Newspapers.com

The Billings Gazette (Billings, Montana) · 17 Dec 1967, Sun · Main Edition · Page 59

Downloaded on May 8, 2018

'Missing In Action'

Such Interesting People

By Addison Bragg
Gazette Staff Writer

Ex-doughboy Jim Walsh looked at his desk calendar with an air of disbelief.

"It seems like a hundred years ago," he said, eyeing the date carrying the date of Dec. 16.

Only 23 years, in fact, have passed since as the 1st-Lt. Walsh, then an infantryman with the 106th Division, fought the Battle of the Bulge, the Nazi Germany's last frantic attempt to achieve its dream of conquest.

THEY CALLED IT the "Battle of the Bulge".

And the month in 1944, when Americans, outnumbered, outgunned and, in many cases, outmanoeuvered, had to be a surprise to an even foe dying enemy is still known as "Dark December".

Even had not a shot been fired, the surprise would, in the last round in, be enough—most that Walsh and the 15,000 others who moved into the Ardennes Hill-Maintenly sector of Hitler's Fortress Europe would have been a memorable one.

"I can't remember being so cold before or since in my life," says Walsh, recalling the Belgian village (the name of which he's forgotten) before the Wehrmacht made its final thrust.

BUT HE CAN remember—and won't forget for a long time—the way it was the morning of Dec. 16 when the German Ardennes offensive was underway.

"It may sound impossible," he says, "but the ground literally rocked under our feet when that artillery began coming in."

The barrage, which began at 5:30 a.m., was punctuated by the appearance of Luftwaffe planes, flying on low-hanging clouds, to give attackers a better look at their American enemy as they moved up behind their shelling.

It lasted two hours.

"And then they were all around us," he said.

Walsh, who at that time was the acting exec of three companies in the area which held for two days and managed to withdraw though surrounded by panzer troops.

ITS COURAGEOUS STAND, which gave the Allies time to form "Line in Rear" resistance, disrupted the carefully planned German schedule, which called for the taking of St. Vith in the first hours of the battle.

Walsh, wounded by shrapnel during the first hours of fighting, shrds his memories of the week which passed from the 16th to the 23rd, when he finally found himself in a field hospital are still centered.

But he remembers the night patrol he went on which took him and his men from the rear across a snowy field and into a forest.

"All of a sudden, we looked ahead of us and there was the Jerries, sitting around in their skating breeches," Walsh says.

Moving back to the field, Walsh's patrol found the enemy had left a machine gun emplacement on the Americans when they reached the open.

"We lost a lot of men there," says Walsh.

WALSH CAN'T remember eating, drinking or sleeping during the week he and thousands of other American soldiers held out in the Bulge, fighting and dying on a parts as its ultimate objective.

"I guess we slept standing up—or while we were walking," he says. "I don't remember."

He does recall having "rubber boots" issued to him and to waterproof combat boots, for bear and light during those long nights of the battle, and he recalls the "Bear Swamp" on they snarled over the Ardennes on their way to targets in Germany.

"They even started using them on us before the week was over," he says.

AND WALSH VOWS he'll never forget the trek.

"They slapped beside us while we was walking along," he says and adds where I was going," he says.

"With you," Walsh told the tank commander, climbing up to take over the 30 caliber machine gun mounted on it.

"I rode out with them," Walsh says, "and the last thing I remember was jumping off when it reached a rear area. I don't remember how or when I passed out."

WHEN WALSH WOKE up he was in a Belgian hospital and he never found himself as a crash carrying convoy to Paris.

Walsh wasn't the only American soldier left to his own devices after the Bulge—many more were in the same boat—or gross frontline sorts.

And he wasn't the only "Lost" to end up on a "missing in action" list.

The important thing, however, was that the 106th had held, disrupting the German's time table and giving the other U.S. reinforcements to come up to the "Bulge."

His father, Kelly Walsh, a prominent Wyoming educator and author, was killed when a turned radar ( ) result he was who came to the Walsh home the second week in January notifying him that his son was "missing in action since Dec. 24."

It was, the elder Walsh agrees, a pretty bleak weekend.

IT TURNED into a happy one, however, when two days later, Jim Walsh, who escaped from a hospital in France, during Dec. 27, reached them.

And Walsh was back with his unit in early February.

"We got to the Rhine just in time to start setting up prisoner of war cages for what was left of the German army," Walsh recalls.

The man who moved in Billings last July to become manager for the Rocky Mountain Oil & Gas Association left most of his war memorabilia behind, including the flag he brought with him was his copy of the 106th's unit history, "St. Vith: Lion in The Way."

HE LOOKS AT IT at least once, each December.

It wasn't the easiest time in the world for anyone who was there, says Walsh.

"But I'd do it all again if I had to," he declares.

Grinning, Walsh dug into a pocket, pulled out his wallet and produced a well-worn, dog-eared piece of cardboard.

"My draft card," he said. "And I'm not about to burn it."

JIM WALSH treasures his unit's history

For 100 Magazines

By Steve Ellingsen

Recently there have been many letters asking for more magazine rack ideas. In answer to these requests we have designed the magazine end table pictured here with Barbara Stove.

Here is a table that requires approximately two square feet of floor space yet the eight or shelves contain fifteen square feet of storage area.

In addition to magazines it will hold over one hundred! It's an excellent furniture piece for keeping sheet music, recordings or any other similar flat items. The table top is handy for a reading lamp, ash trays, a record player and so on.

Now that a large variety of elegant woods are available in plywood form you'll find this piece of furniture not only offers maximum storage space but also has a high decorative value. The cost? Very little mail delivery) in coin, check or money order to:

Steve Ellingsen
The Billings Gazette Pattern Dept.
P. O. Box 2261
Van Nuys, California 91401

To obtain the magazine end table pattern number 416, send $1.00 (add 25 per pattern for air-

Cyprus in Stamp N

By SYD KROVINI
AP Newsfeatures

Cyprus, whose internal troubles are making front page headlines, made stamp news and set of semi-postals for the with three new issues featuring Greek Orthodox religious paintings.

The issue, celebrating honors the anniversary of St. Andrew's Monastery and the bringing of St. Andrew's head from Greece to Cyprus. The stamp shows St. Andrew's Church in Patras, Greece, during back to the 4th Century.

The 25-mils stamp pays tribute to the Church of Panagia tou Lagera in Paris. The exhibition, "Treasures of Cyprus," covers a period of 8,000 years of Cyprus art and history. "Panagia tou Lagera" is a work of the 18th century, as depicted on the stamp.

The 75 mils commemorates the 25th anniversary of CYPRUS "The Three Hierarchs" and is from a wall painting in the Church of Panagia tou Moutoullas, which dates back to the end of the 15th Century.

Religious Motif

A unique design appears on the 25-cent Australian Christmas stamp. It presents a geometrical arrangement of three Australian birds, the Gouldian finch, the Cockatoo and the Cutaway rin and sang symbols—to suggest the spiritual meaning of Christmas and the universal charm of the season. The bright colors of the stamp—red, yellow, purple and black—are designed by the artist to depict the plumage of the birds, as well as to be background.

Broken Glass Replaced
SCREENS REPAIRED
BECKER'S DRIVE-IN
GLASS SHOP—DIAL 8 44

WALTER A. MENELLO
Announces . . .
that he is presently located at
5 East Broadway, Lovell, Montana,
for the practice of
ACCOUNTING!!!
OFFICE PHONE 698-4477
RESIDENCE 698-6980

ATTENTION, WIVES OF SPORTSMEN
A Perfect CHRISTMAS gift for that man is a "68" Membership to Billings Rod & Gun Club.
New shooting ranges for shotgun, rifle, pistol and archery. 110 acres of outdoor pleasure within 10 minutes drive. For
CHRISTMAS SPECIAL of $7.50
Call 259-8855

1967-12-17 Jim Walsh treasurers his unit history

Clipped By:

criswest
Tue, May 8, 2018

Copyright © 2018 Newspapers.com. All Rights Reserved.

POWERED BY Newspapers.com