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'Missing In Action'

Such Interesting People

By Addison Bragg
Gazette Staff Writer

Ex-engineer Jim Walsh looked at his clock 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 an 18-year-old Walsh, then an infantryman with the 106th Division, fought a rear-guard action against 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, outmanned, outgunned and, in many cases, outmaneuvered, had been 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 around, be unpleasant Walsh and the 15,000 others who moved into the 27-Mile-Maginoty sector of Hitler's Fatherland would, it would have been a miserable one.

"I can't remember being so cold before or since in my life," says Walsh, recalling the days he spent in 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 under way.

"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 German planes, playing 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's outfit, in fact, was the only one of three detraining 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 day he was hit to the day he found himself in a field hospital are still centered.

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

"All of a sudden, we looked ahead of us and there was the enemy. We stopped and, in three stating breathless," Walsh says.

Moving back to the field, Walsh's patrol found the enemy, and the Americans opened fire 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 St. Vith, the key to the German drive, and, 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 "dubbed" his rear-guard unit to waterproof combat boots, for hear and light during these long days and nights of battle and the by "Bear Swamp" as they snarled over the darkness on their way to targets in England.

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

AND WALSH VOWS he'll never forget the trek.

"They stayed beside us while we was walking along," he says and, wherever I was going," he says.

"With you," Walsh told the lack commander, claiming to take over the 38 rifles assigned to his outfit.

"It rained and with them," Walsh says, "and the last thing I remember was jumping off stairs it reached a rear area, and I was carried for the first I guess I passed out."

WHEN WALSH WOKE up he was in a hospital—and he never found himself as a train carrying covered to Paris.

Walsh wasn't the only American soldier left to his own devices after the events were over. Many of his mates were under various guess treatise sets.

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 Allied U.S. reinforcements to come up to the "Bulge."

His father, Kelly Walsh, a prominent Wyoming educator and author, was in Belgium on a normal tour—but results he wrote which 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, Walsh, who had 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 said.

The man who moved in Billings last July to become the Rocky Mountain Oil & Gas Association left most of his war memorabilia behind. Everything 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 from it he retrieved, 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

Such Interesting People

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 some music, recordings or any other similar that 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

The easy-to-follow pattern for building this magazine table is full size, consequently it's a big project any inexperienced amateur can undertake with pleasure. You need only trace the patterns parts on wood, saw them out and put them together.

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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 religious paintings.

The issue, commemorating the centenary 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 Lazarus Church in the Lazaro in Paris. The exhibition, "Treasures of Cyprus," covers a period of 5,000 years of Cyprus art and history. "The Lazarus Church" is a work of the 18th century, as depicted on the stamp.

The 75 mils commemorates the 25th anniversary of CYTA, the Cyprus telecommunications. The "Three Stage" and in front a wall painting in the Church of the Holy Cross Monastery, 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 Christmas symbols—the star of David and the Chinese yin and yang symbols—to suggest the spiritual basis of Christmas and the universal nature of the holiday. The bright colors of the stamp—red, yellow, purple and black—are designed by the artist to depict the Christmas spirit in the foreground.

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