nice social event with comradeship and the holiday season reigning.

Men l/r: Howard Bryant, Cowata, 424/F; Lyle Russell, Ochelata, 422/I; Clint McClure, David Deffenbaugh, Claremore, 423/D; Don Herndon, Oklahoma City, 424/L;
Seated: Leland Rurley, Tulsa, 423/H and Lowell Harlan, Tulsa, 424/F

Ladies l/r: Standing - Betty Bryant; Joan Herndon and Anita Turley
Seated: Pauline Russell and Peggy McClure



Mini-Reunions . . .



South Carolina - North Carolina Area - 2001

Waid and Vannie Toy, 422/K - 4605 Wde Street, Columbia, S.C. 29210 Tele: 803-772--0132

Thirty-three (33) members, wives and special guests from the South Carolina/North Carolina area gathered at the Officer's Club, Fort Jackson, South Carolina on December 1, 2001, for their annual luncheon and mini-reunion. The attendance declined somewhat this year for the reason a number of members are experiencing health problems.

The Reverend Ewell C. Black served as Master of Ceremonies. Normal protocol for the reunion was observed. Ms. Carolyn Barrett, Chief, Patient Operations, Veterans Administration Medical Center and Mr. Thomas Goff, Supervisor, Columbia Regional Office, Department of Veterans Affairs, were the featured speakers. The group was given the opportunity for questions regarding existing services.

In a show of support for our country, on the War on Terrorism, a prayer was given and the group participated in the singing of patriotic songs in addition to the usual Christmas selections.

A strong bond of fellowship continues within the group, and it was the consensus of opinion that a reunion be held again in 2002.

Men, front Row l/r: Frank Frierson; Rev. Ewell Black, Jr.; Joseph Benforado and Wayne Lee

Men, Second Row l/r: John Cooper; Calvin Abbott; John Frierson; Rev. James H. Tucker, Sr.; William Shipley; Waid Toy; Scott Westbrook and Sam Schiavo

Third Row l/r: Claude Young; Thomas Goff; Howard Tucker, Jr.; Charles Bethea and Larry Lee.

Ladies Front Row l/r Shelvia Westbrook; Lou Shipley; Mildred Frierson; Mrs. William Bethea; Carolyn Barrett; Lucille Williams; Hazel Cooper and Vannie Toy

Ladies back Row l/r: Carolyn Abbott; Janice Bethea; Gurteen Schiavo and Judith Mcconnel
Absent from the photos, four people.



New Members . . .

BLOCH, NORMAN A. ASSOCIATE

23 Harmon Ave
Pelham, NY 10803
Tele: 914-738-9654
Email: nabloch@aol.com

BROWN (CWO USA Ret), MILTON 590/?

2503 N. Clinton Street
Longview, TX 75604
Tele: 903-759-4102

Email: Milton.L.Brown@att.net

Editor's Note: Unit unknown - If anybody out there recognizes Milton's unit, please contact me or him. J. Kline, editor

BOHDE, EDWARD L. 422/L

29600 Jefferson Street
St Clair Shores, MI 48082
Tele: 586-294-3688
Email: elbohde@msn.com

DIEHL, DAVID ASSOCIATE

65 Woodbury Drive
Monroeville, NJ 08343

Son of Lloyd Diehl. 423/H

DIFRANCISCO, ALBERT ASSOCIATE

8 Waltham Way
Sicklerville, NJ 08081

Relative of Lloyd Diehl 423/H

GOUR, JOSEPH 423/E

641 Shorecrest Drive
Mountain Home, AR 72653

GILLIETT, BRADLEY G. ASSOCIATE

240 Caldecott Lane #310
Oakland, CA 94618
Tele: 415-835-7326

I was born in 1966, amateur historian Battle of the Bulge, friend of John Schaffner 589/A and traveled to the Ardennes this past summer.

HOLLY, WILLIAM C. 87th ID ASSOC

1320 Main Street
Hydanesville, LA 71038
Tele: 318-624-0161

Served in WWII in the 87th Infantry Division in ETO. Was interned in a POW Camp in Germany.

KING, DONALD J. 422/F

53 S Dawn Drive
Franklin, IN 46131-1908
Tele: 317-736-7080

KUTRUFF, ROBIN D. ASSOCIATE

530 Augusta Court
Franklin, IN 46131
Tele: 317-736-8530
Email: RobK@fujimed.com

My father was in

"B" Battery, 591st FAB

MEADOWS, CAROL ASSOCIATE

10 Orchard Court
Deptford, NJ 08096

Daughter of Lloyd Diehl 423/H

NOE, JULIE ASSOCIATE

11578 SE 45TH Avenue
Milwaukee, OR 97222
Tele: 503-652-2431

OBERMEYER, PAUL J. 806 ORD

1480 Long Road
Bridgewater, NJ 08807
Tele: 732-356-4964

PUMPHREY, MICHAEL ASSOCIATE

260 Blakeney Road
Catonsville, MD 21228
Tele: 410-747-7213

Michael was one of those at the Reunion last September, that had the display of WWII guns, uniforms and other material J Kline

I am joining as an Associate members because of my personal interest in the history of the 106th Infantry Division. I admire and respect the contributions and sacrifices you men made. I am an amateur historian and World War II re-enactor that enjoys educating younger generations about the war, without glorifying it. I have a wonderful wife named Cheryl, and a great daughter named Gwyneth, nearly three years old. Thank you all for the service you gave to our country.

Michael....

New Members . . .

ROBINSON, PAULA. 423/SV

1011 Rainbow Drive
Waterloo, IA 50701-1136
Tele: 319-232-8742
Email: teeveeboy@hotmail.com

My father (deceased) was in Cannon Company, 424th Combat Infantry Regiment. My wife's name is Deborah

SEEVERS, WILLIAM 422/B

11142 ORCHARD ROAD
KANSAS CITY, MO 64134:

STAMATAKY, JOHN H. 423/HQ 1Bn
I&R Platoon

145 Seaman Avenue
New York, NY 10034

I joined the 159th Infantry Regiment in April 1945 after going through the REPO depot in Munchen Gladback. The 159th was assigned to guarding 300,000 German POWs along the Rhine River, in the vicinity of Bad Godesberg.

After VE day I was transferred to "D" Company, 423rd Infantry, Col. George Zellars, CO, then to Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 423rd Infantry.

We were bivouacked in the forests near Cologne and were undergoing training to go to the Pacific when VE Day was declared. My friends, Pvts Bernard Kirsch, Chicago; Maurice LaFreniere Lowell, Mass; Chris Maniatis, Mass. etc. The Company was Commanded by Captain Charlie Kuehn, Chicago with Lt. Franklin, California leading the I&R Platoon.

After VJ Day the Division was ordered to return to the U.S.A. Being a new recruit I was transferred to CCA, Third Armored Division, Regimental Intelligence. After several months, the 3rd Armored Division was also transferred to the U.S.A. I was then transferred to the 50th QM Base Depot, 7th Army, stationed in Mannheim until June 1946 when I returned Stateside.

SUMMERS, ROBERT J. ASSOCIATE

41 Henley Road
Buffalo, NY 14216-2207
Tele: 716-833-7589
Email: SSGYN@aol.com

My father, Robert H. Summers, PFC, was in "G" Company, 424th Combat Infantry Regiment

TRONCO, JAY ASSOCIATE

3027 Finley Place
Charlotte, NC 28210
Tele: 704-907-2949

WOLFENBARGER, LLOYD 424/L

4090 Quince Road
Seneca, MO 64865-8033
Tele: 417-776-2373
llwolf@netins.net

Lloyd came to us by the way of the Internet. His daughter Sally Rollins started the ball rolling by writing this editor via email.

She wrote, after our first contact:

"Dad and I had talked about his experiences. He said during that time they had gone out in the deep snow, the snow was very deep. They had been at it for at least 18 hours and he could never remember when he had been so tired. He said he was staggering around.

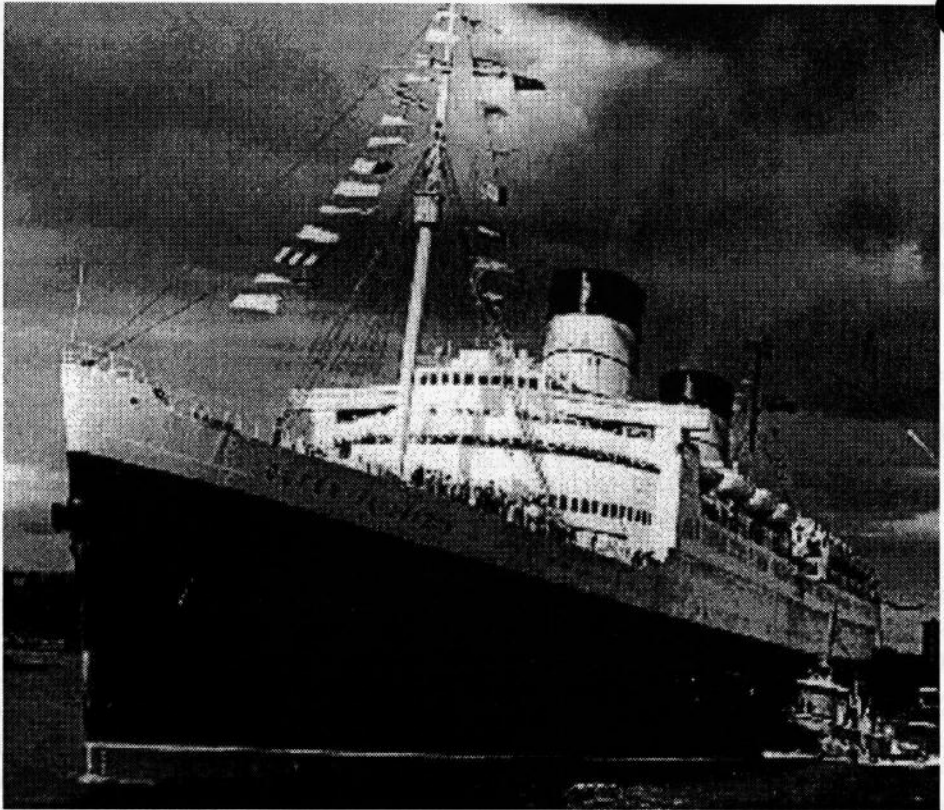
The Lieutenant that was leading them stepped on a land mine, losing a leg and part of his arm. The medics fixed him up. Then they started back. He didn't know the officer, not even his name, but when he stepped up to carry him he said, "Atta boy Wolfenbarger, I knew you would carry me."

As a young man, it really impressed my dad, that this man was suffering so and had time to give some encouragement to his men. He has often wondered if this officer lived. He has always talked about "Steve" who had the nickname "Red Eye" because he wore thick glasses -- he and dad shared many a fox hole.

We are hopeful that some of you 424th Vets out there will recognize my father and get in touch.

Sally Wolfenbarger Rollins

The "Empress Incognito" R. M. S. Queen Elizabeth



The Queen Elizabeth, flagship of the Cunard Line, after her reconditioning in 1946.

By Associate Member, Bill Bucher, Jr.
430 Bob White Run, Salisbury, NC 28147
BUCHERB@cbiinternet.com

Bill is the son of 106th Infantry Division veteran, Bill Bucher, 424 Anti-Tank Co., deceased. He and his wife are regular attendees at our Annual Reunions.

They have two lovely daughters. Bill furnished stories on the *Aquitania* (CUB May 1997) and the *Wakefield* (CUB November 1997)

She was the largest transatlantic passenger liner ever built, and she was one of the three great liners that carried elements of the 106th Infantry *Golden Lion Division* into battle in the Fall of 1944. But then again everything about the legendary superliner *Queen Elizabeth* could only be described as the best, or the grandest of all of the colossal transatlantic passenger ships that carried passengers between America and Europe in the late 1940's, 1950's and 1960's.

Conceived in peacetime to be the finest luxury ship in the world, she was destined

nonetheless to make her mark in history first as a magnificent troopship and then, only after World War II, as the pride of England, a world class transatlantic luxury superliner and flagship of the first-class Cunard Line. The superlatives that describe her, however, were not what raise the *Queen Elizabeth* to the level of a living legend among those remember the war years. It is, instead, the thrilling story of the elaborate deception pulled off by the British Admiralty in order to put her to sea at a time when she was targeted for destruction by the German Luftwaffe.

The ominous clouds of war had already begun gathering over Europe by the time she was launched on September 28, 1938 by Queen Elizabeth and her two daughters, Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret.

Hitler had already invaded Austria and had been granted possession of the Sudetenland to appease his aggression.

The "Empress Incognito" R. M. S. Queen Elizabeth

Almost a year later German forces smashed into Poland, and soon afterward Great Britain and France had declared war on Germany.

At the berth on the Clyde River where the final "fitting out" of the *Queen Elizabeth* was taking place, work suddenly stopped. Not only was the space now desperately needed for building battleships, but the huge hull made an inviting target for German Luftwaffe pilots. The unfinished *Queen Elizabeth* might well have been towed away and scrapped but for the personal intervention of First Lord of the Admiralty Winston Churchill. Dismissing a call to break her down for shrapnel as well as a proposal to sell her to America in exchange for war supplies, on November 2, 1939, the Ministry of Shipping issued orders to rush work on a daring secret plan to spirit her away right under the noses of the German Luftwaffe and U-boats clustered around Great Britain.

The immense size of the *Queen Elizabeth* was legendary by anyone's standards. The gargantuan vessel was 1,031 feet long from stem to stern, and had a gross displacement of 32,998 tons, almost twice the size of today's largest "cruise" ships. Each of her four huge propellers weighed an amazing 32 tons; each anchor weighed 16 tons. Her promenade deck was 724 feet long, and her forward funnel stretched upwards more than 71 feet.

As the big ship neared completion, British war planners noted that there would only be two occasions in the next twelve months when tides on the Clyde River would be high enough to enable her escape: February 26th and another high tide some six long months later. The earlier date was chosen and word went out that the *Queen Elizabeth* would make a short trip to Southampton, England to complete her fitting out.

Preparations were made for her arrival in Southampton. Scores of hotel rooms were reserved for the workers, and large packing crates of ship's fittings and supplies, prominently labeled with the Cunard name, were sent to the docks there. All the while, enemy agents relayed information about these preparations to Germany. What was not known to the enemy, however, was that the British Admiralty secretly counted on the espionage; the Southampton trip was nothing more than an elaborate ruse.

There were other plans in store for the *Queen Elizabeth*. The veteran captain Jack Townley and some 400 hand-picked, experienced crewmen - mostly from the great liner *Aquitania* - were signed on for the short run south from Scotland. The *Queen Elizabeth's* exact sailing orders, however, were to be delivered at the last minute by King's messenger, and were to remain secret until they were unsealed out at sea. At the appointed hour on February 26th she began her voyage, successfully navigated the Clyde and dropped anchor at the mouth of the river to await the arrival of her sailing orders.

At 7:00 a.m. on March 2nd the royal launch delivering the sailing orders approached the *Queen Elizabeth*, and shortly afterward, she began a maiden journey unlike any other before or since. Once at sea, her orders were unsealed and the astonished crew learned that their destination was in fact the Port of New York. They had been ordered to navigate the ship across the Atlantic Ocean without the benefit of a testing trial.

As dusk approached on that fateful evening, the four Allied destroyers escorting the *Queen Elizabeth* fell away and the great ship, her running lights hooded and her cabin windows blackened to avoid detection, sped westward alone and unprotected into the abyss of a North Atlantic night.

On the day that the *Queen Elizabeth* was scheduled to arrive at Southampton the skies over the nearby Solent filled with German Luftwaffe fighters, confounded by prey that had somehow vanished into thin air.

Five days later, just as the mystery of the *Queen Elizabeth's* "disappearance" began to capture the public's imagination, her whereabouts and her surprise destination were revealed on BBC radio. By the time that Britain's latest shipbuilding marvel entered the Hudson River there were thousands of cheering people lining the New York docks to witness her first arrival in America. The Admiralty's ruse had been so successful that the *Queen Elizabeth* had not encountered a single enemy U-boat or plane during her entire transatlantic crossing.

The "Empress Incognito" R. M. S. Queen Elizabeth

The American press affectionately dubbed her "the Empress Incognito" and gleefully celebrated the daring of her maiden crossing.

Hitler, on the other hand, became so enraged by the deception that he offered a reward of \$250,000 and an Iron Cross to any U-boat commander who sank the *Queen Elizabeth* or her sister ship the *Queen Mary*.

The Golden Lions who remember the 1944 voyage of the *Queen Elizabeth* began their trip when they were awakened early in the morning on October 16, 1944 at Camp Myles Standish, Massachusetts, where the division had arrived only five days earlier.

They boarded a troop train and by daybreak they were standing on a wharf in Brooklyn waiting to board a ferry. Soon they discovered that they had been chosen to cross the Atlantic on the newest and biggest passenger ship in the world... the great RMS *Queen Elizabeth*.¹

For these men, seeing the largest ship in the world was utterly breathtaking. Painted completely in wartime grey, the sight of the majestic *Queen Elizabeth* evoked a mixture of awe, excitement and foreboding in the men, many of whom had never even seen the ocean before, let alone crossed it.

An Air Corps band playing the "Beer Barrel Polka" greeted them as they disembarked from the ferry to the pier where the great liner was moored. The Red Cross served them coffee and doughnuts and they formed long lines, by Company, to board the *Queen*. As a sergeant called out their last names, each man responded by shouting his first name and initial and, hoisting all of his gear, stumbling across the gangplank to the deck.

British sailors led the men to their quarters, where they learned that they were to be packed like sardines in every nook and cranny of the ship. Bunks were heavy canvas strips attached with rope to metal frames stacked as many as six-high. Portholes were supposed to remain closed, but some opened them anyways to let a little air into the stuffy compartments, hanging blankets over them at night.

The great ship could transport more than 16,000 troops at a time - far in excess of her later peacetime passenger load and more than

double the ship's lifeboat capacity - and she often traveled with a full load. This trip was no exception; in addition to the 423rd Regiment of the 106th Division, the entire 87th Infantry Division was also aboard. Each man was issued a life vest; scant assurance for being adrift in the ocean but better than nothing.

Around daybreak the next morning - October 17th - the ship began her long trek across the Atlantic. Battle cruisers escorted the great ship to the open sea, and then fell away as she began her trip alone across the U-boat infested Atlantic. Her protection consisted only of a few depth charges, two deck guns, her speed and her zig-zag course, designed to evade the torpedo range of subs she might encounter along the way. Blackout conditions prevailed at night, and on more than one occasion an unlucky soldier got chewed out over a failure to cover their portholes properly.

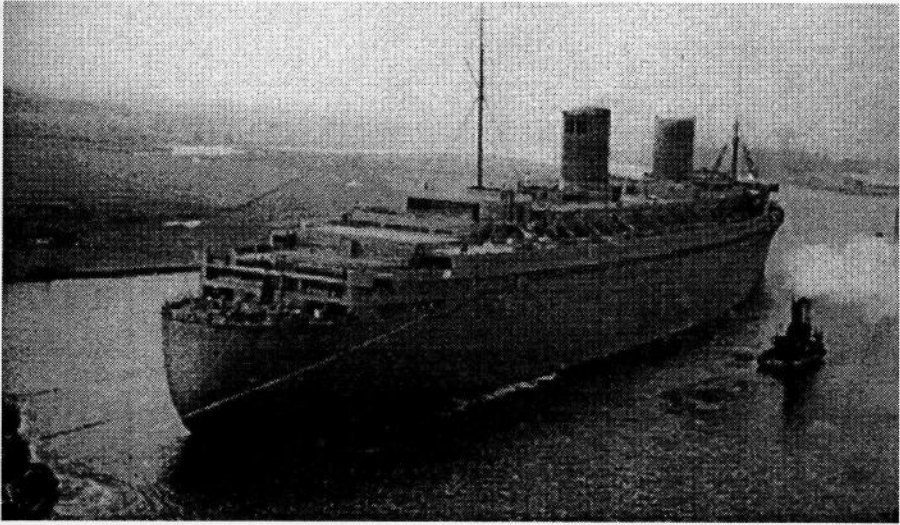
The interior of the ship, though unfinished, provided a glimpse of what the "good life" was like to the men that otherwise may never have experienced it. "*High on one wall in the dining room,*" writes **Richard Peterson, 423/I**, "*was a marquetry of St. George slaying a dragon. beautiful piece of work. It was too high up for anyone to get to it, or the souvenir hunters would have destroyed it.*"

The food, by all accounts, was awful. As on many other crowded troopship voyages, the men were to given tickets which entitled them to eat twice each day and they had to use their own mess gear. "*The food was almost inedible to my midsouth taste,*" writes **Hal Taylor, 423/Cannon**, "*mostly dehydrated eggs and bully beef, along with stale rolls and orange marmalade. Even the dining room smelled of greasy sausages and mutton.*"

Earl Parker, 423/E, reported that the British food didn't just smell unappetizing... it was nauseating. "*The cooking odors that bathed the waiting personnel provided sufficient nourishment for many, who made the on-the-spot determinations that they weren't very hungry at the moment and headed for an open deck and the fresh sea breeze.*"

With the unfamiliar food and the ship plunging at top speed and changing course every six minutes, many spent the entire trip

The "Empress Incognito" R. M. S. Queen Elizabeth



with queasy stomachs, eating only Hershey bars and cookies from the canteen.

At dawn each day when the danger of a visual sighting by a submarine was greatest, "General Quarters" sounded and everyone had to put on a life jacket and stand outside on the crowded deck.

Though drinking water could be had aboard ship the men quickly found out, to their agrin, that the showers only had salt water. "*I made the mistake of taking a bath in the tub one day,*" writes **Frederick Smallwood, 423/HQ**, "*and had to wait until we got to England before I could get the salt off.*"

The ship took five long days to make the trip, arriving in the Firth of Clyde on the evening of October 22nd. As they approached the harbor the men were ordered to stand at alert on deck with their life jackets on.

"*They told us this is standard practice going into a harbor, where the subs could be lying in wait.*" wrote **John Kline, 423/M**, in his diary at the time. He also noted that he had heard that the *Queen Elizabeth* had managed to spot and outrun two enemy subs on the trip that they were just completing. He added, "*I lived on Mallow Cup candy on the trip. The food was not to our tasting.*"

The next morning the men emerged from the bowels of the ship to find that they were anchored in a beautiful harbor filled with ships of all kinds, prompting some to wonder out loud if the entire British Navy was there.

"*The land around the port was magnificent,*" wrote **Hal Taylor**, "*green fields dotted here and there with cattle or sheep; steep, rolling hills, low clouds not far above their summits, an occasional castle; a town; a train threading its way through the valleys leaving a large plume of smoke and vapor behind. Everything seemed accentuated by a crisp, cool temperature.*"

To disembark from the ship the GI's, again carrying all of their gear, climbed down a net to board smaller ships that took them to the docks of Greenock. They walked about 100 yards to a train, which took them through Glasgow, continued east to Edinburgh and then turned south to the temporary camps where they would stay until crossing the English Channel.

Upon their arrival in England, **Martin Jones, 423/G**, was one of those given the responsibility of changing the servicemen's U.S. dollars to English pounds. The job turned out to be less demanding than he anticipated, because very few of the men still had money after the trip. "*I learned that most of the money had changed hands in poker games during our voyage,*" he writes, "*and two of our company cooks were the only men who had much money in their possession.*"

Less than 60 days later the Golden Lion Division would find itself defending, St. Vith, a lonely Belgian crossroads situated squarely in the path of the last major German offensive of World War II.

The "Empress Incognito" R. M. S. Queen Elizabeth



The Queen Elizabeth, at the peak of her popularity, in the New York harbor.

In February, 1946, the *Queen Elizabeth* completed her last duties as a troopship, and in March 1946 Cunard shipyard workers began her final conversion to the luxury liner she was born to be. Her funnels were painted the trademark Cunard red and black for the first time, her topsides were painted bright white and her hull, deep tuxedo black. In her new life she had a maximum passenger load of a mere 2,082 passengers.

She sailed on her first commercial voyage on October 16, 1946 to New York from Southampton, and for years she and the *Queen Mary* carried full-capacity loads and delivered combined profits of more than \$50 million each year.

The high times lasted for just over a decade. Air travel was beginning to come of age, and by 1960 more than 60 per cent of all transatlantic passengers chose to travel by air. Cunard refurbished the *Queen Elizabeth* in late 1965 to attract more passengers, including additional private bathrooms and a new lido deck with a large heated swimming pool,

but the dawn of transatlantic air travel had captured the imagination of the international traveler once and for all.

By 1966 the *Queen Elizabeth* and the *Queen Mary* together were losing some \$1.8 million annually. By May of 1967 the Cunard Line was forced to make the painful decision to scrap them both.

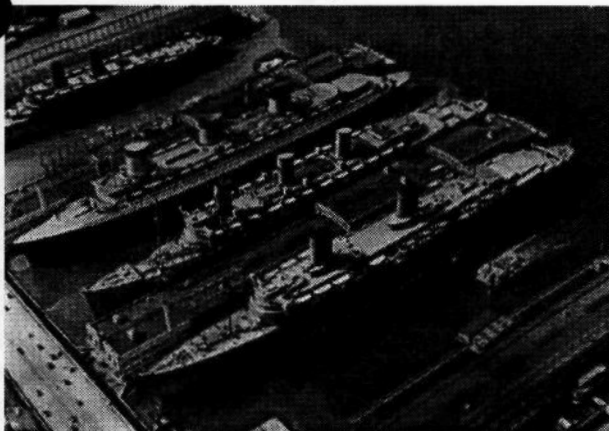
The newer but considerably smaller *Queen Elizabeth II* would become the flagship of the Cunard Line.

The aging *Queen Elizabeth* was sold in 1968 to an American partnership hoping to turn her into a hotel and museum at Fort Lauderdale, Florida (like her sister *Queen Mary* at Long Beach, Florida).

Running out of cash, they sold her to yet another hopeful group of businessmen, but they, too, proved to be unsuccessful.

(Text continued on page 36)

The "Empress Incognito" R. M. S. Queen Elizabeth



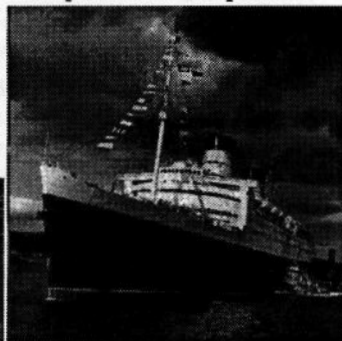
**The Queen Elizabeth
Ship's Service - Inspection**



**The Queen Elizabeth
as a Troop Ship**



Sister Ship - The Queen Mary - New York



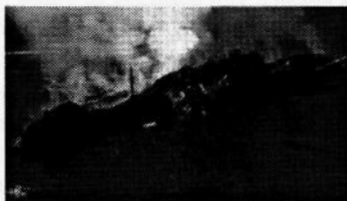
**The Queen Elizabeth
in Peace time**



The END, in a Hong Kong Harbor,



**The Queen Elizabeth
as a floating University after WWII**



The Queen as it was capsizing - How Sad!

A collage of photos of the R. M. S. Queen Elizabeth

The CUB of the *Golden Lion*

The "Empress Incognito" R. M. S. Queen Elizabeth

In September, 1970 the Hong Kong millionaire and shipbuilder C.Y. Tung purchased the aging ship for \$3,200,000 at a public auction. He renamed her the *Seawise University* (making an awkward pun with his initials) and had her taken to Hong Kong. Her trip was marred by repeated mechanical problems, and at one point the ship drifted out of control in the Caribbean for 24 hours. Once the *Queen Elizabeth* arrived in Hong Kong Chinese workers began converting her into Mr. Tung's dream: the world's largest floating university.

It was not to be, however. After a year's worth of expensive renovations, a mysterious fire broke out aboard the ship at mid-morning on Jan 9, 1972. Ultimately engulfed by flames and doused by water cannons for more than twenty-four hours, she capsized around noon the next day. It was the final blow for the heroic superliner; she was later sold for scrap and dismantled.

Today, the legendary Clydebank shipyard in Scotland where the *Queen Elizabeth* was built is silent. All that remains of the ways that launched the *Lusitania*, the *Aquitania* and the three great *Queens* are a few rusted derricks amid a wasteland of coarse black sand. The world will long remember the *Queen Elizabeth*, however, as the final winning entry in the race to build the biggest and grandest ocean liner in the world.

Regardless of her immense size, many will remember the great ship instead for the ingenious cloak of secrecy that surrounded her maiden trip and her faithful wartime service. Either way, the *Queen Elizabeth* earned a permanent niche in world history and a treasured place in the hearts of American men and women who remember the war years.

During her 907 Atlantic crossings the *Queen Elizabeth* safely carried more than 811,000 service personnel and 2.3 million passengers in peacetime, offering a generation of Americans memories of a time of grand ships and opulent transatlantic travel now long vanished. The *Queen Elizabeth* was considered by many to be the most beautiful superliner ever built.

The men of the *Golden Lion Division* who made that trip back in 1944 rarely acknowledge the importance of what they did more than fifty years ago that bitter cold winter in the Belgian Ardennes.

Don Scholten, 423/G, is typical. "*We had a job to do*," he says simply, "*and gave it all for our country as combat soldiers and representatives of American freedom.*"

Like the men of the 106th "Golden Lion" Division, the *RMS Queen Elizabeth* found herself tested in a worldwide conflict not of her own making, and will forever be remembered for her pivotal role in holding the tide of German aggression.

In his personal memoirs, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill recognized the crucial importance of the American infantry forces in World War II and hailed the ships that delivered them to battle.

In praise of the great *Queen Elizabeth* and her sister ship, the *Queen Mary* he wrote,

"Built for the arts of peace and to link the Old World with the New, the Queens challenged the fury of Hitlerism in the Battle of the Atlantic.

Without their aid the day of final victory must unquestionably have been postponed."

Author Bill Bucher, Jr. wishes to thank the many members of the 106th Infantry Division who contributed to this article.

(Footnotes)

¹ The 423rd Regiment's voyage aboard the *Queen Elizabeth* appears to have been misstated in the division history "*Lion In The Way*" by Dupuy as a trip in the *Queen Mary*, making for some confusion.

Cunard Lines records indicate that the *Queen Mary* was in Gourrock, Scotland from October 15-18, 1944 and only returned to New York on October 24th.

Donald E. Doubek, Scout for Company C, died without telling his story of capture during the **Battle of the Bulge**.

In an effort to capture this heritage for his son, members of Company C, 424th Infantry Regiment, shared their own stories with me. So, although titled 'Donald's Story,' let this be the story of all brave men of Company C, 424th Infantry Regiment, 106th Infantry Division, World War II. Dedicated to members of Company C and, especially those who are still living:

Ray Ahrens; Carl Canup; Michael Ciliverti; John Davis; Vern Huyck; Richard Idstein; Royce Lapp; John Plenskofski; James Shanahan; John Spellmen; Peter Taddeo; Richard Thoms; Wendell Ulrich; Scott Westbrook and Bill Wiggers . . .

Donald's Story

While still in his teens, life in Longford, Kansas, most likely seemed dull compared to the extraordinary events shaping the world during the early 1940's.

ducted into the U.S. Army

Ignoring parental pleas to finish his high school education, Donald and his buddies were eager to be part of the troops marching off to war. Weighing 123 pounds and standing five feet four and a half inches, Donald underwent his pre-induction physical examination by the U.S. Army on November 24, 1943 and was classified 1A by the Local Board of the Armed Forces.

Less than one month later, he was ordered to be at Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas, on December 17, 1943, with his formal induction into the U.S. Army taking place on January 7, 1944. He spent four months there in Basic Training. He had additional training as an Army Scout at Camp Fanning, Texas. He then transferred to Camp Atterbury in Indiana just before leaving for overseas as part of the 106th Infantry, 424th Division, and assigned to Company C as a Scout.

According to **Richard Idstein**, 1st Platoon of Company C; *"We spent about 60 hours a week training so I didn't have time to socialize much."*

Crossing the Atlantic on the U.S.S. Aquitania

Leaving Camp Atterbury they went to Myles Standish, Massachusetts where specialized training in case of emergency at sea was provided. On Friday, October 20, 1944, just three days prior to his nineteenth birthday, Donald became part of the 106th Infantry "**Golden Lion**" Division. Under the cover of darkness he boarded the **U.S.S. Aquitania** at the Port of New York. The big ship before them evoked a mixture of awe, excitement, and foreboding as many had never seen the ocean before, let alone crossed it.

The **U.S.S. Aquitania** was immense in size stretching 901 feet and having a breadth of 97 feet at her widest point. She was the last of only fourteen four-funneled liners ever constructed, and the first line to have a gyro compass and special "anti-rolling" tanks for stabilization. She had six spacious decks and her large hull was divided into ten watertight bulkheads. Each of her four propellers weighed an awesome 17-1/2 tons. Her once bright superstructure had been repainted a uniform shade of battleship Gray and her rambling decks, once the scene of carefree fun, were stripped of anything not expressly necessary to her wartime duties.

Large guns were mounted on her fore and aft decks and the once large swimming pool had been drained and converted to a storage area for food and supplies. She was now carrying six times her normal peacetime passenger load of 2,200. The G.I.'s and their gear were packed into bunks stacked six high in every nook and cranny of the ship.

Late in the morning on October 21, 1944, the **U.S.S. Aquitania** backed out of her dock in the Port of New York and pointed her bow toward the open sea and Greenock, Scotland. For many of the men, this was the first look at the Statue of Liberty, an awesome sight in the morning light. It was just four months since the D-day invasion and she would be facing the dangers of German U-boats patrolling the North Atlantic.

The jubilation of embarking on the **U.S.S. Aquitania** soon gave way to seasickness once the ship had reached top speed in the open sea. While one group was sleeping on the bunks,

another was on deck doing mopping details or waiting in line for their next meal. Meals were only served twice a day and it took hours to rotate all the men through the line. Hershey bars helped many make it through the eight long days of sea travel.

The *U.S.S. Aquitania* was met by two Allied escort ships and English flying boats as it approached the coast of Scotland. The men disembarked at the deep-water port of Greenock Scotland, on October 28th, and boarded trains headed south for the midlands of England, arriving first in Banbury, England, and then moving to Southampton, England, where additional training took place.

John Davis, currently of Monterey Park, California, was the C Company first scout and noted *"Donald and I probably trained together in England. Ivy Morris, who was killed in Belgium, was a second scout and the only one I remember, but I had several seconds."*

They boarded another ship that took them to LeHavre, France. Arriving at dark, they had to climb a steep hill carrying their backpacks, helmets, rifles, and duffel bags. **Richard Idstein** recalls C Company moved inland and camped in a cow pasture due to less chance of mines, spending several days there even though it was raining. *"We slept in pup tents and it was strange to feel a cow breathing through the tent canvass."*

Nearby was a barn with straw which was enviously eyed, but the troops were told in no uncertain terms to stay away from it. Many of the men used their raincoats for ground cover.

Heading For Belgium

From LeHavre they traveled by truck convoy across France, stopping at Rheims, and then headed for eastern Belgium. There was quite a snowfall, according to **Ray Ahrens**, and the men were ordered to wash their feet in the belief that this would help prevent infection if they got frostbite. They built small fires and gathered snow which they put into their helmets to melt.

Ahrens remembers that while melting the snow, the heat from the fires would rise into the evergreen trees causing the snow on the branches to fall, which often ended up putting out our fires. *"We would have to start all over*

again." They also used their helmets to soup.

Company C had been issued overshoes several days earlier, but was asked to turn them in for "the troops up front". Unfortunately, it was just a matter of days before they were at the front and had no overshoes.

In the morning they were moving again on curving roads, up and down hills, with truck engines whining and growling, trying to maintain a close convoy. They passed signs that said, *"You are now in sight of the enemy."* They stopped at a small village with a good size stream running behind it with high cliffs or hills behind that. At night the artillery up in the hills behind the village would light up the sky like lightening flashes. **Ahrens** believes the village may have been Steinebrucke near the Our River.

For three days they endured heavy snow and had no visibility from the air. For that reason they were able to build large enough fires, without risk of observation, to get some of their clothes and blankets dried out. They cleaned their weapons every day and were very serious when it came to thinking about using them very soon.

"None of us were too scared right then," states **Royce Lapp**, C Company Weapons Platoon, *"because we didn't know what we were getting into. The mortars had gotten caked with dirt and snow and a little rust lying in the jeep coming up from LeHavre. We got them all cleaned up and ready to go."*

Arriving at the Front

The first day there, about mid-afternoon, they heard a machine gun fire off a burst. It was later determined that a gun mounted on a jeep had flipped down and the impact of the gun on the mounting post started it firing. After the initial scare (imagining it was the Germans), it was considered funny.

Some members of Company C were quartered upstairs in a farmhouse about 200-feet from the stream. The house was at the end of the small town called Hemmeres, a small village near -northeast Winterspelt, on the Belgium-German frontier. They unloaded in broad daylight and didn't realize how close they were to the line and felt fairly safe. Unknown to them, they had been under enemy observation coming into town.

Ironically, according to **Royce Lapp**, "Here we were closer to the line than we had ever been, yet for the first time since leaving Banbury, England, we had a roof over our heads."

The house had several steps leading in the front door. When you stepped through the door you were in the corner of the barn or livestock quarters; through the left was another door and to the right were the stairs to the platoon's quarters. The family living in the house was very friendly, yet the troops had been instructed to trust no civilians and to go nowhere without side arms. The dining room was also available to the men with a large heavy table, chairs and benches, a good place to write or just sit around at night and talk. The cook stove was there and it was the only place the family had to eat so the troops tried not to intrude when they were eating. Across from these quarters was a building which had the Army mess kitchen.

The family went out of their way to be cordial and seemed anxious to make friends with the troops.

"I remember very well one of the last nights we were there," writes **Royce Lapp**. "The man who came to the house had come in evenings before and we would practice our German on him. He was about 40 (seemed old to us), not very large and was taking care of the place. He would come in and stir up the fire in our small stove, bring us apples or waffles or hot chocolate (made with real milk), and usually stay awhile to talk. This particular night, Pat our section runner, was playing his harmonica and got off on Christmas carols while the old man was there. We soon coaxed him into singing along. We opened the door to the next room and there was the whole family singing with us. It was a language of song that we all understood. We were singing praises to the same Lord. That was the closest I came to feeling a Christmas spirit that year."

December 16, 1944 - The Germans Break Through

The troops had become accustomed to hearing the sounds of their own guns firing from up the hill across the river behind them. They had been firing harassing fire every day, but the noise on the morning of December 16th was different.

"We had not been there more than a couple of days and were in the morning chow line," recalls **Ahrens**," when the residents were conspicuous by their absence. Word came that the Germans had broken through the front lines. "We dropped our mess kits. We were handed two C ration cans and two hand grenades. I was issued two boxes of 30-caliber ammunition."

Lapp writes, "If I had realized that was the last hot food we would see for weeks I wouldn't have missed it."

C Company did not stay intact. **Ray Ahrens** was with part of C Company's Rifle Platoon near Steinebrucke by the Our River. **Royce Lapp** was with C Company's Weapon Platoon and saw battle closer to Winterspelt, Germany. This story contains portions of both of their experiences, although experienced several miles apart, were very similar. It cannot be confirmed, but it is likely that **Donald's** experience more closely reflected that of **Ray Ahrens** as Scouts were assigned to the Rifle Platoons.

Sgt. Griffin told the troops: "They've broken through Cannon Company and "C" Company is going up to plug the hole." The men believed it to be a heavy combat patrol that happened to hit a weak spot and slipped through. They didn't believe it could be anything more than that as the weather wasn't right for an attack.

The weather was freezing. The men had all the stuff they would need jammed into their packs: rations, gun cleaning oil, extra socks, a blanket. But just before climbing into the trucks they realized they couldn't do much fighting with all that stuff on their backs so they dropped their packs along with their gas masks. That left them with field jackets, wool gloves and overshoes to fight the cold, plus weapons and ammunition.

Company C believed they would go up, meet the bunch that had broken through the line, push them back, regain Cannon Company's old positions and set up to hold. They expected their packs and overcoats to be brought to them in the trucks.

"As it turned out," says **Lapp**, "I never saw my pack, overcoat or any other of my equipment again. There were plenty of uniforms in those duffle bags and the Jerries weren't slow to take advantage of them. We learned later that, dressed

in our uniforms, they had a merry time disrupting communications, traffic flow, and supply lines."

Ahrens writes, "Quickly we loaded into trucks. As they were covered, it was difficult to tell how far we went. We stopped in a village, Eigelscheid, and piled out of the trucks. We had moved part of a block when we got our baptism in fire. Hugging the street, I started to pray the Lord's Prayer, and got to 'thy will be done' when the Sergeant yelled, 'Ahrens, go to the jeep and get the pintle.' It connects the machine gun to the tripod. In that rain of death, I got up with my ammo boxes, and crouching very low, I ran back to the jeep. I rummaged around until I found the pintle."

"When I got back the Sergeant yelled, 'Move out!' We scurried out of there to the edge of the village and cut down across a pasture and into the woods [that] were so dense that the back half of the squad was left behind. I was sent back to get them. I found them in a few minutes, did an about face and, to my surprise, returned exactly to the squad. We proceeded through the woods and across another clearing and up against another woods where we came under shellfire again."

The troops retreated to Winterspelt.

Ahrens writes, "This gave me an awful feeling like I was letting my country down; like I was a coward and letting down my fellow soldiers. It is of little comfort that I was following the machine gun with the ammunition. We took up defensive positions in the southwestern corner of the village."

The men took position across the cobblestone street, near the last stone building where they set up their 30-caliber machine gun to the right of the Winterspelt sign, and just across from the stone building. They were about 10-15 feet beyond the house in a cave in the bank at the side of the road that may have been used for fruit or vegetable storage.

During the night the Germans sent up flares lighting up the whole area. The best thing one could do was to remain motionless. A truck pulled up in front of the cave in the middle of the night. It was so dark they couldn't see it, but they could hear German voices. The voices passed on in a few minutes. The next morning

they could hear hobnailed boot steps on cobblestones. Closer and louder the footsteps came until finally, almost as one, the MI's cracked. With that, the Sergeants dashed from the cave across the road glancing at the crumpled bodies of the German soldiers.

"Just as I got to the corner of building, there were explosions out in front of me," writes Ahrens. "I turned, saw a door in the rear of the building, yanked it open and almost dived in. I didn't dive far. It was a toilet. I thought it was about as safe as I could find in a hurry."

Company C and the 106th Division occupied a front line that covered over three times the normal distance and, according to all sources of Military documents, the 106th caught the brunt of the German offensive on December 16, 1944.

The shellfire grew heavier and a Captain said, "I'm going for help." Ahrens notes, "He may have been my Captain as we had not been together long enough to really get to know one another. I later found out our Captain Miller was killed by mid-morning. By late afternoon we had lost 12 men out of 16."

"Our section was broken up and each mortar squad was attached to one of the rifle platoons," writes Lapp. "The terrain was rough and the load of ammo grew heavier with every slippery step. We soon began to see what was waiting for us up ahead. We saw that a fellow can be a beat-up bloody mess and still walk. These boys making their way back to the aid station were not a pretty sight."

Some of the men were not wounded, but were dazed, disoriented, disorganized, and wandering aimlessly looking for buddies. From their comments the men learned that it had truly been a German break-through — the line hadn't given and bent or fallen back -it had been chewed up right where it was with massive artillery fire and overwhelming Infantry assault.

Lapp writes, "It was a baptism in fire to be long remembered." They were whisked off to one side and it soon became instinct to hit the ground with the first whistle, find the lowest depression possible and hug it close. At every little let up or pause in the bombardment the troops would move ahead.

The Germans had the woods boxed in as perfectly as if they knew in advance exactly where the troops would be going. It appeared to the troops that they were throwing everything they had at once to catch them before they could reach the Germans.

"They did succeed in getting well over half the company in those first few hours. If I ever did any honest to goodness praying, I did it lying there with my face in the slush. Time had ceased to exist and the cold was no longer your primary concern," writes Lapp. "We were still pushing ahead to get out from under the artillery when we made contact with their infantry. They were taking chances then, practically dropping their shells on their own men. I heard the rip of a burp gun (a very rapid fire German machine gun) for the first time and everyone instinctively scooted back to lower ground as chips flew from the trees above. One of our boys got that first gun with a rifle grenade. From then on it was almost like attack problems we had run over and over at Camp Atterbury."

Lt. McKay, the 1st Platoon Leader, must have seemed invincible to the Krauts. He didn't appear to know the meaning of fear and was ahead of the troops exposing himself to signal the men forward.

"If we had known then what we were doing we probably never would have done it," writes Lapp. "We were bucking the point of a major offensive that was soon going to crush about 40 miles of our lines and penetrate westward about 75 miles. We were green troops pushing back a small element of Hitler's pride and joy — the 6th and 8th Panzer Armies!"

Lapp's story continues in another direction as he avoided capture. Nonetheless, it is a story of heroics, saving fellow GI's, and defending one position after another.

December 16, 1944 - Captured

The men in Company C did not know what others in the company were doing. It was almost every man for himself.

Ahrens, still in the small building with the toilet, recalls, *"I had paused firing for a few minutes when I heard German voices. Very carefully I peered out of the hole. I could only look for a split second or risk being seen. The best I remember there were about five or six*

German soldiers on the road in front of the building. The thought flashed through my mind, 'Rifle too unwieldy through that small hole, too slow a rate of fire; I must resort to a hand grenade.' In order to use it because they were so close, I had to get rid of some of the five seconds on the grenade fuse. So I held the grenade in my right hand, pulled the pin, let the handle fly off in the room, and started the count: one thousand one, one thousand two, one thousand three, two seconds to go. I threw it as hard as I could through that small hole."

"Sensing my time or luck had run out, I started for the back door with the other GI, Leetz was his name, right behind me. I got about two steps outside the door and turned to see other GI's alongside the building already in the process of surrendering."

"Before I could take another step, 'KerWhoom' — it was a German grenade thrown over the roof. I suppose in response to mine. I felt a pain in my right thigh. I was thrown back toward the door and lifted into the air somewhat. Leetz was thrown backwards into the building with a wound on his nose — it was not bleeding very hard."

"We followed the several GI's in front of us. The lead one was already in the street next to the Germans. As soon as we were all at the street, we were checked over for weapons."

The captured GI's were taken to a place on the East side of the street about halfway between the curve in the road and the main road running through the village. There, they were checked again for weapons and gave their names, ranks, and serial numbers.

They proceeded to the main road where there lay a dead bloated cow, just to the northeast of it was a gap in the woods [Later identified as a road leading to Grosslangenfeld.] A P-38 Lockheed Lightning fighter plane passed over the village.

Ahrens recalls, *"As I turned to the east my eyes came to rest on a dead American soldier laying in a half curled position with his head laying in a shallow puddle of water. My thoughts were, 'Even the dead should not be that way.' My next thought was, 'Did they booby-trap the body?' That is, put an explosive charge under the body so that when the body*

was moved it would explode killing or injuring some more soldiers."

"About then I was motioned to move toward a captured Dodge weapons carrier. We paused for a bit. My hands were getting cold; I reached in my field jacket pocket and pulled out one sock. I held it up out in front of me and motioned for the German guard to cut it in two, which he carefully did. The two halves felt good on my hands." By this time the Germans had gotten their wounded together.

Prisoners of War

The captured men of Company C mounted the German weapons carrier. The wounded Germans served as guards by placing their rifles across their knees, pointing them right into the American's midsections. This was not a choice situation and became scary as the truck roared to life and jerked into motion down the road.

Looking into passing fields, the prisoners noticed holes appearing in the ground, evidence of American artillery fire. The truck engine noise was covering up the incoming noise of the rounds. **Ahrens** remembers thinking, "... further away, no closer, etc."

Just outside of Winterspelt where the road turned and headed down hill the truck met an oxen with large horns pulling a cart. The road was narrow and as they passed, it caught a horn on the side of the truck. Its neck was twisted around until it appeared ready to snap, then it came loose. They continued down the hill winding through the woods and dismounted at the bottom.

The prisoners were herded into a line for first aid, an indiscriminate mix of German and American soldiers. As the line shuffled along, men were being given shots. **Ahrens** recalls thinking, "What are those? Everyone was getting shots so I'm not going to have a choice." He later determined they were tetanus shots. After getting his shot, a paper bandage was placed on **Ahrens** hip injury.

From there they were loaded onto a good size bus with bench seats running lengthwise. There were a couple of lights in the ceiling, but just light enough so they could see one another. The bus windows were blacked out. On the bus the men were mixed German and Americans, without order.

Ahrens writes, "Before long I dozed off. The bus made a lurch and I woke feeling my helmet moving against steel. I tipped my head back away from the noise. What had happened? A German soldier and I had dozed off, and as we did we had tipped together and were resting against one another. The strangest feeling came over me. Here we were just two soldiers reduced to one common level."

At no time on these rides or marches did the prisoners talk. There was almost absolute silence, men without voices. They were taken further into Germany to the village of Gerolstein where they arrived at dark and were kept in a building with a large room. In the morning, more prisoners were brought in.

Among these was Duane Anderson, a G.I. who had been in basic training with **Ahrens** at Camp Fanning, Texas. Anderson and **Ahrens** were glad to see someone they knew.

Late in the day the prisoners boarded a train with a shrill whistle. The train moved out at dark so the town was not visible. Trains had to run at night to avoid their smoke being seen in daylight or risk being strafed and bombed by Allied pilots. The train was a passenger train compartmentalized with benches crosswise facing one another with a side door. The prisoners huddled together for warmth.

As the train made its way through darkness, it passed a sign which said, Koln (Cologne), before halting in a rail switchyard. The city was being bombed close enough that the flashes showed the rails next to the train car. There was a hole where the rails had been and they were bent upward in huge circles. Vibrations rattled the car as the train moved on into the night.

The next morning they were deeper into Germany. About mid-day they stopped and the Germans asked for volunteers to distribute soup.

Ahrens says, "I sent my helmet out from our compartment and we ate our meal out of my helmet. This was my first recollection of eating or drinking since the evening meal on December 15th. Many G.I's had ditched their leggings, helmets, etc. I ditched nothing, a result of upbringing as well as service training. That served me well since my helmet was needed for soup."

At another meal stop several days later, the Germans again asked for volunteers. Through the high window opposite the door were pushed several loaves of hard brown military bread and some cans of meat.

At one time the train passed an overpass in a small town during late afternoon. Out the small window was seen a German civilian on a bicycle with an evergreen Christmas tree being pulled behind him. The scene was too much food for thought, for the prisoners were captured just prior to Christmas Day.

The Germans passed out fold-over post cards on which the prisoners were authorized to write a letter home. These post cards were the first signs that those captured were still alive, classifying them as Prisoners of War. Many families did not get these post cards until three months after they were written.

Back in El Dorado, Kansas....

A telegram is received from the War Department by Donald's Mother, notifying her that her son, **Pvt. Donald E. Doubek**, is reported as missing in action since December 1944 after an intense German counter-offensive in France. However, she was unaware of the message for several days, as she had been out of town on a buying trip for her store, the Doubek Hat and Dress Shop. She collapsed at the news and was taken to the Allen Memorial Hospital.

On March 7, 1945, Donald's mother received a second message from the War Department informing her that Donald was a Prisoner of War and interned in Stalag III-A, Luckenwalde, Germany. She had received a letter from Donald the previous Wednesday stating that.

Life as a POW

January 20, 1945: The men were deloused. They undressed and the clothes they put in a basket were put in fumigating chambers. A German sat with a bucket in front of him, with a swab on a stick. As they passed facing him, out of the bucket came a swab, and with the deft hand of a person with much experience, he moved the swab in a circular motion around the men's genitals. It burnt.

From there they hurried to the shower room that had steaming water coming from numerous

nozzles in the ceiling. They tried to cool the swabbed area but it was like fighting fire with fire. They showered for only a few minutes and then their clothes were brought to them.

They continued on in the train arriving sometime in the night and stumbled from the train into the cold air. They were herded to flatbed trucks without any side boards and crowded into them standing up.

Their next stop: POW Camp Stalag XI-B.

The prisoners were separated with those having Jewish names going somewhere else. Many of the GI's were not aware that Jews were being treated differently by the Germans. The prisoners were herded to a barracks and given a blanket measuring approximately 3'x4'. It was not uncommon for two men to share their blankets, overlapping them for maximum coverage. If a GI happened to still have his overshoes when captured, you would see them sticking out from under his blanket when he slept. He dared not take them off or they would have been stolen. The bunks were bare boards. There was a place at the end of the barracks for a toilet, but feces covered the wall and floor. An alternative was a ditch dug outside, but no privacy. It was not uncommon to be harshly awakened in the middle of the night for searches.

Prisoners were sparingly given Red Cross parcels, or at least parts of them. They contained dried fruits, chocolate bars, powdered milk called Klim, cigarettes, vitamins, salt and paper packets, and meat. It would not be uncommon for a small group of prisoners to share a single chocolate bar. Gold top Parker ink pens were hot trading items for food as well as Solingen straight razors.

Sleeping on bare boards, especially for the wounded, pushed prisoners to the limit. Ray Ahrens writes, *"I saw the Germans putting up tents in the prison yards and putting straw in them. One night the air raid sirens started and the lights went out inside the barracks as well as all of the outside lights. From bomb flashes I could see just enough to dash to the tent, grab up a large armful of straw, and run back to the barracks and to the bunk."*

If the Germans would have caught me, I might have been shot on the spot. If other GI's had seen what I was doing, it would have gotten out of control, then who knows what. Of course, thereafter, our bunk was much easier to lay in. I still don't know how I got away with it. Dumb luck, I guess."

The men were grateful for the Army-issued clothes they had on when captured: long woolen underwear, field jacket, good shoes, leggings, wool knit helmet liner. Many had left their gloves in their barracks bag when first ushered to the front and had no time to get them.

On Christmas Day prisoners were given a half a glass of beer which tasted kind of good, but more important they were hoping there was some food value in it. Many of the men suffered dysentery and hunger was eating away their body weight. Many prisoners suffered frostbitten feet, many had skin infections oozing pus, and other's had breathing problems.

On a sunny morning around the first of the year the prisoners were told to form ranks outside the barracks. Food was rationed. Every so many prisoners received a can of meat; every so many more got a loaf of hard bread. The prisoners would share with one another.

They were moved again, this time riding in plain boxcars with enough room only for them to sit. No sooner had the box car been filled and the lock clacked on the door, when the prisoners heard fighter plane engines growling for all they were worth, machine guns going rat-a-tat-tat, and wind screaming past their wings. The prisoners could not see out. There were two holes about seven inches by sixteen inches up about six feet in opposite corners of the box car. The men sat huddled against the sides and were very frightened, many accepting the fact that they were going to die. Fortunately, the boxcar in which **Ahrens** was located took no hits and it grew quiet again.

According to **J. P. Kline**, **CUB editor**, there was a bombing incident on 23 December 1944 at Stalag XII-A, Limburg, Germany, where Donald was prisoner. This was about 25 miles east of Koblenz, and about 110 miles from where Donald was captured. The English bombed the rail yards next to Limburg, a small village named Diez. The heavy winter winds blew the pathfinder markers over Stalag XII-A.

One large bomb hit a brick building inside camp. There were 63 officers of the 106th, most of them medical officers, who were killed by that one single bomb. In the village of Diez, 163 civilians were killed and nearly 140 houses destroyed.

Many of the 106th POW's were in the rail yards in box cars on their way to Bad Orb, Stalag 9-B. There were a few killed, but not as many as it were first thought. After the rails were repaired, over the next two to three days, the three trains continued to Stalag 9B, Bad Orb, 35-miles northeast of Frankfurt.

Boxcars were typically loaded with 60 men per car. The European boxcar is roughly half the size of those with which we are familiar in America. They were known as 40&8 boxcars. Designed for 40 men or 8 horses. Sanitation was nonexistent. Buckets were frequently placed in the cars for human waste and were in frequent use since many of the men suffered from dysentery.

The Germans usually placed a box car loaded with French women ahead of the engine to discourage the French Underground from blowing up the bridges. The train on which **Dale Harriman** was placed is no exception.

The bombing and strafing by American planes was not unusual, as the cars were not marked. Once, while **Harriman** was on a train, P-47's strafed the train twice, the first time on the outskirts of Tours. Bombs had destroyed a bridge. The P-47's destroyed the engine, but also killed 16 men and wounded many more while they were locked in the boxcars.

Ahrens writes that one-day a dozen prisoners were called out to go to the woods about a mile and half from the camp. Snow was about a foot deep and without the Army-issued leggings, snow would have been in their shoes. About half a mile away they saw a German plane which had belly-landed in the field. The Germans told the prisoners to go into the woods to gather firewood and return in fifteen minutes.

It could have been a chance to escape, but to what? It was the middle of one of the coldest January's on record, the Allies were about 300 miles to the west, and the Russians just 100 miles. To escape to the Russians meant you might never be seen again.

[In 1992 the Russians admitted they had some POW's they didn't return!] With no food or water, no shelter, plus the enemy, escape wasn't impossible, but definitely stupid. Interestingly, the Germans required the POW's to give them their salt and pepper packets from the Red Cross parcels so they couldn't be used to throw off tracking dogs! The wood gathered was not for the POW's; it was given to the Germans.

Prisoners were fed once a day: a bowl of cabbage soup, maybe a chunk of meat, maybe a cabbage worm or two (they never bothered to look!), some hard bread. Once a week they got thick barley soup, which was good. They also got ersatz coffee. Because the coffee was hot and the barracks only had cold running water (from 3am until 8am), it was not uncommon for the men to use some of the coffee for shaving. The Germans would give the prisoners two cigarettes a week but they were very mild and not good enough for trading for other items.

Ahrens remembers, "*One day my portion of the Red Cross parcel was part of a box of prunes. I nibbled at them a little, then a little more, and then I noticed I had nibbled quite a few of them. Well, late in the night I had to head to the toilet. I recall I was a little short of making it. I had never learned until that night the effects of a lot of prunes, especially on not too full a stomach.*"

Americans were separated from British and Russian prisoners. When the air raid siren went on, out went the lights. The American officers, as well as the Germans had warned the men, that a lit cigarette could be seen for an incredible distance. In fact, the Germans had told them if they saw a light they would shoot right at it.

"*I looked out the window (at the sound of the sirens) and saw a light flickering in the washroom of the British barracks next to ours,"* writes Ahrens. "*In our washroom I loosened the faucet knob, opened our window, and hurled the knob at the light. It must have hit the window frame so I loosened another one and hurled it. I could hear the glass break, and the fire went out immediately.*"

In the camp carpenter shops they built mummy shaped coffins. Every so often one was used, almost always out of the Russian part of the camp.

Daily life in the prison camp was varied and often depended on a prisoner's bartering capability. Cigarettes were the most popular form of barter, but food such as bread was equally good. At one point the Russian prisoners began paying for things with more cigarettes than the Americans, creating an inflation on goods. The Americans persuaded them to keep prices level and equal for everyone.

Somehow a few Americans had acquired a violin, a guitar, an accordion and a armonica and put on a show. One of the favorite tunes was "*Grandpa nearly eighty, says by cracky, I'm going to marry Katy, and they're doing the boogie now...*" This relieved anxiety for a few minutes, but fear was a constant companion. Prisoners had been forewarned not to be surprised if the guards in the towers opened up on them with their machine guns. It kept prisoners in line and conversations minimal among men.

About the first of March 1945 the prisoners were told they were vacating the camp as the Russian Army was at Atettin, about 50 miles east, on the Oder River. Prisoners were assembled into ranks and marched out of camp through a large overhead stone gateway. It looked as if it had been there several hundred years. This was in the northwest corner of Neu Brandenburg. The weather that day was moderate and as the prisoners marched they jettisoned anything not absolutely necessary. The stony silence as they marched was conspicuous.

They saw a road sign that read, "Malchin." There were small towns before that, and by the end of the first day the men were dragging their feet. It is estimated they had walked twelve miles that first day before turning off the road and entering a barn. Some soldiers were hit in their backs with rifle butts to hurry them to the back of the barn; others rushed past the guards trying to avoid this punishment. The men were packed in the barn; in the dark every move resulted in your hand being in someone's face or stomach. The only good thing about being packed in was that it kept you warm.

Other towns were passed: Teterow, Gustrow. They plodded along until their next 3'x5' door. The next morning several GI's were missing at roll call. When the German's threatened to go through the barn with pitchforks, they hurried out. It was a dumb thing to do because they were too far away from any place that could be called safe.

The prisoners were thirsty having little water to drink and some rushed to the river's edge for water. A German officer fired his pistol at them, high over their heads, and they rushed back to the line. **Ray Ahrens** recalls, "*I was thirsty, too, but I had put a small stone in my mouth. This seemed to help. It also kept my mouth shut ... that helped, too.*"

He continued, "*At another place we were kept, the building alleyway had a gunny sack of oats. I took a handful and put them in my pocket. I probably used as much energy hulling the oats as I got from eating them. One time I was the last one out of the German supply building, saw a chance and took it. I grabbed (stole) a loaf of bread - waltzing again with the grim reaper! As I walked toward the rest of the group, the German's were yelling, I hoped at one another! Of course, I imagined they were looking for the bread. As quickly as I got into the barn I cut it up in pieces and got rid of it. This was foolish. Even though we were losing weight, we were not yet desperate.*" Had he been caught, he most likely would have been shot on the spot.

The sights along the road varied. They passed horses pulling wagons. They saw oats being thrashed with a stationary steam engine, baling the straw into loose bales right behind the thresher. At another farm they saw a McCormick-Deering Big Four, hay mower, reminding the men of home. The tractors had two-cylinders (like John Deere) and called Lantz Bulldogs.

Around the first of April the prisoners came to the Elbe at Dannenburg. The river was overflowing onto grassy pastures. The Germans allowed the men to undress so they could go into the river to bathe. The water was cold and they had nothing with which to dry them selves.

After passing Parhion, then Neustadt, t Ludwigslust, then Dannenburg, the prisoners realized they were marching in a curve toward the southwest and then, later, almost due south. They considered these twists and turn's a good sign that the Western Allies were advancing as the days went by. Fear developed among some of the men that if this were true the Germans might march them back across the Elbe and east to Lord knows what.

One day some American planes dropped bombs. The Germans allowed the prisoners to take shelter up against a stone fence, most likely in the hopes that the planes would move on.

Another day on top of a hill, the prisoners could see radar screens revolving slowly as B-17 bombers droned overhead. The planes dropped tinfoil to disrupt and fool the German radar. On sunny days this made the sky glitter like it was decorated. One-day planes were heard several miles away and the prisoners gathered to watch B-17's in huge groups almost blanket the sky. They could see their vapor trails head down and right through the bomber's formation. The German planes took out two B-17's, one bomber trailing smoke made a large "U" turn losing altitude all the time. A few parachutes appeared and then the plane exploded into a million shiny pieces in the sunlight. The other plane just nosed over and spiraled to the ground. The crew joined the rest of the prisoners.

Because the American forces were so close to the prisoners, they were frequently marched late into the night. One night a small German car driving with only its blackout lights ran into the column knocking down several G.I.'s and a German guard.

Near dawn one morning, about three-fourths of a mile from Wolmirstedt, they heard artillery and soon a squadron of American P-47 fighter planes appeared. The prisoner's scattered and held their breath as other POW's, mistaken for enemy troops, were strafed and lost their lives. The prisoners were lucky because a few minutes later those planes bombed and fire rockets at the town. American troops were just a few miles from the prisoners but they did not get liberated. Instead they were marched back away from them. At this point there were about 200 POW's and German guards in the group.

Because of that incident the men were marched late into the night until they reached another large barn. The next morning as the prisoners woke, it was obvious that the end of their captivity was close. Most of the guards had disappeared. The German Sergeant who was left in charge of the prisoners, said, "*Alles Kaput*" (all is finished). He told the prisoners if he were given orders to move them, he would leave and not march them further. He said he knew what they were up against. He was really caring and told the men he had been a prisoner of Americans in WW I. He was returning the kindness of his treatment.

Liberated!

About 1:30 p.m. on Friday, the 13th of April 1945, an American jeep pulled into the square and an American officer shook hands with a few of the G.I.'s. The prisoners were given K rations and the jeep turned around, leading them down the road to a small village several miles away. The prisoners marched to the edge of the village and stopped while an officer went through the village telling the residents to leave. The prisoners followed in like a swarm of rats.

The first thing the prisoners did was heat water in a tub on a stove. Some men went to a chicken house declaring rights to chickens and eggs. They bathed and dressed. **Ray Ahrens** went to a dresser. He wrote, "*But nothing was left but a pair of women's pants (no problem), I put them on. What a relief after four months in the same clothes!*" He put his old outer clothes on over them.

The next day U.S. Army 6x6 trucks were there to pick up the prisoners. Several hours later they arrived at Hildesheim, given good warm clothes and dusted with DDT. The men had their heads shaved because of the lice.

The command came to load up, and the men climbed aboard C47's. The planes flew close to the ground staying tight in formation to protect each other from German fighter plane attacks. The planes were so close together, you could see faces in the other plane's windows. They were flown to Rheims, France, then taken to Camp Lucky Strike at LeHavre.

Camp Lucky Strike

Flying in low over fields, Camp Lucky Strike was in sight. The men could see wrecked planes on the edges of the field.

After the Allies secured the French harbor of LeHavre on the eastern side of the Bay of the Seine, the Americans began ringing the city with camps that served as staging areas for new troops arriving. Most of the camps were located between LeHavre and Rouen.

The camps, by war's end, were devoted to processing returning soldiers and liberated American POW's. The camps were named for American cigarettes, which were fast becoming a universal currency. The evacuation sites were called *Camp Chesterfield*, *Camp Lucky Strike*, *Camp Old Gold*, *Phillip Morris*, *Pall Mall*, etc.

Unfortunately, the camps also had other nicknames: Pneumonia Hole, repple-depples, repo-depots. Trench foot ran rampant.

So did the flu. The canvas tents were usually sitting in mud.

Camp Lucky Strike was the largest transit camp. It was opened in December 1944 and closed in February 1946. The camp was like a U.S. town with theaters, hospitals, PX and gift shops, and it mainly consisted of more than 12,000 tents. At times, more than 100,000 U.S. soldiers stayed there.

The men arriving at *Camp Lucky Strike* were suffering from the intense cold and lack of sleep. Cots were assembled, stoves set up, and fuel procured for the weary men. The heat from the stoves served to thaw the dirt floors and transform them into ankle-deep mud. To remedy this, gravel was hauled in pails, steel helmets, and any other container that could be found. Some tents had wooden floors, doors, shelves, and cabinets, but not all.

After the prisoners were at *Camp Lucky Strike* a week, they were transported to the docks for the Liberty ship to take them home.

Ray Ahrens was in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean returning home when V-E Day was declared.

Donald Came Home . . .

Bonnie L. (Doubek) McNunn,
Associate member
106th Infantry Division Association

In Memoriam . . .

Barich, John 423/K

Rte 1, 727 County Hwy 3, Friendship, WI 53934

Died 29 Dec. 2001. Survived by his wife, Katherine. John D. Kozik reported the death of his great-uncle.

Finnegan, John F. 424/A

5010 Sulky Dr., Richmond, VA 23228

Died 2 October 2001. Incomplete report in last CUB.. Preceded in death by his first wife, Doris. He is survived by his wife, Clara Whitlow Finnegan; his son Stewart and his wife, Shirley and a granddaughter, Emily. He is also survived by his brother, James Finnegan and his wife Edith; and a host of nieces and nephews. His wife Clara wrote, "His death was very sudden. The afternoon before he said he had been feeling better than he had for a long time. On arising I had fixed his breakfast and he said he wanted to thank me for all the nice and wonderful things wonderful things I had done for him. He sat down to eat and without a word dropped dead. I feel that he had a premonition of his oncoming death."

Hines, Roy Albert 424/I

1814 W Terrace Ave, Fresno, CA 93705

Died 8 September 2001. His wife notified us of his death. No other details known.

Holden, Robert 423/I

4690 Kynnelworth, Bettendorf, IA 52722

Died 4 December 2001. Richard Peterson, 423/I reported the death of his comrade. He said, "Robert died Tuesday at Genesis Medical Center-West Campus, Davenport, IA." No other details were known.

Jenkins, Robert A. 423/M

45 Susan, O'Fallon, MO 63366

Died 11/20/2000: A letter from his widow Katherine. No other details given

Jochems, Richard B. DIV/HQ

1905 SW Palm City Rd #A, Stuart, FL 34994

Died 26 October 2001. His daughter, Lyne Drouillard, sent a copy of his obituary. Comrade Harold Kuizema, 589/B, also wrote, "He was a very special friend, beginning in April 1944. We went to Camp Atterbury, together, from Grand Rapids. Dick made me aware of the 106th Infantry Division Association. It was because of Dick that I became a member of the association in 1970. Born in the Netherlands in 1913. He is survived by his wife of 62 years,

Charlotte, daughter Lynne, son Richard, grandchildren, one great-grandchild. President of the Grand Rapids Real Estate Board 1961 to 1963. Realtor of the year in 1969, Board of trustees of the First United Methodist Church.

Kahler, John K. 423/D

887 Sugar House Drive, Port Orange, FL 32119

Died 31 December 2001: Roy Burmeister, 589/B reported, "John was 85 and was blind at death. His wife, who passed away two years ago, had been his "eyes." He was a member of the East Central Florida chapter of the AM EXP-OW in Daytona Beach area. He was present at a recent AX-POW meeting. His Granddaughter and Great Grandson were present and he was enjoying the comradery."

Kinney, Lawrence M. 423/I

1319 North 2nd Street, Arkansas City, KS 67005

Died 21 December 2001 according to his son Don, who sent an email letter. He said, "As far as we can tell it was 57 years to the day that Dad was loaded into a box-car and sent to a Prisoner of War Camp. He was proud to have served his country. He was a great man and touched many lives in a positive manner. He will be greatly missed by all, especially Mom (Lois), they were a team over 67 years."

Landis, Robert J. 424/D

210 Indian Mountain Lakes, Albrightsville, PA 18210

Date of Death: 1 January 2002: Robert's daughter Denise Wettstein, notified us by email. He was vacationing in Hilton Head, South Carolina at the time of his death. She said, "He is survived by his wife Maryjane, 5 children, 15 grandchildren and 6 great-grandchildren. We were proud to display the U.S. Flag at his private service decorated with the Lion Patch that meant so much to him. His recent Association with the 106th Infantry Division Association and the wonderful people that he and my mom met at the various Reunions, was so meaningful to him and her."

Lennstrom, Edward A. 424/HQ 3Bn

839 Highland Rd, Frankfort, IL 60423

Died 30 August 2001: Emily, his wife, reported, "Sorry it took me so long to report Ed's death. He passed away in his sleep (congestive heart failure). He looked forward to receiving The CUB. Thank you for everything. He was a dear friend of Lee Berwick, 424/HQ 3Bn, who passed away April 26, 2001. He is survived by

Rest In Peace

In Memoriam . . .

wife, Emily and daughters Linda M. and son-in-law, John VanWestrienen; Lea M and son-in-law Bob Sullivan; four grandchildren, Greta, Brittany, Mara and Brendan.

Marsh, Robert 423/D

PO Box 437, Cal Nev Ari, NV 89039

Died 14 October 2001. His death was reported, without any details, in the last CUB as 1 October. His son, Randy Marsh wrote, "My Dad died 14 October 2001 serving as a volunteer fireman in Nevada. He was responding to what turned out to be an abandoned vehicle and suffered a fatal heart attack while pulling up to the scene. He was dead before before any other person got to the scene. He was given a full fire department ceremony, with Honor Guard."

Patchen, Frank 423/HQ

PO Box 3002, Corsicana, TX 75151

Richard Sparks, 423 I&R Platoon, notified us that Frank had died on 5 December 2001. He said, "Frank was 88 years of age, he was a member of the original I&R Platoon when it formed at Fort Jackson. Frank was made Sergeant of the 423rd Regimental Motor pool. He like many others was captured in the *Battle of Bulge*. In civilian life he was, at one time, CEO of the McCrory retail chain. He joined the Association just before the Indianapolis Reunion in 1998. He is survived by a daughter Janet and a granddaughter Lauren."

Potter, Raymond E. DIV/HQ

5014 Cedar Lane, Pell City, AL 35128

His son, Richard, notified us his father had died on 6 June 2001. His mailing address is: Potter, Bryant & Moore, 617 South 38th St., Birmingham, AL

Prendergast, Richard M. 422/H

3574 N Oakland Ave Apt 207, Shorewood, WI 53211
Date of death unknown

Sauer, Maurice M. 590/HQ

397 Blackhawk Vista, Oregon, IL 61061

Died 15 January 2002: Death reported by his wife Marilyn. Maurice was born May 23, 1923. Christian Funeral Mass at St Mary Church, Oregon, Illinois. Celebrant: Rev John Hanrahan, St Mary Catholic Church Polo, Illinois. Maurice was a POW at Dresden an - an Artillery Survivor in the 590 FAB.

Schneider, Francis "Ollie" 590/SV

9116 E. Cactus Lane South, Sun Lakes, AZ 85248

Died 13 October 2001: His wife Joan said, "Ollie" died in his home. He was born 4 September 1920 in rural Minonk, Illinois the son of John and Rose Hindert Schneider. We were married May 29, 1943 in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. He held several jobs in his life, including for the Railway Express Agency. Survivors include two sons Raymond and Rick; seven brothers and two sisters. Also surviving are two grandchildren, Erik and Heidi and two great-grandchildren Elissa and Katie Marie. His parents preceded him in death.

Stolp, Robert R. 590/HQ

3725 Bennet, Dearborn, MI 48124

Died 13 December 2001. Russ Mayotte Livonia, MI reported Robert's death. Survived by his widow, Elizabeth. Father of Nancy (John) Murnan and Daniel (Lisa). Grandfather of Rhonda (Michael) Patyl and Robert Murnan. Brother of 6.

Teahan, John A. 422/K

15445 Everly Drive, Roseville, MI 48066

Died 17 December 2001. Russ Mayotte reported John's death. No other details known.

Trachsel, Junior D. 424/F

PO Box 222, Sugarcreek, OH 44681

Died 22 October 2001: Born August 22, 1925, at Sugarcreek. He retired from the Ohio Association of Public School Employees of Columbus and was the custodian of the Graway Schools for 17 years. A Deacon of the Sugarcreek Church of the Brethren. Surviving are his wife Mabel Harman Trachsel, whom he married May 3, 1946; four sons Jerry, Gary, Daniel and David, one son-in-law, James Kart; one sister Vera Weymouth; 15 grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Wassgren, Milton 81st Eng/A

401 Valley View Drive, Schlesweg, IA 51461

Died 20 October 2001: Milton was a retired Oil Jobber and Real Estate Broker. He is survived by Betty, his wife of 53 years and a daughter, Deborah of Half Moon Bay, California.

Williams, Aubrey J. 423/G

2201 Flair Drive, Oklahoma City. OK 73159

Died 4 December -

Reported by his widow Sarah.



Fort Jackson, 1943, Battery A, 590th FAB, Detail Section

Front Row: Bob Jenkins; George Peros (Association Board of Directors 1999-2003); Russ Gunvalson
Back: Len Wauroski; John Phillips; Sgt. T. Sot; George Cunningham; Jr. Bobroski; Joe Cigna; Gordon Sather
Photo by Gunvalson

**56th Annual Reunion
106th Infantry Division Association
September 18 - 22, 2002
Holiday Inn - Hampton, Virginia**

**Reunion Activity Schedule
Registration Forms
being mailed Special First Class Mail
to each Association member
by mid - February 2002.**

**This will be the only mailing - save the forms
so you will have them when you decide to go.**