

The CUB

PUBLISHED BY AND FOR

*The Veterans of the
106th INFANTRY
DIVISION*

of the
GOLDEN LION

Vol 59 - No. 2

JAN - FEB - MAR 2003

***This beautiful bronze plaque
24" x 36"
with a full colored 106th
emblem and a marble base
will be dedicated at the
Andersonville National Historic
Site on Sunday May 25, 2003***

***See details of the time
location and accomodations
on page 2 of this CUB
magazine.***

Come join us.

***We hope that we will
see you there.***

***Dr. John Robb
Memorial Chairman***



**IN MEMORY of
The OFFICERS and MEN
from the
106th
INFANTRY DIVISION**

**who fought in the
BATTLE of the BULGE,
many of whom were captured
after exhausting their means to resist
when surrounded in the
Schnee Eifel region of Germany,
and during actions near St. Vith, Belgium
in December 1944 and January 1945.**

The CUB

*A quarterly publication of the
106th Infantry Division Association, Inc.
A nonprofit Organization - USPO #5054
St Paul, MN - Agent: John P. Kline, Editor
Membership fees include CUB subscription*

Paid membership February 1, 2003 - 1,593

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Membership Fees

Life Vets/Associates ... \$75 Auxiliary \$15
Annual Vets/Associates... \$10 Auxiliary \$2
Annual Dues payable by June 30 each year.

Checks Payable to
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President's View . . .

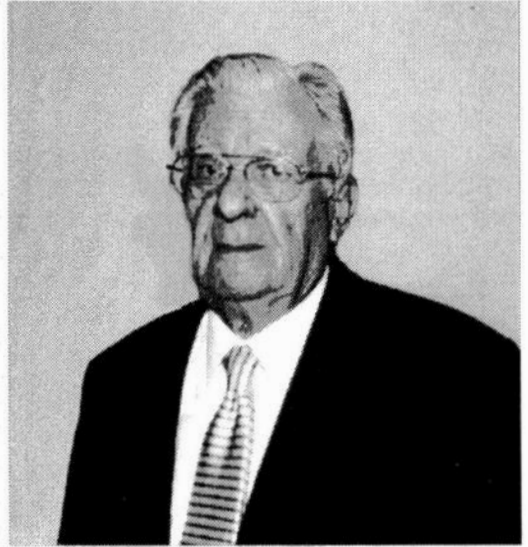
An important announcement:

Sherod Collins, Past-President and long time "Treasurer- Historian" of our Association has decided to retire from that position. He deserves thanks and praise from all of us for his long term in office. More about that in the next CUB.

Richard Rigatti, Past-President has agreed to accept the position of "Treasurer." He is well suited for the position, a professional accountant for many years.

For those of you with business, membership dues etc. for the "Treasurer" can find Rigatti's address on the inside front cover of this CUB magazine.

Thank you Sherod



John R. Schaffner, President 2002-2003
106th Infantry Division Association
"A" Battery, 589th Field Artillery Battalion

1811 Miller Rd, Cockeysville, MD 21030-1013
Phone: 410-584-2754 Email: jschaffn@bcpl.net

Every one of you has a story to tell.

And, every story is different as to the personal, and the emotional experience, both then and afterward. You must know that the stories of two men in the same foxhole are going to be different enough to where both are going to think the other guy was in a different war. So, don't worry about that. Just put it on paper. Make it history.

We certainly value the story featured in the November CUB, and this current Cub, written by John Califf, 423/I&R. This is the stuff of history. WE are the monuments to the 106th Infantry Division. But, we are temporary. Our stories make our history permanent.

There is something else. There are historians out there, both amateur and professionals who profit from the books and documentary films they produce. Give them your story when they appeal for it. It is a fact that when you tell your story it gets passed on. That's the important thing. Be aware that someone out there is interested.

There was a long time when I thought of myself as someone who kept a "low profile." I even considered that attribute responsible for getting me through the battle at *Parker's Crossroads*. The score of that game was definitely in favor of the Germans, (although we did get a lot of "hits.")

Now I find that I am the President of this Association with a great responsibility to you, the members. Actually, the responsibility of making our Association live rests on the shoulders of our members who take on the various jobs of the Board of Directors. These are the people who are doing what it takes to keep us an organization. Most important of all is our Cub Editor, John Kline, who works steadily throughout the year to produce the "glue" that sticks us together.

By the time that you are reading this, the major number of our Mini-Reunions for this year will be history. Because of a "space" problem they will be reported in the May CUB. I hope that you will have participated in one of these local gatherings. If you live in a remote area where none exist, then just take someone to lunch and celebrate having lived through what happened to you fifty-eight years ago. Send a report to "The CUB." We are the survivors. That is something just by itself, *Right?*

President's View . . .

Your Association is blessed by having a "living" Board of Directors. I mean the word "living" to denote that these individuals recognize their obligation to the membership and are concerned with executing their assignments. Not just warming the bench.

In the wings we have more candidates for nomination to the board than there are chairs to fill. This is a healthy sign and indicates a willingness to serve that most of our members have. In spite of the statistical forecast of declining numbers our total membership is holding at around 1,600. Some of this is due to the influx of Associate Members. Eventually, I hope to see Associate Members come forward and take a more active role in the management of the Association. This will extend the life of the Association.

Some of you have said, after joining our 106th Association, that your life has changed. Well, I certainly will admit that mine has. I don't know what I would be doing with my (extra) time, but for sure, what ever, it would not be nearly as satisfying. My visits to Europe probably would not have happened, had I not joined the Association. I would never have met those good and faithful friends that I now have in Belgium, Holland, and Luxembourg. I know that most of you do not enjoy that same relationship simply because you have not returned to Europe. I must assure you that my visits back to the battlefield are as your representative. I realize that I represent all of you who will not make the trip. When honors are given it is because I represent you, the American soldier who restored their freedom. The honors are yours!

The most important thing on my mind currently is to try to find a way to extend the life of our Association to its very limit. We, as individuals, did our part to help defeat the Nazi Armies in WW II. Now the important thing is for us to use our Association as a sounding board to perpetuate the memory of those events. The Cub is the best tool we have.

I thank you for being there for OUR Association. May God bless and keep us all in good health and make it possible for us to meet again and again for a long time to come.

John R. Schaffner, 589/A President 2002-2003 106th Infantry Division Association

***** Important Announcement from John Robb, Memorial Chairman *****

106th Infantry Division Memorial

11:00 AM Sunday May 25, 2003

Unveiling Ceremony / Dedication at the Andersonville National Historic Site

In addition to our morning dedication service, Andersonville will have a 2:00 PM service with a major speaker and band. Picnicking is permitted in designated areas.

Nearby places of Interest:

The National Prisoner of War Museum

Jimmy Carter National Historic Site

Habitat For Humanity International Tour Center and Museum

Nearby accommodations in Americus, GA:

Holiday Inn Express (229) 928-5400 - Jameson Inn (229) 924-2726

Ramada Inn (229) 924-4431 - Windsor Hotel (229) 924-1555

To contribute to the cost of the memorial make check payable to

"Andersonville Memorial"

Mail it to Richard L. Rigatti, 106th Association Treasurer

113 Woodshire Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15215-1713

412-781-8131

Chaplain's Message . . .

“Choose ye this day whom you will serve
.... as for me and my house, we will serve
the Lord.”

“Quarreling began between Abram’s herds-
men and the herdsmen of Lot. So Abram said
to Lot. “Let’s not have any quarreling ...let’s
part company.”

So Lot chose for himself the whole plain
of the Jordan and set out toward the east...
Abram moved his tents and went to live near
the great trees at Hebron, where he built an
altar to the Lord.” *Genesis 13*

Choices! We constantly make choices!

On December 17, 1944, almost out of small
arms ammo, and with enemy soldiers all
around us, our orders were to make our way
back to Saint Vith any way we could. My jeep,
having been destroyed, I managed to climb
aboard a 2 1/2 ton GMC along with others.
Off we went in the early morning hours.

A few miles further, the road was wooded on the left, with a wide open empty field
on the right. At least it had been empty a day or two before. Now German soldiers with
machine guns were covering our road very effectively. Forewarned, we stopped to de-
cide what to do... whether to run the gauntlet or try to find another way. With no reason-
able options available, we started down-the road at high speed. The Germans fired at us
and we fired rifles and pistols as we went by, hoping to “Keep their heads down.” Our
vehicle ended up with quite a few holes, but we had not a one.

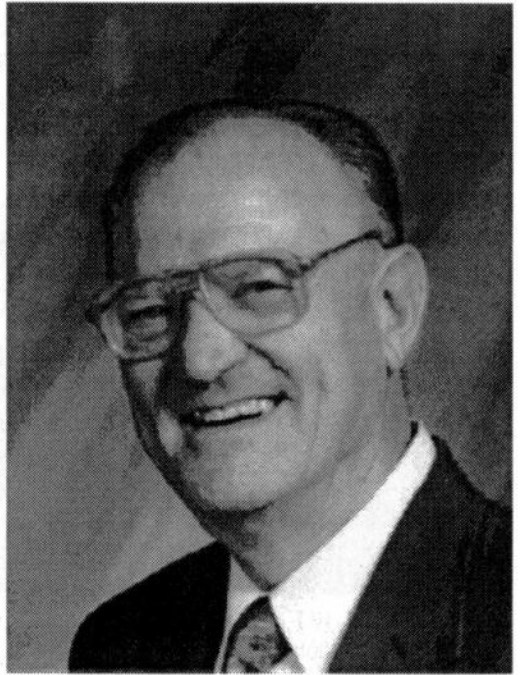
Choices! I’ve often thought about that choice to go on. Risky! But the alternative
would surely have resulted in our capture.

We still make choices in life and sometimes they’re risky. The leap of faith is risky.
Commitment of any kind is risky. Sacrifice is risky. Love is risky. Every choice worth
making involves a risk.

“Choose ye this day whom you will serve,” said Joshua. And the people chose to
serve the Lord... not knowing where that decision might lead them.

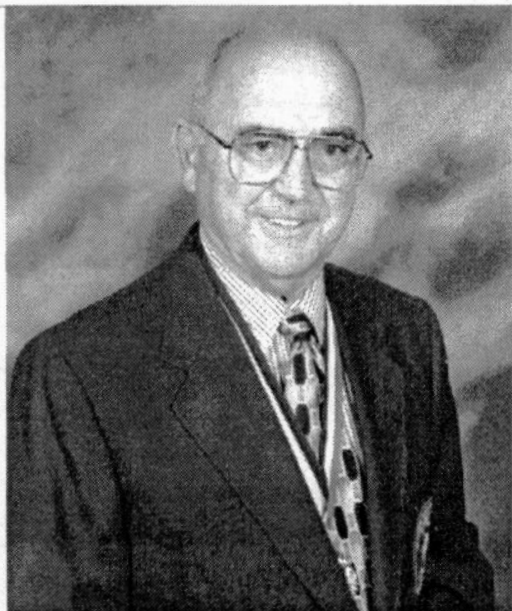
That same choice confronts us today. To focus life on ourselves in self-serving ways,
or to focus life upon service to God - and to others.

The latter is the way of faith. It is also the way to fulfillment and to satisfaction.



Chaplain

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

If you missed Oliver North's **WAR STORIES** Battle of the Bulge show, January 19, 2003, with me, your editor, as one of the participants, you can order the TV Tape.

It is available from FOX News. \$19.99 plus postage. If you missed the show call: Ask for the Battle of the Bulge TV Tape.

Monday - Friday 8AM - 8PM EST

Toll Free - 1.877.588.8932

To Call FOX News Channel:

1-888-369-4762

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URL. All one line.

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Donations

*Since Oct-Nov-Dec 2002 Cub
Your generosity is appreciated*

| | |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| Frank A. Hohendel 424 HQ 2BN | 25 |
| Arthur K. Hanke 106 MP | 25 |
| Richard W. Tennant 422/K | 100 |
| Richard L. Idstein 424/C | 3 |
| Claude Billiet (Belgian) ASSOC | 10 |
| Donald Ruddick 423/E | 10 |
| Rufus Grantham DIV/Arty | 5 |
| Robert C. Homan 424/D | 50 |
| Damon Young 423/D | 10 |

Due to the showing of "PART II" **RETURN and REMEMBRANCE Part II**

Author - John Califf

423rd Regiment I&R Platoon.

The

2002-2003 MINI-REUNION REPORTS

**WILL APPEAR IN THE APR-MAY-JUNE
CUB Magazine.**

Thank You John Kline, CUB editor

ANNUAL MEMBERS !!!

**Your annual dues expire on
June 30, 2003**

Send \$10 per year \$75 for LIFE

Treasurer Richard Rigatti

113 Woodshire Drive

Pittsburgh, PA 15215

CURRENT MEMBERS 1,593

Feb 11, 2002

Life Vets 697

Annual Vets 624

Life Associate 122

Annual Assoc. 128

Other 20

From the Mail Bag:

From Major Mack O'Quinn

I am writing a book on Berga POWs. For this book, I would like identify the units, company/regiment/division, of those Berga POWs who died in camp.

To date I have identified that information for most of the 106th soldiers who died at Berga, or shortly after, but not their Company or Battery.

I need info on the following:

Charles Clark, 422nd

Harold Peterson, 422nd

Arthur Rosen, 422nd

Milton Rothman, 422nd

John Simcox, 589th FAB

Herman Wildman, 423rd

Note, he needed Aaron Rosenberg, who he showed as 424th, but Rosenberg was in 422/D.

Anyone with information can contact me at the following address

Major Mack O'Quinn, Co C 702d
MSB; Unit 15092; APO AP 96224-0353
or email Mackoquinn@AOL.com.

From Hans Wijers, Netherlands

Hans is has been an Associate member for several years. He is well known your editor, and to the officers of our Association. He is researching for a new book.

Text from his email follows.

Since I finished my first book, the 99th Infantry sector, I felt I should write more. I am finishing my 2nd book on the V Corps area, the one on the 2nd Infantry. I want to follow with books on St. Vith and one on the 106th Sector, the Schnee Eifel.

I need help from the 106th Veteran's and ask them to support me by sending their "Personal Accounts" and "Stories, so that I can start work on it.

John, it was nice to appear with you, in Ollie North's *Battle of the Bulge*, I thought it was well done for the short time that it had to explain the largest land battles in World War II.

Send diaries, stories, comments about your personal experiences to:

Hans Wijers

Zegerijstraat 27

NL-6971 ZN Brummen (GLD)

The Netherlands

wijers@wxs.nl

<http://home.planet.nl/~wijer037/Bulge.html>

From Donna Lee AFR

Year 2002 Annual Reunion entertainers. **THE STROLLING STRINGS**

That was great entertainment, young people, great presentation and wonderful music.

A CD Music Disk is available from them as follows: \$10 covers costs .

No credit cards

including shipping in USA.

Overseas add \$5.00 for shipping handling.

Some of the music included :

Hello Again

Memory from the cats

My Way

Arrivederci roma

Unchained melody

Moonlight Serenade

Moon River

Patriotic Salute

Classical Approach to Dance

All I ask of you

Andalucia

theme from the Ice castles

Moulon Rouge

Mac the Knife

Canadian Sunset

Adagio from the Pathetique

In a little Spanish Town

Send order and money to:

The Strolling Strings

Heidi Kirby

c/o Norfolk Public Schools

322 Shirley Ave

Norfolk, VA 23517

Minneapolis World War II History Round Table Tour - 2003

Don Patton, organizer, and manager of this very active group of veteran's that meet nine months of the year, has scheduled another tour to the "battlefields of Europe."

Don was present at, and very helpful to the two group meetings with the German veterans that I organized in 1995 and 1999. He has been back with is group in the past two years. One trip to the battle area from Aachen down through our area and into the 28th Infantry Division area. Another trip, last year to the D-Day landing areas and in through France.

From Don Patton's words:

This year the tour will leave on May 9th, 2003 with a direct flight into Amsterdam. The important sites at Market Garden will be explored at Einhofen, Nijmegen and Arnhem. After a stop at EBan Emael, we will visit the Remagen Bridge. A visit to the site where General Patton's car was hit by a truck and a visit to the room in which he died.

After a stop in Heidelberg we will follow the route that TF Baum followed to rescue the POW's in Hammelburg. On to Nuremburg we will see the site of the Nazi Rallies and Post-War trials. A day trip to Rothenburg will be followed by a stop at Dachau. We will visit the castles of Prince Ludwig after setting up a base in Munich. Another trip will go to Berchestgarten and the Eagles nest. There will be time for all to shop. The cost is \$3,400 for 15 days. Call Don Patton at 952-891-8430

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



Life Membership

| | |
|--------------------|-------|
| Under 35 | \$360 |
| 36-50 | \$300 |
| 51-60 | \$180 |
| 61 & Over | \$120 |
| Spouse Life Member | \$ 40 |

Annual Membership

| | |
|----------------|-------|
| Single | \$ 30 |
| Husband & Wife | \$ 40 |

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 Special notice !!

2002-03 Mini-Reunion Reports will appear in the May CUB....

There is still time for a Mini-Reunion this year. Some areas are holding the mini-reunions in the seasons where traveling is easier, e.g. Minnesota and the cold states. It's never too late or too early to hold a local reunion - get with it. Ask the editor for a mailing list and labels in your area.

Recognizing that every member of our Association cannot attend the annual reunion for various reasons, the next best thing is to have one in your own neighborhood. If you have ever thought that it would be fun to get together, have a nice meal, shoot the breeze with real friends, and go home realizing that you had a good time, then let me share with you how you can make it happen. Say to yourself, "I want to make that happen!"

1. Select a place that will host your group. Get prices and menu.
2. Write or call our Cub Editor, John Kline, and request a list of Association members in your area. He will do that, and he will print sticky labels for you to use for a mailing or start off small if you want to and just telephone what appears to be the logical or interested members. Those that you call may call their buddies and the chain reaction begins.
3. Do step 2 well in advance of the date, which is usually December 16th. Write a short letter of announcement indicating what to expect, the cost and a return of their intentions and a check to you by a specific date. Your meeting place will need to know how many to expect.
4. If at all possible, provide someone to speak to the group. You will be surprised that many qualified speakers will jump at such an opportunity.
5. After the meeting be sure to send John Kline, CUB editor, copies of the group photograph. Usually taken with a men's group and ladies group. It's also O.K. for a mixed group. Just be sure to identify the participants that are in the photo.

I have organized mini-reunions for a few years now and have found that, after the first one, it is a piece of cake. Get someone to work with you. Associate members are not excluded from doing this. Look forward to encouraging results and know that fellow veterans will deeply appreciate the opportunity for such an enjoyable gathering.

There may be some questions or guidance needed, If so, feel perfectly free to contact me See below:

Harry F. Martin, Jr.
National Mini-Reunion Chairman
106th Infantry Division Association
121 McGregor Avenue
Mt. Arlington NJ 07856
973-663-2410

HELP TO KEEP OUR ASSOCIATION ALIVE!

106th Infantry Division Association - PX Items . . .

Send Order to our PX Manager John Gilliland, address below

No credit cards - make your Checks payable to:

John Gilliland
140 Nancy Avenue
Boaz, AL 35957-6060
256-593-6801

If you call seeking information please refer to the line number of the item listed below.

1 0 6 T H P X I T E M S

- | | |
|---|----------------------|
| 1. Cap, ball, mesh back, adjustable, 106th Logo/Washington | \$10.00 + \$3.50 S&H |
| 2. Cap, ball, mesh back, adjustable, 106th Logo/WW II Memorial | \$12.00 + \$3.50 S&H |
| 3. 106th shoulder Patch, duplicate of original, 2½" | \$3.00 PP |
| 4. Patch, pocket, etc. 106th Inf. Div. Assn., 4" | \$3.00 PP |
| 5. Flag Set, US & 106th w/base, miniature (limited) | \$10.00 PP |
| 6. Address Index, expandable, magnetic, credit card size, w/106th Logo, Gold, Nice! | \$3.00 PP |
| 7. Decal, 4", like 4" Patch, peel and stick | \$2.00 PP |
| 8. Decal, 4"x 6", 106th Logo on Red & Blue Flag, peel & stick | \$2.00 PP |
| 9. Decal, 4" x 10", Combat Infantry Badge (CIB), peel & stick | \$2.00 PP |
| 10. Decal, 1-3/8", Lion's Head, 60 to sheet, peel & stick | \$3.00 PP |
| 11. Lapel Pin, Hat, etc. St. Louis, w/106th Logo (15 left) | \$3.00 PP |
| 12. Lapel Pin, Hat or tie or dress (raised Gold) in red & blue circle | \$3.00 PP |
| 13. Lapel Pin, same as above - with bar and chain for tie tac. | \$4.00 PP |
| 14. Scratch Pads, 5" x 8", (50 sheets) w/106th Logo, Battles, etc. | \$3.00 PP |
| 15. Planner, Two Year, pocket size, w/106th logo (Nice) | \$3.00 PP |
| 16. Windbreaker, lined, Blue w/106th 4" patch on left front XL and XXL | \$25.00 + 4.50 S&H |
| 17. T/Shirt, Jerzees w/ colored Artist Photo of 106th Logo and WWII Memorial on front Med, Large and Xtra Large \$12.00 - 2X \$14.00 - 3X \$15.00 Plus \$3.50 S&H each | |
| 18. Colored Artist Photo, 8x10 inch, suitable for framing | \$2.00 each PostPaid |

Your choice showing: 1. World War II Memorial 2. 106th WWII locations, as detailed on
Afghans. State your choice and how many you want. Order both at this low price.

New Members . . .

BARE, ROBERT N. 422/B

3525 CAMBRIDGE DR
SPRINGFIELD, OH 45503
Tele: 937-399-3209
Email:

POST, VIRGINIA ASSOCIATE

4510 GOLDFINGER DRIVE
MADISON, WI 52714
Tele:
Email:

CHESTER, MORRIS S. 422/HQ

27845 HAWTHORNE BLVD
PALOS VERDES, CA 90275-3301
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Email: mschester@cox.net

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80 MITCHELL HILL RD
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Tele: 207-883-1602
Email:

DAVILA, EUGENE C. 591/B

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BOCA RATON, FL 33487-2106
Tele: 561-994-8742
Email:

SLAYTON, DAVID B. 422/A

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LONG BEACH, CA 90807
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Email:

FRIERSON, JOSEPH 424/G

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Email:

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Tele: 623-939-6687
Email:

MAKRIANIS, JAMES R. 589/HQ

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SAGINAW, MI 48602

MESSMER, SR., JOHN A. 422/F

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Email:

PERRYMAN, E. FIRTH 424/A

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WEBSTER, NY 14580
Tele: 585-872-3874
Email: firthp@aol.com

Sherod, Enclosed is a check to cover the cost of a Lifetime membership for my eldest son, Frederic. He teaches History and Literature at Sarah Lawrence College Bronxville, NY and is currently teaching a course on the history of *World War I* and *World War II*. His hobby is "Military History" and he has been published frequently on the subject.

In his capacity of contributing editor of the "*American Heritage Magazine*" Fred will be attending our reunion in Cincinnati in order to gather material for a possible article on the 106th Infantry Division, and the "Association" to appear in "*American Heritage*" in the Fall of 2004, to coincide with the 60th Anniversary of the *Battle of the Bulge*." I have made him familiar with John Kline's website as well as many CUB magazines and the book that John published, which contained the personal experiences of many of us.

Sincerely, Irwin C. Smoler 424/B

New Members . . .

Editor's note: Irwin, thanks for the copy of this letter. I would be happy to work with your son in passing any information I might have. He certainly has my OK to use anything on my website.

I also might have more information that he could use that I have not put on that site. Tell him to keep in touch. See below....

John Kline
M Co., 423rd Infantry Regiment WWII
Past-President '97-'98
Editor, The CUB magazine since 1987
Membership Chairman
106th Inf Div Association
Email: jpk@mm.com
Home Page: <http://www.mm.com/user/jpk>
Personal War Diary:
<http://www.mm.com/user/jpk/wardiary.htm>

MANGIARACINA, MICHAEL ASSOCIATE

1140 Crane Blvd
Libertyville, IL 60048

Email: michaelmangia@ameritech.net

My grandfather's name was George P. Mangiaracina. He was the company medic for "D" Company, 422nd Infantry Regiment. I am joining because I would like to learn as much as I can about what he went through. I am also trying to obtain photographs, can you help me?

George passed away in February 1990, his wife's name is Mary and she just turned 75. She will be excited to read this Association magazine.

Are there old copies available?

Thank You

Michael P. Margiacina

Editor's Note": Michael, nice to have you join us. I have a web site at
<http://www.mm.com/user/jpk>

My email address is jpk@mm.com

Contact me and I will discuss the "old magazine" situation with you. J Kline editor)

WEBER, JR., GEORGE A. 423/G

2833 REDSTONE DRIVE
ST LOUIS, MO 63125-5136
Tele: 314-892-6889
Email: chinon24@aol.com

WINTER, RAYMOND J. UNIT UNKNOWN

PO BOX 305
MAPLE LAKE, MN 55358
Tele: 320-963-3210
Email:

If anybody recognizes which unit Raymond might have been in contact me, please. John Kline

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PLEASE NOTIFY THE EDITOR (See my address on page 4)
WE ARE PAYING THE USPO \$2.16 FOR EACH CUB RETURNED FOR
A BUM ADDRESS. Figure it out - EACH CUB cost about 2.50 to
produce AND MAIL (BULK). If we have to pay return postage we
don't even break EVEN.**

RETURN and REMEMBRANCE - PART II



AN ALBUM OF A WAR AND TWO WINTERS IN THE ARDENNES

Final Chapter - Continued from the Oct-Nov-Dec 2002 CUB Magazine

John Califf, 423rd Infantry I&R Platoon

**423rd Infantry Regimental Headquarters
I&R Platoon 1944**





The guardian angel hovers over almost 8,000 markers bestowing the laurel branch on the fallen below.

THE CEMETERY AT HENRI CHAPELLE

AN AWESOME SENSE OF SERENITY

Snow continued falling throughout the night along with the temperature, and on Sunday morning Rob and I rather guardedly caught the 7:21 again for Liege. Henri met us there along with Christian Kraft de la Saulx, president of CRIBA, and the four of us wedged into his subcompact for our trip back to the Ardennes for the second day.

Driving through the city we passed a very somber piece of statuary with dark figures against a white marble background. Its starkness evoked a comment from me and Henri said that it honored the suffering and resistance of the Belgians during the war. He then spoke very bitterly about the massacre of civilians, including some of his wife's family and declared that he would have nothing to do with German veterans of the Ardennes campaign.

Our first stop of the day was at the military cemetery near Henri Chapelle to pay our respects to Bill Morris of the I&R and 7988 other GI's, most of whom had died during the Bulge. On a windswept hilltop about twenty miles east of Liege against the grey sky and white landscape suddenly appeared the vivid red, white and blue of a violently snapping American flag. It flew from a flagstaff on an overlook with a panoramic view of the countryside across the road from the cemetery in which the white marble grave markers were laid out in gentle arcs rising up from woods to another overlook on the terrace of a memorial colonnade. Above this terrace hovered a bronze figure of the archangel Michael bestowing a laurel branch on the fallen warriors below.

The heavy snowfall had left a pristine white blanket over the earth, trees and markers, yet unmarked by footprints that morning. Once cursed in the misery and cold of the battlefield by many of those lying there, it now ironically seemed to form a protective mantle over them. Only the church bells in the surrounding villages broke the silence, but added in their own way to the awesome sense of serenity.

Trees lacily encrusted with snowflakes stood close behind the cross at Bill's grave which nature also had decorated with windblown accumulations. With some hesitation at disturbing the unblemished surface I trudged through the snow to leave a little marker with the I&R symbol for Bill and to bid him another final farewell.



Later on a sunny day the archangel Michael radiates the youthfulness of those at rest

Both the cold and the wind had increased since we had arrived at the cemetery and only a few other visitors had come after us. Fortunately, they included Anne Marie and Karl who had driven ten miles through the snow from Eupen to bring us heavy lined and hooded winter coats and those knee high Belgian farmer's boots which they insisted we use for the rest of our journey.



Another farwell in the snow, fifty-four years after the first in the convent school yard at Ferrieres

Better protected by this much welcomed additional warmth, we went across to the overlook where the flag fluttered wildly in the gale force wind. Its militantly harsh noise contrasted starkly with the mystical chiming of the church bells sounding across the rolling countryside, just as the brutality of the war contrasted with the serenity of this final resting place of its victims.

Return and Remembrance, John Califf, 423rd Infantry, I&R Platoon



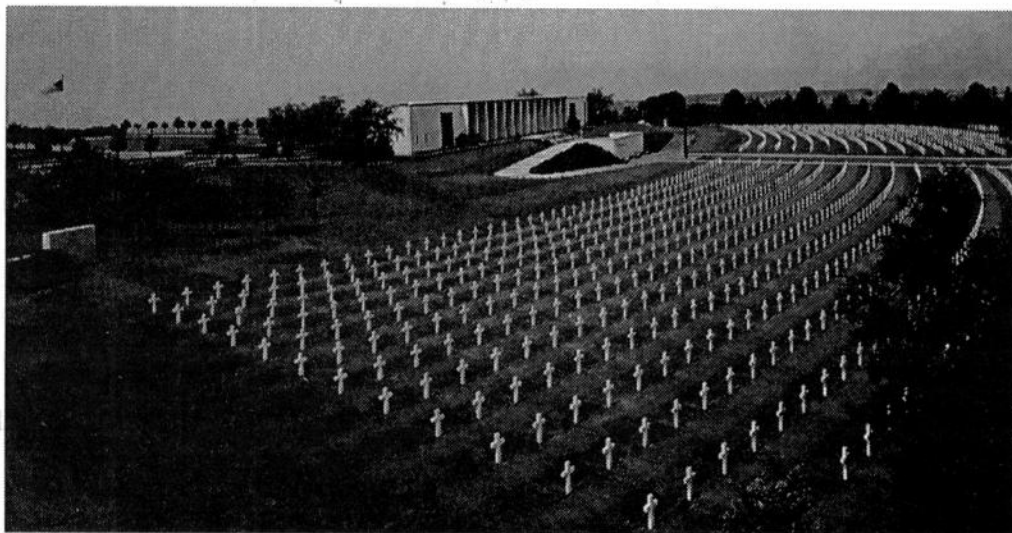
Nature's artistry around the perimeter
of the cemetery.



The awesome panoply of gray overhead
and white underfoot.

This simple, but eloquent prayer, is inscribed on the wall of the Henri-Chapelle Chapel

O Lord
Support us all day long
until the shadows lengthen
and or work is done
then in thy mercy grant us a
safe lodging and holy rest,
and Peace at Last



Henri-Chapelle in the Summer
7,988 American soldiers, most of whom died during *The Battle of the Bulge*



The Ambleve River bridge changed hands several times between the SS and GI forces.

STAVELOT

FOLLOWING THE ROUTE OF KAMPFGRUPPE PEIPER

Leaving this awe inspiring place, we headed south into the Ardennes again in Christian's car while our Good Samaritans, Karl and Anne Marie, returned to Eupen. We passed by Verviers where the platoon had been taken for a rest stop at some public building, perhaps a school. I can still see the bright tile colors and feel the warmth of the steam heat and hot water, an oasis amidst the cold and devastation. As we wound down through Spa, there was a road sign for Hollywood, one of the nearby resorts that we had seen in 1944, then the headquarters for the First Army and before that in WWI the imperial headquarters of the Kaiser.

Henri and Christian kept up a constant chatter in French, pausing only to answer our questions and to make pertinent comments in English. As we neared Stavelot, Henri pointed out that we were following the route of Kampfgruppe Peiper leading the rampage of three other similar units and a Tiger tank battalion through the area, virtually unhindered until they encountered elements of the 30th Infantry Division there at the bridge across the Ambleve River, where a fierce struggle had occurred. It was here that some relatives of Henri's wife had been killed by SS troopers in one of their infamous massacres.



A view of the area, after the battle, with disabled "Tiger 222" in front of the buildings to the left.

Return and Remembrance, John Califf, 423rd Infantry, I&R Platoon

As we stood in the little memorial park on a bluff overlooking the rebuilt bridge and talked about the violent back and forth encounter for its possession, Henri excitedly pointed to a sign which read: "Stavelot Place, du 18 Decembre 1944." He had remembered my birthday story. It was hard to realize that when our jeeps were still on the road from Buchet to Radscheid, German armor had already driven more than twenty miles behind us to reach this bridge.

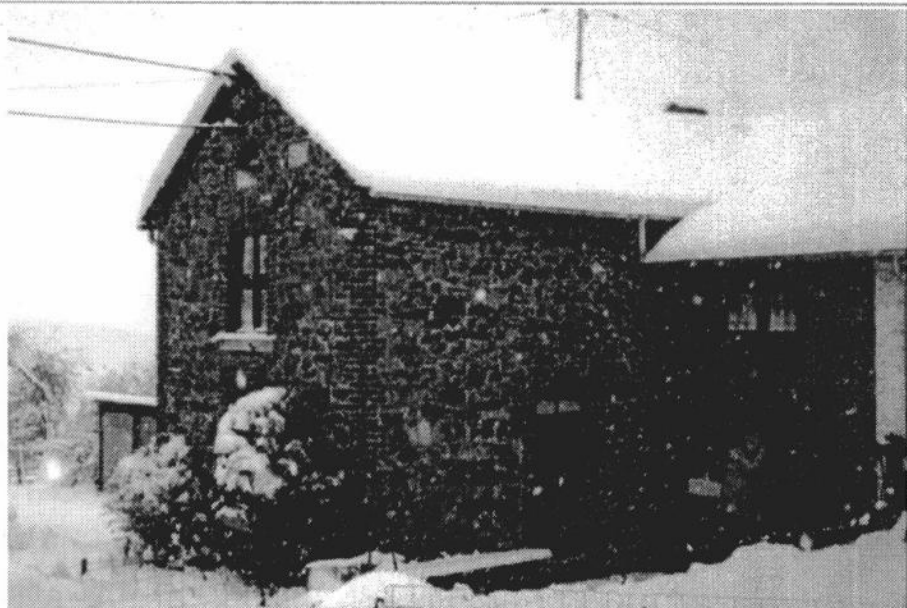
Leaving Stavelot, Christian tried a back road which went up a steep hillside and ran out, giving us some uneasy moments before he got turned around in the deep roadside snow and headed off through one of Belgium's most scenic areas. Central Wallonia is a place of winding roads and rushing streams between steep rocky cliffs, thick forests and hamlets with stone and half-timbered structures right out of the 15th century. However, scenery was not in the agenda of the 424th when it arrived there in January 1945 and found itself facing the 18th VG Division which earlier had encircled its two sister regiments in the Schnee Eifel.

These weary volksgrenadiers had replaced the SS kampfgруппes after their armor had ploughed through the area and stalled, leaving their bloody trail of more murdered POW's and civilians.

In the initial German attack on the 106th positions in December the 424th had been cut off from the 422nd and the 423rd and had been able to fall back and join in the perimeter defense around St. Vith with CCB of the 7th Armored. Then after being in the line around Manhay, it had been pulled out for a brief regrouping as a regimental combat team and given this sector below Stavelot and Trois Ponts between the 517th Parachute regimental combat team and the 75th Infantry Division waiting to start an attack to push the Germans back behind the Siegfried Line again.

THE END OF THE I&R PLATOON

Much to our dismay, it had been decided to disband the 423rd I&R Platoon and reassign us as individuals to units of the 424th. Irish Sheehan and I were made squad leaders in Company A which was dug in around the little farming hamlet of Spineux. Badly depleted in almost a month of constant contact with the enemy, 424/A and other units in the regiment were being rebuilt with the few survivors of the 422nd and 423rd and replacements with varying infantry experience, mainly little or none. Our platoon sergeant was from a Air Corps service outfit and some were rear echelon personnel who didn't know how to load their rifles. Others were boys who had finished basic training, eaten Christmas dinner at home and were shipped over directly to the front lines. There was barely time to learn names, much less the fundamentals of working together as a combat unit. Perhaps the 18th VG units desperately trying to prevent the U.S. recapture of this area were even more depleted and lacking in replacements, but they had plenty of automatic weapons, assault guns and artillery.



The stone part of this house served as a warm haven from the cold weather in January 1945

FROM SPINEUX

WARMTH THEN AND NOW

There had been a small stone house on the edge of Spineux where we found some relief from the bitter cold around a little fireplace. Some years ago we added a fireplace just about that size in our den and every time that we use it, memories come back and the warmth is especially gratifying. As Christian drove through Spineux, my primary desire was to find that blessed sanctuary. Happily, it was still there, though now part of a much larger house.

Henri trudged through the snow and knocked on the front door which was opened by a cheerful little lady. After an animated conversation she looked toward the car and waved her arms, shouting, "Americain, libérateur, entrez!" As we entered the house, she hugged me and kissed me on both cheeks, chattering in her native Walloon dialect which Henri understood and translated for us. She said that she had come to this house before the war as a young bride and had fled before the German spearhead. Therefore Madame Marie Lakaille-Collin had not been there when we had used her home, but she and her husband had returned after the area was free of battle. Apparently they had prospered and had expanded the small farmhouse into a comfortable home with many of the conveniences and appliances so familiar to us, including a large screen color TV.

Madame in her purple sweater and flowered smock also reflected a big change in the appearance of the Belgian women from their wartime attire of black sweaters, skirts and stockings. As we sat around her big kitchen table, she brought out a bottle of the "family recipe" for a round of toasts to our two countries and to her liberators. Now there was not only the warmth of that house, but also the warmth of that dear little lady and fellow survivor.



Madame Marie Lakallie pours some of the family recipe for a toast to United States and Belgium

It is hard to describe the feeling of gratitude expressed toward returning veterans from most of the Belgian people, especially survivors like Madame Lakaille. As Christian drove resolutely through the snowy lanes of Spineux, we came to the innovative monument that the people of the area had built in honor of their liberators. With native stone they depicted a GI with his rifle at the window of a shell torn farmhouse. On the outskirts we passed a pretty little roadside shrine nestled under a snow laden fir tree overlooking the ground where our foxholes had been facing the German-held village of LaVaux.



A monument to their liberators, the 424th Regiment of the 106th, and the 112th Regiment of the 28th Infantry division, built in Spineux by the citizens of the area.

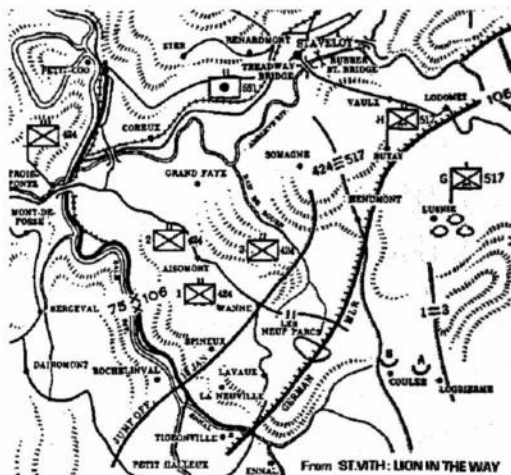


Our foxholes were located down this road at the edge of the woods in the distance toward LaVaux

TO LA VAUX

VISIONS FROM THAT VILLAGE AND THE WOODS BEYOND

The enemy's main line of resistance ran along high ground to the east with minefields and outposts covered by fields of fire from automatic weapons and artillery. LaVaux was contained some of these outposts and was the first target of Company A on the morning of January 13, 1945. As we approached fifty four years later, a white stucco and stone farmhouse stood out atop a hill overlooking the open fields. There a German machine gun squad set up in a window fortunately had decided to surrender rather than to mow us down as we trudged up through the snow without any appreciable cover. Around a bend in the road we had come upon an abandoned mobile field kitchen, horsedrawn and in other ways comparable to the chuckwagons of our Old West. Judging from the pungent aroma, they had been preparing sauerkraut or cabbage soup and on a shelf were round loaves of that heavy black bread. I grabbed a loaf and shoved it down in my field jacket. Though it probably contained a goodly portion of sawdust and other "ersatz" material, the hard loaf tasted mighty good during the long day and night which lay ahead.



The Spineux-LaVaux-Coulee area between towns of Stavelot and Trois Ponts

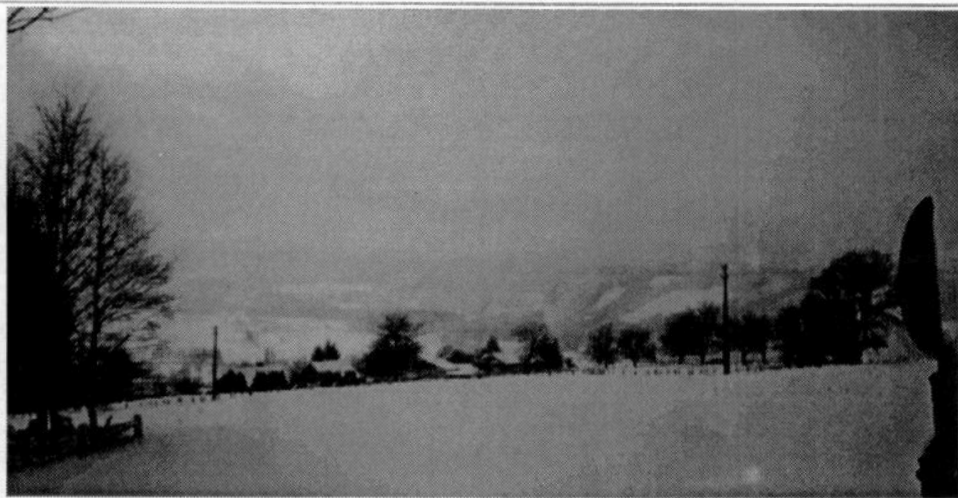


Looking over the hilly fields to LaVaux on the way there from Spineux

Beyond the eastern edge of LaVaux was a ridge covered with woods which had held the German MLR studded with fortified log bunkers and machine gun nests. There the farm roads and woods trails lay deep in snow, not passable by vehicle, even Christian's little wonder. Our tight travel schedule forbade even a brief trudge through snow on foot, but my memory brought back the sensory impact of that day. The strong musty smell of the bunkers still seemed to come from the woods along with the unmistakable sound of the incredibly rapid fire from the enemy's automatic weapons. One of these bursts had killed our company commander, Lt. Robert McKay, right after he had come by with a word of steadying encouragement for my squad. A vision of 1st Sgt. Wallace Rifleman, another survivor of the 423rd, ran through the trees like a tall Indian warrior, leading the company on its charge to clear the woods of machine guns and Germans. A very young and badly wounded grenadier appeared, lying in a snow bank along the tree line, a cloud of steam rising from his body into the frigid air.



German machine gunners were in this house on the edge of LaVaux and a field kitchen was just down the road.



Looking over Coulee in the direction of LaVaux behind the Faix du Diablo (Devil's Load)

AND THE END AT COULEE

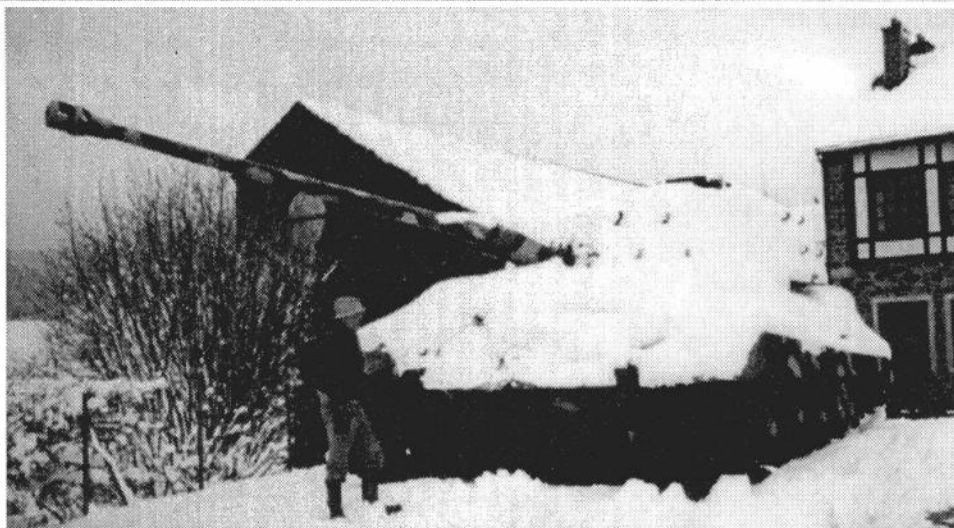
A PLACE ON THE WAY TO LOGBIERME

Taking a roundabout route, we approached Coulee from the east and looked back over it to the west at the ridge called Faix du Diable(the Devil's Load) and the Ponceau ravine which lay between this little collection of buildings and LaVaux. Though another veteran looking for Coulee was told by the locals that it was not a village, but only "a place on the way to Logbierme" in 1945, it was apparently of such importance that Company A and B were expected to take it by frontal attack over the ridge, down into the ravine and back up the hillside. Viewing the terrain and the clear field of fire from the vantage point of the enemy machine gunners and artillerymen, it was easy to see why the attack had not been successful.

Company A had cleared LaVaux and the wooded ridge, but as it moved down into the ravine, it was caught in a deadly combination of tree bursts and direct fire from artillery and assault guns as well as cross fire from automatic weapons from these advantageous locations in and behind Coulee. The lack of training and combat experience together on the part of the replacements and the old hands was evident in the confusion that ensued and we moved to a more protected area to dig in for the night with Coulee still held by the enemy.

One artillery shell had burst almost on top of our platoon with devastating results. That shell and two severely frozen feet took me out of the action. Irish Sheehan had been wounded in the neck and the two of us spent that night huddled in a shell-torn aid station awaiting evacuation. We said goodbye the next morning and did not see each other or anyone else from the I&R platoon for more than forty five years. After six months of treatment at hospitals in Belgium, France, England and Florida my discharge finally came through, but was postponed for twenty four hours because of the V-J Day celebration.

The effect of the intense cold was devastating to the body and psyche and through the ages has been thought to be as deadly as the weapons of the enemy. Only once prior to December 1944 had I even seen snow or been in weather much below freezing. Of the forty five days during the Bulge only eight were above freezing with the highs ranging from 42 to 22 degrees F and the lows from 32 to 8. Our winter equipment had been inadequate, particularly for continuous exposure to such temperatures in snow and ice and for wading across streams.



Tank 212, sole surviving Tiger II from the Bulge, left at LaGleize by Kampfgruppe Peiper.

TIGER AT LA GLEIZE

LAST OF A DANGEROUS SPECIES

After another vocal map session Christian and Henri ploughed across the countryside get back on Peiper's route from Stavelot to Trois Ponts where a blown bridge had diverted his armor off onto side roads to the mountain villages of LaGleize and Stoumont. There lack of fuel and fierce opposition rising to hand-to-hand combat finally brought the spearhead to a stop. Retracing its movement on these minimal roads in similar weather, it was hard to believe that the lumbering German armored vehicles had been able to maneuver up that far, but as we wound up the narrow road from the highway into LaGleize, we looked into the muzzle of a Tiger's long 88.

The massive hulk of the Tiger was nearly as awesome as a relic as it had been in reality that night in St.Vith. This was the only survivor of its breed left from the Bulge, saved from a post-battle tank retrieval unit in a trade for two bottles of local wine and maintained as an exhibit of an interesting little local museum.



Tiger 222 also from 501st SS heavy tank battalion as seen in many Nazi propaganda photos.

Return and Remembrance, John Califf, 423rd Infantry, I&R Platoon

Outstanding among the many GI exaggerations were those that most Germans were SS troopers, most artillery were 88's and most tanks were Tigers. Actually, of the 717 enemy armored vehicles used in this campaign, only 87 were operational Tigers from the 501st SS and 506th heavy panzer battalions. All Tigers were in these independent units which were attached to the panzer divisions as needed. Both of these battalions had seen much action in Russia and Normandy before undergoing extensive reequipping for this last big push. The 501st SS had followed the leading kampgruppen in the breakthrough. Entering the fray at St. Vith where six of its monsters led that final night attack, the 506th previously had smashed the 2nd Armored, knocking out 57 of its Sherman tanks in a single November day. The surviving seventy ton monster at La Gleize was a MkVIB King Tiger with six inches of armor plate. Tigers were the only tanks to carry the much feared 88mm cannon. The smaller fifty ton MkV Panthers and the workhorse forty ton MkIV's both had 75mm high velocity guns, but even those outmatched the 75's on the American Sherman which in the end overwhelmed all of them with its vast superiority in number and fuel supply.

Back on the highway we stopped at Trois Ponts for refreshments at a small cafe on the town square and then headed west to Manhay where in late December the 424th had been on the front line between the 75th and the 82nd Airborne. There the I&R was assigned to the security forces in the town, but spent most of its time scrounging for food and warmth since it had become an "orphan." As troops moved through the town, my eyes had strained to no avail for a glimpse of a fellow architectural student from Clemson who was somewhere in the 75th. Later he came back to the campus with a shattered leg in a brace as a constant reminder that he had been there.



Lights on a Christmas tree and the highway shine hazily at Parker's Crossroads, the "Alamo of the Bulge."

SEE next page for "The Alamo of the Bulge."

CHRISTMAS TREES AND ALAMOS

THE ALAMO OF THE BULGE

From Manhay Christian turned south towards Baraque de Fraiture, now known to Americans and Belgians alike as Parker's Crossroads, where an heroic stand against the advancing Germans had taken place resulting in its being characterized as "*the Alamo of the Bulge*." After escaping entrapment in the Schnee Eifel, Major Arthur Parker of the 106th's 589th Field Artillery Battalion had come into the area with three 105mm howitzers and their crews searching for what remained of the division. As they moved through this unprotected road junction, Parker realized that its defensive importance had been overlooked by the generals and without orders set up his three guns with barrels leveled for direct fire. As stray armor, anti-aircraft equipment and men wandered up, he added them to his force and held off the enemy for several days until they were overwhelmed by the armor and grenadiers of the 2nd SS "Das Reich" Panzer Division. The leader of the attacking force, a veteran of many savage battles on the Eastern front, called this clash his toughest and most violent experience in the war. Das Reich had gained much notoriety earlier in France when one of its units locked more than two hundred men, women and children in the village church of Oradour-sur-Glane and set it afire. Perhaps the makers of Mel Gibson's movie **The Patriot** used this episode as an inspiration for their undocumented depiction of similar terror in our Revolutionary War.

Suddenly as we neared Parker's Crossroads, the traffic began to increase and parked cars lined the roadside. Young people with skis on their shoulders also slowed our passage. Christian and Henri shook their fists and muttered, "Hollanders," and other things in French, as we passed several cars with Dutch license plates. They explained that this area, one of the highest in the Ardennes, had become a popular winter resort area, especially for cross country skiing, not only for the locals but also for people from the cities in Belgium and surrounding European countries. They resented the best property falling into the hands of the latter, especially the Dutch who they said controlled the money in northern Europe.

MYSTICAL CONTEXTS

High spirits and the contagious sense of camaraderie that we had witnessed in the Grand Place in Brussels and on the train were much in evidence here, but an abrupt change of mood came for me as we reached the road junction. Years ago a memorial had been dedicated to the defenders with flags, a rough boulder and a 105mm howitzer like those that had stood there against the invaders.

Now at Christmastide a tree had been added, its branches covered in snow and golden lights. High in the background other golden lights over the motorway seemed to float in the snowy haze.

In this mystical context the Christmas tree seemed to merge with the boulder and the gun in signifying the valor of man willingly giving his life for his fellow man.



A Christmas tree was also featured at the "original Alamo" when Sarah and I were there a few weeks before my trip to the Ardennes and area.

By coincidence just a few weeks earlier while visiting our daughter in Texas, we had seen a tree with decorations in front of the original Alamo. The story of the Alamo has been one of the most interesting subjects in American history for me.

Its commander, William Barret Travis, and his intrepid courier, James Butler Bonham, who returned to the besieged compound from a mission and faced certain death, were born in the same little community in South Carolina some fifty miles above Columbia and died together in the final attack by the Mexicans.

My experiences in the Schnee Eifel and at St. Vith have sharpened this interest.

In both situations decisions were made at the command level for withdrawal to more defensible positions.

In the Schnee Eifel the regimental commander had instructed those units not caught in the hapless entrapment to get back through the enemy to friendly lines, if possible.

At St. Vith the plan of the generals had been to delay the German advance and then fall back to a more defensible line, if possible.

In my mind has always lurked the question of my response if volunteers had been sought to join a stand to the end with a man like Travis at the Alamo and Parker at his crossroads, much less of my committing an act of individual self-sacrifice such as Bonham's voluntary return to die with his comrades.

Could any of the spirited young skiers in Belgium or the weary tourists in Texas have had such thoughts or sensed this significance of *Parker's Crossroads* or the *Alamo*?

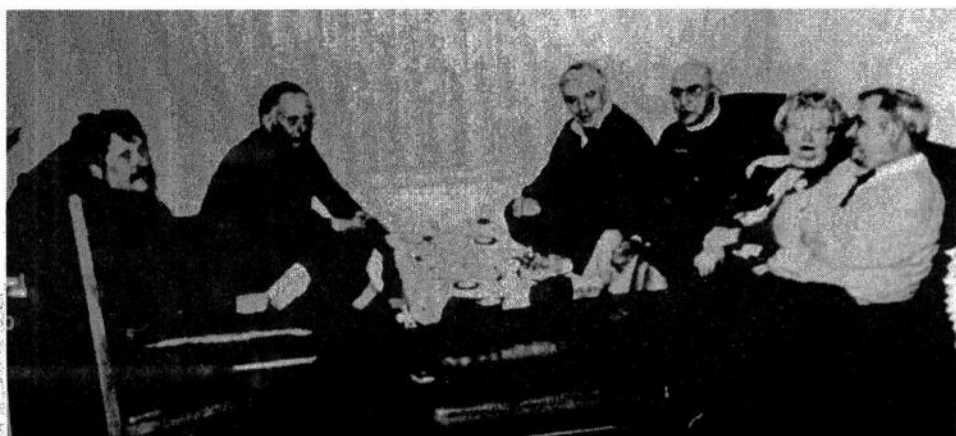


Rob, my son, and I welcomed the warmth of the Rikken's home in GOUVY, Belgium, though I kept on my WWII sweater reworm for the trip.

JOURNEY'S END AT GOUVY

WITH FRIENDS FROM CRIBA

By coincidence, John Kline, the 106th's webmaster and editor, was in the Ardennes to plan a spring tour in coordination with CRIBA so Christian and Henri had planned to meet him at Gouvvy where he was visiting Willi and Adda Rikken also members of the Belgian organization. So leaving the golden glow of the crossroads for dim roads through the countryside, we headed for Gouvvy about fifteen miles to the southeast close to the German border. There in the Rikken's cozy home we were treated to a variety of Belgian refreshments including wine bottled by CRIBA in 1994 to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the *Battle of the Ardennes*.



We enjoyed refreshment, in the Rikken home, with my son, left and I, and on the right. Henri ROGISTER C.R.I.B.A. Secretary (next to window); John Kline 423/M, then Adda RIKKEN, well known to the 106th Association and Christian KRAFT, President of C.R.I.B.A, "Center for Research and Information Battle of the Ardennes," known in the USA as "*The Battle of the Bulge*."

Return and Remembrance, John Califf, 423rd Infantry, I&R Platoon

Adda has been honored by the 106th Association for her devotion in caring for graves of men from the division at Henri Chapelle and the memorial to Lt. Eric Wood, a man in the cast of Bonham, who had roamed alone in the forest near Meyerode and harassed the surrounding Germans for days before being tracked down and killed.

She was quite taken with my wearing the dog tags and Red Cross issue sweater from my previous visit to her country so many years ago.

Kline settled his business with Henri and Christian and we went back into the frigid night for the ride to the railroad station at Liege. Rob and I said farewell to them with sincere expressions of gratitude.

Many of the roads and super-highways in Belgian had been closed during this huge snow-storm. Willy and Adda had picked up Kline at the Luxembourg airport, a couple days before, and barely made it off the Luxembourg/Brussels super-highway, before that major road was closed. Our group, Ron and I with Henri and Christian, were lucky to not be snowed in. The amount snow was reminiscent of the days in the winter of 1944-45.

In our two day return trip we had revisited so many of the places that were important to my wartime experience. Because of time and weather restrictions we did not get to see others including Vielsalm, Harre, Ferrieres and the unidentified village southwest of St. Vith where the inhabitants had taken the platoon into their homes for food and a warm rest by their firesides even as the Germans neared. In January 2002, with the help of our Belgian friends, this village was finally located and its story is included further on with accounts of two other places that we missed.



A view as we approached the driveway of the Adda and Willy RIKKEN home Gouvvy, Belgium, about 1.5 miles from the Luxembourg border, December 1989. Note the thickness of the snow on the trees and hedges.



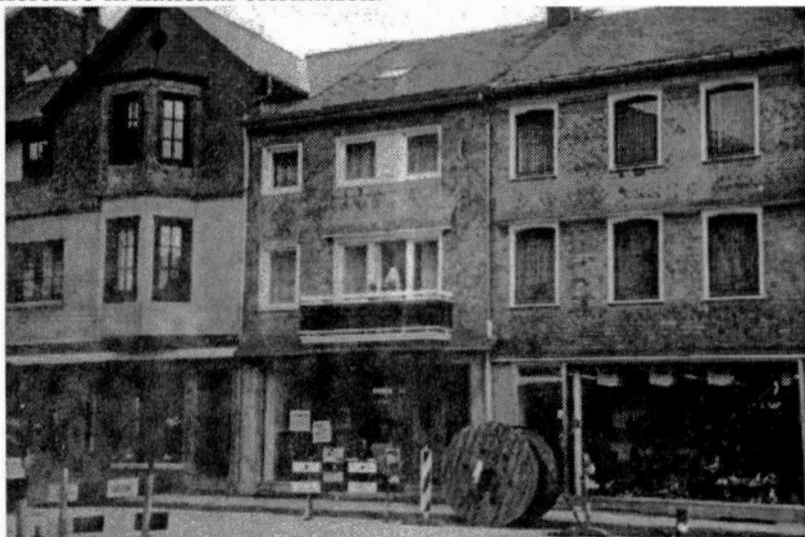
The house with the balcony in this photograph triggered a strange recall.

A DIFFERENT KIND OF TRADING CARD

RITTERKREUZTRAGER

One of my boyhood treasures was a German Iron Cross decoration, brought back from World War I by my father. Its honored Knight's Cross, along with the famous "Blue Max", had dangled from the uniform collar of the Red Baron, Manfred von Richtofen, who intrigued my young mind. Hitler revived and revised the medal, replacing the old imperial crown at the center with a swastika and emphasizing greater courage and devotion to the Third Reich with the awarding of the Knight's Cross and the addition of oak leaves, swords and diamonds.

Above a shop in an apartment with a balcony overlooking Main Street in St. Vith an interesting aspect of the famous decoration was found during our short stay. On a table was a stack of cards, each with a photograph of a military man wearing the Knight's Cross under which was a short write-up about the recipient. These cards were similar in size and composition to the trading cards so familiar to American boys, but so different in content. War heroes versus sports stars and Indian chiefs, quite a difference in national orientation.



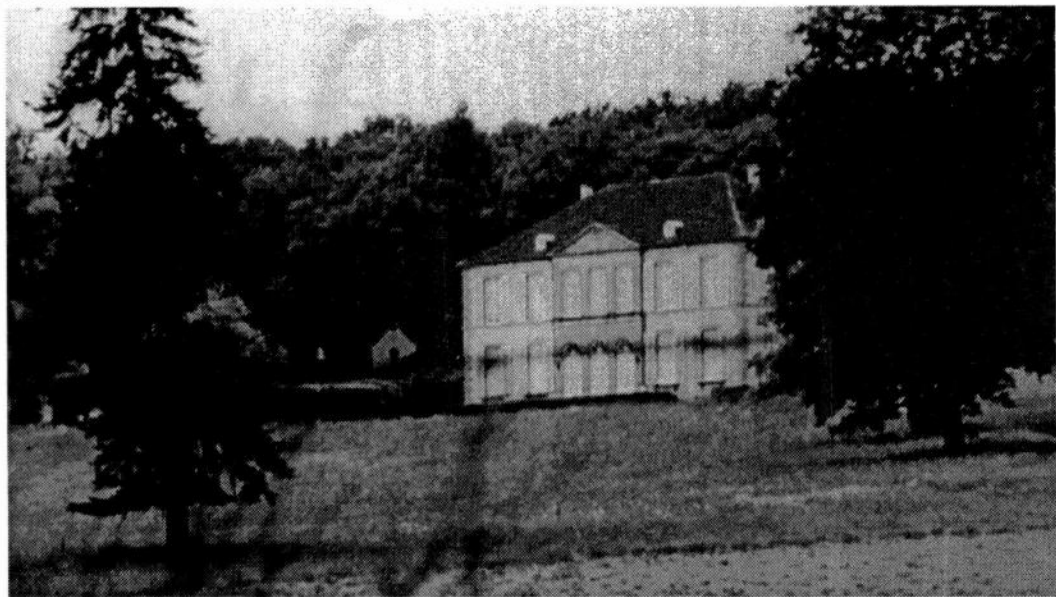
Anne-Marie Simon found and photographed this house, one of a few to survive the war, as it is now.

One of the photographs in Anne Marie Simon's material showed a tank and some troops from the 7th Armored after the recapture of St. Vith in front of that wartorn shop and apartment with the balcony, right out of my memory. When I wrote her about the cards, she found that the surviving walls of the building had been used in the postwar reconstruction effort and sent me some photos of its new look and of an interesting poster. Issued by the Supreme Command of the Army, it showed some of the winners of the Knight's Cross, the Ritterkreuzträger, ranging in rank from Field Marshal Rommel to a private first class. Apparently, the material on each winner had been reprinted on an individual card and both the posters and the cards were issued regularly to the population as a part of the incessant Nazi propaganda effort.



THE CHATEAU OF BARON MOFART LOCATED BY A DETERMINED BELGIAN

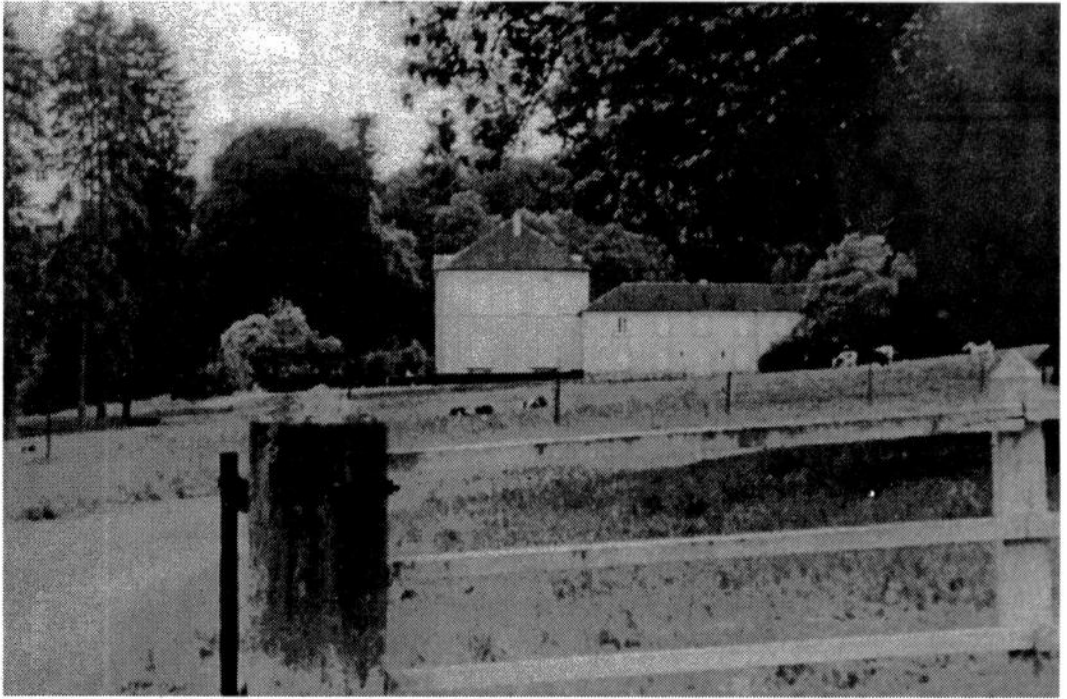
Also missed on our tour was a fine country house where the platoon had been billeted while serving as security guard for the 424th regimental headquarters. In his journal Dick Sparks had placed it near the town of Louveigne between the Ardennes and Liege, beyond the boundaries of our tour. When Dick made his return trip, he and Henri had failed to find it and later he asked me what I remembered.



The terrace side of the chateau overlooking the lawn with the lake and the summer house to the left.

The chateau was set in a landscaped park featuring specimen trees, an artificial lake and a summer house. It was a tall, two story mansion with a high roof and lower wings housing the kitchen, stables and servants' quarters and forming an entrance court.

At the rear arched French doors opened onto a terrace which overlooked the lake. Inside, a large entrance hall with a wide staircase and faux-marble walls and columns led past several rooms to a salon across the rear from which the arched doors went to the terrace. In this room was a grand piano and large prints and memorabilia of the Napoleonic era and one of the other rooms off of the hall had a huge cabinet of dark, heavily carved wood.



Cattle rest on the lawn near the chateau and it's kitchen wing.

We had slept in the high attic where there was an armoire filled with the papers of a Baron Mofart, a *punny* name to Americans. A surly local caretaker on the premises had brushed aside any questions about the family.

Dick relayed these recollections to Henri who immediately took off to look for the chateau of the gassy baron. After searching in the vicinity of Louveigne in vain, he found the estate near the village of Baugnee, some ten miles to the west. Its occupants were as evasive as the old caretaker and refused to let Henri go inside or take pictures, but did verify my recollections of the interior. Unfortunately, we have no information on the baron.

He could have been one of Napoleon's functionaries in that part of Europe, or perhaps a local aristocrat or an industrialist who had been titled in the later Belgian tradition.

It would be interesting to know what had transpired at the chateau to make its taciturn inhabitants so different from the other warm and friendly Belgians whom we had met.



Neundorf - The village looked just like this as the I&R Platoon approached it on December 22, 1944.

NEUNDORF

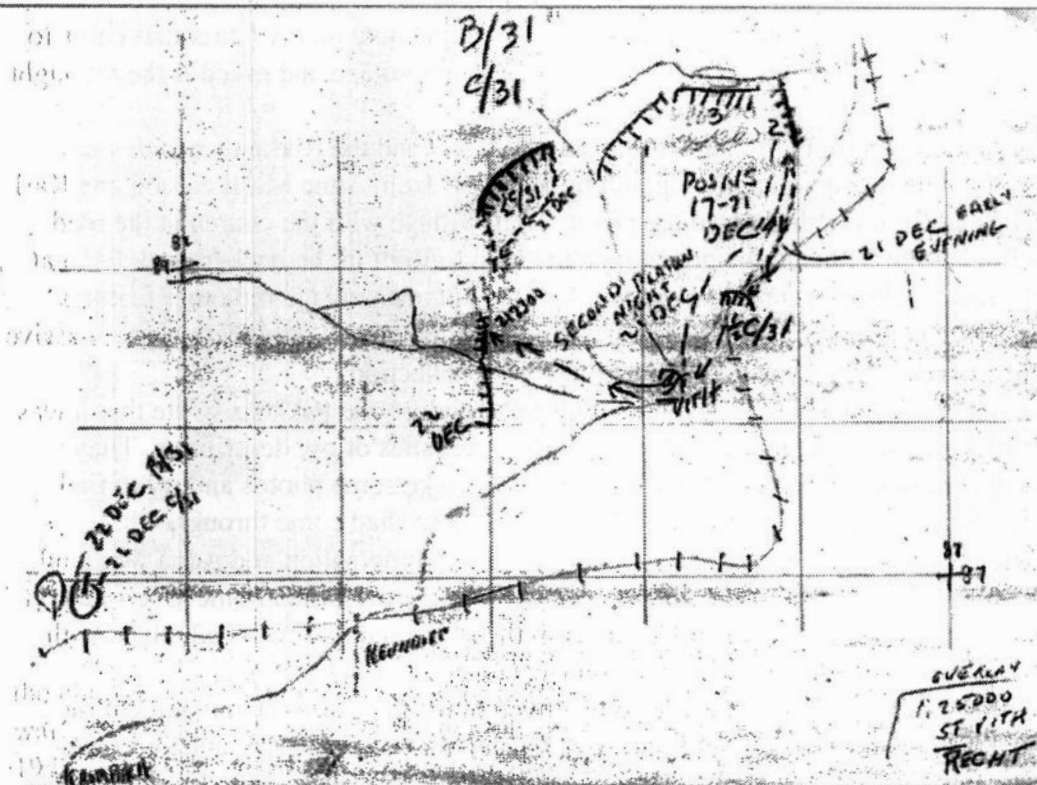
A VILLAGE FOUND

After three years of travel, research and correspondence verifiable information was still lacking on one important place in the I&R experience - the little village which had offered us warmth and food on our trek to find our division headquarters after the fall of St.Vith. In *A Walk Through the Woods* Dick Sparks said that it was "probably Poteau". However, later battle reports showed that back-and-forth fights had been going on there for four days and that German advances, following up on the kampfguppe spearheads, had not yet reached the area through which we were moving on the morning of December 22nd. My recollection of that village is as follows:

The night before we had been the last organized infantry unit to get out of St.Vith, riding the last tanks of the 7th Armored on the last road open to the west and the new line of resistance. A mile or so up this road they stopped and set up a defensive line on a wooded hillside and luckily the Germans stopped in St.Vith to take advantage of the warm houses and American supplies and equipment to be found there. After a frigid, snowy night the tanks pulled out and we went to look for 106th headquarters, reportedly in Vielsalm. Artillery and small arms fire was heard in every direction as we trudged off through the snow.

Before noon we came to a road and followed it to the outskirts of a village. After crossing a small stream we passed a house with an attached barn or service building set off by itself on the right with a wooded hillside behind it.

Further ahead this road crossed another which went through the village on the left and by a church on the right. At this junction we were met by a group of inhabitants concerned about the stream of American traffic passing by headed west and the increasing noise of battle to the east.



An overlay by the 7th Armored Division trace the movement of C/31 and the I&R Platoon from St. Vith to the position on the Rodt road.

In spite of this concern they invited us into their homes for a hot meal by their firesides. My squad went to the first house on the outskirts where we were welcomed by two women and several children.

Our apprehension grew when we learned that the man of the house was away in the German army. After we had eaten, the unmistakable sound of enemy automatic weapons seemed very close and we were quickly on our way, catching a ride on some trucks from the 106th which luckily happened by. As the trucks pulled out, my eye for detail caught the village church with its tower, steeple, steep roof, white walls with stone buttresses at the corners and cemetery surrounded by a stone wall.

In addition to this memory of the village there were two other sources in my collection which yielded both verification and new information. Sam Bordelon's account of this incident quoted in *A Walk Through the Woods* has many of the same facts as mine. Dick's map of our trek, though somewhat blurred, shows only one village, Neundorf, within range to the southwest of St. Vith which had a church with a cemetery and a road crossing a small stream from the direction in which we had come that morning.

Contained in the combat interviews of the 7th Armored's 31st Tank Battalion is an overlay which shows Company C on December 21-22, moving from St. Vith back to a position on the road to Rodt in approximately the same place that Dick showed the I&R platoon on his map.

About a mile and a half below that position is Neundorf.

With these clues it seemed to me that this had to be the friendly village, but photographs were needed to compare with the scenes in my memory.

So again my Belgian friends came through. In the note on my Christmas cards to them last December I described the situation and the village and asked if they thought that it could have been Neundorf.

Soon the mail brought maps from Henri Rogister and the Rikken's which were coordinated with an aerial photograph of Neundorf from Anne Marie Simon and Karl Noel. This photograph showed the layout of the village with the church at the road junction and St. Vith and the position on the road to Rodt in the background. Even at such small scale the church looked familiar, but summer foliage hid other features such as the house near it on the outskirts and the little stream, and there was a massive triple arched railroad trestle of which I had no recollection.

Living in Gouvvy about ten miles south of Neundorf, the Rikkens wrote that it was the only village in the area which had the characteristics of my description. They volunteered to drive up and look over the village, take some photos and try to find some "old people" who may have been there when we had come through.

The results of their visit were awaited with great anticipation and Adda was kind enough to call me with some good news as soon as they returned home. She said that they had gotten some photos of Neundorf in the snow and that they had talked with two "old people" who had been there on December 22, 1944.

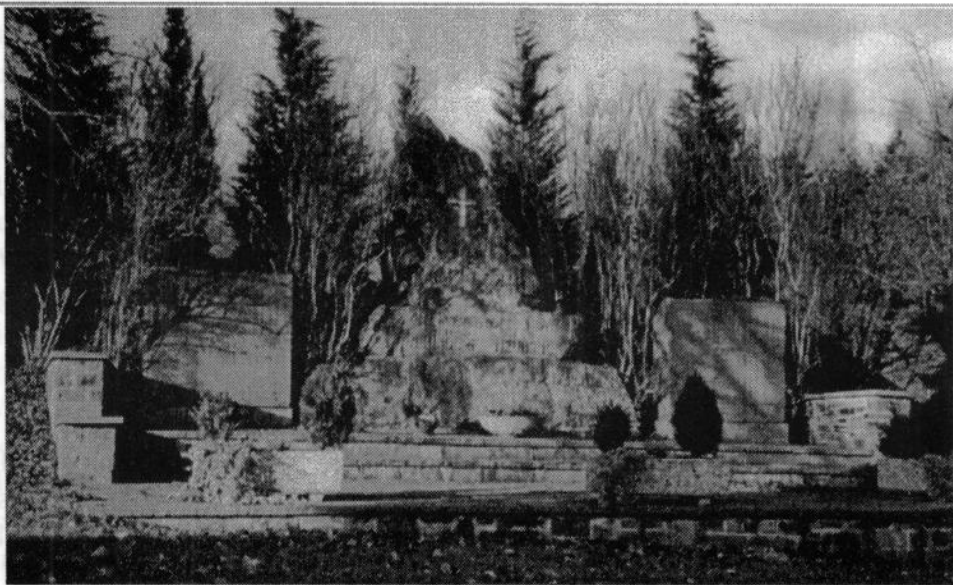
One had been a girl of eleven who had lived in the house on the outskirts of the village beyond the church. Her father was serving the German army and she and a sister were at home with their mother when the Americans had come. Another had been a teenage boy whose home was in the small line of dwellings on the other side of the church and also took in some GI's.

Soon afterwards the photographs arrived and several looked like they could have been printed right out of my memory if such a thing were possible. One showed the road going into the village from the direction of St. Vith, crossing over the small stream and passing the house with an attached structure on the right before reaching the junction with another road to the small group of buildings on the left.

At the right of this junction was the church exactly as I had seen it more than fifty years ago with its white walls and stone buttresses, high pitched roof and bulky tower with a tall steeple. The cemetery lay between the church and the high stone wall which bordered the roads running around it.

The house on the outskirts near the church looked familiar with a wooded rise behind it and appeared to be the one in which we had been fed and warmed up. However, this rise was turned out to be, not a hillside, but an embankment for the railroad tracks on up to the trestle which somehow had escaped my memory.

It may have been obscured by snow or mist or some trick of the mind. In spite of this lapse all of the other evidence apparently seems to confirm Neundorf as the friendly village.



The somber Germanic memorial to the men of the Nuendorf area lost in World War I and World War II.

Several other photos from Anne Marie and Karl included, in addition to details of the church, a war memorial to men from the area who had been lost in the two world wars. The somber stone slabs list more than forty dead and missing in the battles of 1940-1945, almost all before we were cared for in their village. In sharp contrast on the night before while trying to get through the streets of St. Vith, we had been fired upon by some of the inhabitants from their second story windows.

In **Battle** John Toland tells of another “good German-bad German” happening that night. On one of those tanks a GI started singing *Silent Night*. Others joined in, including two captured grenadiers in their native tongue.

“Schlauf im himmlischer Ruh,

Sleep in heavenly peace.”

The song was ended. The tanks, with clanking treads muffled by the rising drifts of snow, disappeared into the dark.”

RESEMBLANCE OR REALITY?

SOME OF BOTH

In looking at photographs relating to the Battle of the Bulge published in newspapers, magazines and books or shown on television, it is often difficult to keep fiction from becoming fact. The I&R platoon was photographed after getting back through the German lines to St. Vith and was shown correctly in the newsreels and print media of the day. Later in postwar documentaries we were sometimes misidentified as being all over the Bulge including Bastogne. Some photos of the time have men or equipment with strong, but unconfirmed, resemblances to ours like those shown here. One of the sequences from a captured Nazi newsreel seemed to show our vehicles after we had left them burning near Radschied. In *Nuts! The Battle of the Bulge* further close-up shots and documentation proved that these vehicles were from the 14th Calvary Group ambushed by SS Kampfgruppe Hansen near Poteau.



"Rat" Califf



Captain Sam



Colonel Cavender

SIX MONTHS LATER

A LETTER TO CAPTAIN SAM

In the early 1990's John Kline, the editor of **The Cub**, sent me a copy of this letter which he had come across while reviewing the papers of the late Colonel Charles Cavender, commanding officer of the 423rd Infantry Regiment. It had originally been written to **Captain Sam Davis**, my company commander, and forwarded by him to the colonel. I have absolutely no recollection of having written it, especially on a typewriter. Perhaps Sam copied my handwritten or handprinted letter and sent out carbon copies to some of his fellow officers who had been captured.

Originally written at Welch Convalescent Hospital in Daytona Beach, Florida, it has been edited to correct typos and errors and to take out some material of a personal nature. This letter and Dick Sparks' **A Walk Through The Woods** give very similar accounts of some of the same happenings.)

16 July 1945

Dear Captain Sam,

You don't know how glad I was to hear from you today. I had been wondering ever since December 19th what had happened to you and the rest of headquarters company. The I&R platoon certainly was lucky to escape. **The story is a long one as follows:**

On the night of December 18th we were put on a road block at the crossroads between the remainder of the regiment and the little town near which the fight had occurred that afternoon. At dawn on the 19th we saw a terrific artillery bombardment fall on the area in which we had presumed the regiment was. Apparently the Germans did not see us at the crossroads. After about an hour when things had quieted down a bit, Lt. Long decided to move the platoon down and see what had happened. So we moved down the road in our vehicles with a TD, a half track which we had picked up and a 2 1/2 ton truck with all of our belongings and two .50 calibers.

When we pulled up on a rise in the ground, we saw a tremendous crowd of Americans with white flags and their hands up and we realized the fate of the regiment. Just then we were spotted and direct fire came in on us. We did the only sensible thing that we could. With the little time left we tried to set fire to the vehicles and took off on foot with all of the ammo that we could carry, discarding overshoes and overcoats.

Skirting the little town, we ran into Maj. Helms who had a collection of stragglers including part of A Co. with Capt. Nauman, Lt. McKinley and some of his ASP platoon and a bunch of T.D.s.

Lt. Long tried to persuade Helms to destroy the vehicles and try to infiltrate through in small groups, but he wouldn't listen.

Almost as soon as the convoy pulled out, direct fire came tearing in again and they pulled into some heavy woods. Helms wouldn't destroy the vehicles, so Long got us together and with Nauman and McKinley and their men we took off leaving the others to their fate. Not long after we left, an intense barrage rolled in on them.

We split up into two groups, Nauman and McKinley with Long. Everything was going well until Nauman got trapped in another town. Our group moved all that night passing German outposts and coming very close to the German tank columns moving up, crossing roads between vehicles and such.

We traversed some treacherous territory, up and down mountaineous hills, through dense forests, wading icy streams. Towards morning Dick Sparks and I were separated from Long's crowd and got with McKinley's. Once we stopped for a rest and some German tanks almost ran over us. Finally we rested for a few hours, then as it began to get light, we could hear Germans talking all around us. Luckily, they moved off and so did we. Travelling all day in the woods as much as possible, we moved at top speed for we knew if we didn't reach our lines soon, the enemy advance would completely engulf us again. We could hear artillery barrages in all directions.

Once while in the woods we thought that we heard 2 1/2 ton trucks on a road nearby so we, crept up to see. They were 2 1/2s, but they were loaded with enemy troops and accompanied by their own tanks, assault guns, etc.* We had to drop quick and I happened to be on the edge of the woods. They stopped and set up their command post right there. One German with a machine pistol came up within a few yards of where I lay, but either thought that I was dead or didn't see me. Finally we moved out of there after dark, then ran into an outpost at a road juncture and wiped it out. Now we were in between the Americans and the Germans preparing for the final push on St.Vith, dodging artillery from both.

Finally before dawn on the morning of the 21st we hit an outpost of the 7th Armored. They said that it was impossible to have gotten through the extensive mine fields and trip wires, any one of which, if hit, would have brought down everything that the 7th had on that area.

At the S-2 position of the 7th's combat command we met Spier and Brendlinger who had become separated from the group. They had run smack into another concentration of Germans, but Spier saved the day by explaining in his perfect German that they were Germans going out as spies. Amazingly, the Germans believed him and luckily, they didn't ask Brendlinger any questions.

We were carried into St.Vith and, much to our dismay, learned that it was almost completely surrounded, that the 106th Hq had long left and the 7th was preparing to leave. At that time we were the only known survivors of the 422nd and the 423rd.

The 424th was lucky in having a better position with respect to the German plan of attack and had not been completely cut off as we were. A war correspondent said that our story was one of the best of the war and newsreels were taken of us.

Return and Remembrance, John Califf, 423rd Infantry, I&R Platoon

About noon that day the Germans began a terrific bombardment and kept it up all day. That night there was only one road open and the 7th began pulling out. We were ordered to remain behind as a rear guard with some tanks, T.D.s and armored infantry. So there we stayed knowing that the end was near. After several hours the artillery lifted and the Germans started dropping in those brilliant flares which lit the place up brighter than day and then some Tiger tanks came rolling in and had a point blank fight with our armor.

We had been deployed alongside them as flank protection. Our armor and the buildings around us were hit by the fire from the Tigers and we were all pretty well dazed. When we came to our senses, some of the tanks were blazing, but amazing as it seems, the platoon was still intact. Further back in town, we hopped the surviving tanks and rode out on the only remaining open road. It was covered with 88 and M.G. fire just above our heads, but somehow we all got back to high ground where the 7th was planning a stand.

The snow really fell that night and by the next morning we were in bad shape so we were sent back to report to 106th Hq. After stumbling around all day, we finally ran into some of the 424th artillery and caught a ride back to Vielsalm only to find that Hq had just pulled out, but Lt. Dick White, 423rd liaison officer at division, got us a good place to stay for the night. At last, we thought, a good night's sleep! But about two o'clock in the morning we were awakened, told that Vielsalm was expected to fall at any minute and packed into a truck. For the next day we were hop, skip and jump ahead of the Germans and finally caught up with division headquarters at Ferrieres, at last in a safe place. The few survivors of the 422nd and 423rd were assembled there and we got a few days rest. Heidepriem and Annable, another radioman who had been attached to a calvary unit and had gotten through, came in. M/Sgt Givens, Charlie Sartori and Capt. — were also there.

Then a very terrible thing happened after all that we had been through together without losing a man, a rifle accidentally went off while being cleaned, killing Bill Morris instantly and severely wounding Felix Henderson. That was almost the straw that broke the camel's back. The division G-2 wanted to keep us as a unit and assigned us to 424th headquarters. That didn't last long, however, and the platoon was broken up and we were scattered as individuals throughout the 424th.

Lt. Long was made 1st Bn S-2 and Casenheiser and a few of the fellows went with him. Bulman, Dentz, Sheehan, Spier and myself went to A Co. which had suffered heavy casualties and were made squad leaders. I lasted until the middle of January though my feet were getting numb and it was getting hard to move about. Then during an attempt to take a small village we were caught in an artillery barrage and had a good many killed and wounded. Sheehan was hit in the neck by shrapnel and I had a close call from a near miss. The medics also found that my feet were severely frozen and Sheehan and I were evacuated together. Survivors from the 424th whom I met back in various hospitals said that regiment had caught hell, so I don't know how many of our old I&R men were left when the division was reorganized in April. I'm still pretty well messed up, but hope to be out of the army within the next two months. — Thus ends my story.

* German information published after the war had elements of both the Fuhrer Escort

Return and Remembrance, John Califf, 423rd Infantry, I&R Platoon

Now there are some questions that I want to ask you. Do you remember what happened to Prater, who was with the S-2 section and not with us? Was Col. Nagle killed?

I didn't see his name on the captured list in the Army-Navy Journal. How did Col. Cavender take the capture? What happened after we last saw you?

Incidentally, I saw a captured German newsreel which showed what looked like some of our I&R vehicles burning just after we had left them. The more I read of the breakthrough the more I am convinced that the 106th and the 99th were used as bait to draw the Germans out of the Siegfried Line to fight in the open. Maybe some day it will come out.

I hope that you are back to normal again and enjoying life. Please write again soon.

As always,
"Rat" Califf

AN I&R ALLEGORY

A MIDNIGHT CLEAR

In the spring of 1992 reviews for **A Midnight Clear**, a movie set in the Bulge, appeared in several magazines. After reading these reviews it seemed probable to me that it was about the experience of GI's from an I&R platoon. Seeing the movie and reading the book upon which it was based confirmed this and the detail and insight contained in both made it almost certain that the author would had to have been an I&R man. Though our experience lacked the haunting allegorical atmosphere of the book and movie, so many of the adventures and misadventures of this group were eerily similar to ours as was its cast of characters, nicknames and things like the chateau with faux-marble columns in its entrance hall, the death of a comrade, the jeep accident, both the weary and the fanatical Germans.

Dick Sparks even suspected that the author William Wharton, who had used a pen-name, may have been one of the several non-responding members of our group and got in touch with him through the book publisher. He had been in an I&R platoon in another division at the southern end of the Bulge and after the war had become a painter and a writer living on a houseboat in the river Seine near Paris. None of us were so fortunate as to have such a romantic life-style!

Later Wharton was in Columbia for a book signing at a bookstore right down the street and we had an interesting session about our similar experiences. His plot and characters were real, only slightly modified for the allegorical story. There really were only six surviving men from his squad. The other squad from his platoon actually had gone out on a patrol, never to be seen or heard from again. Such probably would have been the fate of the 423rd I&R had it been in action longer. A study of the intelligence and reconnaissance platoon as a combat unit would be interesting to read. Perhaps one exists in the archives of the Infantry School.

Wharton's message is about the stupidity of war. The dedication to his book reads: To those ASTPers who never reached majority . . . We need you now.

BATTLE OF THE BULGE

THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE-A QUICK LOOK AT THE BIG PICTURE

In the military history of our nation the Battle of the Bulge was a paradox - its largest campaign beginning with a major defeat and ending in a great victory. Many books, studies and analyses about it have appeared since its occurrence more than a half century ago now. A very short condensation of this massive conflict seems desirable here to provide a background for the situations which involved a small infantry unit in an ill-fated infantry division around which it swirled.

By the early fall of 1944 the forces of the Third Reich were being pushed back on all fronts. In the East the Russian summer offensive had reached the German border with Poland. In the West the Allies had gotten out of the Normandy beachheads in July and had reached the river Seine and Paris by the end of August, then had rapidly advanced to the Siegfried Line by the middle of September. These forces were stretched out from the North Sea down to southern France with their supply lines running back to the beachheads. To provide a closer source of the vast supplies necessary for the final push to the Rhine and the industrial heartland of Germany the reopening of the great Belgian port of Antwerp was being anticipated.

Meanwhile, the 28th Infantry Division crossed the Our River and the 4th broached some of the bunkers of the Siegfried Line on the Schnee Eifel before being mauled by the elite 2nd and 2nd SS Panzers. These successful counterattacks by panzer units through this area in the midst of defeat prompted Adolf Hitler to plan a breakthrough here to recapture Antwerp and change the course of the struggle. German attacks through this area had been successful by calvary in 1914 and by armor in 1940. Against the advice of his generals and at great cost to the overall defense of the Fatherland, Hitler ordered the secret massing of thirteen volksgrenadier (infantry) and five panzer divisions, totalling some 250,000 troops, 700 tanks and assault guns and 2,600 artillery pieces and rocket launchers with three divisions and two brigades in reserve.

Facing this massive buildup stretched out along a seventy five mile front at more than four times the recommended coverage, were only six American infantry divisions and a lightly armored calvary group, backed up by widely dispersed units of an armored division and bereft of readily available reserves. Their men and equipment totalled 83,000 troops, 400 tanks and tank destroyers and 400 artillery pieces, creating a German advantage of 1.7 to 1 in armor, 3 to 1 in men and almost 7 to 1 in artillery. However, even considering the long supply lines, the Americans had an advantage in the availability of fuel and ammunition of which the Germans had serious shortages. To cover the more than 125 miles from the front to Antwerp the panzers would have to depend on captured fuel and much of their artillery was horse drawn as was the ammunition supply for it and for their unbelievably rapid firing automatic weapons. In strategic planning German capabilities were underestimated by the Americans and overestimated by themselves to the detriment of both sides.

Antwerp is on a wide, undulating plain, open eastward to the Meuse River and then was covered with a good road network for the movement of armor. However to reach the Meuse from Germany attacking forces had to push eastward through the Eifel and the Ardennes, rough and heavily forested terrain crossed by rivers with deep gorges which the major north-south roads parallel.

Connecting east-west roads were narrow and often unpaved in a geological area with soft soil making the movement of armor and heavy trucks very difficult in rainy weather and cross-country. There were no cities in the region and the larger towns with several thousand people developed around the major crossroads of St. Vith, Manhay, Clervaux and Bastogne. Possession of these crossroad towns and the smaller crossroad villages was vital to the success of the breakthrough.

The German strategy was to concentrate heavy artillery and infantry attacks on weakly defended access points along the front to make openings for the advance of powerful armored spearheads to the important crossroads, then to the Meuse and the open highways beyond to Antwerp. These attacks were not to begin until meteorologists could predict at least a week of typical Ardennes winter weather with thick clouds, mist and fog which would ground Allied air power. To accomplish this mission a strict timetable was set. There would be one day to breach the front lines, another to cross the rugged terrain of the Eifel and the Ardennes and a third to reach the banks of the Meuse.

Two puzzling aspects of American planning and command greatly aided the enemy effort. First, the Losheim Gap, scene of the German breakthroughs in 1914 and 1940, was one of the weakest points in the First Army front which lay between the junction of the 99th and 106th Infantry Divisions covered only by the light tanks and armored cars of the 14th Cavalry Group. A similar situation existed to the south at the Bleialf road junction between the 423rd and 424th Regiments of the 106th. Then there was the complete disregard by the staffs from the corps level on up through the supreme command of reports from intelligence sources ranging from infantry combat patrols in close contact to aerial reconnaissance. These reports indicated a major enemy buildup of panzer units with heavy support behind the front lines in the Eifel, yet no counter-measures were even contemplated, much less taken.

This incredible buildup was accomplished with hand delivered orders and messages in complete radio and telephone silence. The best divisions and brigades in the west and the east were brought together to form the 6th SS Panzer Army from Losheim north, the 5th Panzer Army south to the all infantry 7th Army, all under Army Group B. They were retrofitted with men and equipment as much as possible with the four units bearing variations of the Fuhrer's name getting the best of everything available. The 1st SS Adolf Hitler Liebstandarte and the 12th SS Hitler Youth Panzer Divisions and the Fuhrer Escort and Grenadier Brigades personified this effort as his brainchild.

Early in the morning of December 16th after intense artillery barrages, volksgrenadiers and assault guns attacked weak points in the American lines opening the way for the armored kampfgруппes of the 1st and 12th SS panzers to break through the Losheim Gap. Further south near Clervaux, similar action occurred with the crack regular army 2nd, 116th and Panzer Lehr divisions advancing. During the next two days these spearheads pushed forward some twenty miles on either side of St. Vith and in between them another attack took Bleialf and the road north from there to Losheim paralleling the Our River, thus encircling the two 106th regiments in a double noose ten miles out in front. This action separated them from the third regiment, the 424th, which with help from a combat command of the 9th Armored was able to fall back into the defense line which was being formed around St. Vith.

There was no withdrawal possible now for the two encircled regiments which had little ammunition and no resupply, reinforcement, support or clear orders from division or corps due to poor communication, both verbally and technically. With only small arms they thrashed around in the trap and attempted to get to Schönberg to deny the enemy use of the Bleialf-Losheim road, but were quashed by their heavy firepower. Since further resistance would have resulted in mass slaughter for no strategic purpose, the regimental commanders had to give up with more than 7,000 men, the greatest mass surrender of Americans after Bataan. Some seventy men who had been separated from these regiments in the melee were able to get to St. Vith through the Germans individually or in small groups which included our 423rd I&R platoon whose experiences have been chronicled here.

All armored, infantry and airborne divisions not on line were being rushed in to stop the breakthrough. The 7th Armored barely got from Holland to St. Vith before the major access roads were cut by the panzers. Armored elements of Patton's Third Army headed for Bastogne as did the 101st Airborne as the 82nd Airborne along with the veteran 30th Infantry Division built up a new defensive line in the sector between Stavelot and Manhay.

Among the first troops committed to protect St. Vith had been the men of the 168th and the 106th's 81st Combat Engineers whose command post had been there along with that of the division. They were joined by the 106th's 424th and the 28th's 112th regiments along with the 9th Armored's CCB as they fell back from the original front lines. Eventual command of the "fortified goose egg" defense went to the 7th Armored when it arrived with its three combat commands. After several days this defensive operation found itself being pounded on three, and almost four sides by the enemy buildup and it was ordered to hold the vital road center as long as movement was still possible to the more defensible Stavelot-Manhay line being set up some twenty miles back. Having gained access to the road network from the Eifel to St. Vith, the Germans brought up their heavy Tiger tanks and overwhelmed the last defenders left in the town on the night of December 21st. The 424th was reorganized as a regimental combat team with other surviving elements of the 106th and replacements and put into the middle of the new defense line.

Massed dug-in troops on the northern shoulder of the breakthrough, the arrival of the 30th Infantry and 82nd Airborne Divisions along the Stavelot-Manhay line and a fuel shortage slowed the advance of the SS kampfgруппes. To the south the racing armored columns of the 5th Panzer Army had been able to get further on towards the Meuse through the loosely defended countryside while the 101st Airborne and CCB of the 10th Armored were holding out at Bastogne. Between there and Manhay the recon battalion of the 2nd Panzers made the deepest enemy penetration almost getting within sight of the Meuse near Dinant before running out of gas and into the British 29th Armored Brigade. At the far southern end of the front the 7th Army without panzers kept up steady pressure with conventional infantry attacks, but gained little ground. With the Allied withdrawals and the steady elimination of resistance between the spearheads the Germans were creating the celebrated bulge, a solid penetration seventy five miles into Belgium and Luxemburg.

Two days before Christmas the foul weather which had kept Allied air support grounded finally broke and more than 3000 bombers, fighter bombers and cargo planes covered the skies. They harassed German armor, supply lines and road networks and dropped food and ammunition down to the besieged troops at Bastogne, allowing it to escape the fate of St. Vith.

For the next month the battle raged on in fierce tank battles and large scale infantry attacks with equally brutal small group and hand to hand fighting. When the tide was finally turned near the end of the year and roles were reversed, the intensity of the struggle did not diminish, though the tactics differed as the Americans moved forward across the entire front instead of in spearheads. By the end of January the fighting was again at the Siegfried Line where it had started and the Battle of the Bulge was over.

Hitler's gamble was costly to both sides in men and material. Official accounts show that Allied losses totalled 80,987 with 10,276 killed, 47,493 wounded and 23,218 missing. The Germans claimed a total of 81,834 casualties (over 100,000 unofficially) with 12,652 killed, 38,600 wounded and 30,582 missing. The U.S. Army lost more than 700 tanks and tank destroyers and the Germans some 800 tanks and assault guns, some of which were left by the roadsides in "factory fresh" condition, but completely out of fuel. Ironically, in spite of massive bombing raids and material shortages, production of German armored vehicles had reached its peak simultaneously with the beginning of the attack in December as the production of fuel to keep them in action declined drastically.

Both sides suffered from the unrelenting attacks of a common enemy. By the end of December the usually bad weather had developed into the worst winter within living memory. In some areas of the Eifel and the Ardennes the temperature normally drops below freezing for almost 150 days out of the year with stiff winds and heavy snow, sometimes accumulating a foot in a day., but in forty five days of the battle it was above freezing for only eight days with lows ranging from 32 to 8 degrees and highs from 42 to 22 degrees. Even those eight days of thawing were bad news for the combatants as they turned unpaved roads into troughs of axle deep mud, impassable even to jeeps much less to armor and loaded trucks.

Studies on winter warfare have shown that a high percentage of casualties to ground troops have been due to the weather, not only directly resulting in freezing and misery, but indirectly hastening death for the badly wounded left exposed for much more than a half hour.

When the deaths and injuries from the cold were added to those from small arms and artillery fire, the results showed that more than ninety per cent of the total American casualties came from the infantry. Post combat analyses concluded that although both sides heavily used armor and artillery, the battle was mainly an infantry fight.

REFLECTION

BELGIUM THROUGH DIFFERENT EYES

(Upon our return from Belgium Rob's wife Lydia commented that he had talked more about that venture than any of his countless trips all over the world in his medical research career. At my request he put his reactions and thoughts in writing. JC)



Robert M. Califf, MD

Increasingly over the past few years, I've marveled at the naive concept I had as a child that adults understand why the world works the way it does. Now that I've reached the venerable age of 47 years, my perspective has changed: adults have no more direct insight into the meaning of the universe than children; instead they have a lifetime of experiences that have shaped their ability to deal with the world as it is. A recent expedition to Belgium with my father opened an avenue to his past and my present that has provided an impetus for many hours of reflection on this subject.

As the beneficiary of an era of prosperity never before experienced in the world, I have been lucky enough to avoid even a second of doubt about the availability of the fundamentals of living. I've been able to attend outstanding schools and to have the freedom to pursue a career as an academic cardiovascular medicine specialist characterized by extraordinary rewards, both human and intellectual.

Part of this blessed existence has been an opportunity to participate in the organization of clinical research studies that involve physicians, nurses, and patients from over thirty countries. This experience has enabled me to develop friendships and to see situations that have provided a broad horizon of possibilities for the future of the human condition. A part of this global effort to improve the plight of patients with vascular disease has been a close collaboration with colleagues at the Catholic University in Leuven, Belgium.

Anyone working in central Europe is immediately aware of the rich texture of cultures within a small geographic distance. Documents and conversations must take into account the differences between French and Flemish Belgium, while just across the borders of the small country of Belgium lie substantial differences in world view — France on one side, the Netherlands in another direction, and Germany to the East. Despite constant awareness of these differences, my professional field has been characterized by a relentless drive across national boundaries to work together to improve the state of the field—suffering from a heart attack is the same in all languages!

As a child, I heard stories of the Battle of the Bulge, but the details escape me and never do I remember hearing the whole story of my father's experience.

I just knew that somehow the War had shaped his view of the world, and in some unexplainable fashion perhaps it had changed the way in which he interacted with the world. He had never mentioned the possibility, or an interest, in going back to the scene to which he was shipped with little preparation during the record-breaking cold winter of 1944.

During the weeks and months leading up to the 50th anniversary of Normandy, it crossed my mind that it would be worthwhile to take my father back for a visit, but I was busy with my own business and initially dismissed the concept. The thought kept crossing my mind, though, and when the opportunity arose last year I called home to see if he would like to accompany me to a medical education meeting in Brussels. He agreed and, although he was reserved about it, his excitement about the trip rapidly became apparent. And so we set out on a late-life father-son pilgrimage to revisit the War scene.

We enjoyed the excellent service of American Airlines from Raleigh-Durham airport to London Gatwick, and from there we were off to Brussels. Dad had carefully planned his trip, and in his usual modest way had packed his belongings in a small set of bags, with most careful attention to the written material from a guide with whom he had been corresponding, Henri Rogister.

On the way to Belgium we noticed that the weather report was unusual—heavy snow was predicted; indeed, the forecast was for the worst snowstorm since ... December, 1944. In my usual haste, I was poorly prepared for the cold weather, but I have gained a sense of trust and confidence in the world, and so we proceeded on regardless.

My first two days were spent at the conference. Dad made an excursion with Henri and then returned to have meals with the group of my cardiologist colleagues gathered at an excellent Belgian hotel. His presence with a group of my peers from all around Europe filled me with emotion. As we described to them the circumstances of our visit, this group of learned academic physicians became extremely personal about their views and experiences related to World War II. Everyone wanted to hear the story of the Americans at the Battle of the Bulge; and in the context of the stories, they readily expressed their tremendous sense of respect for the generation that had defended freedom, while leaving their blood and their friends on the fields of Europe. In a way my Dad was treated like (the kind of man) that he really was. His sense of humility and his respect for my friends set an example that I will never forget. Furthermore, my friends' warm reception of this older man who had sacrificed for our mutual benefit renewed my enthusiasm for the value of our international effort.

Armed with good feelings, my Dad and I set off by train on the third day in a heavy snowstorm. A smiling Henri met us in a (typically) small European car. He and my Dad had set the proposed agenda for the day, and during its course I was privileged to have a remarkable experience.

Through the day, we visited numerous small villages and even entered some houses along the way that were the same ones in which my father had survived the ordeal. Particularly memorable was a visit to a house in which he and a group had stayed that was within shouting distance of the German troops. My father and the matron of the house shared vivid memories of their mutual experience. As Henri listened in and expressed his feelings, the dark side of the cultural differences became evident.

As I enjoy my work very much with Belgian, French, and German colleagues, it is sobering to recognize that just 54 years ago, in the exact same spot in which we were sitting, these same cultures had allowed young men to kill each other at point blank range. And to my horror I heard the stories of civilian massacre in the villages of the Ardennes. What will keep us from continuing to replicate these cycles of cultural hatred that have characterized European history?

While the general theme of suffering is probably no different from Vietnam, Korea, or individual tragedies of everyday life, much of the experience was highly personal—being able to visualize my father's experience in an epic struggle that played a part in shaping the direction of the world for a generation. Visiting the American soldiers' cemetery in the Ardennes, hearing details of the Malmedy Massacre and seeing the crossroads at which the valiant stand was taken by American artillery in the face of inevitable death, I was able to viscerally feel the experience of my father. The indescribable horror of being in a dormitory one day and just a few months later being alone in a strange European country in the worst snowstorm in years—I now understood why it was discussed so little at home.

The unbearable cold and snow of 1998, which must have been close to the exact conditions of 1944, made the experience even more memorable. For reasons that remain unexplained, the American troops at the point of the German attack not only had inadequate munitions but also lacked appropriate cold weather gear. How could they stand the ongoing cold with no opportunity to go into a warm car or put on an extra sweater or coat, and with a greater than one-in-four chance of not emerging from the conflict alive?

Our visit ended with a snack and discussion with a Belgian couple and another survivor of the Battle of the Bulge. Stories were exchanged as we warmed up, and pictures were taken to capture the good memories in a place in which so much suffering had occurred. Henri dropped us off at the station, and we took the train back to Brussels, exhausted and quiet, with much to think about. Our trip home was uneventful and we returned to our previous existence.

I returned to my job of physician in charge of the Cardiac Care Unit to find a resident in training from Germany - one of our brightest and friendliest - busy saving the lives of patients in our intensive care unit. He commented that his uncle had been on the other side but didn't like to talk about his experience there.

What did I learn? We frequently say in medical research that we learned something from the last experiment, but we're just not sure what it was. But here's a try:

My father is a quiet man—I'm now convinced that this is a characteristic emanating from classical male behavior, a somewhat congenital desire to enjoy absence of speech shared with my sons, and a

Return and Remembrance, John Califf, 423rd Infantry, I&R Platoon

result of his experience during the War. I learned of a concussion incurred in action that may also have had a long-lasting effect. The closeness of father and son do not emanate simply from words, but from a primordial common understanding based on experiences—and this one made a huge difference to me. My respect for the man and my gratitude for what he provided increased enormously. I know how extremely lucky I am to be able to have had this experience.

What of his colleagues who never made it home and were left there to be buried on foreign soil? What would they have contributed? How were their families changed? What could have been done to prevent this from happening? Why did some die while others were spared? I have no better answer now than I did when visiting Hiroshima in 1990 or when caring for dying patients throughout my career.

The people of central Europe live in a complex world. The simple friendliness of my colleagues in medical research and the many Belgians who helped us tour the scene, as they have helped thousands of other veterans and their families, provides great hope for the future. The cultural differences can be overcome.

What about the Germans on the other side of the Battle, who as I heard could have been as young as 15? The current generation is living proof that the societal madness of Nazi Germany was a transient derangement—one that should not be forgotten but also one that should not be cast in stone. The descendants of the same people who were attempting to kill my father are now my close colleagues and collaborators.

A final thought—the greatest hope for avoiding repetition of the past is the same instrument that allowed our trip to be so successful—the internet. Not only were most of my communications about the scientific sessions conducted on the internet, but my Dad's planning with his Belgian guide was done "on line". By communicating frequently in a common format we increase our similarities and reduce the opportunity for senseless presumptions about the motives of others.

I have been lucky in many ways throughout my life, and this trip was one of my most fortunate experiences. The opportunity for reflection on it provides continuing motivation—to try to set an example for my own family, to push for continued international collaboration and, above all, to enjoy the effort, for our time on earth is limited.

Robert M. Califf, MD

Return and Remembrance, John Califf, 423rd Infantry, I&R Platoon



In our yard during the 106th's 1994 annual reunion in Columbia, at it's largest gathering were twelve of the eighteen survivors of the I&R Platoon at that time.

Back row l/r: John Califf; Doug Prater; Bob Hirst; Johnny Johnson; Ted Slaby; Bob Brendlinger; Gordon Zicker and Al Shoffit.

Front row sitting l/r: Dick Sparks; Casey Casenhiser; Huck Jones and Irish Sheehan.



Fortunately we were able to return some of the hospitality shown by two of our Belgian friends when they visited Raleigh, North Carolina in 1999. We got together for dinner at the Washington Duke campus. As photographed afterwards we are
l/r: Rob Califf; Karl-Heinz Noel; Sarah Califf; John Califf
Anne-Marie Simon and Rob's wife. Lydia

AFTERWORD

This effort gives some recollections and history of the battle and of some of the towns, villages and buildings where it happened. Perhaps too much space is given to St. Vith, even though some of the material collected was not used. It must have been an unconscious effort on my part to compensate for the short shrift in importance given by the media to that town in favor of Bastogne, both then and now.

My being in both an intelligence and reconnaissance platoon and a rifle company provided different views of the situation. In the 423/I&R we moved back toward our lines in the midst of the attacking enemy armor, then faced the attack of those forces after we got there. In 424/A there was the continuous day and night misery of enemy fire and freezing cold with the distinct possibility of death from either or both.

These happenings occurred within a relatively short span of time, a little over five weeks. I have the highest respect for those men whose combat experience covered months, if not years. Some went from North Africa through Sicily, Italy, Normandy, Holland, the Bulge and Germany. Many were wounded and returned to action several times. I have great empathy with those 7000 comrades in the 422nd and 423rd who, through no fault of their own, underwent the humiliation of being surrendered and sent to POW camps. Because this album contains mostly factual accounts of my experiences in the places revisited, one should turn elsewhere for related background material.

Dick Sparks' *A Walk Through The Woods* tells of the entire 423rd I&R experience, paralleled by some of the happenings in William Wharton's amazingly similar book *A Midnight Clear* and its film version. In my view the miserable life in the infantry is well told by Stephen Ambrose in *Band of Brothers*, even though its locale is Bastogne and its infantry are really of the airborne variety. The Ardennes portion of the resulting Hanks-Spielberg movie showing an artillery barrage in the snowy woods and its devastating effects is terrifyingly realistic and recalls our situation near Coulee. The old black and white movie *Battleground* is a classic. Danny S. Parker's big volume *Battle of The Bulge, Hitler's Ardennes Offensive* gives a very comprehensive and richly illustrated view of the entire campaign and John Toland's *Battle* shows it in an interesting manner through the eyes of combatants on both sides.

Sometimes my narrative touches on controversial issues such as war crimes, the "good German - bad German" dilemma and the initial American failures in intelligence, strategy and tactics. These issues have been studied by experts for almost sixty years without any accepted resolution in my mind. My discussing them in depth here would be indulging my tendency to "tilt at windmills." It must be said, though, that the widely held GI belief in 1945 that the 106th had been used as bait was discarded long ago after the failures mentioned above had been studied and published.

These reprints of my album all in black and white are appropriately dark and gloomy. In the winter of 1944-45 the sun seldom shone. The mud was gray and so was the sky. The trees appeared to be almost as dark as the clothes of the villagers. All of this was accentuated by the whiteness of the snow. Both the Belgian and the German civilians were downcast and weary. Many of their homes and shops were destroyed or bare, their families shattered by separation and death. It was a dark, gloomy time in their lives and ours.

Return and Remembrance, John Califf, 423rd Infantry, I&R Platoon

In both the original album and in the copies the text tells of a new day there in the same places - the gaiety of the young people and the Christmas festival in the Grand'Place, the bustling streets of St.Vith, the warmth, gratitude and helpfulness of my Belgian friends and my son's hope for the future based on his experience with Europeans working together in medical research. In the original album color photographs, many taken in better weather, also brighten the scene. In her warm, modern kitchen Madame Lakaille-Collin wears a gay purple flowered smock. A young girl dashes across the rebuilt An Den Linden in St.Vith. Snowy Neundorf, the brief sanctuary for a wornout I&R, basks in the soft hue of the setting sun. And perhaps most symbolic of all, at Henri-Chapelle in these same golden rays the archangel hovers radiantly over the graves of those men whose sacrifice helped to make this new day possible. **Revised December 2002 by John Califf**

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7th Armored Division Combat Interviews, *The St. Vith Salient*, Dec. 17-23, 1944,
transcribed and indexed by Wesley Johnston, son of Walter G Johnston, Jr., AT/B/38 7th Armored

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Photographs and Maps

In addition to those of the author, the photographs and maps came from the following sources: American Battle Monuments Commission, Brussels Tourist and Information Office, Bundesarchiv, Duke University Medical Center, *Grenz-Echo*, *The Infantry Journal*, John P. Kline, National Archives, Anne Marie and Karl-Heinz Noel-Simon, Adda and Willy Rikken, Henri Rogister, St. Vith Land Survey and Tourist Information Offices, St. Vith Website, Richard D. Sparks, US Army Signal Corps and various Belgian and German publications.

Corrections to RETURN and REMEMBRANCE

Part I, Oct - Nov-Dec 2002

by Association member Adda RIKKEN, GOUVY, Belgium:

Page 31: THREE LANGUAGES and a GREAT RAIL SYSTEM:

"the south of Belgium is called "Wallonia, but the official language is French (schools, church administration, all). Wallon is a dialect spoken by some families in parts of that area.

by Association member Dean F. Jewett, 168th Combat Engineer Battalion:

Page 32: BACK TO ST. VITH and the EIFEL:

"You speak of a nearby monument to an engineer battalion and I believe that you are referring to our monument on the Prumerberg ... former members of the 168th erected this monument ourselves.

Page 35: You refer to "Engineer Cut-off..." we built this cutoff.

Page 41: you indicate the fortified goose egg was composed mainly of 7th Armored CCB and the 106th's 424th, plus the 81st Engineers.

My research shows that all three of our line companies were on the Prumerberg defense line. I quote from Dupuy.. "that we had 356 men there and the 81st had 114.

Surely this should entitle us to some consideration, perhaps even, "mainly..."

Author John Califf, and editor John Kline, extend their apologies.



Monument built on the Prumerberg
by the 168th Combat Engineer Battalion

In Memoriam . . .

Brasher, S Walter 422/MED

6601 S County RD 1025 E&F, Crothersville, IN 47229

Date of Death: 09/27, 2002 Hazel, his wife, wrote: "He had been fighting heart problems since July 1983 when he had to retire. He had two surgeries in the interim and died in his sleep at 78 years of age. We had been happily married for over 58 years. He is survived by five sons and three daughters, 17 grandchildren and 25 great grandchildren. Keep him in your prayers for we miss him so much.

Cariano, Samuel P. DIV/HQ

305 Parkside Place Indian Harbour Beach, FL 32937

Date of Death: 12/15/2002 Age 86, a retired US Army Lt. Colonel. He was born in Lansing, Michigan. He was last employed by U.S. News & World Report in Washington D.C. as Chief of Personnel Operations. He served 31 years of active service and saw action in the battle of the Bulge in WWII and in Korea. He was a member of the Retired Officers Assoc, VFW and DAV as well as the Cape Canaveral Chapter TROA and the 106th Inf Div Association. He was Adjutant of the 106th Inf Div Assoc from 1984 to 1988. He was awarded the *Order of the Golden Lion* (106th Inf Div Assoc) "Officer's Class - Silver" at the 1990 Annual Reunion. Survivors: His wife Francis; brother, Thomas Cariano of Stuart; sisters, Mary Michels, Virginia Sovill and Eva Roiter.

Edwards, H. Storey 423/E

828 Cherokee Lane, Signal Mountain, TN, 37377

Date of Death: 10/20/2002 Age 81, a native of Lyerly, GA and son of the late Howard and Lassie Edwards. He graduated from Lyerly High School and the University of Georgia with a degree in forestry. He served with the 106th Infantry Division in WWII and was a POW, having been captured in The Battle of the Bulge. He was a retired forester from Hieassee Land Co. - Bowater Inc. A member of the Signal Mountain Baptist Church and Selman Sunday School Class. AX-POW Chapter, Society of American Foresters, Signal Mountain Lions Club and City Farmers.

He is survived by wife, Mary Edwards and several nieces and nephews.

French, William 424/D

9458 Cherry Tree Dr 104, Strongsville, OH 44136

Date of Death: September 2002. Widow Jean reported that William passed away in September. He died of Parkinson's. He had a very rough time of it during the last six months. He is missed greatly by all. He was buried in the new Veteran Cemetery in Rittman, Ohio, a very beautiful place.

Mahoney, R. Neill 590/HQ

3155 Cherry Point Court, Fallbrook, CA 92028

Date of Death 12/28, 2002 age 81. Born in Hutchinson, KS he grew up in Minnesota, Colorado and Wisconsin. In support of the 423rd FAB he was one of the few who escaped capture. His career in accounting began with six years in public accounting with two national firms. During this time he earned his CPA credentials by examination. He later worked for a subsidiary of Inland Steel in Milwaukee, three years later he was promoted to a mid-management position with Inland in Chicago, where he remained for 28 years. During that time he was promoted to Assistant Corporate Controller and finished his career as Controller of Integrated Steel, a division of the corporation that encompassed steel production and mineral mining. He is

Rest In Peace

In Memoriam . . .

survived by his second wife of 33 years, the former Charlotte Birkholtz, sons Michael and his wife Cheryl; Dr. Patrick R. and his wife Kathryn; Son James D, a sister Patricia and four grandchildren. He was a long time members of St John's Episcopal Church, a life member of the Financial Executives Institute and past president of the Chicago Chapter; an honorary 50 year members of the American Institute of CPA's; an honorary 50 year member of the Wisconsin Institute of CPA's and a long-time member of the Fallbrook Men's Golf Club.

Meagher, Herbert 422/M

18228 Montana Ct, Orland Park, IL 60467

Date of Death not given, reported to Adjutant January 13, 2003. Be loved husband of late Luella M. Meagher, loving father of Jean (Jack) Dorris, Gail, Nancy, Queenan and Herbert (Rick). Dearest Grandfather of John (Kristinia), Kathleen, Kelly (Dorris) and Derek Campbell; fond brother of Allan Meagher; kind Uncle of many nieces and nephews; dear brother-in-law of Alex (Dolores) George. Funeral services were at the Holy Sepulcher Mausoleum. Meagher was a Mason and a member of Tinley Park Lodge #810, Retired I.B.E.W. Local #134 (from Chicago Tribune).

Naslund, Jack C. 423/G

14075 Canada Street, Red Creek, NY 13143

Date of Death: 01/06.2003 Reported by Harold W. Beam, Naslund's POW Buddy. Jack died on January 6, 2003 at the VA Hospital in Saint Petersburg, Florida. He was a member of 423/G, captured along with the rest of us on 19 December 1944, marched to Koblenz, Limburg and ended up in Stalag IV-B in Muhlberg. He was sent to Gleina along with a work party of about one hundred POWs to work in the reconstruction of a gasoline factory at Troglitz, near the city of Zeitz. He was liberated by the 3rd Army on 13 April 1945. We were buddies all through that experience and continued to see each other at least once a year for all the past years. He was a great gentleman. He is survived by three children, Natalie, Carol and Tom.

Rydzinski, Edward 422/I

1715 Elm Street, Des Plaines, IL 60018

Date of Death: 12/11/2002 Reported by his wife Sylvia. She wrote, "My husband Edward, age 83, died on December 11, 2002. He was very ill and was in the hospital over three months. We were married for over sixty years, being married June 27, 1942. He went into service at Fort Jackson on March 15, 1943. He came home November 1945. He was a wonderful person and loved by everybody. Sylvia....

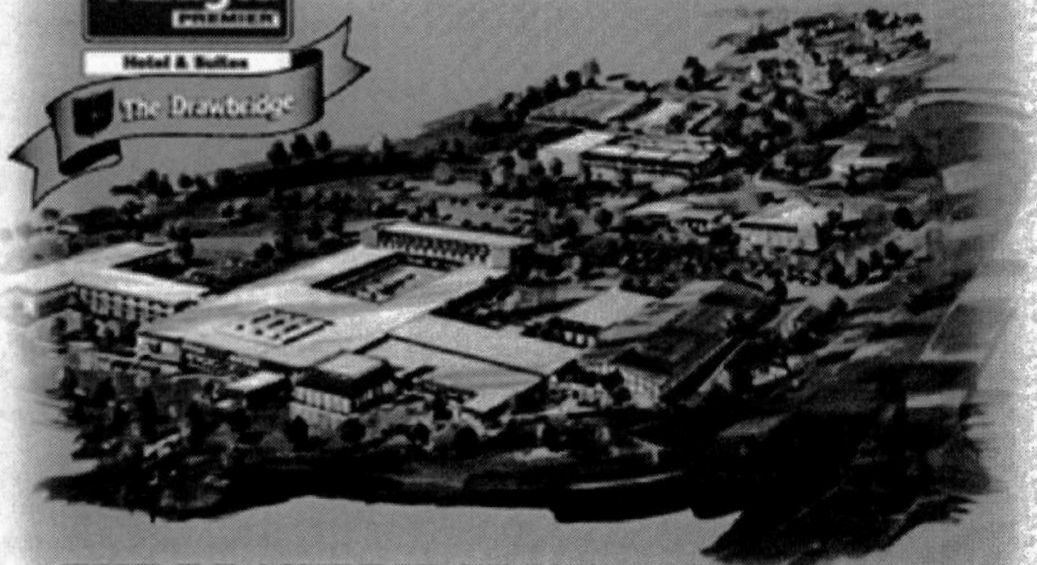
From his obituary: Age 83, loving father of Gene (Debbie); Steve and Suzanne; proud grandfather of Diana Ferguson, Ginger (Jeff) Neisz and Robert; adoring great-grandfather of Austin Ferguson; dear brother of Frank and the late Dorothy Broniszewski. Member of the Lutheran Church. Lifetime member of the American Legion. Longtime member of the American Legion Post #36, V.F.W. #2992, Des Plaines, IL. Member of I.O.F. Foresters Court Illinois #878. Member of Maine Township Seniors Club and des Plaines Seniors Club. Active volunteer of the Illinois Special Olympics

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