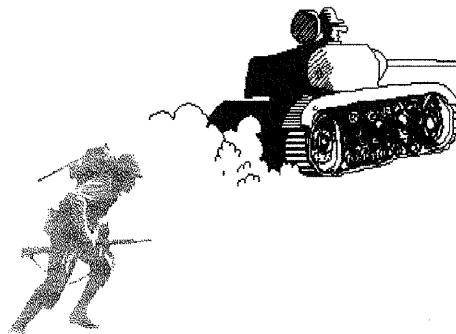
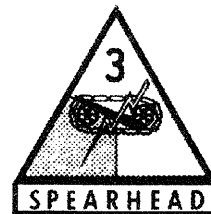
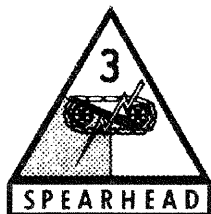


The Last Request



*England, France, Belgium,
Holland, Germany*

*September 1, 1994
to
September 26, 1994*



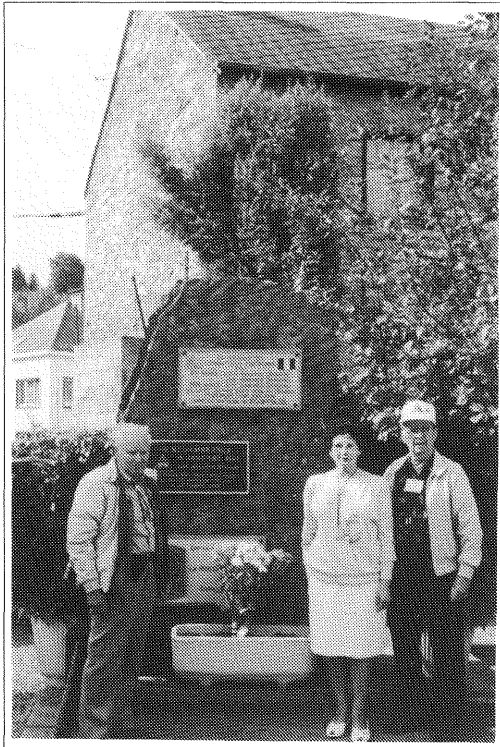
The Last Request

compiled by
William B. and Eulalia C. Ruth

Those that do not recall the past are
condemned to live it over again.

— George Santayana
1863-1952

Houffalize 1992



Houffalize 1994



Translations of newspaper articles provided by Isabelle Delabre

Design and layout by In-House Business Services, 6685 Evening Street, Worthington, Ohio 43085

May 1995

Dedication

by Bill Ruth

This book is dedicated to our fellow "Last Request Traveler", Bernie Orie, who passed away very suddenly Saturday, February 4, 1995, while reading the newspaper.

We remember the close friendship shown by Bernie and Aulay Tompkins. Aulay tells us that this friendship is a result of both of them working for Unisys (Sperry) for over 25 years. Bernie was Director of Auditing for the International Division. Aulay was Director of Auditing for another of Sperry's major divisions.

Lale and I remember having dinner with Bernie in Caen, France. He told us how thrilled he was to be on this trip and wished his brother could have joined him because he fought in France. Regretfully, Bernie's brother passed away a week before we left JFK Airport for this trip. It was also in Caen that we learned that Bernie was younger than us (64 years old) but served with the Third Armored Division after the war. Bernie also lost his twin sister over the holidays.

Bernard T. Orie graduated from Alliance College (Mt. Union) Alliance, Ohio, and did graduate work at De Paul University and Case Western Reserve in Cleveland. Bernie is survived by his wife, Catherine, and three sons, Christopher of New York, Steven of Virginia, and Raymond of New Mexico. Christopher and Steven are Air Force pilots.

Bernie is also survived by his sister-in-law, Carrie Robson. Carrie and Catherine both grew up in Coventry, England, and remember the devastation of the bombing by the Germans.

Bernie was from Downingtown, Pennsylvania. Funeral services were held February 9, 1995, with a Mass of Christian Burial from St. Joseph's Church.

Bernie's story about Normandy and St. Jean de Daye appears later in this book.

I'm sure we all agree that we were blessed to have Bernie with us on this trip.

May he Rest in Peace.

Photo by Aulay Tompkins at the U.S. Military Cemetery in Normandy. The English Channel is in the background.

Bernie said, "As the neat rows of white crosses and Stars of David in St. Laurent Cemetery attest, the day proved to be the last for too many. I know I will never forget those who paid the ultimate price. Of one thing I am certain, I shall always remember my emotions as well as those expressed by others in our group."

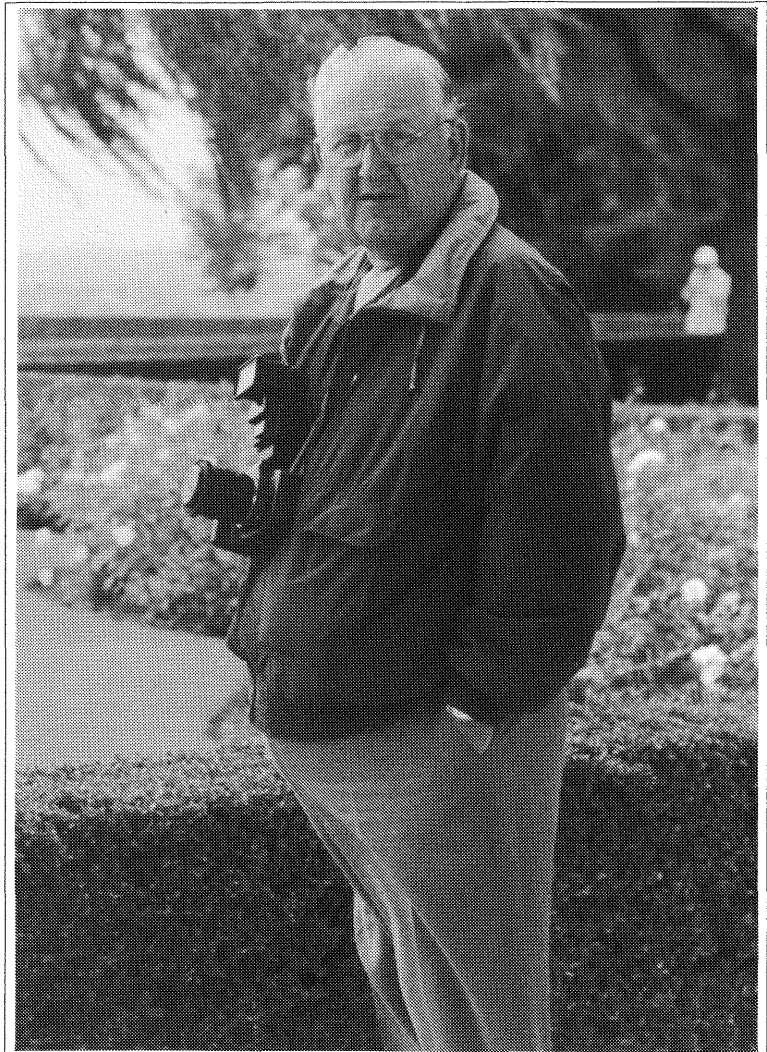


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Preface

by Bill Ruth

In September 1992, eighty-five Third Armored Division members toured Europe following the same route as in 1944-45. We were shown enthusiasm, fervor, respect, and gratitude by the French and Belgian people. A big 50-year celebration was being planned for 1994 and we were invited to return.

While in Houffalize, Belgium, in 1992 a group of Third Armored veterans decided that if we were able to return we would like to have a plaque representing our division added to the monument along with the other divisions.

During the 1993 Indianapolis reunion a group of us met with the Third Armored Division Board of Governors. We requested \$2,000 to have twenty memorial plaques produced. These plaques would be placed in towns liberated by the Third Armored during World War II. Approval was given and bids were solicited throughout the United States. Through Bill Wall's efforts, Kearney Foundry, San Jose, California provided the best bid. The price was so good we were able to order thirty plaques. Subsequently we decided to install thirteen plaques in England and six more at the U.S. camps where we trained. We were given approval for another \$1,500 for these additional plaques.

To insure safe delivery John O'Brien, 32nd Armored Regiment, and Bill Ruth, 33rd Armored Regiment, volunteered to deliver these plaques personally May 12-22, 1994. Aurio Pierro and Bill Wall were quite involved in this project also. Thanks to John for obtaining the best possible air fare, and to the Belgian Airlines for letting us bring 240 pounds of plaques on the plane at no cost.

We want to thank those who made the trip two years ago and who gave their support.

Leland Cook, Manning, South Carolina
John Danay, Rock Island, Illinois
George Edmondson, Covington, Kentucky
Elmer Ekman, Chicago, Illinois
Arnold Fuerstenberg, Clearwater, Florida
David Hedrick, Orlando, Florida
Bill Heinz, Middleboro, Massachusetts
John O'Brien, Kensington, Connecticut

Lyle Pfeifer, Sapphire, North Carolina
Aurio Pierro, Lexington, Massachusetts
Bill Ruth, Worthington, Ohio
Walter Stitt, South Bend, Indiana
Eugene Turcotte, Livermore Falls, Maine
John Vondra, Mesa, Arizona
Bill Wall, San Jose, California

A special thanks to Haynes W. Dugan, Shreveport, Louisiana, our Historian, for helping us decide where the plaques should be placed.

Thanks also to Charles Jacobs, Tucson, Arizona, past president, who with assistance from our Executive Vice-President, Marcus Schumacher, Largo, Florida, and our Board of Governors, secured the additional money needed to complete this worthwhile project.

Chapter Two of this book describes the trip to deliver the plaques.

Acknowledgments

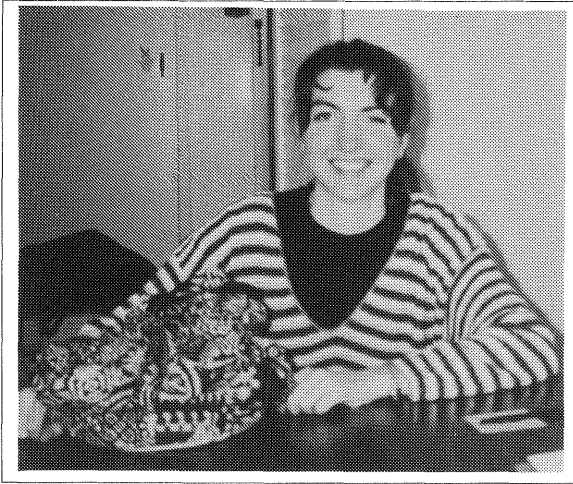
by Bill Ruth

We are indebted to Haynes W. Dugan, Third Armored Division Historian, and William D. Wall, past President, for their assistance with this project. Bill and Haynes spent countless hours on this project this past year. Bill located and secured the best price for the plaques and was on top of things all the time. Haynes spent much time corresponding with the people in France and Belgium, helping John O'Brien and me as we delivered the plaques in May 1994. This is dedication, to say the least, especially when they knew they would not be able to join us on this trip.



Haynes W. Dugan

Our thanks to Isabelle Delabre, Wimpy, France. This delightful 'ray of sunshine' translated all the French and Belgian newspapers in this book so they have meaning and 'come alive'. We met Isabelle during the historic parade that Saturday as we traveled from Fourmies through Wimpy, Hirson and St. Michel. She was serving cold drinks at the tent near the Abbey. Isabelle has returned to France after spending ten weeks with Lale and me and our entire family. She came to America to work on a research paper that is required to complete her degree in American Studies at the Charles de Gaulle University in Lille, France. Thanks also to Isabelle's parents, Lysiane and Pierre, for loaning us their precious gift. Thanks to Isabelle's grandmother who contributed the excellent photo of Omaha Beach in this book.



Isabelle Delabre

Our thanks to Bob and Molly Swirsky and Jim and Meredith Matthews who sent the many newspaper articles from Dison and Liege.

Lastly, thanks to all who have contributed stories, pictures, articles, and encouragement for the completion of this book, document, travelog or historical biography (call it what you want).

Introduction

by Alice Brewer

The purpose of this trip to France, Belgium and Germany in September 1994 was to have a few Spearheaders travel the route (push) of the Third Armored Division from July 1944 to August 1945. Many bronze plaques were donated by the Association and placed in towns along the way to assure that the Third Armored Division liberators are remembered — both the living and the youths who died. Towns such as Fourmies, Hirson, St. Michel, St. Jean de Daye, Falaise, Fromental, Putanges, Brunehamel, Mons, Rotheux (Neupre), Limont-Tavier, Melinne, Manhay, and Malempre, Houffalize, La Glieze, and Herstal. In Liege, a plaque was added to the Resistance Monument. In Germany, Stolberg was liberated, and a plaque was mounted outside the City Chamber, where the Mayor greeted and honored us.

The ceremonies and receptions along the way from the civilians were overwhelming — even "fantastic" was said by us to describe the welcome we received, the outpouring of gratitude and love to their "liberators", and real joy at seeing the Spearheaders. There was hugging, kissing, and handshaking from youngsters (second generation) and oldsters who had lived through the bad times of Nazism and third generation school children. These bright, healthy "kids" were waving flags, bashfully shaking hands, and reaching for the gum and little Third Armored pins the vets were passing out. What therapy for the men!! Many have grandchildren and can relate to these lively children who are being taught by parents and school, the history of the war and the large part the United States soldiers, sailors and airmen had in the fight for their liberation.

The populace revere their dead. Many monuments were seen, to honor and remember their dead from wars in 1870, 1914-18, and 1939-45. Small towns had small memorials, larger towns had larger memorials which include the Allies who were killed in their mission to destroy the Nazis and free the French, Belgians and towns in northern Germany, such as Stolberg.

In Germany, we missed the ceremonies and meeting the people and the champagne. No one even waved to us!

Chapter 1

The Beginning of the Plaques

When we arrived in Normandy in 1992, we noticed that every outfit in the country that fought in Normandy had some sort of plaque or insignia posted in the local towns or museums. The Third Armored story was missing. This upset us. As we traveled through France and Belgium we still did not find any indication that we had been there. So we started talking about what could be done to right this wrong.

As we entered the Battle of the Bulge area, we saw Colonel Hogan's tank. We were elated to see that the Belgian people had a beautiful plaque mounted on the tank. This plaque properly identified the tank and gave the rightful recognition to the Third Armored Division. To our dismay, we found another unit had come in and placed their insignia and plaque on Colonel Hogan's tank. I was so mad I frantically searched for a screwdriver to remove it.

We went to Malempre where the whole town turned out to greet us. Here, on a wall in front of the Catholic Church, we once again found our insignia and proper recognition given to us. Our group was proud of this.

Later on that day we went to Houffalize, where we were asked to place a wreath at a large monument in the center of town. Our president, John Danay, and Aurio Pierro were asked to do the honors. There were many plaques on this monument but nothing about the Third Armored. We were not only mad, but humiliated. This was the final straw. Our group became more determined than ever to correct this. Many of us vowed to return in 1994 to place a plaque on this monument to join the many other plaques.

We began to prod John O'Brien to arrange another tour in 1994 so we could accomplish our mission. John had said all along that the Last Push tour was his last. Well, we eventually persuaded John to have one more tour. He kept saying, "How can I save face. I named this tour the Last Push. What can we call the next tour?" We, as a group, came up with the name of the "Last Request" tour. So our tour was now decided upon — our Last Request.

Throughout the rest of our trip we began exploring ways to secure the funds to get these plaques. When we returned from our trip a group of us from the Last Push tour met with the Board of Governors at our annual meeting in Indianapolis. At this time we were shooting from the hip. We had not been able to obtain a firm price and consequently were at a disadvantage because we did not know how much money to request. After some discussion we told them we thought we could get a plaque made for \$100 and that we would like twenty plaques. We were given approval for \$2,000.

The Board requested a spokesperson so Aurio Pierro volunteered. Bill Ruth and I offered to assist him.

After our convention Phyllis and I went to Fort Knox to meet with the curator of the Patton Museum. We asked where they had bought the plaques for the Avenue of Armor (every Armored Division has a location there). He gave me the name of the company and I proceeded to go there. Luckily, we had a rough sketch that Phyllis had drawn in Indianapolis at the request of the Board of Governors. They quoted the outlandish price of \$295 per plaque. At this rate we would only have six or seven plaques made.

I learned about another place in Bowling Green, Kentucky, that does a lot of work for the government in Washington. They seemed to have a monopoly on all the governmental agencies. Using Phyllis' sketch, they gave a price of \$325 per plaque. Outrageous!!

When I got home I contacted Aurio and Bill and reported my findings. In the meantime Bill had given Phyllis' rough draft to Carol Helling, the lady who does his Service Company newsletters. He asked her to give us a computer drawing of the plaque. She provided three different versions which Bill sent to John O'Brien, Aurio, John Danay, and me and asked us to choose the one we liked best. It was a unanimous decision.

Using the computer drawing we continued to look for someone to make the plaque. Bill Ruth got quotes from Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Canada and Ohio. The best one was for \$133 in Columbus, Ohio.

In the meantime I wrote to several contacts that Third Armored members had given me. One was in Michigan, but he had passed away and one was in Southern California, but their estimate was more than \$200.

All of a sudden it dawned on me that I had a good friend I used to do a lot of duck hunting with, Taylor Bradford, who owned a foundry in Santa Clara, California. I called Taylor who told me he had sold his business five years before this. "Where do I go now?" I asked. Taylor suggested Kearney Foundry in San Jose. I had gone to Santa Clara College with the owner.

I visited Kearney Foundry and found they were still in business. The grandson and a partner from Canada are running the business now. I showed them our drawing and they said they would need to have a template made in order to make the mold but they could make the plaques for \$60 each. Boy - there was the answer!

I then took the drawing to Coast Engraving, in San Jose and they made an aluminum template for \$150. Luckily the day they finished the template Bill and Lale Ruth flew to San Jose to visit with us and Lale's sister, who lives there also.

I took Bill Ruth and the template to Kearney Foundry and asked if it would be possible to have a plaque made while Bill was in town because Bill was one of our decision makers.

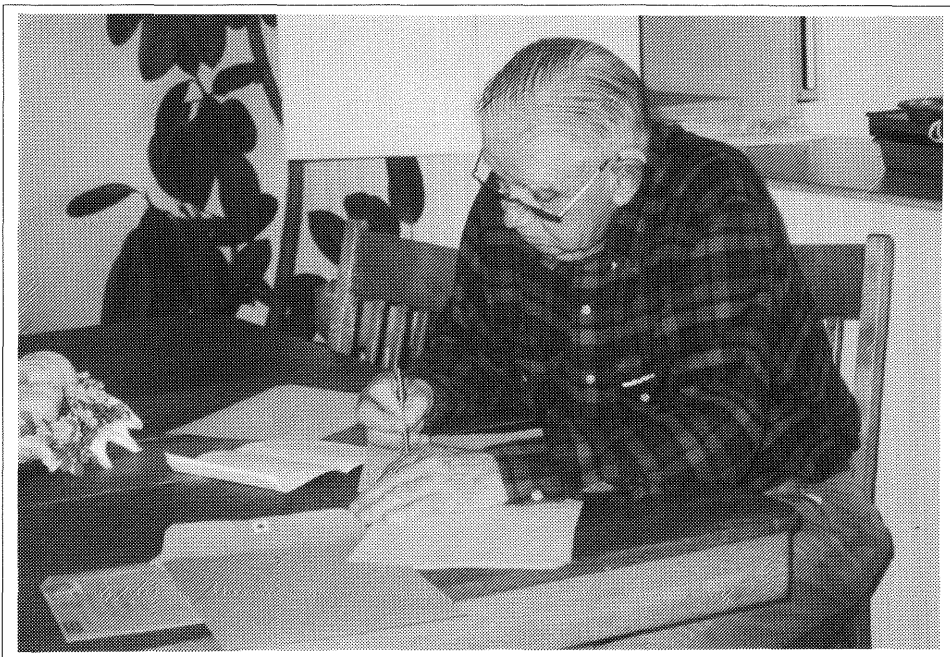
Fortunately they were able to comply with our request. When we saw the finished product we were ecstatic. It was beautiful. We finalized the price and told them to go ahead and make thirty plaques. Because Bill and Lale were here for several weeks they helped us pack and crate the plaques to be shipped to John O'Brien.

Bill and Lale disagreed about the best way to deliver the plaques to John O'Brien. Bill wanted to take them home with him on the plane, then drive them to John O'Brien in Connecticut in May when they were to be delivered to Europe. I won't say who won, but the plaques were shipped to John by UPS at a cost of about \$80 for 240 pounds of bronze.

Through John O'Brien's 'know-how' the plaques were shipped by Belgian Airlines on the same flight he and Bill took to Europe. John and Bill had tried to work through their congressmen, various embassies, and a variety of red tape to get the plaques shipped. Finally they became frustrated and decided the best way to insure proper delivery was to deliver them personally.

At this time we had not given any thought to England. In the meantime we heard from Martyn Lock, who was working with Erwin Sadow to get \$1,000 to find a tank to put in the town square of Codford. The people in the Salisbury Plains area heard about our plaque project. Subsequently thirteen communities where units of the Third Armored Division had stayed prior to the invasion, requested that our Last Request tour honor them by attending ceremonies. They all wanted a plaque also. We would need another \$1,500. After many telephone calls to our president, Charles Jacobs, Bill, Aurio, and I developed a letter explaining this additional proposal so that the Board of Governors could vote on the additional money. Our request was granted.

Once again John O'Brien came to our rescue and arranged with British Airways to ship the thirteen plaques to England without paying any freight charges. I worked out a deal with the British Embassy to waive the duty on the plaques which saved us \$400. My congressman was instrumental in steering me to the proper people.



Bill Wall writing to Martyn Lock.

It's quite a story. A few of us have spent a lot of time on this project. I am sure we all agree it was well worth the effort, time and money.

It is my firm desire to go to Europe and see where all the plaques are. Phyllis and I were very disappointed that we were not able to make the Last Request tour, but our health would not permit it at this time.

***Bill Wall
Company A,
Supply Battalion***

(Note from Bill Ruth: Bill Wall is now working on a project to deliver a plaque to every army base the Third Armored used for training in the United States during World War II. The plaques are nearing completion and Bill is planning to have them shipped in the near future. The locations are: Camp Polk, Louisiana, Mohave Desert, Camp Pickett, Indiantown Gap [targeted to be closed by the government] and Fort Knox. Marcus Schumacher is working on a tour to the Gap during our Valley Forge Reunion to have an installation ceremony. We are unsure what effect the closing of the base will have on a plaque being installed there.)

Chapter 2

Memorial Plaques

Following is a pictorial account of the May 12-22, 1994, delivery of twenty-seven memorial plaques to towns liberated by the Third Armored Division during World War II.



Upon arrival in Brussels on May 12, 1994, at 9:00 a.m., John and I were met by Raymond Goeme and Henri Rogister, CRIBA members. They took us to our motel where we immediately rolled up our sleeves and went to work. John and I were anxious to begin after lugging four 60-pound boxes filled with plaques. Each plaque weighs eight pounds. This is not the easiest way to travel. John had already arranged for the delivery of eleven of the plaques to the following towns: Mons, Houffalize, Verviers, Dison, Herstal, LaGleize, Malempre, Melinne, Liege, Rotheux-Neupre, and Limont.

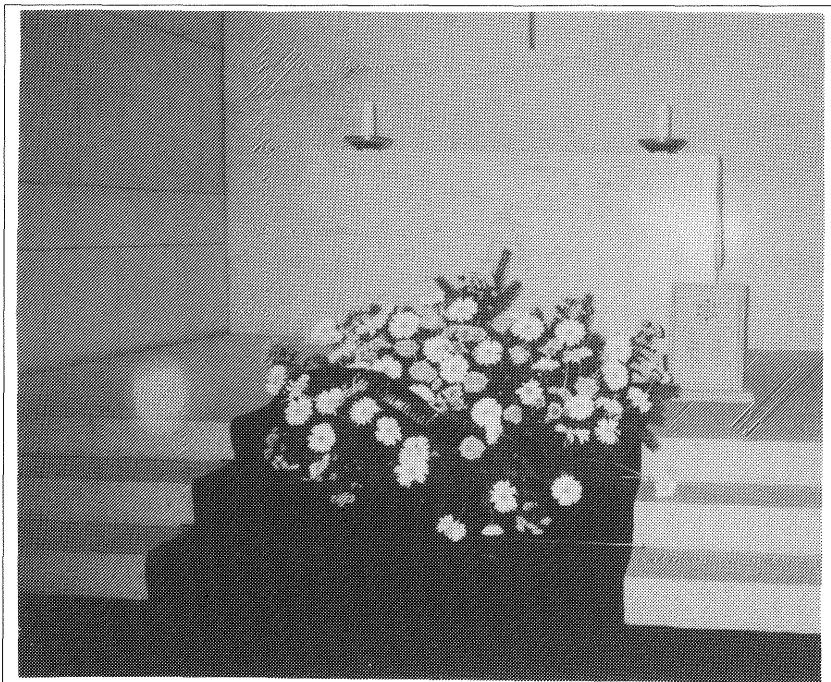


Henri Rogister, John O'Brien (standing), and Raymond Goeme.

Henri Rogister was to make contact with Gunter Von Der Weiden in Stolberg, Germany, to place a plaque on their city hall. The people of Stolberg appreciate the fact that their people were treated in such a humanitarian way.

Third Armored members who made the tour two years ago will attest that these CRIBA members are very dedicated, appreciative and sincere gentlemen. They want to help. They continually thank us for their liberation and show much respect for the Third Armored American soldiers who gave the supreme sacrifice.

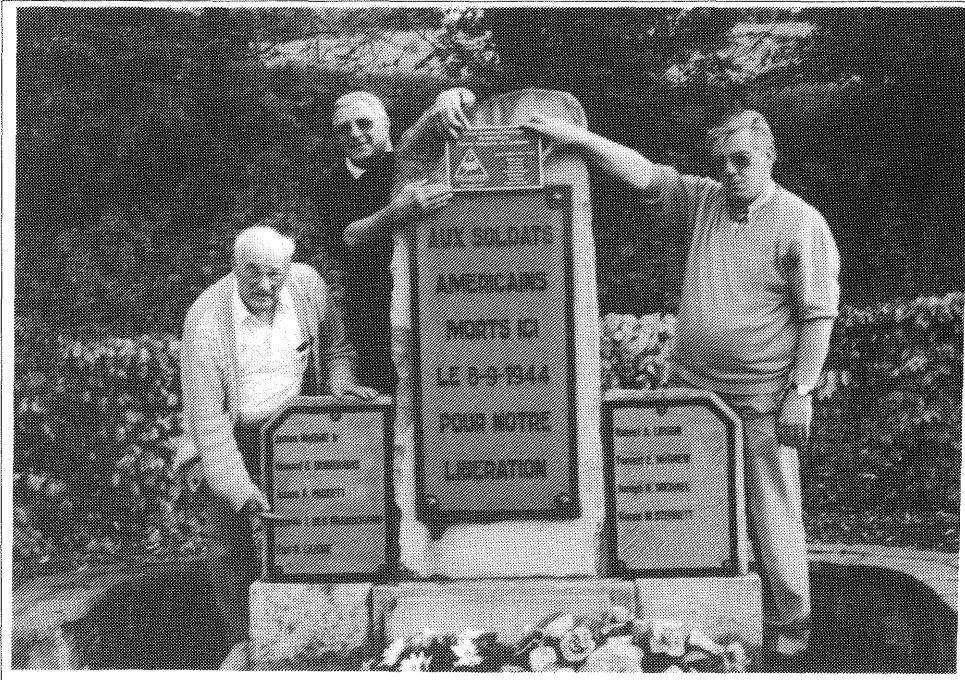
*Ferdinand Dessante
standing in front of
the Ardennes
American Military
Cemetery at Nuepre,
Belgium, located 15
miles south of Liege.
Haynes Dugan and
Leroy Hanneman
have received much
correspondence from
this dedicated man.*



*Fresh flowers are
placed in front of the
altar by the Belgians
throughout the year.*

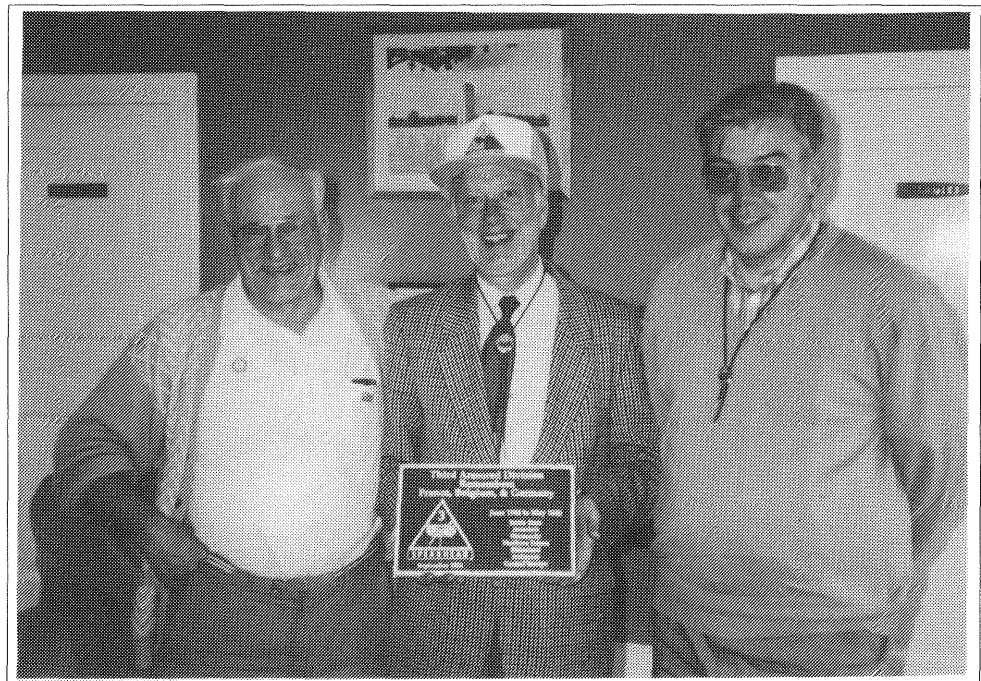
Most of you know what CRIBA stands for, but to review, CRIBA is the Center for Research and Information on the Battle of the Ardennes (Battle of the Bulge). The aims of CRIBA are:

- (1) to associate all those who are interested in the history of the Battle of the Bulge,
- (2) to establish detailed documentation about the Battle of the Bulge,
- (3) to inform the Belgian people and perpetuate the memory of the sacrifices of the soldiers and civilians,
- (4) to preserve historical data and sites, and
- (5) to help the allied veterans who return to the Ardennes battlefield.



A plaque will be placed on this monument in Limont. The names of four members of Service Company, 33rd Armored Regiment, are included on this monument. Please notice the fresh bouquet of flowers.

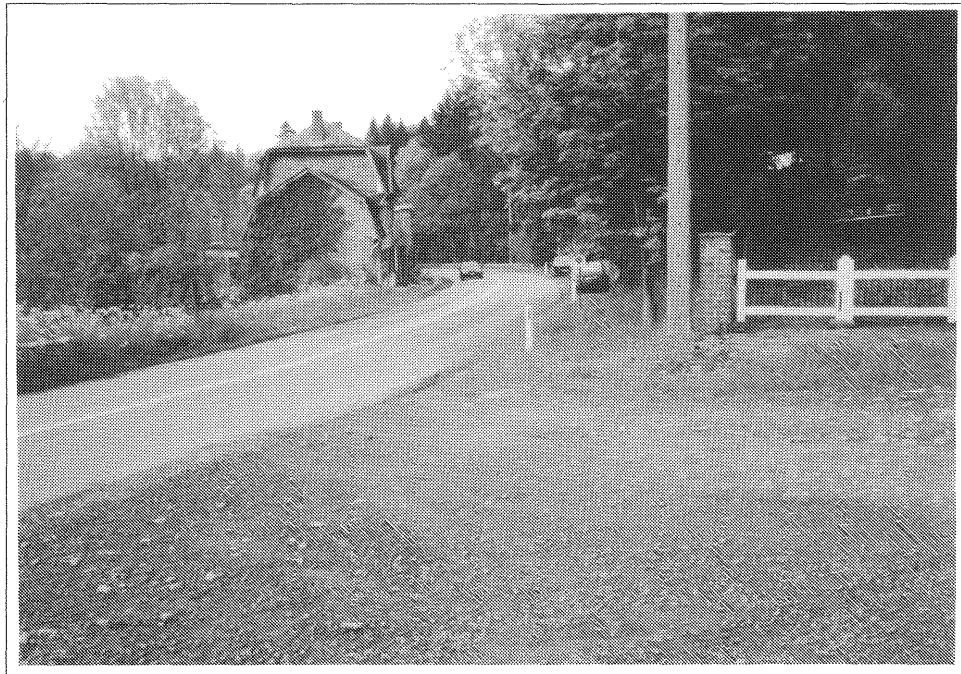
Left to right: Bill Ruth pointing to Marvin DesGrandchamp's name (a member of Bill's Service Company), Bihay Rene, Commander of the Legion of Tavier, and Henri Rogister, CRIBA member.



Bill Ruth, Ferdinand Dessante, and Henri Rogister.



A German tank was camouflaged behind the last building. It was zeroed in on the curve (bottom photo). As the half-track turned the corner (where you see the car) it received a direct hit. Two light tanks also were hit here. The monument on the preceding page was built to honor those who gave their lives.

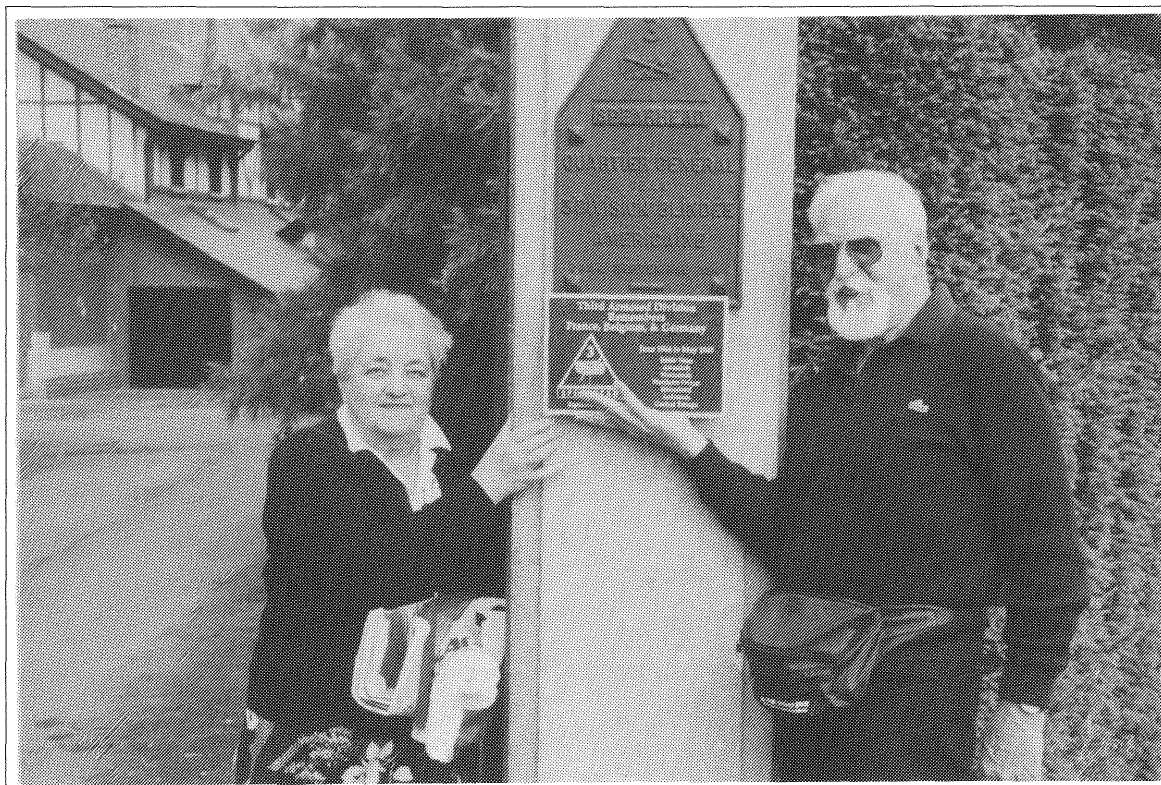


Two members of the half-track crew, thought to be killed, wrote an eyewitness account of this incident in 1987. They had been taken prisoner. This information was relayed to Ferdinand Dessante via Haynes Dugan who placed a search inquiry in the March 1993 Division Newsletter.

Jack Stephenson of the Southern California Chapter told Bill Wall about his experience visiting General Rose's headquarters in Quivy, Belgium, several years ago. Jack asked that we try to locate it while on our trip. We spent a memorable four hours visiting Mme. Wauters and her family. A bronze plaque was placed here years ago. Our plaque will be placed below the original, as shown in the bottom photo.



The mayor of Mons, Belgium, inspecting a plaque.



Madame Wauters from the Chateau de Warelles, and John O'Brien.



John's meeting at the tourist office in Caen.

We crossed the Belgian/French border and met with representatives from Maubeuge, Avesnes, Fourmies, and Brunehamel. The people of Fourmies are planning a two-day celebration during our September visit. Marceau Batteux is doing a great job of organizing this. Those on the tour two years ago will remember him. Marceau treated John and me to a great dinner while there.

The appreciation shown by the people at Avesnes and Maubeuge will never be forgotten.

Brunehamel reminded us of Malempre in Belgium, a nice village where people are sincere and down to earth. The citizens of all these towns want us to stay for a big party when we tour in September. John O'Brien is going to have a difficult time staying on schedule.

We left our rented car in Mons and boarded a train still lugging eight plaques. When we arrived in Caen John immediately used his expertise as a travel agent. He contacted the tourist bureau and explained what we were doing. We told her the towns we wished to visit. She asked us to return later and she would have the appointments arranged. She made our visit to each town so easy because she explained to each mayor or town dignitary our purpose. When we arrived they were expecting us, knew our mission, and, in most cases, had arranged for an interpreter.

Two plaques will be placed in the Falaise Gap area, one in the town square, the other in the museum.



Visiting Mortain was an interesting experience. Even though John O'Brien had received a letter from Falaise indicating their interest in receiving a plaque, our reception was not very enthusiastic. We were met at City Hall by a 'feisty' 87-year-old doctor who was considered to be the town historian. He respectfully declined the plaque stating it was the 30th Infantry Division that liberated Mortain, not the Third Armored Division. "We have a monument in our park to prove it," he said.

John and I reminded him that the 30th Infantry Division and Third Armored Division were in support of each other during this drive. He then fired a series of questions at us. "What date did you enter the city? What time? What direction did you come from?" Bill said, "Hell, we weren't on a sight-seeing tour. We were trying to defeat the Nazis and in the process save our own necks." He laughed, "Let's look over our history." Sure enough he learned that the Third Armored Division did help liberate the town. See pages 73-75 of *Spearhead in the West*.

This next picture reminds me of one I used to see in my school history book, when Christopher Columbus met with the King and Queen of Spain imploring them for financial help to make his voyage to America.



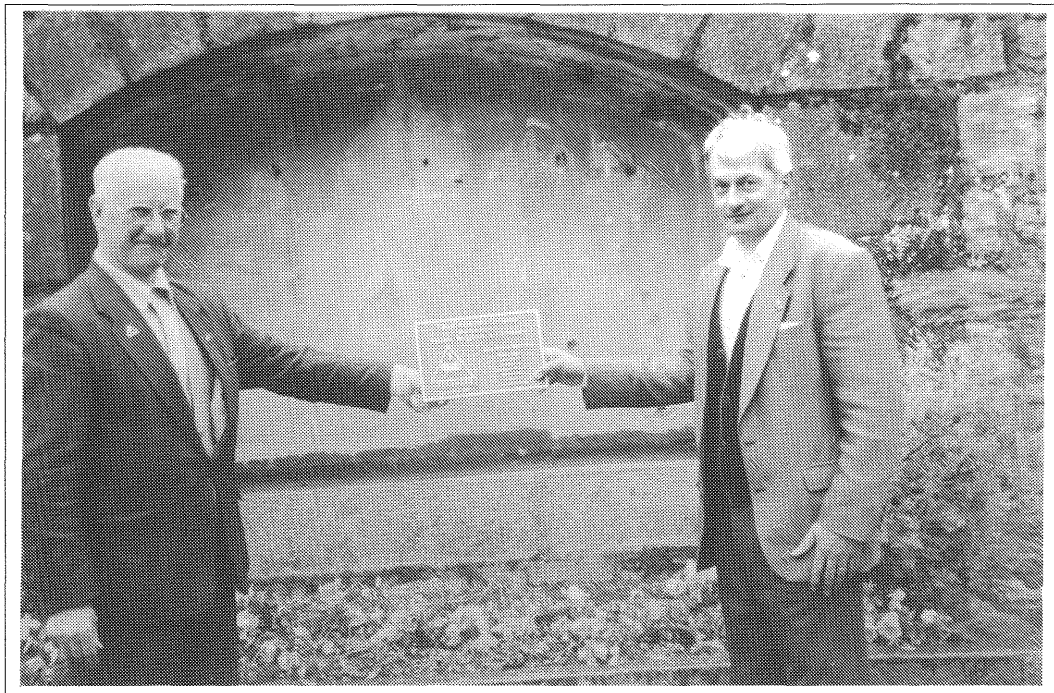
John O'Brien talking to our 'feisty' 87-year-old doctor and the mayor of Mortain.

We went to the park where the 30th Infantry Division monument is located. They were thinking of attaching our plaque to this monument. John and I politely told them that this would be inappropriate.



30th Infantry Division monument in Mortain.

After searching for a place for our plaque, the city officials decided to place it on an old unused town bulletin board across from the Chamber of Commerce.



The city officials of Mortain with the plaque.

Fromental was probably the most rewarding experience of the whole trip. Please remember that Fromental is just a crossroads leading to Falaise to the north and Argentan to the east. A few houses and the cafe/restaurant are still there. We saw them burning in 1944. It is now a favorite stop for truckers.

The mayor works only two days a week. He and all council members are farmers. Our meeting was conducted in a farmhouse.

In the following picture a council member, who was an eyewitness, shows us the German positions. His was one of the houses that was in flames as we liberated the town. It is interesting to note that the German government furnished the money to have his house rebuilt.



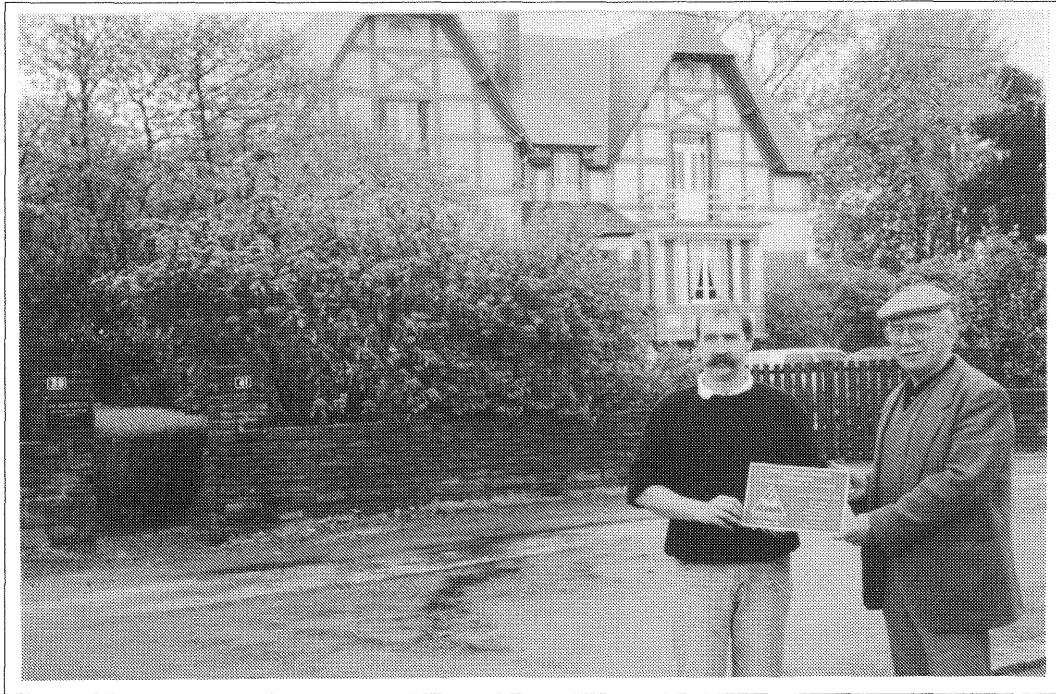
John O'Brien listening intently as a council member recounts the battle. Please note the many pictures of the liberation of their village.



At Putanges on the highway leading from Fromental to Falaise we found the mayor and his staff receptive to our mission. At the conclusion of our meeting the mayor opened his liquor cabinet and proposed a toast. Boy, was that Calvados smooth!

Spearhead in the West says CCA fought heavy engagements at Juvigny le Tertre with well organized Nazi units. Juvigny was taken after a vicious firefight and CCA troops remained static in this area for two days, while German units, well supported by artillery, attempted to take high ground around Juvigny.

Haynes Dugan, our Historian, recommended that a plaque be placed at Doctor Lemonnier's house, which was used as divisional headquarters. We can't put it there because he sold the house. We were able to talk with him on the phone. The plaque will be placed at the city hall.



The mayor and his assistant holding the plaque in front of Dr. Lemonnier's house.



Bill Ruth with school children who wanted their picture taken. John and I wondered if they ever heard of the battle 50 years ago.

Our visit to Vire was the result of arrangements by the Caen tourist bureau. We requested a meeting in Airl on the Vire River. She not only set up an appointment with the people of Airl on the Vire but also with the town officials at Vire 40 miles south. When we arrived, they were sure we never fought in the area. Since we were down to two plaques and still had three sites to visit, we thanked them and continued our trip.

We learned that the French people prefer not to accept a plaque if they feel a unit was not in the area. Based on information in *Spearhead in the West* and Haynes Dugan's recommendations we knew the people in Vire were right.

John and I met with Hank Hooker, an American and assistant superintendent of the Normandy American Cemetery at St. Laurent. We were lucky to get this interview because of the increased activity preparing for all the D-Day ceremonies that were seen on television the week of June 6.

We learned we are not able to place a plaque in the American Cemetery without going through the red tape of contacting the American Battle Monuments Commission in Washington. This also applies to placement of a plaque at the Military Cemetery at Margraten, Holland, where General Rose is buried.

John and I took a good walk on Omaha Beach. Following are some of our impressions captured on film.



*"Think not only upon their passing,
remember the glory of their spirit."*



*View of the Memorial
with its reflecting pool.*



*Many of you saw this
monument to the "Big Red
One". There are more than
1,000 names of soldiers who
spent ten minutes to a
maximum of eight hours and
lost their lives on the first day.*



While standing at the base of the First Infantry monument, we noticed a wooden cross standing alone at the base of this lone wind swept tree. Upon close examination we found that it had been recently placed there by a German veteran in memory of his comrade who was killed there.

On the lighter side — When John and I were leaving our motel one morning we saw about 30 leather jacketed bikers getting ready to depart. We approached them and determined they were German. When we asked where they were headed one man replied, "To the Normandy beaches to see how you Americans kicked our butts".



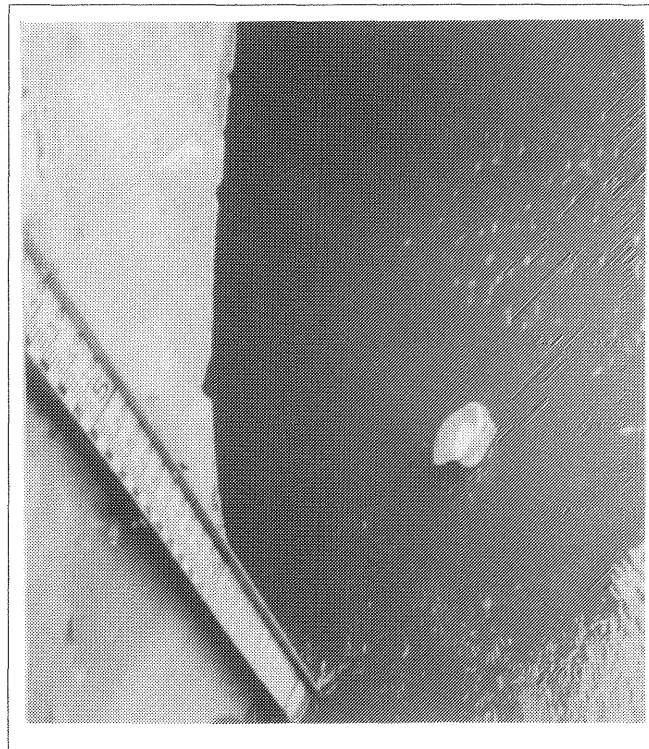
John O'Brien and the mayor of Airel checking the spot where the plaque will be placed on the bridge at River Vire.

Spearhead in the West, page 63, says CCA had their baptism of fire on June 29, 1944, at Villiers Fossard.

On the evening of July 7, 1944, CCB's baptism of fire occurred in the town of Airel at the bridge crossing the Vire River under heavy shell fire.

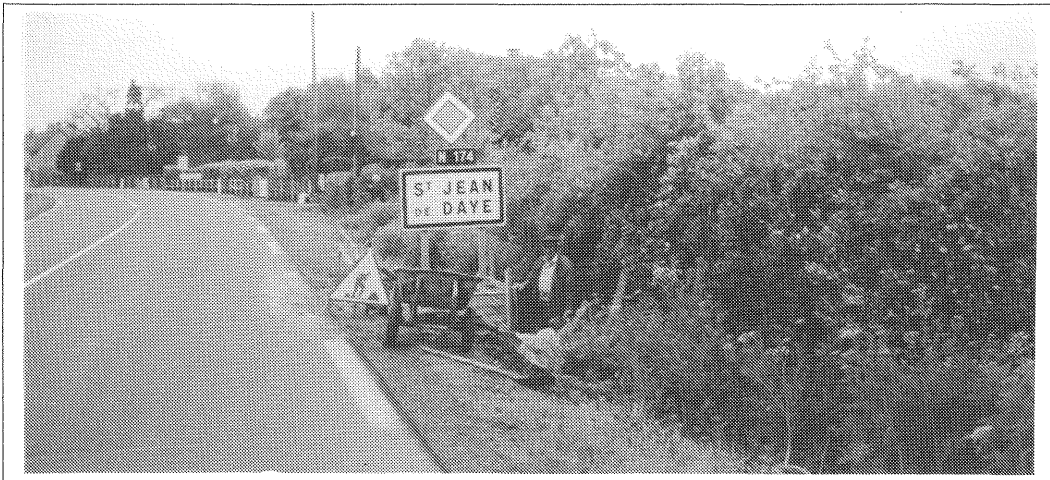


John O'Brien and the bridge.



There was one casualty on the trip. It was raining and windy. While taking the previous pictures a truck passed and blew Bill Ruth's Third Armored cap into the river. We wonder if anyone ever retrieved it.

Our last stop and last plaque placement was at St. Jean de Daye, another of Haynes Dugan's suggestions. As we entered town we took this picture of a man installing a new sign at the outskirts of town.



The town officials were not sure that the Third Armored was involved in their liberation. They thought they were liberated by the 30th Infantry Division. This situation was similar to our experience in Mortain. We learned that the veterans of the 30th Infantry Division have been returning to St. Jean de Daye in five-year intervals. They will be back this year for a celebration on August 28, one week before our tour arrives. They had just completed installing a monument the day we arrived.

On the wall in the mayor's office in St. Jean de Daye we observed two pictures with captions on them indicating they were tanks of the Third Armored Division. Because of the language barrier they interpreted the insignia of 3▲ to be 30, signifying the 30th Infantry Division. We were able to clear this matter up as well.



The mayor, his interpreter (his wife) and another city official proudly display our plaque after we explained that we did help liberate their town.



The mayor of Airel proudly wearing his Third Armored cap and holding his plaque points to Third Armored tanks on the wall of the mayor's office in St. Jean de Daye.

The mission of delivering 27 plaques to Belgium and France was completed on May 18 (Bill's birthday) at 3:30 p.m. It was a most rewarding experience. We felt that all the people, even the younger generations, greatly appreciate the sacrifices of the Third Armored Division and all American units who liberated them from Nazism.

We look forward to visiting these areas again in September 1994. We remember the genuine outpouring of affection that the people of Avesnes gave us two years ago as noted in the picture below.



*— Bill Ruth
Service Company
33rd Armored Regiment*

The Last Request Tour
by Marge Giles

The Last Request Tour
 we took in September,
Some of the highlights
 I'll try to remember -
As the wife of one of you
 brave guys -
I'll take you to Belgium,
 it'll open your eyes.
The pomp and circumstance
 from these humble places
And to look at the people,
 such happy faces.
You'd get kisses, some flowers,
 even a gift -
Some champagne and goodies
 to give you a lift.
You were wined and dined
 throughout each day
Then we'd go to a cemetery
 where your comrades lay.
The awards presented
 we must recall -
Be it simply done or
 in a great hall.
It's back on the bus
 and away we go
To France and Germany
 to another great show.
When you put it all together -
 The people were great
And so very, very thankful
 You were there to liberate!

Chapter 3

Quevy le Grand, Maubeuge

Back in December 1993 it seemed a long time until September 1, 1994. But the months passed really fast until July when Marge and I decided we should do something in the way of a token gift for the people we would meet on The Last Request Tour. In 1986 the tour took us to Brunehamel, France, and left us feeling that it would have been nice to have had some way of saying thanks for their kind reception.

Ten years or so ago we made some buttons for the 486th semi-annual reunion. They were a great success and even today some of them show up on the fellow's caps. That being a success we decided to try to make some for the tour. The first batch was entirely handmade. We cut out a paper circle, stuck on a Third Armored logo, stamped 1944-1994. Then put it through the Badge-A-Minit process to make a button.

When it came to packaging Marge and I questioned if we should include a stick of gum or not. Marge thought it would be a bit tacky. So we called John O'Brien. His opinion was "that anything we did in the way of a gift would be appreciated by the folks in France and Belgium."

The first three hundred or so buttons were made entirely by hand. After that we had Badge-A-Minit make up the graphics for the rest of the buttons. Yes, the commercially printed logos looked better, but we still liked the first handmade ones. This button making process used up the month of July and well into August. Some of the cashiers at the supermarkets gave us some odd looks when we checked out with a half-dozen ten packs of gum.

Once the system got started it was an easy routine to make the button, insert badge and gum, staple, count out ten to a package and then twenty to a large plastic bag. We finally put 450 buttons in a school child's book bag. It took two bags for the 900 buttons. At JFK Airport we tried to see that every member on the tour received a bag of ten. We got to almost everyone, but there were a few people we never did catch.



Curt's granddaughter shows off a button.

Looking back now, two separate instances stand out in my memory about giving out the badges. The first happened at the very impressive ceremony at the Abbaye-aux-Dames in Caen, France. The man who presented our 50th Anniversary medal was very impressive and made every veteran feel that he was personally being thanked for his part in the liberation of Normandy. After the ceremony I

gave the gentleman a badge. He took it, smiled and thanked me. But when he turned it over he broke out into laughter. He then proceeded to tell everyone how, as a boy of nine, he had been introduced to a lifetime of gum.

The second instance took place a week later in Liege, Belgium. We had just finished the ceremonies and church services at the Liege Cathedral. I gave a badge to an English lady, the wife of a cemetery commissioner. When she saw the gum she burst out laughing. She was a little girl of eight at home in England when she was introduced to gum by the American troops.

The buttons were a success. My only wish was "I should have made 9,000."

— *Curt Giles*
486th AAA

Our plane trip on British Airways from Kennedy Airport to England was exciting. The stewardess' were very pretty and striking in their blue and red outfits complete with their saucy brimmed hats. They treated us with delicious food and cold alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks. The trip was very smooth. The plane trip from England to Brussels, Belgium, was eerie as the plane sounded old.

On September 2, 1994, we landed in Brussels, Belgium, with our group of 84 members of the Third Armored Division. There were two buses waiting for our arrival and we immediately boarded them. The bus drivers were John Paul and Roger, who drove us to Quevy le Grand and the Chateau Warelles, which was General Rose's former headquarters.

We moved on to Fourmies, France, to meet our host families. They awaited our arrival on the steps of a government building. Our host family was M. Mme J. Pierre Wilhelm; Pierre, Michelle, daughters Sophia, 18, and Caroline, 14. The people greeted us warmly with champagne, wines, juices and delicious cookies. We enjoyed a concert in their concert hall. Our host family drove us to their lovely estate with front iron gates. Their home is 75 years old and is lovely and well maintained. We occupied a bedroom on the second floor of this three-story home. Again we ate, first cold cuts and breads and more champagne, then a delicious dinner. Needless to say we were overwhelmed by all this hospitality.

This wonderful, caring family is in the medical field. Pierre is a doctor (general practitioner). Michelle is a Doctor of Geriatrics and works at the local hospital. Sophia attends the university, majoring in Political Science and loves Fridley, Minnesota, and also Chicago, which she visited in July. Caroline attends a local school.

On September 3 we all attended the dedication of the Third Armored plaque at the City Hall. A wreath was placed at the base of the monument honoring the Allied Forces. The townspeople related their appreciation that the Third Armored Division liberated them to freedom after four years of German occupation. There was a memorable parade of restored United States army vehicles and then a ride to the picnic on the lakeshore in an antique car. The people along the parade route to the outdoor picnic cheered and waved to all. The afternoon was filled with many activities including a parachute jump by two parachutists.

In the evening Pierre and Michelle escorted us to an organ concert in St. Michel Abbey Church. It was at this site in the old and constantly being restored Abbey that a lovely dinner was served to all of us and our hosts. The church dates back to the ninth century. A seventeen-piece dance band from Paris played for our dancing pleasure. The lengthy, delicious dinner with creamed-filled cakes was served by white-coated waiters. Homeward bound we were all tired from a thrilling day.

The next day, Sunday, we attended Mass. With hugs and thanks we departed from Fourmies, France, with wonderful memories of a wonderful family and townspeople.

— *Bob and Alice Young*
2nd Battalion, Company E
33rd Armored

My husband always wanted to go back to Europe to see what it was like after the war. We never had the opportunity to go. I knew that I had only two weeks to decide if I would make the trip of a lifetime. I knew that if my husband was here he would make this tour. I not only made this tour for myself, but to represent my husband.

The flight to Europe on September 1, 1994, was very smooth. It was raining when we left Brussels on our special motor coaches. The tour's first stop for lunch was in Maubeuge, France. What a warm reception. Then we continued on to Fourmies where we met our host families. What a wonderful two days and nights — the open-air market, the parades. Riding in an army jeep through the countryside was a joy. Everyone was smiling and waving to us. The weather was nice and warm. Then later that evening we had dinner with the big band music. They went all out to entertain us. I felt like a "Queen".

I was asked what was the most impressive thing on the tour for me. I cannot pinpoint one particular event; they were all very exciting.

I could write on and on but will keep this short. I was happy to be in the "Third Armored tour of a lifetime".

— *Mrs. Rosalie Root*
Husband served with Service Battery,
54th Field Artillery

Castorama
— tout ce qu'il vous faut —
42, boulevard de l'Europe
MAUBEUGE - ☎ 27.62.20.56

**OUVREURE
EXCEPTIONNELLE
CE DIMANCHE**

Vive la BRADERIE CASTO
SOUS CHAPITEAU GEANT ET EN MAGASIN
Du 1^{er} au 5 septembre

Venez profiter des bonnes affaires...

2 septembre 1994 : les Américains... reviennent

Ils sont revenus... Une troupe en civil de vieux messieurs bien rangés, cheveux blancs et souvenirs plein la tête. Les anciens de la troisième division blindée américaine étaient à Maubeuge hier. Les vrais héros de la journée

Le matin, le défilé de véhicules historiques dans le centre-ville de Maubeuge s'était déroulé sous un ciel gris. Et sans tout à fait recevoir des Maubeugeois l'accueil qu'il méritait. Peu, trop peu de drapeaux tricolores sur les maisons comme le souhaitait la ville. L'émotion, la vraie, comme une bouffée de tendresse, comme un pincement au cœur, a surgi l'après-midi seulement. Juste quand un rayon de soleil a enfin percé sur l'avenue Franklin-Roosevelt et la stèle des Américains. Derrière les employés municipaux en grande tenue, une troupe d'hommes et de femmes en vêtements civils, des papiers et des médailles, s'est mise en branle vers le petit square. Alors, quelques spectateurs ont applaudi : « Bravo, bravo » a dit un monsieur enthousiaste. « Oh, thank you, thank you » (merci) lui a répondu une vieille dame bien mise, et visiblement émue.

2 septembre 1994, 15 h 45 : les Américains sont... revenus. Et les festivités maubeugeois-

ses de la Libération tenaient enfin leurs vrais héros : ces vieux messieurs à cheveux blancs trotinant à petit pas vers la stèle, bardés d'appareils photographiques automatiques et de caméscopes de poche. Un groupe reconnaissable de loin, avec ses casquettes blanches de base-ball. Forcément, forcément... Mais ces casquettes-là étaient toutes marquées du même sigle : « Spearhead », comme fer de lance, l'insigne de la troisième division blindée américaine. Celle-là même qui avait libéré Maubeuge et l'Avesnois il y a cinquante ans. Hier venant, comme ils l'avaient déjà fait il y a deux ans, les vétérans américains sont revenus sur le lieu de leurs combats.

La main sur le cœur

André Renaux, ceint de son écharpe tricolore, les a placés en rang devant la stèle. Sagement ils se sont massés sous la bannière étoilée flottant au vent, en attendant que d'autres anciens combattants, Français ceux-là, s'alignent au pied du monument, tous drapeaux dé-

ployés. Ils ont pris encore, à la sauvette, quelques photos. Il y avait là William Ruth, 72 ans, venu avec à son épouse de l'Ohio. Et encore Roland Saint-Amour, Américain oui, mais francophone, domicilié dans l'Etat du Maine, à dix kilomètres de peine du Canada. « Chez nous, on parle français, même dans les magasins... » Ils n'ont pas voulu rater le cinquantenaire, ils sont venus pour une vingtaine de jours en Europe, et dans le Hainaut, avant de filer sur Berlin.

Alors la fanfare a entamé l'hymne américain. God bless America. Et tous ces vieux messieurs ont enlevé leurs casquettes de base-ball et les ont placés sur le cœur. Salut aux couleurs. Devant le parterre, des élus présents, dont J.C. Decagny, A. Renaux, Alain Carpentier et le représentant de la délégation américaine, tout casqué de cheveux blancs, ont dévoilé la stèle. La bannière U.S. a claqué au-dessus de leur tête. Et les dizaines de films, de reportages, les centaines d'articles de journaux et de commémorations

du cinquantenaire ont tout d'un coup pris du sens. Y compris pour ce jeune homme en veste de jeans, présent sur le square, et né des années et des années après la Libération. « Ça m'a fait frissonner. J'ai même cru que j'allais pleurer. J'ai pensé à tout ce que mon grand-père me racontait... » Plus tard, après la cérémonie aux morts, la Marseillaise a répondu au drapeau étoilé. Au premier rang des élus, à côté d'Albert Maton, Léon Zimmermann, adjoint au maire, souffrant mais qui tenait absolument à être là, a eu bien du mal à retenir une petite larme. L'émotion.

T.T.

Salut au drapeau pour ce vieux monsieur américain, ancien de la troisième division blindée américaine, revenue à Maubeuge avec son épouse. La main et la casquette de base-ball sur le cœur... Emouvant.



Ce samedi soir à La Luna La ville de Maubeuge et La Voix du Nord vous invitent à danser la « Libération »

C'était il y a cinquante ans, le 2 septembre. Le samedi avec un météo plutôt ensoleillée. Quand les premiers blindés alliés entrent par Louvroil et Soulebois, c'est une immense explosion de joie. Du délire, rapportent les témoins. Alors jeune fille, Marcelle Bertheux dont les parents tenaient une librairie-papeterie, rue Dorlodot, se souvient : « Quand les Américains sont arrivés, on attendait du bruit partout. Les gens se bousculaient dans la rue. L'euphorie. Les gens montaient sur les véhicules. Les femmes jetaient des bouquets de fleurs. Des drapeaux pavoisaient les rues. On sortait des bouteilles, on s'embrassait, des gens se bécotaient, des pas de danse... » Parfois dans l'insouciance car la guerre n'est pas finie, loin de là. La Sambre va encore souffrir dans sa chair. A Paris et dans toute la France, des petits bals spontanés marqueront l'événement.

Pour restituer cette ambiance, la ville de Maubeuge et

La Voix du Nord s'associent pour vous inviter à fêter cet événement en musique. Car c'est tout naturellement que notre journal participe à ces journées commémoratives. Le premier numéro de La Voix du Nord, d'après la Libération, date effectivement du 5 septembre 1944. « La région du Nord est libre » titre-t-il, sur sa première page. Des animations marquent ce cinquantenaire de notre journal, à Lille mais aussi dans d'autres grandes villes. A Maubeuge, avec le concours de la ville, c'est un bal qui est offert à tous les Sambriens. C'est ce samedi soir à la Luna à partir de 21 h et pour toute la nuit. En toute décontraction avec l'orchestre Choc Show Bizz. Du rock bien sûr (il faut être de son époque), du musette et des airs d'époque. Entrez gratuite bien sûr. Buvette et ambiance. Une occasion unique d'accompagner ce cinquantenaire et revivre un moment d'émotion entre générations. Ce n'est pas tous les jours qu'on fête un cinquantenaire...

Libération de la ville

Si les Américains n'étaient pas là...



Les véhicules militaires ont été attendus avenue de France par les Maubeugeois qui ont bravé la pluie.

(Ph. « La Voix »)

Cinquante ans après ils reviennent ! Dans les rues de Maubeuge comme dans celles de Ferrière, les véhicules blindés ont lentement défilé pour chacun puisse une fois encore se souvenir de cet instant magique où le shernan US a remplacé le panzer allemand un certain 2 septembre 1944.

Bien sûr, la guerre n'était pas finie pour cela et les combats allaient être encore rudés mais pouvoir enfin laisser exploser sa joie et acclamer les libérateurs après quatre années de guerre est un sentiment certainement encore indescriptible



A l'époque, le coca était en bouteille en verre, mais avec les chewing-gum, ce fut certainement le « débrayement » alimentaire, cette fois, le plus important en Europe.

(Ph. « La Voix »)

pour ceux qui n'ont pas vécu cette époque. Forcé, toute une colonne de jeeps, de chars légers et lourds, de Half-track, de camions G.M.C., de Dodges... a emprunté l'avenue de France pour se rendre sur la place de l'hôtel de ville. Soixante-dix véhicules d'époque, bannières gonflables et graffiti sur le capot, ont défilé lentement. Malgré la pluie, les Maubeugeois sont restés sur les trottoirs pour « revoir çà ».

Bien sûr, la pluie avait remplacé le soleil de ce fameux samedi, bien sûr la liesse n'était pas au rendez-vous mais la nostalgie, elle, était dans les regards. Cinquante ans, c'était hier. Dommage que les rues n'étaient pas pavoisées des drapeaux français et américains, histoire d'ajouter encore à l'ambiance. Pourtant, avec quelle rapidité, les Maubeugeois avaient sorti les leurs, en 1944, alors que les Allemands étaient encore à leurs portes...

Hier, sur la place de l'hôtel de ville, les uniformes américains étaient légion. Ici, un Gi,

là un aviateur, lunettes et écharpe blanche, là encore un mecno. On parle souvent de l'attrait des uniformes mais quand ceux-ci symbolisent toute une époque de liberté et de prospérité, l'attrait s'en trouve largement accru. Car, au-delà de ces quelques jours de libération que les cinquante ans ont pu connaître, même les quadragénaires ont gardé le souvenir de ces jeeps et de ces soldats US qui balançaient des bonbons aux gamins au temps où les bases américaines étaient autorisées en France. Nostalgie des années cinquante où la crise n'existait pas, où l'heure était à la fête avec ces soldats qui « mangeaient » leur soldat en quelques jours, où chacun travaillait de près ou de loin avec les « ricains ».

Hier, c'était l'heure d'échanger des souvenirs. Un Maubeugeois se souvient que c'est face au bar du zoo qu'il a fumé sa première cigarette. Beaucoup d'ados ont d'ailleurs dû faire de même ce jour. Un autre a amené ses enfants et leur explique en détail le type

de véhicule qu'ils ont en face d'eux. Une femme, entre deux âges, se prend à rêver devant un jeep. Quels tombeurs ces mâcheurs de chewing-gum !

Au bar du zoo, c'est devant une bonne bière que les figurants d'un jour s'attendent, en uniforme bien sûr ! La radio diffuse des chansons qui, curieusement, ajoutent à l'ambiance. « Pour moi la vie va commencer », on se croirait dans un remake de film de guerre... Il ne manque plus que les sirènes. Celles-ci se feront entendre mais plus tard quand la colonne s'ébranlera en direction de Mons, en début d'après-midi, après que conducteurs d'engins eurent rencontré les militaires (les vrais) américains, venus pour la circonstance. Sur la route qui mène en Belgique, le long cortège défile. Sur les trottoirs, les gamins, instinctivement, lèvent la main et saluent. Cinquante ans plus tard, les américains incarnent toujours au tant le rêve que tant d'enfants ont blotti dans un coin de leur cœur.

C.M.

Qui sont-ils ?

Ferrière-la-Grande, pour se diriger vers Maubeuge. Le repas du midi était offert par la municipalité de Maubeuge. C'est à 13 h 15, devant le bar du Zoo que les participants belges ont pu serrer la main aux militaires américains avant de s'en retourner vers Mons où ils devaient participer à une grosse manifestation sur la grand-place. Les figurants français, pour leur part, ont rejoint Valenciennes pour participer également à d'autres commémorations.

○○○

Le défilé de véhicules militaires que les Maubeugeois ont pu voir hier a été principalement constitué grâce au Royal auto-moto club de Mons. En fait, le convoi a pu être formé grâce à la collaboration de trois clubs de Belgique. A noter que certains figurants venaient de Bruxelles, de Gand, de Mons et aussi de France. Le grand coordinateur de l'ensemble n'était autre que le président du Royal-Club, M. Jean-Claude Busine.

Le cortège a démarré, sur la place de

le pont de Boussois. C'est en le voyant que nous avons eu vraiment conscience d'être libérés. Immédiatement, certains ont pensé à la vengeance, faire payer ceux qui ne nous avaient rien donné pendant la guerre. Un groupe est parti dans une ferme, pour défilier dans la cour. Ils ont pris une belle genisse, lui ont mis une cocarde tricolore, ont l'emmené et la tué, et ont dit à la fermière « Maintenez, on se sert ».

Une voiture noire, marquée F.F.I.

Le lendemain dimanche, quelqu'un est venu voir mon père qui travaillait dans le jardin, et lui ont dit que mon frère Richard, qui était dans la Résistance, venait d'être tué à Jeumont. Mon père est parti, à vélo... Nous aussi sommes allés cueillir des fleurs, puis en procession pour saluer la mémoire d'un résistant tué la veille en allant attaquer le fort d'Elesmes. Mais sur la route nous avons croisé une voiture noire marquée du sigle F.F.I. et des résistants qui nous ont dit que les Allemands avaient repris Maubeuge. Alors nous sommes revenus et avons attendu notre père. De la maison nous avons vu une colonne d'Allemands qui décrochaient à travers champs. Mon père est arrivé à ce moment-là, les a croisés. Nous avons cru qu'il allait se faire tuer. Mais non, il ont parlé puis on continué. Mon père nous a expliqué que Richard était sauf, qu'il se battait à rimetiers de Jeumont, pour y déloger des Allemands. Ce n'est que le lendemain qu'il a été blessé, et rapatrié sur la maine d'Erquennes. Il était parti aider les résistants belges.

Témoignage recueilli par T.T.

September 2, 1994: The Americans are back

They came back....A team of distinguished old men, with white hair and heads full of memories. The Veterans of the United States Third Armored Division were in Maubeuge yesterday. They were the true heroes of the day.

This morning there was a parade of historical vehicles in downtown Maubeuge under a gray sky. People in Maubeuge did not give them the welcome they really deserve. There were too few flags on houses today. But there was true emotion in the afternoon, just like a ray of sunshine. A parade of city employees followed by grandfathers and grandmothers headed to the little square. People applauded, "bravo, bravo" and "thank you, thank you" with emotion.

September 2, 1994, 3:45 p.m. The Americans are back - the true heroes of our liberation were there, men with gray hair and cameras and camcorders and white baseball hats, all with the same insignia: Spearhead (Third Armored Division). They are the ones who liberated Maubeuge 50 years ago. They came back where their battles took place.

The hand on the heart

Andre Renaux, mayor, placed them in front of the monument under the star spangled banner. Former French soldiers took some pictures. William Ruth, 72 years old, from Ohio, was there with his wife. Also present was Roland Saint-Amour, an American who speaks French. Mr. St. Amour lives in Maine, 10 kilometers from Canada where everyone speaks French. They are visiting Europe for about twenty days.

Then the musicians played the United States anthem, *God Bless America*. The veterans took off their hats and placed them over their hearts. Then the plaque was unveiled. All the television programs, press articles, etc., about the subject found their meaning. A young man born years after the liberation said, "I shuddered, even thought I was going to cry. I thought about all my grandfather had told me." The Marseillaise - Leon Zimmerman, vice-mayor, was there in spite of being sick. He could not help the tears in his eyes - that was emotion.

(Photo caption, top: Mr. and Mrs. Bill Ruth, Third Armored Division members, salute the flag with emotion as they hold their hand and their hat over their heart.)

(Photo caption, middle: People on the Avenue de France were expecting the vehicles in spite of the rain.)

(Photo caption, bottom: At that time, Coke was in glass bottles but with the chewing gum, it was probably a food landing, the most important in Europe.)

Chapter 4

Fourmies

After a wonderful visit at Maubeuge we went on to Fourmies where our buses pulled up at the city hall. We entered and went to the second floor where tables and refreshments awaited us. The city fathers welcomed us with several speeches. Then our names were called and our host families claimed us. After retrieving our luggage from the buses, our hosts took us to their autos and then to their homes. My host and hostess, Bruno and Paula Rolland, took me to their lovely home located within the city in a park-like setting. They have three children, all of whom were away at universities or schools in Paris.

As the day of our arrival was the fiftieth anniversary of the liberation of Fourmies, we went to the Provincial Government building where a Third Armored plaque was unveiled. By then there were several thousand people in the vicinity. Across the boulevard from the hall was a large park where members of the resistance, old French soldiers, a band and many of the citizens congregated. Here we were greeted from a podium and various individuals made further statements and offered greetings. Each of us was given a lovely china dish on which Fourmies and the Third Armored are colorfully mentioned. There were more dedication ceremonies, memorials and the feeling of a great festival with old friends, altogether moving and wonderful.

That evening we attended a recital in our honor by an American pianist and soprano. Both spoke fluent French and they sang and played Gershwin, South Pacific, French Resistance songs, etc. Wonderful entertainment! We then returned with our hosts to their homes. My host family and I talked, drank various wines, had a wonderful dinner and several after dinner drinks before retiring. I called my wife and introduced her to the Fourmies family and they told her she must come over and visit some day.

The next day, Saturday, we participated in a very long parade with much waving to people lined up everywhere along the route. At the Hotel Ibis, we had refreshments (wine). After the long march we were provided with a delightful lunch under canvas in a garden.

Then on to Wimpy and Nueve Maison for champagne and ceremonies. There we met some old resistance fighters and drank wine with them. It was a lovely, sunny afternoon. The others had left and I was waiting for my hosts to take me to the next place, but had my signals crossed. However, the local officials arranged to transport me to the ceremonies at the next stop, and made contact again with my host family. We went to St. Michel Abbey to await the parachute drops. The sky turned cloudy and an overpass by French jets was cancelled, although several parachute drops did occur. Next we entered the cathedral, which is being restored, and enjoyed a fine organ concert. We went to the attached abbey and gardens where a dinner (with tablecloths) awaited us. And lo and behold a fine band was playing the 'big band music' of the forties. I 'jitterbugged' with my hostess and several ladies from our group. The dinner courses and accompanying wines were endless and wonderful. Our hosts and hostesses then took us to their homes (about 1:00 a.m.).

The next day, Sunday, a special mass was offered in the Catholic church and attended with my host and hostess and a number of our group. At City Hall we met with the others to travel to Caen with a stop at Lisieux on the way to visit the shrine of St. Therese of Lisieux. Then on to Caen, with a stop en route for a snack in (of all things) a McDonald's. Upon arrival at the hotel in Caen, I took a walk around the neighborhood, then back to the hotel for a meeting, a calvados, and then to bed.

— *Frank Sanders*
Division Headquarters

A long time ago, in songs my father sang to us, I first heard about Normandy. I never dreamed that one day I would visit there. Oddly enough, the song was about one day returning to my beautiful Normandy, that it was the place of my birth, so goes the song. The melody lingers to this day.

The beautiful and warm welcome we received from our host family, the Theodorczyks, reminded me of my ancestors and their gentle ways. We formed quite a friendship there and were all very sad when we said our good-byes there by the bus at the Hotel de Ville. Everyone had tears in their eyes. It seems we had not been there very long and there was still a million things to say. We brought home many fond memories of our short visit with this wonderful family.

Our attendance at Mass that morning with the family and Dr. Mac was very heart-warming and made us feel very close. The reason for this may be that we speak the same language and conversation came very easily. We sometimes detected expressions and idioms that our grandparents used.

Valerie Theodorczyk, the young girl from our host family, went out of her way to make our stay in Fourmies very pleasant. When we ran out of film, she was willing to find some. The postcards and newspapers she was unable to get then were sent to us later. She would lead us through the crowds so we could get a better view of the ceremonies, always polite and unassuming. She even stayed up late one night to write some notes about the activities of the three days we were in Fourmies. I dare say she was outstanding. She also gave us the cassette of the big band who played at the Abbey St. Michel, as a souvenir.



Saying good-bye from Fourmies with the Theodorczyk family.

We were happy to meet a member of the French resistance. Mr. Maurice Frecht is a good storyteller. He remembers vividly and talks non-stop about his exploits in the resistance movement. He was never at a loss for words, they just flowed on and on. I would have loved to listen to him all day, he was so interesting. He mentioned that he should have come to America after the war, after his wife had died. He celebrated his 75th birthday on November 10.

There were many places that impressed us, like all those crowds of villagers who came out to greet us and show their appreciation for what the veterans had done for them fifty years ago. All along the route as we traveled in jeeps and military vehicles, people our own age came out in their yards to wave. You could tell those who remembered and that we were bringing back memories to them. It was something to see.



I remember an old couple in Neupre. He had been a prisoner for five years and had suffered a lot she told us. He didn't do much talking, he was crying so. I noticed when we went back to the bus, as I was looking out the window, directly in front of their doorway, she stood there waving until the bus left. Again we feel very lucky to have met these people and been able to converse with them. It made our experience so much richer.

The reception at St. Jean de Daye was also very impressive. Almost everyone was presented with beautiful flowers. We filled

the bus with blooms of every description. There were dedications and memorials and wine at every stop. Some ladies told of whole families living in their cellars for ten days at a time, only coming upstairs to warm up a bit or get food. When they heard footsteps upstairs they thought it would be the Germans. Imagine their disbelief and joy when they realized it was the Americans. No wonder they love the Americans and are so grateful and want their children to know it.

A nice surprise was the army band greeting us when we arrived at a hall filled with people one Sunday in Herstal. What a crowd and what a meal! There must have been over fifteen different choices. Our plates were overflowing. Needless to say no one could eat it all. One local lady was going around greeting people and saying, "We eat very well in Belgium," and was very happy to share with us. The people of Belgium don't want to be thanked. They insist on doing the honors.

The happy highlight of our trip was also being able to meet with our son who was stationed in Frankfurt which is a short distance from Freidburg where we were spending the day visiting the men of the 67th Armor and the museum. We had lunch with them at their army kitchen and watched some poor guys struggle with the obstacle course. We had been looking forward to an all day visit with our son, but it turned out he was busy with Army business, so we had to be content with a shorter visit and shared a good meal. All in all, it was a good day.

We both feel very fortunate to have been able to go on such a wonderful trip. This certainly was the trip of a lifetime. We have heard from a few of the nice people we met on the tour and our host family whom we continue to correspond with. This trip will be among our most precious souvenirs.

— *Roland and Rena St. Amour*
486th AAA (AW)

*Mr. Maurice Frecht,
showing his FFI armband.*



*Aurelie and her sister, Sophie Ann,
who gave us flowers.*



*They lived in the cellar for
ten days at a time.*



Roland and Rena with their son.

Our two tour buses took us through beautiful country to Fourmies, France, where the people were waiting for us, to a "Welcome" party at the town hall. Children as well as adults, wore name tags to identify them as our hosts. Name tags for us were distributed and in a pleasant confusion hosts and guests located each other. Our host and his son and daughter were almost at our elbow. Others took a little longer to meet. There were welcoming speeches, some wine and snacks, then a concert of sacred music featuring soloist Rosalie Becker. Then to our host's home to meet his wife for dinner and a little rest. Another tour couple, the Knisleys, and their hosts and our host's Mother made the dinner very festive. It was a little difficult at first, as our host, Denis, had to translate all the conversations in English and French. He did very well and we did have an enjoyable evening.

These two days of ceremonies were planned by the Association Fourmies-Fridley, to welcome the liberators returning after fifty years, saying "Time has not dimmed the glories of your deeds. You are our true friends and we greet you with pride."

The next day, Saturday, September 3, was a fun day. After breakfast with our hosts, we were driven to the town park for a ceremony to dedicate the Third Armored plaque which will be placed at the town hall. There were many people, a band, lots of flags carried proudly by French veterans. Then the Third Armored veterans were asked to line up facing each other while the two mayors expressed their gratitude and welcome. A gift of a beautiful plate with each man's name was distributed. Meanwhile a parade of vintage United States Army vehicles and old cars from the Picardie Vehicle Club arrived. The band played American military music. The band consisted of school-age children up to senior citizens.

We were told to choose a vehicle we would like. We chose a jeep which I drove with my wife at my side, and the owner, appropriately dressed in United States Army fatigues, rode in the back.

We drove to a reception at the Etangs des Moines Lake, where we were met by the brass band. We then went to a small hotel room for champagne and tasty snacks. At noon we received a large box lunch which we ate at long tables under a pavilion on the lakeside, while another brass band played 40s and 50s tunes and Annette Lowman sang.

At 2:00 p.m. we boarded the vehicles and were off on a beautiful sunny afternoon through lovely country to Wimpy, Neuve-Maison, and to Hirson, waving to people along the way who were waving flags, saluting the veterans and blowing kisses. The number of people was overwhelming. Babies to oldsters greeted us with "V" signs and "merci beaucoup" and "bonjour". Here was another welcome and plaque dedication with national anthems playing, singing, and military music. A reception under a huge tent in a large parking area was joyful, as we mingled with the people of Hirson, shook hands and talked with them. Regretfully we had to leave, get back in the jeep to St. Michel Abbey church to await parachutists of the French Air Force to fly to honor us. The last jumper's parachute was specially made for the Third Armored Division. It proclaimed, "Thank You Again, from Fourmies-Fridley 1994". It was given to the Association for our archives. What a gift!

Then into the Abbey church with all the host families, for an organ concert by Jean-Michael Verneiges, of wonderful classics and both countries' anthems. This organ was built in 1714, rebuilt several times, and is the most important ancient French organ in working order.

We proceeded to the Cloister for wines and a look around the very old and beautiful building, now undergoing renovations necessary due to the age of the building. We found our table for the formal dinner and a seventeen-piece "big band" from Paris entertained us. Dinner was beautifully served and delicious, and conversation flowed with the wine. Little by little, couples got up and danced in spaces between the tables until 12 midnight when we had to leave for the short drive to

our host's home. After breakfast on Sunday, we were taken to the town hall to board the buses by 8:00 a.m. All the lovely, untiring hosts stayed until we pulled out at 8:30 a.m. The Third Armored plaque was on the front of the town hall.

Au revoir to our new friends, who so graciously took us into their homes and hearts, and entertained us so well to express their gratitude for their liberation.

— *Jack Brewer*
32nd AR, Co. B

Our first very favorable impression was with the fine people that we stayed with in Fourmies, France, Mr. & Mrs. Oglaza and their daughter Caroline, a college senior. They wined and dined us and couldn't seem to do enough. They had the mayor of their little town over to meet us. They spoke no English. We spoke no French, but their daughter spoke English, so with that and plenty of champagne we made do very well.

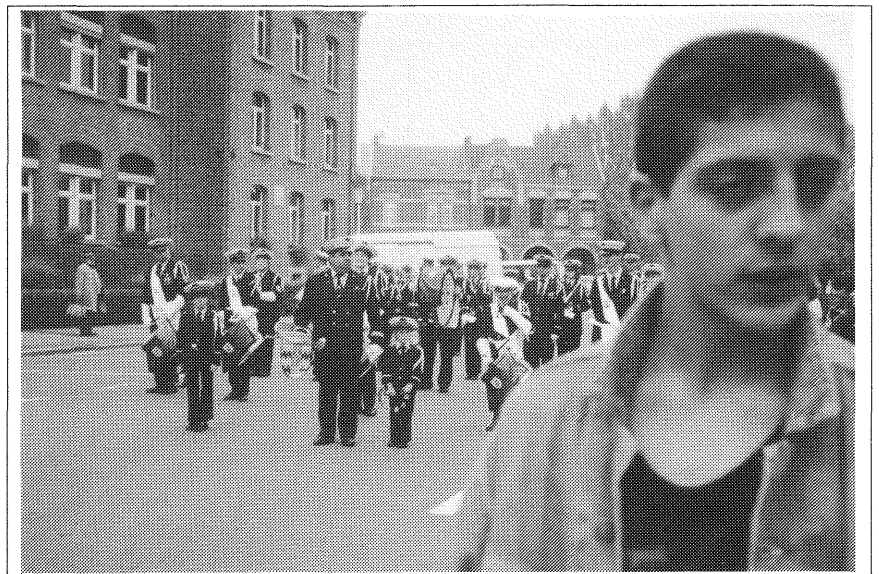
Other very favorable impressions were the French and Belgian people, applauding as we arrived. The bands were made up of senior citizens and children playing. The elderly people carried flags representing towns from all over the area. Many of them had tears in their eyes as we shook their hands. They said, "thank you, thank you." I think this was the extent of their English. Their thanks was very evident in their speeches, their champagne, wine and food treats at the many receptions. They made us feel very special with the formal presentations of medals and diplomas. We thought the museum at La Glieze was exceptional with many interesting exhibits.

I was surprised, but pleased at the reception we received in Germany, I guess we deserve the thanks they gave us for getting rid of Hitler and the Nazis for them.

Many of the towns and places we visited brought back memories of combat experiences and lost buddies to me. I thought many times how great it would be to share such a tour with all my old buddies (living and dead). I am sure we received heroes treatment, but much of the credit belonged to those not present. I feel that I was less worthy than many that weren't able to attend.

I was very favorably impressed with the United States military people we met. I believe they are representing us well. I think it was very good relations for us and the French, Belgian, German and English people, for their presence at several of our dedications of plaques. I had never before been addressed as "Sir" by so many captains and majors.

I was one of the tour members interviewed by the TV crews in Cologne. I told them of some of



The young drum majors ready to do their part.

my experiences in Cologne on March 6, 1945, (my birthday). I saw the tank battle where one of our tanks was knocked out first and then one Pershing tank destroyed the German tank, the tank near the Cathedral. As the German tank burned, some German soldiers tried to get away in some civilian cars. Our tanks hit them with H.E. shells. There was not much left. Then our orders were to try to capture the big bridge before they could destroy it. We were very close to it when it went down. The TV people said they were going to present the pictures and interviews in their 1995 celebrations.

We would like to thank all those responsible for all the effort in preparing and acquiring the plaques and organizing the tour. It will long be remembered as well as all the tour members we were fortunate to meet on this trip. I believe the plaques will be a part of our history in and for Europe. I believe we have done our part.



The French and Belgian people may have more World War II equipment than we do.

I am very proud of the medals, diplomas and mementos I received on the tour. I have been showing them at every opportunity. I was showing them to some of my family. There are ribbons on several, red and combinations of red. My five year old granddaughter said, "Granddad, you sure got lots of seconds." God willing, I may get a blue ribbon sometime.

— *Carl and Olga Tucker*
Company B, 36th AIR

On September 1, 1994, I embarked on a 20-day journey through France, Belgium, Holland and Germany with veterans and their wives from the Third Armored Division. It is a journey I shall never forget. On our first day in Fourmies we all met our host families. It was early evening and we all congregated in the theater for a concert. I think I was weary by this time. I didn't realize we were to meet our host families when this French couple came up to me and looked at my name tag and they realized I was their guest. Then the fun began. Neither of them spoke a word of English and I speak very few words in French. The big job was to get my luggage to their apartment which was within walking distance of where we were, without carrying my luggage. They kept talking to me in French and I thought he was telling me he was going to get his car and take my luggage to their apartment. Not so. We finally went outside and Maureen, our lovely nurse, came along with her hostess and somehow my luggage was put in her car. Emile, my host, went with her and deposited my luggage in their apartment. Then we all enjoyed the concert featuring Rosalie Becker.

Many of the Americans stayed in French homes and were served large meals and much wine after the concert. In my very limited French I told my hostess, Fernand, I wanted "petit" (little) "mange" (eat) and she understood what I was telling her. We walked over to their apartment after the concert. They lived in what we call a "high rise" apartment building. It was very tastefully decorated, lots of pretty flowered wallpaper and nice floors. If I understood what they were saying, they did all the wallpaper and the floors themselves. We just had a ham sandwich which was fine with me because I was not hungry at all. I found the French bathrooms very quaint because the

toilet was in a completely separate room from the bathtub and sink, and their apartment did not have a bidet which surprised me. I thought all French homes had a bidet.

According to my schedule we were to be at the Market at 9:00 a.m., Saturday. My hostess woke me in plenty of time. For breakfast my host put his coffee in a bowl like we eat cereal from and dipped his roll or bread in the coffee and that was his breakfast. I asked if she had any orange juice and she did bring some out. I think they were as surprised at my likes and dislikes as I was at theirs. We left after breakfast and walked down to the Market Square. They were lofting two hot air balloons and the French people were setting up their tables for the Market Day. Very few of our people arrived much before 9:30 a.m. but we did run into Maureen, our nurse, and she walked with us all around the Market Place. Around noon we had a plaque dedication ceremony there at the Market Place and they presented the veterans with medals and the wives with plates they had made especially

for this occasion. The people were just marvelous. They came in great numbers and there were many children. There was a group of boys and girls who belonged to a cycling club and they were all decked out in their uniforms. There was also a band playing after the plaque dedication.



The French bicyclists.

Some of the older men in Fourmies had been French Resistance Fighters when France was under German Occupation and they carried these beat-up old flags. They cheered and cried when they met our veterans of the Third Armored Division who came through Fourmies and liberated them from the Germans.

After the ceremonies we all jumped into these old cars, historical vehicles we would call them, and had a great parade complete with all the old army vehicles, out to a lake where lunch was being served. It was a lovely afternoon and everyone had a good time. When Emile, Fernand and I decided to leave this area the car we came in was no place to be found. Fortunately for us, one of our buses had come to the lake area, so we got on the bus.

Our next stop was at Hirson for a plaque dedication and champagne. After that we went to an area where a man was to parachute out of an airplane. It was a long wait but he finally did jump. From there we went to St. Michel Abbey Church for an organ concert. The organ was a very old pipe organ and probably the only one of its kind in the world. The music was great but by this time we were into our second day and were not caught up on our sleep from the plane flight yet. From the concert we went to a large room in the Abbey where they served us a fantastic dinner. And the best part was they had a marvelous band — Glenn Miller sound. I love to dance and even though there wasn't a dance floor per se, Frank Sanders and I managed to find a spot to dance. After a while



Emile and Fernand, waiting for the parachute to land.

a lot of people were up dancing wherever they could find a spot. I was disappointed that we did not have time to go to Fourmies and put our good clothes on because this was an occasion to be dressed up for.



Emile, Fernand and I decided it was time to leave but about that time they started bringing dessert around and surely we weren't going to pass that up. So we sat down and ate our dessert. Then John O'Brien announced Mass the next morning. I thought, "How am I going to find out about getting there." One of the young French ladies was sitting at the next table, so I had her ask Fernand if she knew where the Catholic Church was. She said, "Yes," so that was taken care of. When we finally decided to leave we walked up to the door just as the bus was pulling away. I was almost panic-stricken because we were at least 20 miles from Fourmies and I was with these people who speak no English. I watched all the cars as they left the parking lot and they were all full of people. Finally Emile went up to a car with a young couple in it and they were going to Fourmies so we rode with them. What a relief! It was about 1:00 a.m. by this time and I was really tired! We were up in time for Mass at 7:30 a.m. the next morning. Right after Mass our buses bid a fond farewell to these wonderful people in Fourmies, France. I will never forget these two days.



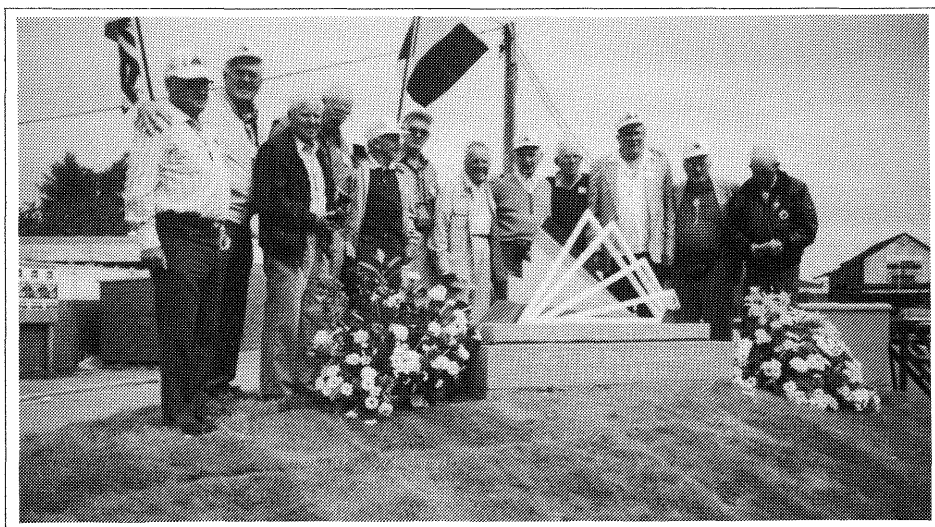
— *Betty Coons*
Husband served with
U.S. Air Force

I would like to thank everyone of the Third Armored Division who made this trip possible. There was a great effort put into it and the timing of the places must have been hectic. I think this trip really was a must. It bonded us more than most people will ever realize. It made all that we went through worthwhile. The trip with the plaque dedications was the best ever. It held everyone together, young and old, so that World War II will not be forgotten. It was a lot more than I ever expected. I will never forget it.

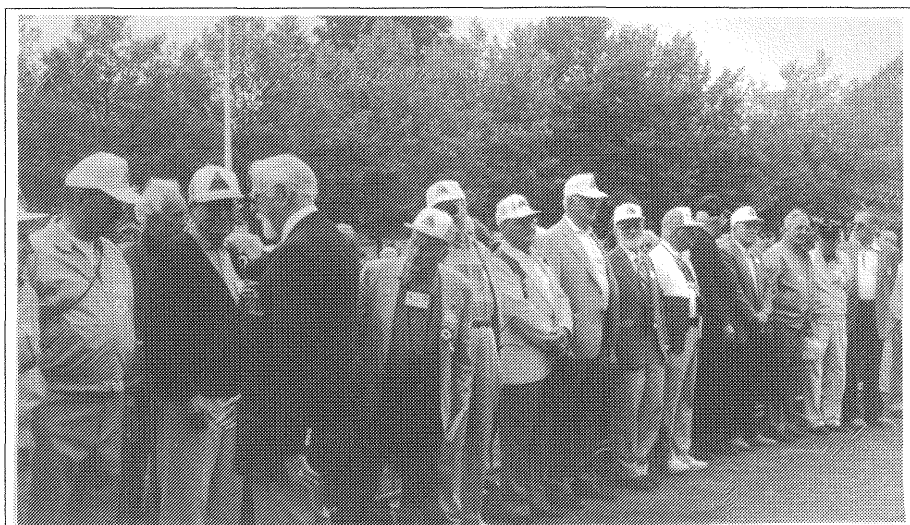
I would like to thank our host family that we spent the first nights with, Bernard Cuisset, his lovely wife and three well-mannered children, one girl and two boys. The meals they served were fit for a king. They took us to all types of places. All the war memorials are well kept with flowers and shrubs.

They live in a very beautiful brick farm house in the country with rolling hills and open land. The landscape is very beautiful. You just want to take a chair, sit down and enjoy it forever. We have some photos of them so we will not forget them. We had to bring a bottle of his homemade wine with us and it was excellent.

— *Russell Eick*
486th AAA (AW)



Ceremony at Falon. Left to right: Carl Tucker, Dick Roemer, Aurio Pierro, Dick Goodie, Eugene Turcotte, Roland St. Amour, Bob Swirsky, Bob Young, Chester Davis, Bill Ruth, Bill Elms. Photo by Carl Tucker.



*Ceremony at Fourmies.
Photo by Dick Goodie.*

John O'Brien asked many of us to give brief remarks when the situation warranted it during the course of our trip. At Hirson I was asked to do the honors. I had my mini-tape recorder on as I spoke so I am able to remember what was said.

"I speak on behalf of the 85 members of the Third Armored Division Association who are with us today. I also speak on behalf of the 2,200 members still living in the United States who would like to be with us today but for many reasons, especially health reasons, they couldn't be here. Lastly, I would like to speak on behalf of the 2,220 members of the Third

Armored Division who gave their lives for your and our freedoms. As we drove into your town today our members made these remarks, "We wish our children could be with us today. We wish our grandchildren could be with us today and we wish all of America could be with us today to witness this wonderful outpouring of love, affection, appreciation, and generosity that you wonderful people from France, Fourmies, Hirson and your region have shown us.

We thank you from the bottom of our hearts. God Bless France, God Bless Fourmies, God Bless Hirson and God Bless America."

— *Bill Ruth*
Service Company
33rd Armored Regiment

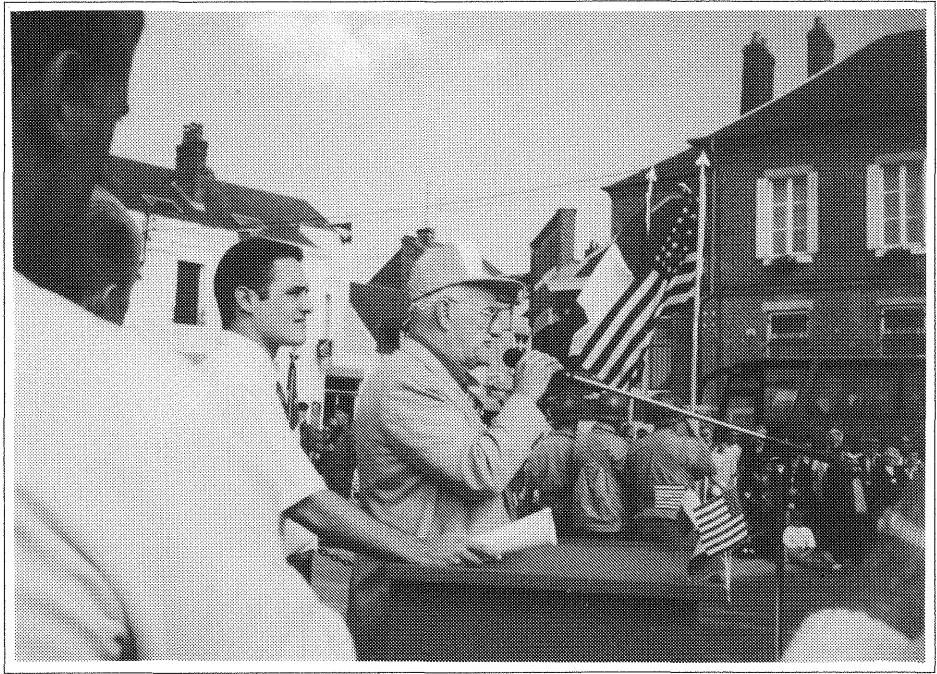


Photo by Roland St. Amour.



Photo by Carl Tucker.

Cérémonies de la Libération

Anor-échanges a accueilli des vétérans américains

Répondant à l'appel de l'Association Fourmies-Fridley les membres et sympathisant d'Anor-Echanges ont vécu deux journées formidables à l'américaine. A noter que sur les 5 familles d'accueil 4 familles avaient des racines étrangères : Hongroise, Polonaise, Allemande, et Portugaise. Pour ces amis américains, Anor-Echanges et ses hôtes étaient représentatifs des futurs Etats-Unis d'Europe et sa bannière étoilée.

Robert, Anna-Doris, Aulay, Toivo, Chester, Belle, Jimmy, et Lewis ont été très touchés par l'accueil chaleureux des familles Anoriennes. Le séjour fut court mais cordial et chaleureux. Lorsque le dimanche matin sur le pavis de l'hôtel de Ville de Fourmies les vétérans entonnèrent en anglais "Ce n'est qu'un aurevoir..." plus d'une personne avait une petite larme à l'oeil.

"We will come back... Come to the States... Thank you".



Les membres d'Anor-échanges ont reçu des Américains dans le cadre des cérémonies de la libération

Liberation ceremonies

ANOR-EXCHANGES WELCOMED U.S. VETERANS

Responding to the request of the Fournies-Fridley Association, the members of Anor-Exchanges spent two wonderful days in the American way. Among the five host families, four had foreign roots: Hungarian, Polish, German, Portuguese. A good representation of the future United States of Europe. Robert, Anna, Doris, Aulay, Toivo, Chester, Belle, Jimmy, and Lewis were very happy with the warm welcome of the families of Anor. On Sunday morning, on the square of the Fournies city hall, veterans sang in English *Auld Lang Syne*. Many people had tears in their eyes.

"We will come back...Come to the States...Thank you."

(Photo caption: Members of Anor-Exchanges are shown as they participate in liberation ceremonies.)

Fête de la Libération

Rosalie Becker : une voix venue d'Amérique



De nombreux mélomanes assistaient à ce concert de musique sacrée

Vendredi, au théâtre municipal, un récital de musique classique et sacrée chanté par Rosalie Becker, dont l'entrée était gratuite, a été organisé pour accueillir les vétérans américains venus célébrer le cinquantenaire de la libération de Fourmies.

La musique sacrée fut appréciée par les mélomanes si l'on en croit les applaudissements. En effet, Rosalie Becker, par sa voix enchanteresse enthousiasma la salle entière à la faveur d'un répertoire riche et varié accompagné au piano par John Fergusson.



Rosalie Becker par sa voix, a enthousiasmé le public

Celebration of the Liberation
ROSALIE BECKER: A VOICE FROM AMERICA

Friday, at the town theater, there was a recital of classical and sacred music given by Rosalie Becker. This free recital was organized in honor of the United States Veterans that were there to celebrate the Liberation of Fourmies. Judging from the applause, people liked it. Indeed, Rosalie Becker, thanks to her beautiful voice, charmed the whole crowded room with a rich and varied repertoire. Piano accompaniment by Mr. John Fergusson.

Trélon

Commemoration de la Libération «Thank you again» aux Américains

Pour marquer comme il se devait l'anniversaire de la Libération de la commune, Trélon avait invité dimanche matin, un cortège de véhicules militaires américains. Après un défilé aux couleurs françaises et américaines, on procéda à un dépôt de gerbe au monument aux morts avant que ne retentisse la Marseillaise, interprétée par l'harmonie de Trélon. La cérémonie commémorative de remerciement aux libérateurs américains fut suivie de près par les Trélonais qui leur rendit hommage par leur présence en nombre et leur vif intérêt à l'événement.

M. Ruelle, président de l'UNC mit cette cérémonie à profit pour évoquer un résumé historique de la Libération de la France et de l'Avesnois.

«Construire la paix est la volonté des peuples sauf lorsque la fièvre atteint certains d'entre eux et les transforme en guerrier.

Nous anciens combattants soyons les apôtres de cette paix fragile.

Vive l'Avesnois libéré, vive la France» inclut-il.



En présence des élus, Maître Ruelle, président de l'U.N.C. et A.F.N. rendit hommage aux victimes des guerres

Commemoration of the Liberation "THANK YOU AGAIN" TO THE AMERICANS

For commemoration, Trélon invited a parade of United States vehicles. After the parade with French and U.S. flags, flowers were offered at the monument. Marseillaise played the harmonie of Trélon. The people of Trélon paid great attention to the ceremony and many people were there.

Mr. Ruelle, president of UNC, evoked the history of the liberation. "People want to build peace. Except when some get the fever that turns them into warriors. We former soldiers are the apostles of this fragile peace."

"Vive la France."

(Photo caption: Mr. Ruelle paid tribute to war victims.)

Cinquantenaire de la Libération Emouvantes retrouvailles entre

Avec le temps, avec le temps va... tout s'en va : cette phrase tirée d'une célèbre chanson de Léo Ferré ne peut en fait être appliquée qu'à la seule rancoeur éprouvée par toute une population, victime de plus de quatre ans d'oppression et de privations, envers l'occupant nazi. Après cinq décennies, cette rancoeur s'est estompée, voire dissipée. Et c'est peut-être aussi bien ainsi.

Cependant, la libération avec un grand L, on n'est pas prêt de l'oublier et le souvenir demeure vivace dans la mémoire des sexagénaires, septuagénaires et octogénaires, et de tous ceux, qui à titre divers, ont refoulé l'envahisseur hors de nos frontières.

L'évocation de ces grands moments de l'histoire de la France a donné lieu à Fourmies, et dans toute la région, à de festivités où gaieté et émotion étaient étroitement mêlées.

Les cérémonies du cinquantenaire de la libération débuteront vendredi après-midi, au foyer du théâtre municipal, par une cérémonie où les membres de l'association Fourmies-Fridley, auxquels s'étaient joints M. Fernand Pêcheux, maire de Fourmies, et son conseil municipal ; MM. Marcel Deloux, conseiller général et Alain Berteaux, conseiller régional ; les représentants des corps constitués et de nombreuses personnalités ont accueilli chaleureusement les quarante-cinq vétérans américains de la troisième Division Blindée U.S., qui a libéré Fourmies au matin du 2 septembre 1944.

Invités à Fourmies avec leurs épouses, ces vétérans ont été hébergés dans des familles de tout le canton, à la demande de l'association Fourmies-Fridley.

Deux montgolfières dans le ciel fourmisien

Samedi matin, alors que les Fourmisiens arrivaient en grand nombre place de Verdun, lieu du rassemblement, deux montgolfières, comme deux colombes de la Paix, sont alors apparues au-dessus de la Place Verte pour disparaître dans le ciel, derrière l'hôtel de ville... Les cérémonies, organisées par la ville, marquant le cinquantième anniversaire de la libération, débutaient dans l'allégresse franco-américaine.

MM. Fernand Pêcheux, maire, et John O'Brien, président des vétérans américains, dévoilèrent une plaque commémorative, offerte par les anciens de la 3ème Division Blindée U.S., apposée sur le mur, près de l'entrée de l'hôtel de ville.

Sur un podium, dressé pour la circonstance à côté du parvis de la mairie, la chanteuse américaine Rosalie Becker, accompagnée du pianiste John Ferguson, interpréta avec brio «Le chant des partisans», «l'hymne à la joie» et les hymes américains et français. Son interprétation fut très appréciée de la foule, parmi laquelle on pouvait remarquer, outre les personnes déjà citées, M. Jean-Claude Giraud, sous-préfet d'Avesnes ; un représentant de l'Ambassade des Etats-Unis à Paris ; le commandant du Shape de Mons, accompagné de militaires ; de nombreux élus, des représentants des associations patriotiques, des sociétés locales et des corps constitués.

Cérémonie du souvenir

L'assistance, précédée de sept drapeaux de la batterie-fanfare de Fourmies et de la musique municipale de Pargny-sur-Saulx (Marne), fut ensuite conviée à se rendre devant le monument aux défenseurs de la patrie pour la cérémonie du souvenir. Après avoir déposé une gerbe au pied de la stèle, tandis que M. Jacques Derigny, adjoint à la vie associative, faisait de même devant la stèle de la Résistance, M. Fernand Pêcheux, maire, fit observer un instant de recueillement en mémoire de tous ceux qui ont donné leur vie afin que nous soyons libres. M. Jean Doué, membre des déportés, ranima alors la flamme de la Résistance, tandis que les sonneries d'usage retentissaient.

Des cadeaux-souvenirs

A l'issue de cette cérémonie



Un large public avait envahi la place de Verdun pour prendre part aux festivités

du souvenir, chacun leva les yeux vers le ciel. Un bourdonnement de moteur d'avion se fit entendre, mais les conditions météorologiques n'étaient pas propices, le parachutiste de la Reconnaissance, membre du Para-Club de Trélon, ne put exécuter son saut et atterrir Place Verte. Le parachute portant la mention «Thank you again», qui devait être offert aux vétérans américains par l'association Fourmies-Fridley, le fut quelques heures plus tard

à Saint-Michel, alors que le ciel était plus clément.

Chaque vétéran reçut ensuite une assiette souvenir des mains de MM. Jacques Derigny et François Gorlin, adjoints au maire, tandis que le maire de Fridley, M. William Nee, offrait une plaque écrite en français et en américain au premier magistrat de Fourmies.

On vit aussi Mme Féry, vice-présidente de l'association Fridley-Fourmies, remettre une aquarelle à M. Marceau Bat-

teux, président de la même association du côté français.

La fin d'un cauchemar

Dans son allocution, le maire de Fourmies provoqua à coup sûr une vive émotion chez nombre de ses concitoyens, dans la mesure où ses propos avaient valeur de témoignage. Fernand Pêcheux se rappela : «Il y a cinquante ans, à l'heure où je vous parle, après quatre dures années d'occupation,

Fourmies était libérée par les G.I.'S de la 3e Division Blindée qui traversaient notre ville en direction d'Avesnes sous les acclamations et les baisers d'une population qui voyait arriver la fin d'un cauchemar. Ce 2 septembre 1944, j'étais présent parmi la foule, j'avais 31 ans et c'est les larmes aux yeux que je regardais défilier les engins blindés qui nous apportaient la Paix et surtout la Liberté.

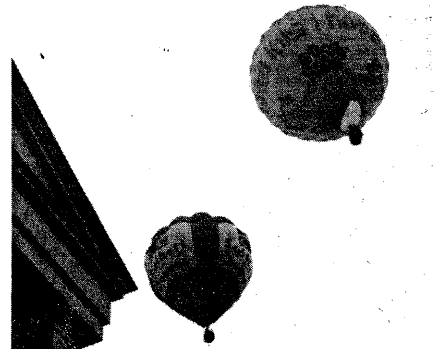
Je ne me suis d'ailleurs pas



MM. Fernand Pêcheux et John O'Brien dévoilent la plaque commémorative offerte par les anciens de la 3e Division Blindée U.S.



Rosalie Becker, chanteuse américaine, fait vibrer le public par son interprétation du «Chant des partisans»



Devant le monument aux défenseurs de la patrie, un hommage a été rendu aux disparus

Fourmies et Américains

attardé car, membre de la Résistance, j'avais rendez-vous au théâtre dont la salle de bals avait servi, pendant quatre ans, de mairie provisoire. Le maire a revêtu cette journée en voyant la lointaine Amérique venir « rendre à la France l'aide que lui avait apportée Lafayette dans la lutte pour son indépendance ». Il devait conclure son allocution par un vibrant « vive l'amitié franco-américaine ! vive nos libérateurs ! vive Fridley ! vive Fourmies ! ».

Un point marquant pour l'humanité

Quant au maire de Fridley, il salua tous ceux qui ont participé à la libération de cette terre de la tyrannie. « C'est une chose inoubliable ». Et il estima : « tout cela a marqué un point important en Europe et, peut-être dans l'histoire de l'humanité ». Et de souligner : « il faut remercier tous ceux et surtout les résistants, qui sont morts pour la liberté ». A propos du jumelage Fourmies-Fridley, William Nee il estima que « c'est un fil dans la Paix dans le monde ».

Le public a ensuite assisté à un imposant défilé à travers les principales artères de la ville avec la batterie-fanfare de Fourmies, des véhicules militaires de la Big Red One A.S.B.L. et des voitures anciennes du Groupement des véhicules anciens de Picardie, transportant souvent des vétérans américains.

Le cortège, emmené par la musique municipale de Pargny-sur-Saulx, gagna les étangs des Moines où un vin d'honneur était offert par la ville à l'Hôtel Ibis.

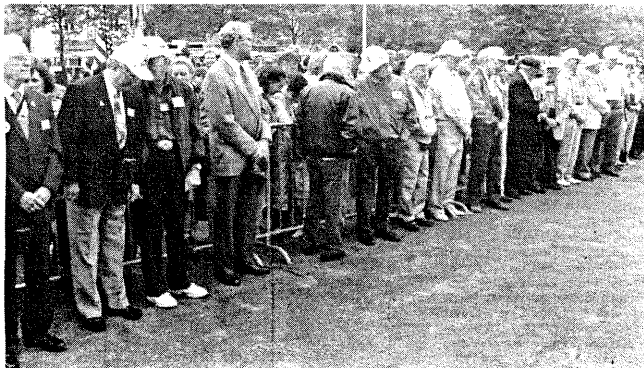
Devant l'auberge des étangs, le repas champêtre fut animé par l'orchestre d'Annette Lowman sur des airs de jazz.

Cette agréable journée de retrouvailles entre fourmisiens et vétérans américains devait se poursuivre chez nos voisins de l'Aisne.

Ce n'est qu'un au revoir

Au terme d'un week-end chargé en cérémonies, commémorations, concerts et défilés, dimanche matin, le groupe des quarante-cinq vétérans et leurs épouses ont été accueilli une ultime fois à l'hôtel de ville de Fourmies ; des adieux en forme d'au revoir ; car bien des liens d'amitié sont nés ou confortés entre les populations des deux pays. Pour les Américains, le périple se poursuivait avec la visite des plages normandes ; celles-là même qu'ils avaient foulé cinquante ans plus tôt.

J.M. Rocourt



Quarante-cinq vétérans américains ont reçu un cadeau souvenir de Fourmies



A leur arrivée à Fourmies, les vétérans américains et leurs épouses ont été accueillis par Marceau Batteux, président de l'association Fourmies-Fridley



M. William Nee, maire de Fridley, a offert une plaque écrite en français et en américain au premier magistrat de Fourmies



La garde d'honneur du Shape de Mons participait à la commémoration de la libération

Révision des listes électorales politiques pour l'année 1995

Le Maire de la Ville de Fourmies informe ses administrés que la révision de la liste électorale politique a débuté le 1er septembre. Elle se déroulera jusqu'au 31 décembre.

Peuvent se faire inscrire :

- les jeunes gens qui atteindront 18 ans, au plus tard le 28 février 1995,
- les électeurs inscrits sur

une liste électorale qui, à la suite d'un changement de résidence, ont perdu le droit d'être maintenus sur cette liste.

Les personnes remplissant l'une de ces conditions doivent solliciter leur inscription en s'adressant à la Mairie, bureau des élections, aile gauche, Porte 13, munies du Livret de famille ou d'une pièce d'identité.

Concours de pêche à la truite les 10 et 11 septembre

La Gaule Fourmisiennaise organise les 10 et 11 septembre deux journées de pêche à la truite, au 1er étang des Moines.

Prix : 60 F les deux journées, 35 F le dimanche.

Deversement de 100 kg de truites portions : 6 h, inscription : 7 h, tirage : 7 h 30, départ : 8 h.

Nombre de gaules : deux ; prises illimitées, taxe piscicole des élections, palette leurre et vif interdits, amorçage léger autorisé. Buvette.

Deversement de 100 kg de truites portions : 6 h, inscription : 7 h, tirage : 7 h 30, départ : 8 h.

Nombre de gaules : deux ; prises illimitées, taxe piscicole des élections, palette leurre et vif interdits, amorçage léger autorisé. Buvette.

Aux anciens de Saint-Pierre

Pour le centenaire de l'institution Saint-Pierre de Fourmies qui sera fêté en 1995, le comité d'organisation lance un appel aux anciens et anciens élèves. Il souhaite en effet qu'un maximum d'entre eux et d'entre elles acceptent d'envoyer un courrier à M. Régis

Coustenable, directeur de l'établissement (10, rue du Général-Goutier, 59610 Fourmies) en indiquant leur adresse actuelle ainsi que les noms et adresses d'autres anciens avec lesquels ils et elles sont demeurés en relations.

Validation des cartes scolaires 94-95

Les élèves qui utilisent les lignes d'autocar :

- Valenciennes - Bavay - Maubeuge
- Maubeuge - Solre-le-Château - Fourmies
- Valenciennes - Le Cateau - Busigny
- Hazebrouck - Abeelle

peuvent faire confectionner leurs cartes de transports scolaires dans les villes ci-dessous :

- Le Cateau, Lycée Camille Desmoulins, 1er septembre 1994, de 9 h à 12 h.
- Solesmes, Institut Saint-Michel, 1er septembre 1994, de 14 h à 17 h.
- Maubeuge, Cité Scolaire Pierre Forest, 2 septembre 1994, de 9 h à 12 h.
- Solre-le-Château, C.E.S. de Solre-le-Château, 2 septembre 1994, de 14 h à 17 h.
- Valenciennes, Gare SNCF, le 5 septembre 1994, de 9 h à 12 h
- Bavay, mairie de Bavay, le 5

septembre 1994, de 14 h à 17 h.

- Caestre, mairie de Caestre, le 7 septembre 1994, de 14 h à 17 h.

SCETA Voyageurs se tiendra à disposition des élèves qui devront se munir :

1. du formulaire de couleur verte délivré par le Département du Nord.
2. d'une photo d'identité.
3. de 10 F pour couvrir les frais de confection de la carte.

A partir du 14 septembre et jusqu'au 12 octobre 1994, une permanence sera assurée, les mercredis après midi de 13 h 30 à 17 h 30 en gare SNCF de Valenciennes.

Vous pourrez y valider les cartes d'abonnements et obtenir tous renseignements utiles sur les lignes exploitées par SCETA.

SCETA Voyageurs, 21 rue du Nouveau Siècle, BP 182, 59029 Lille Cédex - Tél. 20.40.17.11.

Inscriptions à l'école municipale de musique

Vous enfant ou vous-même désirez apprendre la musique ? Vous jouez déjà d'un instrument mais cherchez à approfondir vos connaissances ? Vous ambitionnez de devenir un amateur de bon niveau ? Vous souhaitez que vos enfants se présentent à des concours nationaux ou internationaux ? Vous désirez vous préparer à l'entrée dans un conservatoire ? Vous voudriez participer ou voir votre enfant se produire lors d'auditions publiques ? Vous, ou votre enfant aimeriez jouer au sein d'un orchestre ? d'un ensemble d'accordéons ? d'une chorale ?

Voilà ce que vous propose l'école municipale de musique et les différentes missions que se donne son personnel.

L'école municipale de musique, c'est aussi le choix : 15 disciplines instrumentales enseignées par un personnel compétent.

Flûte traversière (JC Raguet) ; clarinette et saxophone (L. Carlin) ; trompette, trombone, tuba (E. Congin) ; percussion, cor (F. Congin) ; guitare classique (H. Bramer) ; art lyrique (S. Wymies) ; piano (E. Bascourt, C. Demoustier, M.C. Gréillon) ; orgue moderne (B. Coutelier) ; orgue classique (M. Alabau) ; accordéon (M. Buis-

son) ; violon (F. Prodhomme).

Les tarifs de l'école :

- droit d'inscription pour tous : 50 F/an,
- éveil ou formation musicale (soifège) : 30 F/trimestre (Fourmies et extérieur),
- formation musicale + pratique instrumentale : 60 F/trimestre (Fourmies) ; 140 F/trimestre (extérieur),
- élèves participant à la classe d'orchestre ou à l'ensemble d'accordéons : 50 F/trimestre (Fourmies et extérieur),
- élèves participant à l'Orchestre Philharmonique de Fourmies (OPF) : gratuité des cours (Fourmies et extérieur),
- location d'instrument (sous réserve de disponibilité) : 70 F/trimestre (Fourmies) ; 100 F/trimestre (extérieur).

Vous souhaitez vous inscrire ou inscrire votre enfant ?

L'école municipale de musique vous attend lors de ses permanences :

- le mercredi 14, septembre de 14 h à 18 h,
- le vendredi 16 septembre de 16 h 30 à 19 h 30,
- le samedi 17 septembre de 14 h à 18 h.

L'adresse : Ecole municipale de musique, théâtre municipal, rue Emile Zola, 59610 Fourmies.

Un renseignement ? Téléphonez au 27.59.94.90.

(translation from previous two pages)

Fiftieth Year of the Liberation

Emotional Reunion between Fourmies and the Americans

People say that with time the memories don't last. This may be true as far as the hatred against the Nazis is concerned. Nevertheless people will never forget the liberation. The people who are today 60, 70, 80 years old fought against the invasion of our boundaries. This was the occasion to celebrate the commemoration of the liberation in Fourmies and the whole region. Ceremonies were full of emotion and joy. Last Friday the 45 American veterans of the Third Armored Division who liberated Fourmies on the morning of September 2, 1944, were welcomed by Mr. Marcel Dehoux and Alan Berteaux. The veterans and their wives were invited to stay in the homes of French families. Saturday morning, the people of Fourmies gathered on the square of Verdun around two balloons that were thrown into the air right behind the city hall. This was the beginning of the ceremonies of the commemoration of the liberation which was filled with joy.

Mr. Fernand Pecheux, mayor, and Mr. John O'Brien, president of the American Veterans, unveiled the plaque that was given to us by the Third Armored Division. The plaque is now on the wall of the city hall.

Rosalie Becker, who was accompanied by the pianist John Fergusson, sang *Le Chant des Partisans* and *l'hymne a la joie*, as well as the American and French anthems. The crowd was charmed. Among them was a representative of the American Embassy in Paris as well as people from the French army, many mayors from towns around Fourmies, French veterans and also many inhabitants.

Then there was a ceremony in front of the monument. Flowers were given and the people remained silent for one minute in the memory of those who were killed for the liberation of our country. After that everyone looked up to sky. The parachute was supposed to come down. But the weather wasn't nice enough. Only the plane could be heard. But still the parachute was offered to the American veterans. It says, "Thank you again." And the parachute could fly in the sky later on in Saint Michel when the weather became nicer.

Each veteran was given a plate by MM. Jacques Derign and Francois Gorlin, vice-mayors, and M. William Nee gave a plaque written in French and English from the mayor of Fourmies. A painting was given to M. Marceau Batteux, president of the association between Fridley and Fourmies.

The mayor of Fourmies gave a very emotional speech. He said, "Fifty years ago at that time after four years of German occupation, Fourmies was liberated by the G.I.s of the Third Armored Division that crossed our town with the cheers and the kisses of a population that was living the end of a nightmare. On that September 2, 1944, I was there among the crowd. I was 30 years old and I had tears in my eyes when I saw the tanks that were bringing us peace and liberty. I could not stay long because I was a member of the resistance movement and I had to be at the theater for a ball that was given for us." The mayor also said that "the help the Americans gave us during the war was the help we gave them with Lafayette when they were fighting for their independence."

Then the mayor of Fridley paid salute to all those that have taken part in the liberation and said that this was unforgettable. "It was an event that would forever change Europe and also the whole humanity. We have to give our gratitude to all of them, members of the resistance movement who died for our liberty."

Then there was a parade on the streets of Fourmies of World War II vehicles. Then the American veterans were offered a dinner. Before they left on Sunday morning, the group of 45 American veterans and their wives went again to the city hall of Fourmies. They had to say good-bye to their French friends, but they also said "see you later", because now the links of friendships between the two populations will never be broken. The American veterans headed toward the beaches of Normandy where they landed fifty years ago.

(Photo caption, page 40, top right: Crowd attended the ceremony on Verdun Square.)

(Photo caption, page 40, bottom left: Mr. F. Pecheux and Mr. John O'Brien unveiling the plaque given by the Third Armored.)

(Photo caption, page 40, top center: Rosalie Becker charmed the public with "Le Chant des Partisans".)

(Photo caption, page 40, bottom center: 45 U.S. veterans were given a souvenir of Fourmies.)

(Photo caption, page 41, bottom center: Veterans and their spouses were welcomed by Marceau Batteux, president of the Fourmies-Fridley Association.)

(Photo caption, page 41, bottom left: M. William Nee, mayor of Fridley, gave a plaque to the mayor of Fourmies.)

(Photo caption, page 41, bottom right: The guard of Mons, Belgium, took part in the ceremony.)

Chapter 5

France

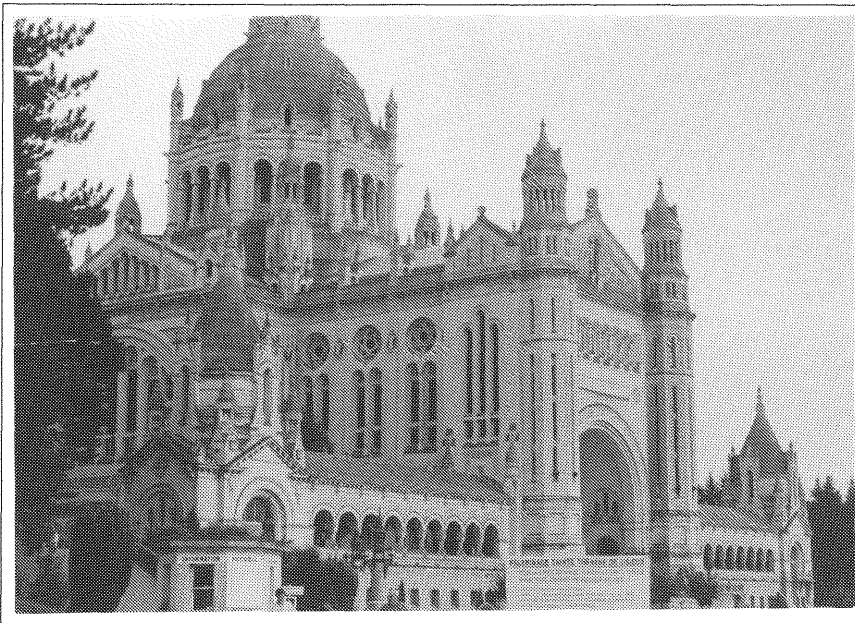
On Sunday, September 4, as we were preparing to start our journey to Caen and the Invasion Beaches at Normandy, all of us were comparing notes about our first days in Belgium and France. In particular, these comments centered on the two days and nights with our host families.

Admittedly, I had some concerns about living in a house with strangers, in a foreign land. Concerns regarding privacy, inability to communicate, interference with our hosts' daily lives, etc. But, as we all quickly realized, these days and nights became very cherished memories. And, with very warm feelings, we started our bus trip to Caen and the Beaches. Even the weather seemed to be trying to cooperate.

On the drive many — except for our drivers, John Paul and Roger, thankfully — did some catnapping. Sleep was something we were not long on.

Our stop in Compiegne was brief but long enough to visit the site and the "rail wagon" where the World War I armistice had been signed in 1918 and where Hitler required the French to acknowledge their defeat in World War II. We were not allowed to take pictures inside of the rail car, but if not crickets then there were some detectable "camera clicks".

At Lisieux, France, we visited the Shrine of St. Theresa. The awesome beauty and reverence of this Shrine is hard to describe. It is huge. To the right and to the left there are long balconies, a beautiful dome, impressive steps, etc. As inspiring as these are, they do not prepare you for the beauty you are surrounded by within. The beautifully laid marble, colonades, Gothic structures, stained-glass everything to the many, many lit candles, kind of takes away your breath.



St. Theresa Shrine, Lisieux.

On Monday, we were in Normandy and at the Invasion Beaches. First we saw Juno and Gold Beaches where the Canadian and English landed. Then, as we drove through the quaint Normandy villages, including Arromanches and its picturesque harbor, we came to Omaha Beach. Along the way there are still standing some 'monuments' to the invasion including 'pillboxes', bunkers, parts of the artificial harbor, guns, etc.

The sun had generally been cooperating, but the winds were blowing with a vengeance. Except for the previously mentioned monuments, there was a peacefulness about the area, a tranquility.

Homes have obviously been rebuilt. As you look at the Beaches and at the overlooking 100-foot cliffs, which the enemy so effectively fortified, you can't help but think of the agony so many experienced fifty years ago. Later, as we visited the Normandy American Cemetery with its row after row of crosses and Stars of David, those thoughts are really driven home! Some of our group have friends resting there.



Invasion Beaches, Pointe du Hoc.

Although the wind could not blow us away, it became time to leave the Beaches and continue through Normandy. As we drove through the quaintness of Normandy, we could not help but notice the thick hedgerows that still remain all over the area. Today they may be just picturesque fences, but fifty years ago they were something else. Something we were always trying to blow away or crash through. Funny how different they look without a German on the other side.

Before our sojourn to Normandy was over, we were honored by ceremonies and dedications in St. Jean de Daye and Ariel. These ceremonies with the bands playing and the banners waving all had a common thread with the many other ceremonies. That common thread was the sincerity and the compassionate outpouring of all the townspeople. Over and over again we were thanked for what was done fifty years ago. Thanks by the old (our age) who remembered and by the young who the old will not let forget. And neither will we forget them! Tomorrow Paris!

— *Aulay Tompkins*
703rd T.D. Battalion
Company C

Chapter 6

Normandy

On September 5, we left our Caen hotel to visit the Normandy area. Our first stop was Arromanches to view their museum which covered the landing of Allied Forces on all beachheads. There were complete layouts of the beaches, including the German fortifications the Allied Forces had to contend with, and many pictures that were taken during the invasion. A video was shown with actual footage of the assault on the beachheads showing the landing craft and troops. It reflected some of the problems they had landing on the beaches and the type of terrain they encountered. This museum had many of the small arms that were carried by the Allied soldiers and was a very good replica of D-Day and was quite complete.

Driving down the coast toward the American Cemetery at St. Laurent, the country side was lush and green. It was very comforting to see the difference in the landscape from fifty years ago. The hedgerows that gave us so much trouble 50 years ago, now look so beautiful and picturesque.

We arrived at the American Cemetery and Memorial late in the morning for a fast tour of this great memorial for the soldiers that died for the freedom of the people of Europe. This cemetery has the graves of 9,386 American soldiers and is composed of 173 acres which was deeded to the United States from France in 1956. It was very moving to see all the marble crosses and the Stars of David. All of us must have known someone that is buried there. The cemetery is a short distance from Omaha Beach. You could walk to one end and see the beach where a lot of these men gave up their lives.

On reflection, I pictured the beach as it was fifty years ago with all the elements that protected the area from invasion; engineers blowing up and eliminating the elements and teller mines that protected the beach from invasion; the landing of infantry troops by way of LCVPs and the many men and materials on the beach fighting to stay alive and attempting to move inland. Now the area has a new look which is a great expanse of sandy beach and appears very serene.

There are many historical areas along the beachhead. We visited Pointe Du Hoc where 225 United States Rangers stormed the 100 foot cliffs which were well fortified. You can see the turrets where the howitzers were, the storage areas for ammunitions, and the living quarters where the Wehrmacht was housed. Now, large grass craters cover the area that appear to be approximately 5 to 6 feet deep and all the fortifications have been destroyed. The area was impressive.

After viewing Pointe du Hoc, we moved to a tiny sea coast village to have lunch. With 80 people in tow, it was difficult to have lunch in a restaurant. Some of the people made lunches at breakfast, so all that was required was something to drink. The weather was kind to us so we could lunch at one of the park benches and look at all the fishing boats in the harbor and enjoy the scenery and the weather.

After lunch, we proceeded down country roads enjoying the scenery, to our first reception at St. Jean de Daye.

— *George W. Van Allen*
23rd Armored Engineers
Company D

**THE AMERICAN BATTLE MONUMENTS COMMISSION
NORMANDY AMERICAN CEMETERY AND MEMORIAL**

The Normandy American Cemetery site was chosen because of its historical location on top of a cliff overlooking famous Omaha Beach which was the scene of the greatest amphibious troop landing in history. The cemetery site covers 172 acres. The maintenance of the cemetery and memorial is the responsibility of the American Battle Monuments Commission. Construction of this cemetery and Memorial was completed in 1956 and dedicated on 19 July of that year. The architects for the cemetery were Harbeson, Hough, Livingstone & Larson of Philadelphia, Pa. The landscape architect was Markley Stevenson, also of Philadelphia.

There are 9,386 American War Dead buried here. 307 of the headstones mark the graves of "Unknowns". The remains of approximately 14,000 others originally buried in this region were returned home at the request of their next of kin.

The Memorial consists of a semi-circular colonnade with a loggia at each end. On the platform is a 22-foot bronze statue, the "Spirit of American Youth", a tribute to those who gave their lives in these operations. Around its base is the inscription "MINE EYES HAVE SEEN THE GLORY OF THE COMING OF THE LORD". The sculptor was Donald De Lue of New York City. On the walls within the south loggia are three battle maps engraved in the stone and embellished with colored enamels. These maps were designed by Robert Foster of New York City from data furnished by the American Battle Monuments Commission. They were executed by Maurice Schmit of Paris. The panels in the ceiling of the loggias are of blue ceramic by Gentil & Bourdet of Paris. At the entrance to each loggia are two large bronze urns, also designed and sculptured in high relief by Donald De Lue and cast by Marinelli Foundry of Florence, Italy.

On the east side of the Memorial is the semi-circular Garden of the Missing. Inscribed on its walls are the names, rank, organization and state of 1,557 of our Missing. They gave their lives in the service of their country but their remains have not been identified, or they were buried at sea in this region.

The circular Chapel, whose mosaic ceiling, designed and executed by Leon Kroll of New York City, symbolizes America who gives her farewell blessing to her sons as they depart by sea and air to fight for her principles of freedom. Over the altar, a grateful France bestows a laurel wreath upon Dead who gave their lives to liberate Europe's oppressed peoples. The return of Peace is recalled by the Angel, the dove and the homeward bound ship.

At the western end of the main axis of the cemetery are two Italian granite (Baveno) figures by Donald De Lue representing the United States and France.

At the Memorial one can descend a flight of granite steps to an overlook parapet on which is situated an orientation table that indicates the various landing beaches. In the early morning hours on 6 June 1944, three Airborne Divisions, the U.S. 82nd and 101st, the British 6th, dropped behind the beaches to destroy enemy forces and to cover the deployment of seaborne assault troops. At 6:30 hours, under the cover of intense naval and air bombardment, six U.S., British and Canadian divisions landed in the greatest amphibious assault recorded in history.

NORMANDY AMERICAN CEMETERY
COLLEVILLE-SUR-MER
14710-TREVIERES.FRANCE
TEL 31.22.40.62 FAX 31.21.98.73

Dick Goodie wrote this article to be published in the *Maine Sunday Telegram* for Veteran's Day, November 11, 1979.

Today is Veterans Day, when, across America, veterans of all the nation's conflicts will be remembered. It is 61 years since the end of World War I, for which Veterans Day was originally instituted, and 33 since the cessation of World War II. It is four years since America withdrew its troops from Vietnam. We are marking this day with two special articles. On this page appears a story by a veteran of World War II. On page 3 there is another by a veteran of Vietnam, where America's long involvement is only now being officially referred to as a war.

By DICK GOODIE

IN EVERYONE'S lifetime there is a single encounter that is remembered as "a brief rub with greatness."

Mine was knowing The First Infantry Division — *The Big Red One* — during WW II in Europe.

Always beady-eyed from lack of sleep and the intense fighting, those of us riding armor called them "homely dogfaces," but we protected them and gave them rides every chance we had.

In America's history you can search hard and perhaps fail to find another group that gave any more for any cause than did *The Big Red One*.

Some claim they never knew what they were fighting for; that they were trained then pointed toward battle.

Oh, no. They had motive alright.

After the Nazis swept through Czechoslovakia, Poland, France, and a few other countries, we all understood their motives, then formed ours.

THE BEST approach to tell about *Big Red One*, a title those fellows cherished, is to mention a single soldier of that division whom I talked to my first night in France. It was June, 1944; I was 21.

Because of the storms that churned up the English Channel, my own division, The Third Armored, was not able to land on Omaha Beach until after the infantry had established a lodgement. Now the dogfaces were hoarse yelling for armor to help hold the green pastures they had crawled forward to capture.

In an apple orchard above the beach, we removed the water-proofing from our armor and found ourselves on the firing line that afternoon.

Once in position, against a tall hedgerow, the first thing I did was to dig a foxhole large enough to bury a horse in. I then covered most of the opening with logs and sod.

Only fools feigned bravery at Normandy. It would have been inconsistent with the situation: the new army from the streets of America was untried; the front lines were ill-defined in a tangle of hedgerowed pastures; the German army had the psychological edge, having gained a "ruthless" image in the world press.

I can remember the skies over Normandy that first night were aglow with warlights. Two of the world's mightiest armies wanted to move in opposite directions. The deep rumble of artillery seemed to come in shockwaves from the core of the earth.

With darkness came a light drizzle — it rained often in Normandy. We lowered our guns so they rested on a hedgerow.

My equipment was an M-15 halftrack that mounted an automatic 37mm cannon and twin 50-caliber machine guns. With three guns firing at once, we had great fire power and could take on aircraft as well.

Mostly we were deployed as flank protector, but we often "worked over" a wooded area prior to the infantry moving forward.

Now, soon after D-Day, it was a stroke of luck to land in the same pasture with the First Infantry Division. They were real veterans.

In Stars and Stripes, the forces' newspaper, we had followed their campaigns in North Africa and Sicily and all of us knew that a few days earlier, as a veteran Division, the *Big Red One* had steadied the massive assault on Omaha Beach while the world stopped breathing.

But, God, how they suffered.

MOST OF US, naive to battle, looked upon Red One as royalty, but were quick to see they enjoyed no comforts of that lofty station.

We stood almost at attention as they filed that afternoon into our pasture through a break in the hedgerow, harnessed under rifles, Browning automatics, bazookas, mounts and packs containing ammo, grenades and their scant possessions.

At once, they began digging foxholes along the length of the pasture.

Throughout the night's drizzle, without sound or motion, they sat like surfaced field animals on piles of dirt near their individual holes.

One of them sat just a few feet from my own position against a tall hedge, a blanket draped over his shoulders so as to protect the working parts of an M1 cradled on his lap.

Around midnight, I slung my own rifle, muzzle down, and jogged around the shell craters to talk to him. I offered him a dry shelter-half.

"I could use it," he said quietly.

He sounded not at all savage, as I had expected, but weary, withdrawn, insensible to the sane world we both had known in England a few days earlier, before they isolated us in the Invasion pens.

We agreed the task ahead would be free from worry once the belief was firm that there would be no way to come out of it alive. He taught me the importance of this; it transformed terrifying combat into an adventure.

Then we talked about the rain and were pleased it came if only to put down the rotten cabbage odor of the enemy corpses and bloated cows that were scattered all about.

I asked him about Omaha but didn't press when he became strangely silent.

I COULDN'T tell from his accent if he was from Maine or Colorado, but the anguish in his voice was unmistakable; he'd been hurt by the carnage of battle.

He removed the wet blanket from his shoulders and dropped it near his foxhole. Then he placed my dry canvas around him, collaring it up under his steel helmet. You'd have thought I'd given him a fur-lined London Fog.

I noticed he moved his left arm awkwardly.

"Maybe you should go to the rear."

"Oh, no," he came back warily.

But he brought his arm out from under the shelter, rolled up his sleeve, took a clean field-dressing from a kit hooked to his ammo belt, poured something onto it, then rolled down his sleeve.

He was not a large man but his arms were thick, and the shot had gone through a fleshy part.

"Go back, you'll get a Purple Heart," I said.

"I already have, with two clusters. I go back, later they'd transfer me to a different outfit. I'm used to this one."

The light rain made metal-like tappings on our helmets and formed shiny pools in boot prints cast in the mud near his foxhole.

He said, "You haven't been in combat long."

"It shows?"

"Your chin strap is buckled. Concussion could tear your head off."

I unbuckled the strap.

"Did you get a Purple Heart at Troina?" I inquired.

"Yes. My second one."

"Ever see anything to match these hedgerows at Troina?" (Sicily)

"Never seen anything to match these hedgerows anywhere," he said accurately.

FOR A WEEK the attack had been going badly because of the hedgerows, built through the centuries as property demarcations, and now high enough to protect the cattle and crops from damp ocean winds.

The generals had promised Paris would be liberated that summer; but the English and Canadians hadn't even taken Caen yet.

I was to learn that combat was more tolerable when the army moved; but at Normandy the army cringed and grew ponderous from the realization of being part of a deeply committed Crusade that was unable to cut its way through the hedgerows. Many of the tanks under camouflage nets brooded against the hedgerows like grounded sea monsters, their powerful guns lowered in a posture of futility.

In such battlegrounds a frontal attack with tanks and infantry was near impossible.

I remember asking, "Do you think we'll ever get through these hedges?"

"If they don't gas us we will."

Occasionally, a shell landed nearby and exploded in a shower of sparks. In the pastures behind, 105s and Long Toms pounded the German army incessantly; I can still remember how, in the lights of the explosions, the infantryman's whole being was shown alerted, transfixed in a posture of readiness, his tired

A brief rub with greatness

Continued

eyes probing the dark hedge where the enemy lurked, reconnoitering for weak spots or artillery targets.

When an 88 scarped over in the wet air, he wouldn't flinch, but read the enemy pattern passively, knowing artillery tends to spray forward and to the sides, not to the rear.

During a lull in the bombardment there came from the jammed-up battalions behind us the careless crash of a messkit on armor.

It sounded like a shotgun going off in church.

My companion turned in disgust, indicating the noise would attract more artillery — a concentration. But his speech was limited to tactical essentials.

I WASN'T SURE what to expect when I first went across the pasture to visit that soldier; my lasting impression was his capacity to absorb punishment.

Had it been necessary for him to pass through some sort of celestial gateway, where physical appearance would determine heavenly caste, certainly he could only have qualified for God's human junkyard.

And if through the magic of then-unknown satellite TV, his image, for example, could have been flashed to his wife or girlfriend back home, she would have screamed with horror.

In Normandy, however, he was infantry and therefore what was known as the "queen of battle." He belonged to "the goddamned infantry" as they referred to themselves; he was of the First Infantry Division and as professional a soldier as the American army had.

That night I remember searching his lonely stoicism for some heroic feature that would make it all balance.

There was none.

He was neither brazen, swashbuckling nor grandiose. He was not hyper nor the type to strut around. I have never encountered a more miserable human, and wonder today if his sensibilities ever allowed him to become whole again — if he survived, which is doubtful. Yet, there he sat in the rain holding the front, paradoxically contented, his courage and fear locked in numbed counterbalance.

In the pasture that night the Germans eventually had found what they had been probing for and dropped in heavy artillery. I remember geysers of dark earth spraying the hedge before us. Shells whistled and exploded in a bracket all around the pasture.

Our artillery responded.

"Run for your hole," the veteran warned before, like a spooked woodchuck, he dropped out of sight into his own burrow.

Shells were landing in our pasture as I ran across the field to follow his advice.

By morning when I came out of my foxhole it had stopped raining. In the early light, the landscape emerged as badly shell-torn. Of more interest, our pasture was deserted. At dawn, under the umbrella of the artillery barrage, the First Infantry Division had moved up. I can still feel the void of disappointment.

Dick Goodie lives in Portland. He is the author of several short stories that have appeared in national magazines and has contributed a number of articles to the Telegram. One of his most recent Sunday Telegram features, "Ramblings: The reflections of a retired race director," won a first prize in the 1979 Maine Press Association writing contest. He is pictured here at age 23 shortly before the end of World War II. He served three years with the Army, two of them in Europe with the Third Armored Division.



WITHIN A FEW weeks many of our tanks had been fitted with "hedgerow cutters" — tusk-like devices made from train rails, sharpened then welded to the lower front frames, that enabled them to smash straight through a hedge, rather than lifting their soft underbellies to the waiting German guns.

Then with the support of saturation bombing by 2,500 planes, a sight no one can ever forget who was there, the tanks and infantry began to move until we forged a major breakthrough at St. Lo, with Paris only days away.

Even though our Third Armored fought with Big Red One as a tank-infantry punch across France, Belgium and Germany (at Mons, the two divisions captured 26,000 of the enemy in three days), it is because of Normandy I miss them.

They were the veteran division; we came in inexperienced. Their presence made me feel a little more secure.

Over the years I can think of nothing I have missed more than the First Infantry Division. Little doubt, knowing them has been my "brief rub with greatness."

Recently my teenaged daughter asked about Normandy. She had touched upon the battle in history class.

I explained what had happened in my pasture. I told her about the weary infantryman, sitting at his foxhole, a wet blanket over his shoulders; but in my symbolic portrayal, I wonder if I hit the mark?

I mentioned to her the frustrations of the infantryman's struggle, of his incredible resilience that transcended agony, his day-and-night vigil at the tideline of an erupted hell, his perseverance in his quest for the next hedgerow.

I went as far as to say: his M1 rifle was pivotal in the thin difference between freedom and enslavement.

I said, "That infantryman in Normandy helped give the Free World another chance."

SO, ON THIS Veterans Day, across America toasts will be offered in reverent ritual to the memory of fallen comrades.

Those of us who survived, most in our mid-50s or beyond, no longer possessing the raw power of youth as when we soldiered, but mellowed to the gentle recollections of our Army (which was said to be invincible) still wonder if contributions made then, in some small measure, can help stabilize the capricious world in which we live today.

If this can be true, then it is possible to look back to those exciting days of the campaigns with renewed belief that they were indeed, "the best years of our lives."

I find it difficult to believe that fifty years have actually passed since the most pivotal invasion in history took place on the beaches of Normandy. But I suppose there is something to the old saying that time seems to fly. It is also said that even the longest day will have an end. Yes, even that "Longest Day", June 6, 1944, came to an end. But surely those who actually experienced the hell of war at Omaha Beach must have thought otherwise. As the neat rows of white crosses and Stars of David in St. Laurent Cemetery attest, the day proved to be the last for too many. After visiting the beach areas and the cemetery, I know that I shall never forget those who paid the ultimate price.

On the walk back to the bus I thought, "Will I ever really fully comprehend the enormity of D-Day?" Of one thing I am certain I shall always remember my emotions as well as those expressed by others in our group.

Jean Paul and Roger, our most able bus drivers, proceeded to drive us through the Normandy countryside on our way to St. Jean de Daye. We all were impressed with their driving abilities as they ably negotiated the narrow roads winding through the picturesque farm country of Normandy.

During the ride, our guide, a native Norman and daughter of a farmer, gave an interesting commentary. She pointed out gun emplacements still visible after all these years. She then explained that the Normans rely primarily on the land and sea for a livelihood. The farmers, she noted, specialize in dairying and growing fruits, especially apples. Many of the apples are used to make cider and Calvados, a potent brandy. Some of those on the bus recall drinking the stuff during their war experiences in France. The guide further pointed out that the cows in Normandy produce a milk ideally suited for making cheeses. Actually, she made me hungry for a piece of crusty French bread, a chunk of cheese and a glass of cider. As we moved along, I gazed out the window at the pastoral landscape and found it difficult to imagine that fifty years ago the serenity of this Norman countryside was the site of many a fierce battle.

As we arrived in St. Jean de Daye, the sun was shining, fleecy clouds passed overhead, and a slight breeze was blowing. Unfortunately, this weather did not last too long into the trip. There to meet us in front of the town hall and post office was a French honor guard. At times we felt like conquering heroes because the scene was to be repeated often throughout our trip. French, American, British and Canadian flags hung from the town hall and post office. The local men, women and children gathered and offered bouquets of flowers. We certainly felt welcomed.

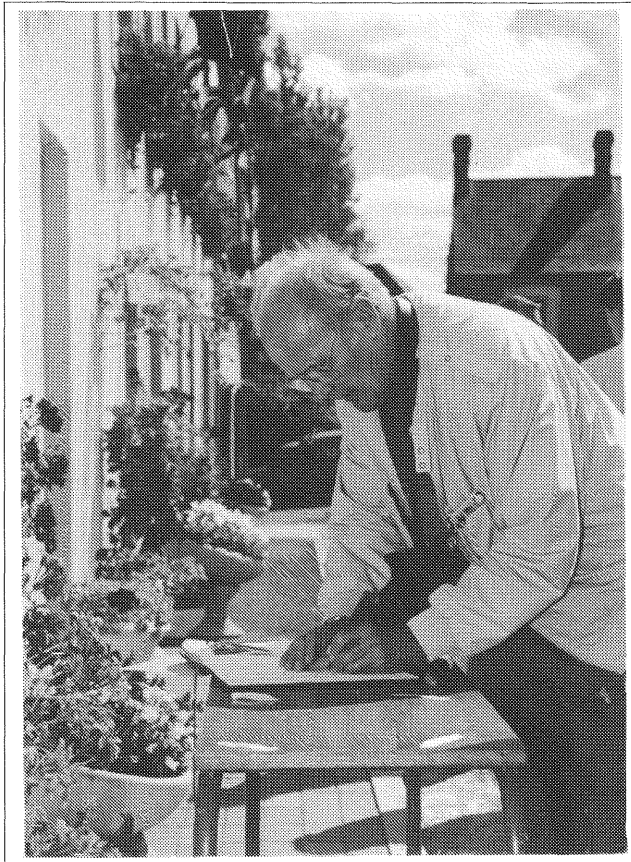


The smiles of the children at St. Jean de Daye tell it all.

A touching incident occurred which I particularly remember. It involved one of the ladies in our group. I can't recall her name, but she too was deeply moved by the incident. She had received a bouquet of flowers from an elderly woman. A note was attached to the bouquet which in essence stated that perhaps her flowers are not the biggest nor the prettiest, but none were given with more sincerity and gratitude than hers. Her gesture exemplified the overall hospitality and gratitude extended by the citizens of St. Jean de Daye and that to be received from the French and Belgians as we made our various stops on the tour.

The proud honor guard, some members of which wore medals and war decorations, led us to the town square, Place De l'Eglise. We were accompanied by a band of local musicians who although not dressed in any fancy uniforms gave their best. At the square we congregated at the corner of a long beige building. It's shuttered windows were decorated with window boxes of hanging geraniums and flags of France, the U.S.A., Britain and Canada. Affixed to the corner of the building was the Third Armored Division plaque. Colonel Paul Kaufmann had the honor of unveiling the plaque.

This was followed by a French lad being hoisted by one of the Frenchmen to place a bouquet of flowers below the plaque. Then the American veterans were asked to sign the book of honor placed on a table below the plaque.



Jim Matthews signing the guest book.

The ceremonies then shifted to the war monument in the center of the square. With honor guard and band in place Colonel Kaufmann raised Old Glory up the flag pole. All stood at attention as the La Marseillaise was played. In my opinion this is a most beautiful and stirring anthem which we were to hear many more times before leaving France. Three local dignitaries then placed a wreath at the base of the monument as the band played the *Last Post*. One could not help but notice the dignity and reverence shown by the French at these remembrance ceremonies.

Our next stop was a short walk away at the stone bridge crossing the Vire River to Ariel. Here a local dignitary gave a speech recalling some of the events that occurred here fifty years ago. The ceremony ended with the band playing the *Star Spangled Banner*. We Americans proudly joined in and sang along.

Our next stop was back to the town hall where we heard another speech, were entertained by a group of school children, and enjoyed French goodies including Calvados. The French children sang in English; one of the songs being *My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean*. Of course they were warmly applauded by an appreciative group of Americans.



Unveiling the plaque at St. Jean de Daye.

Sadly, we had to leave St. Jean de Daye. As the buses pulled out, our gracious hosts waved good-bye. Many of the children enthusiastically waved small American flags.

It appeared that we would be late for our next destination, the Abbaye-aux-Dames in Caen. But no fear, our able Luxembourg bus drivers maneuvered through the late afternoon Caen traffic and got us there on time. As we drove through the streets of Caen, it was hard to realize that this medieval city was practically totally destroyed during the war. Our guide told us that the city's St. Peter's Church spire was knocked down by a shell fired from an offshore Allied ship.

The Abbaye is a most impressive place with well maintained gardens, especially the manicured shrubs and trees. We were led to the Great Hall where Caen officials were waiting to present the Caen Normandy Commemorative Medal to those who actually participated in the liberation of France. Those receiving the medal stood proudly in the hall decked out with flags of the Allied Nations that were instrumental in freeing France. I'm sure that those receiving the medal felt a lump in their throat as the medal was being presented to them.



Aulay Tompkins receiving his Normandy Commemoration Medal.

We made our way back to the hotel to end a most memorable September 6, 1994. As our tour continued through France, Belgium and Germany, I was deeply impressed by the receptions and outpourings of hospitality and gratitude. One Belgian gentleman in particular told me that we Americans can be assured that the Belgians will never forget the sacrifices and contribution made by the American GIs and the American people in liberating Belgium from the Nazis. He went on to explain that Belgian school children are required to spend at least two hours a week studying the history of World War II. How comforting it was for me to learn that such feelings really do exist to this day in Europe. I honestly believe this gentleman was most sincere and not just being nice.

Personally, I will always cherish this trip. It has special meaning to me because my older brother who actually fought in the war and had been to many of the places I visited passed away one week before the tour left New York. He often talked about his experiences in Europe and always tried to remember the nice things that happened to him in England, France, Belgium and Germany. I am most grateful that I had the opportunity to make "The Last Request" trip and certainly met many nice fellow Americans from various parts of the country. To quote Bob Hope, "Thanks for the memories."

*— Bernie Orie
Trained with the Third Armored
after the war*



**Meanwhile,
American
legions
are
"invading"
Omaha Beach.**

On June 7, soldiers of the 2nd Division leave Omaha Beach, headed towards the Cerisy, 20 kilometers away from the coast, a strategic position before conquering the village of Trevieres.

The day after D-Day, waves of men and equipment are still arriving on Omaha Beach. Artificial ports are assembled under the names of "Gooseberries", and "Mulberries". Some old ships are

drowned 10 meters under the water to break the waves. Ports are equipped with guns against planes and several hundred ships can be there at the same time. Between June 6 and June 16, 557,000 men, 81,000 vehicles, 186,000 tons of equipment.

There was a dangerous operation, as well as on Sword Beach. Pictured is the Beach of St. Laurent-Sur-Mer.



Omaha Beach, as many of us remember it.

The French girl who is staying with Lale and me brought several copies of *Paris Match 1944*, a magazine similar to *Look* and *Life*. In it were pictures taken during the invasion and Normandy campaign. The photo on the previous page is startling because it is the exact spot where we disembarked after a choppy trip across the English Channel. The insignia you see is that of the 2nd Infantry Division.

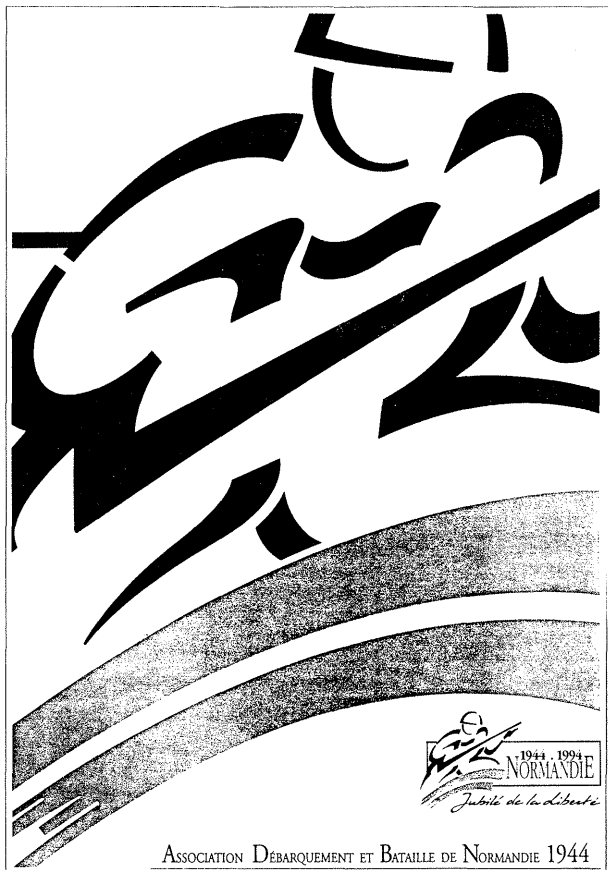
That scene is indelibly fixed in my mind, so I scurried to my diary to see what I had written. The date will be different for some of you, but those of us who came over as replacements will understand this description.

July 18, 1944: Early morning we headed out the English Channel. The trip was rough and many were seasick. I slept most of the way for we hadn't slept much the past few nights. We landed in France in the afternoon (about 2:00 p.m.). We landed on the famous Omaha Beach in Normandy. My eyes now really opened up. This was my initial taste of war. I saw hundreds of scuttled ships lining the shores. A crater-like hill was at our right. The hill was so torn up as a result of ship to shore batteries and bomb craters, and still rifles stuck in the ground indicating a spot where a brave soldier had died. There were fox holes galore. A graveyard where the heroic soldiers lay, who gave their lives. They helped establish the beachhead.

As we moved up the hill we continuously encountered a vast graveyard of broken equipment, more craters, smashed tanks, barrage balloons swayed in the sky and thunderbolt (P-47's) fighter bombers were zig-zagging across the skies. They offered a protective cover from any German plane that had ideas of bombing the beach.

Thousands of army engineers were building floating piers to increase the landing capacity of ships coming from England with troops and supplies. A steady procession of ragged German troops, captured in the early fighting, were going down the hill to board the same LCI we got off. How lucky, I thought, they were going away from it all while I was heading into the fracas. How I envied those German prisoners, who were so damn lucky to be alive, while my future was still in doubt.

— *Bill Ruth*
Service Company
33rd Armored Regiment



Following is the narration for the ceremony to present the Normandy Commemorative Medal.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

First of all, I would like to apologize for President Rene Garrec for not being with us today. I would like to assure you all of his attachment to our liberators.

We are gathered today for a ceremony where the dominant theme is solemnity and more especially emotion.

It is a great honor for me to present you the Commemoration Medal of the Jubilee of Liberty in the name of the people of Lower-Normandy. This medal which is going to be presented to you marks a major event.

You probably saw along the roads and streets, large panels on which is written: In June 1944, we told them "Thank you", in June 1994, we tell them "Welcome".

Today, to each of you, I want to say personally "WELCOME AND THANK YOU".

Our territory and more especially the coastlines are lined with monuments neatly kept, with inscriptions written in several languages: English, Polish, Norwegian, German, and French. They show the terrible fights in which thousands of Allied soldiers gave their lives.

The landings on our beaches of Normandy remain in our minds, one of the most outstanding battles of the history of the Modern World. Indeed, Normans have not forgotten the terrible days of June 1944 which led to Liberty.

Today, when we see these thousands of white crosses, I can assure you that emotion remains intact and gratitude eternal. Normandy wants to take advantage of the Jubilee of 1944 to pay tribute to the sacrifices of men and women who died so that their children could live in a free country. At the same time we would like to transform this event into a message of peace.

Indeed, this commemoration has to be the linking event so that Lower-Normandy, which was until the past few years a place of pilgrimage for Veterans, becomes a place where the memory of future generations is cultivated so that liberty will not be endangered anymore.



Therefore it is a personal tribute that we want to pay by proclaiming the name of each veteran of the Battle of Normandy, here on the Norman ground. It was the least we could do for the men and women who risked their lives to save us.

For your courage, for your self-sacrifice, for your exploits, for our freedom, I am proud to pronounce your name and to present you the Medal of Normandy.

*Receiving the Normandy medal.
Left to right: Rosalie Root,
Frank Sanders, John O'Brien,
Bill Ruth, and Walter Stitt.
Photo by Bernie Orie.*

Chapter 7

Fromental

No one wrote about Fromental, which was a surprise. Was it because the tour was split up that day? Was it because of the miserable, rainy day? If you check Chapter 2, page twelve, you will note the impression these very plain farm people left with John O'Brien and me. It rained that day, too.

We remember the plaque ceremony in the rain and the leaders escorting us to the town hall where their children entertained us with song and dance. The natives proudly served us their homemade *Spearhead* brandy. Even the labels said *Spearhead*. They gave each of us a bottle of this wine, a beautiful medal and a printed copy of the battle that occurred August 16-18, 1944.

What beautiful people. Even though it was a miserable rainy day, they were a "ray of sunshine".

— *Bill Ruth*
Service Company
33rd Armored Regiment



A prominent farmer who lost his home in the fighting. The lady holding the umbrella is the wife of his tenant farmer.

They were very proud of our plaque on this simple stone retrieved from their farm. This site is the main intersection leading north to Falaise and east to Argentan. They asked John O'Brien and me to help select this site last May.



THE BATTLE OF FROMENTEL

16th-18th August 1944

On August 8, General Bradley, who had resisted the General von Kluge's (Chief major of the German armies in Normandy) counter attack, decided to surround his enemy in making his tanks to go up which had reached Mayenne, Alençon, Argentan, Falaise.

On August 16, Argentan and Ecoche´ were taken, which forbade the Germans any withdrawals toward Paris by road N° 24 bis. The German division which was surging back from Mortain and Flers, then tried desperately to stay and resist in Fromental, as strategic crossroad which allowed them to flee toward Evreux and the North of France through Putanges.

Coming from Ranès a detachment of the American 3rd Armored Division reached on August 16 on the evening the outskirts of Fromental but retired to the village of La Lande de Louge´, to the south of the railroad.

The whole night, the inhabitants who were hidden in hedges, two kilometers to the north of their village heard artillery shots on Fromental and its surroundings.

The tanks of the 3rd Armored Division of the 1st American army attacked on August 17 in the morning but came up against the 10th Panzer division set, in the few ways around where Tiger tanks were curtailed and almost invulnerable for the Sherman tanks. The whole day the battle raged. The inhabitants of Fromental who had fled to take cover saw the planes pound on the village in fire, heard the explosion of bombs mingled with cracking tank shots.

With no doubt, Fromental was taken and cleared up by commandos on August 17 at night. The Americans got in touch with the people who had taken refuge to the north of road N° 24 bis on August 18 in the morning; gave the people chocolates, cigarettes and fraternized with them, talking with their hands since they did not talk the same language.

The people of Fromental went back to their village on the 19th. Fourteen houses out of 30 were destroyed. On the German part, two destroyed Tiger tanks and four slighter tanks. On the American part, thirteen destroyed Sherman tanks were counted. Minimum of twenty-five German corpses were found, some of them killed by bayonet. Americans restored their death and both camp wounded.

The population material losses were considerable, some of them lost almost everything, even precious objects they thought they were protecting by hiding them in isolated ox-stalls far from the village. But, by wonder, there was no death among Fromental inhabitants, only two people easy hurt by artillery.

The reconstruction last five years. But, our liberators repelled the Nazis away from France. All French people are still grateful.

Chapter 8

Paris

Here we are, Tuesday, September 7, 1994, in "Gay Paree", the City of Lights (*fortunately not neon lights*). I've been to Paris frequently and I've always been fascinated. First, of course, as a soldier with the Third Armored and subsequently on business trips or as a "genuine Yankee" tourist complete with cameras, extra lenses, audio equipment, binoculars, bow-tie, tote bag and souvenir bags, log book, etc. (*I could never understand how strangers just knew I was an American.*)

First, I was never kissed, hugged, or seduced (*in 1994*).

Second, today you see relatively few Frenchmen riding around the streets of Paris on their bicycles, with those long baguettes (loaves of bread) sticking straight up in the air.

Third, no more of those quaint, old, metal pisserias, or pissoirs, along the streetwalks. With their open lattice-work tops and bottoms you could see the feet and legs of those "getting relief" and you could continue to carry on a conversation with someone on the sidewalk. Now, these have been replaced by the new, round, small, individual and claustrophobic pissoirs. These new marvels of mans' ingenuity flush, gush, cleanse, rinse, sterilize, lift, lower and lift the seat and generally flood the enclosure. They do not encourage you to second guess your activities. Hopefully, you have exited the cubicle before the cycle is completed or you will have been flushed, gushed, sterilized, lifted and lowered and flooded away! You may never be heard from again!

But, let me tell you, there can be other difficulties. Being of a more mature age, nature sometimes calls without the courtesy of an advance warning. What happens? Panic! "Find a pissoir, find a pissoir, grope for the correct change, enter the cubicle in the proper position to facilitate the activity, and pray the cycle doesn't start too soon!!!"

Now, with all this space-aged technology my friend, Bernie Orie, offered me some old-fashion paper. Why would anyone need such an archaic, passe, item with today's modern miracle? However, for two reasons I accepted the paper and disappeared into the 'innards'. One, I didn't want to offend my friend, Bernie, and second, I didn't have time to refuse. Guess what! The marvel of the ages ground, groaned, flushed, but the paper dispenser was jammed. So much for progress! Next time a glass of wine and the cafes' facility.

Fourth, back in the good old days you could tell a Frenchman or Frenchwoman (*not wanting to discriminate or sexually harass*) from a foreigner or imposter by how they walked. The foreigner divided his or her gaze of the quaint beauty of Paris with anxious looks at the streetwalk beneath his feet. This was done to allow the foreigner to skip, jump, dodge or sidestep those precious little "Poodle doodles". Now, on the other hand, the Frenchman or woman simply glided through the morass with hardly a downward glance using their French "Poodle-doooper sonar". Today, they use mechanical "Pooper-scoopers" to vacuum these little deposits and clear the "minefield", so to speak. Another cultural challenge has disappeared!

Aside from some of these more mundane changes, it is surprising how little Paris has actually changed. Those beautiful old buildings and monuments and gardens are still there (although they were in the process of replanting the Tuilleries gardens). The beautiful and historic elms have not given way to shopping malls and parking lots. Paris is still the "City of Lights" and romance. I think all of us must have felt that indescribable mystique that is Paris.

— *Aulay Tompkins*
703rd TD Battalion
Company C

The following items were printed in my local newspaper, *The Independent*, November 11, 1994. They tell about some of the events that happened during the war.

Photo Special to the Independent

SALUTE TO VETERANS

Show Low resident William Elms was one of hundreds of World War II veterans who returned this summer for a 50th reunion in Europe of the Allied forces that helped end the war. They are recognized in a special salute on pages 8A and 9A.

AT THE FRONT

William E. Elms of Show Low was discharged from the Arizona National Guard September 19, 1941. He was recalled after Pearl Harbor and assigned to the 3rd Armored Division.

This division (named the Spearhead Division) in 10 days liberated Mons, Carleroi, Namur, Verviers, and Liege in Belgium. It was the first division to capture a German town, Roetgen, and then on September 12, 1944, the column breached the Siegfried line.

During the Battle of the Bulge, the 3rd Armored Division . . . (captured or destroyed) 98 tanks, 20 self-propelled guns, 76 motor transports, 8 artillery pieces, 23 anti-aircraft and anti-tank guns, 1,705 estimated Germans killed, 545 estimated wounded and 2,705 hard-won prisoners of war. I received the purple heart December 30, 1944, for injuries received when a V-2 rocket hit in a pigsty; it killed a lot of pigs, and the men were showered with shrapnel and mud. Several men were wounded by the shrapnel.



Elms and his comrades 'liberated' a German flag, patches and badges.

WWII veteran returns to cities he helped liberate

Katy Bornhofen
The Independent

SHOW LOW — William Elms fought with the 3rd Armored Division during World War II. In September, he will return to Europe and visit the cities he traveled through 50 years ago - this time, under much different circumstances.

Elms has been retired for 21 years. After serving his tour of duty, he worked with the Corps of Post Engineers, including a six-year position in Nevada with the Atomic Energy Commission. He is an electrician by trade and is a member of the Masonic Lodge and Elks Lodge.

A widower, Elms lives in Show Low during the summer and in Gila Bend during the winter.

He has three daughters and nine grandchildren. One of his grandchildren died while doing missionary work in East India. He also has six great-grandchildren.

Elms still has short-cropped hair, but it's gray now. And it's often covered in an old baseball cap rather than a military-issued helmet. Although he keeps busy, Elms still likes to reminisce about his experiences as a young soldier.

The 3rd Armored Division was the first to cross a German border, the first to take a German town, the first to cross the Siegfried Line, and the first to shoot down an enemy plane from German soil. Because of such accomplishments, and because the division often led invasions, it was nicknamed "Spearhead."

According to the booklet *Call Me Spearhead: Saga of the 3rd Armored Spearhead Division*, the 3rd was activated April 15, 1941, at Camp Beauregard in Louisiana and left for Europe Sept. 5, 1943.

The booklet explains: "The division had entered the arena of war untried. In less than two months of powerful all-out attack, it had hurled back the blitzkrieg to the land of its origin...The supermen of Hitler's Third Reich fought well, but the Spearhead pounded them into the very ground they had stolen."

Elms was 29 when he left for Europe. He hasn't been back since. Now 79, he will return Sept. 1 with other members of the 3rd to the countries where he fought. Elms' group will hold dedication ceremonies in many of the cities it passed through during the war.

Elms is president of the Southwest Tri-State Chapter of the 3rd. The group covers Arizona, New Mexico, and Nevada but there are only 65 members.

"There aren't too many of us left," he said.

Elms said he was hit with shrapnel during his tour of duty but went back into the fighting. "They needed people. If you could move you went back into battle. I've still got the piece of metal over at my house," he said.

Elms was awarded the Bronze Star Medal for "meritorious service in support of combat operations against the enemy in France, Belgium, and Germany from 4 July 1944 to



Katy Bornhofen—The Independent

Half a century later...

Gerald Elms (left) receives a letter from his brother William written almost 50 years ago. The letter traveled throughout Europe before being returned to William in Gila Bend. This month, Gerald read it for the first time.

24 April 1945...Sgt. Elms' thorough knowledge of all aspects of his work coupled with his calmness under pressure and willingness to assume responsibilities beyond the absolute requirements of his position have contributed immeasurably to the successful operation of the Headquarters."

His name has been inscribed on the Wall of Liberty for being "one of the courageous Americans whose sacrifice and commitment led to the liberation of the continent of Europe during World War II."

Elms recounted one incident that occurred during the fighting. "A buzz bomb hit in a pig's pen. There was blood and guts everywhere. There were about 25 of us and everyone had blood and guts on them and we didn't know who was hurt."

Elms will visit Nordhausen, Germany Sept. 17. He explained that the enemy held prisoners of war there and "they were killing them with gas," he said.

The 3rd Armored Division saw some of the war's grisliest sights. According to *Call Me Spearhead*: "Much-bombed Nordhausen was the center of a concentration camp...called the Death Camp by

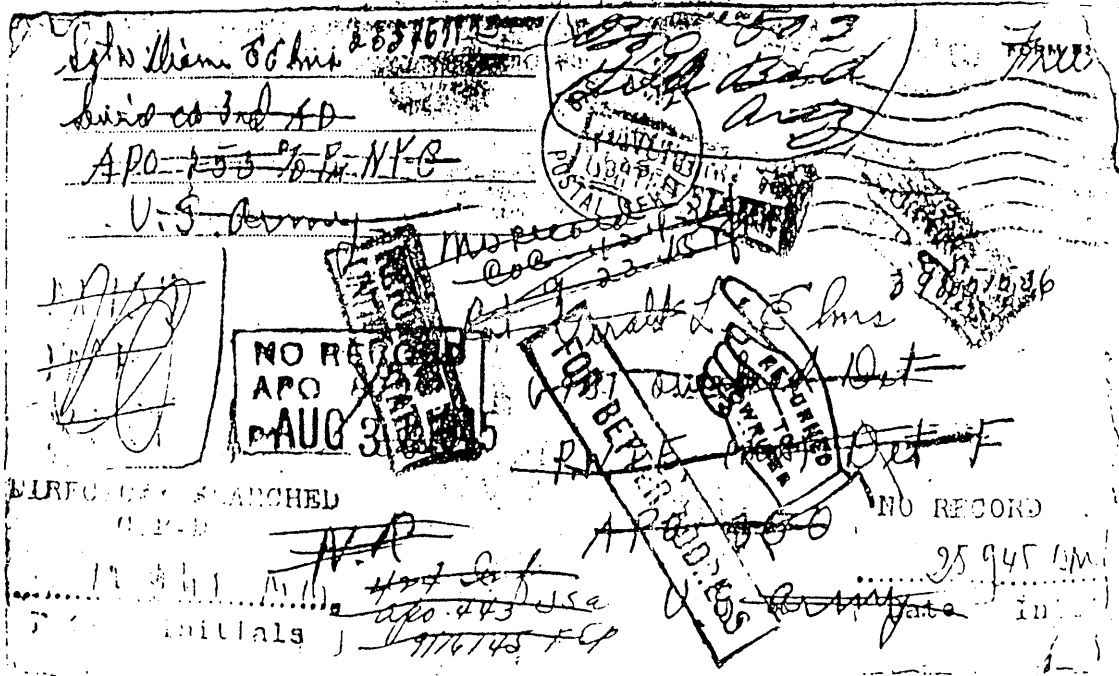
prisoners, hundreds of corpses lay sprawled over the huge compound's ragged acres. They lay there in contorted heaps, half-stripped, mouths gaping in the dirt and straw; or they were piled naked, like cordwood, in the corners of great steel and cement barracks. Most horrible was the sight of the living among the dead. Side by side with the bodies of their comrades, sunken-eyed skeletons of men moaned weakly or babbled in delirium."

Elms had three brothers who also fought in World War II. On June 30, 1945, he wrote to his brother Gerald to tell him he was heading home. The letter traveled through about five countries before being returned to Elms in Gila Bend. Elms tucked it away in his scrapbook, along with German marks from the 1920s, old newspaper clippings about the atomic bomb, and pictures of young soldiers and European cities.

Elms went through his scrapbook when he began preparing for his trip to Europe and came across the 50-year-old letter. A week ago, Gerald read his brother's letter for the first time. In it, Elms had written, "I hope to be home by the time you get this letter."



Elms visited a graveyard in Belgium where simple white crosses list the names of those killed in Europe during World War II.



Note the stampings and the route taken by this letter.

Marsielle, France
June 30, 1945

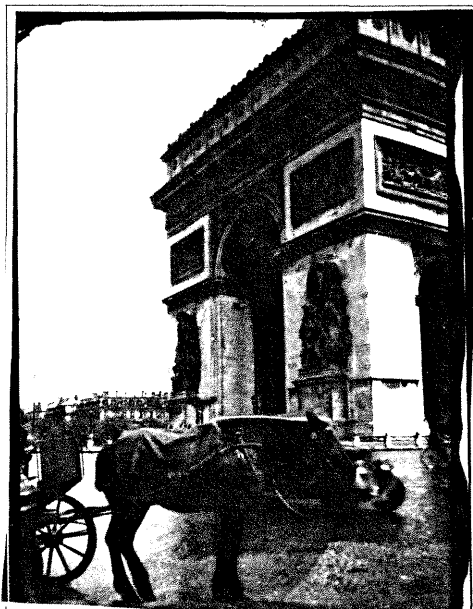
Dear Gerald:

Just a few lines to let you know that I am all right and am on my way home. I hope to be home by the time you get this letter. You remember the fellow that went to Cologne and brought that girl back. Well, I saw him a few days ago and he was on his way home. So you should be leaving there soon. I hope so. So keep your nose clean.

I went to see Wilbur York at Reame and he is just fine. He has a good place there and with lots of Red Cross clubs where they can get all the free Coca-cola and ice cream that they want.

I am going to write to Lro and Wilbur after I finish this letter to you. So you be sure and keep in touch with them and maybe you will be sent close to where he is and then you can see each other. Tell the bears there that I said hello. Ah yes, I am supposed to fly home.

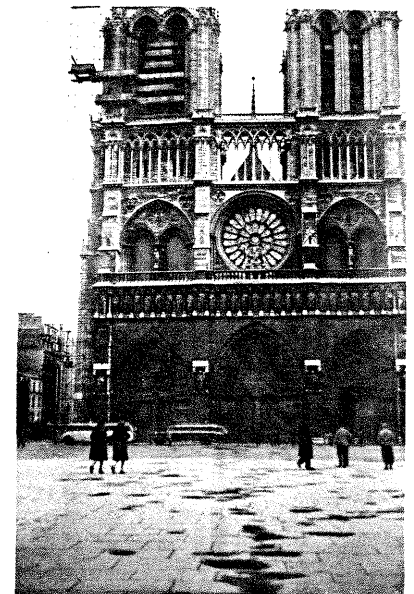
Your Brother,
Elmer



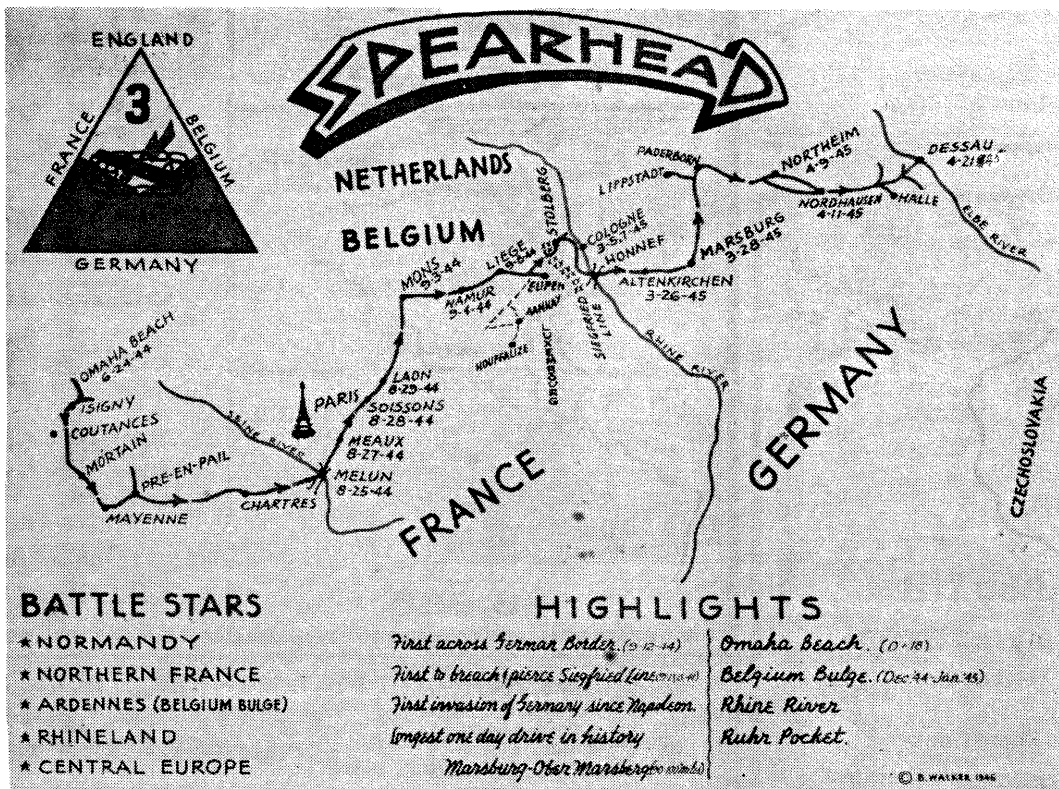
A horse-drawn taxi in front of the Arch de Triumf, 1944.



Bill Elms in front of the Eiffel Tower in 1944.



Cathedral of Notre Dame, 1944.



The 3rd Armored Division became known as "Spearhead" because it was the first division to take a German town, the first to cross the Siegfried Line, and the first to shoot down an enemy plane from German soil.



Elms (far right with white cap) returned to the Eiffel Tower where he had been fifty years earlier.



Europeans came out to greet troops rolling into towns in tanks.

Commemorating 50 years

In commemoration of the 50th anniversary of World War II, members of the 3rd Armored Division recently visited the European cities they helped liberate. Show Low resident William Elms was among those men. He has collected these photographs which depict Europe — 50 years ago and today.

— Bill Elms
 Headquarters, 3rd Division,
 ADG General Office

Chapter 9

Brunehamel

Following is the translation of a speech by M. Didier, Mayor of Brunehamel, given on September 8, 1994.

"Ladies and Gentlemen, Veterans of the Third Armored Division."

"Everywhere in France we are celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of our liberation in 1944 by the Allied troops to which some of you and some of your countrymen belonged. Particularly we would like to mention the shock troops, namely the Third Armored Division. This liberation put an end to four years of Nazi occupation.

During the German invasion of May 1940 our village suffered severely. Many buildings were bombed and destroyed and more than a hundred casualties were reported among both the civilians and soldiers. These victims were buried in the Military Cemetery of Brunehamel. Later on, during the night of May 16, 1943, a bomber crashed near the village killing the crew of eight English and Canadian members. Every May we perform a short remembrance ceremony at the monument which commemorates the sacrifices of all war victims: members of the French Resistance Movement, the 'FFI', and also those who were arrested, tortured, deported and those who died in the concentration camps."



Photo by Bob and Doris Sullivan.

Today, we were almost into Belgium. With all our wonderful treatment by the French, starting from our time in Mauvais, and the appreciation shown to our men for their sacrifices to liberate the French from their suffering in the Nazi occupation. It occurred to me, there was not one mention of the Jews in France during those dreadful days.

The Synagogue

It was crowded in the City Hall where refreshments were served after the parade, the dedication and the speeches with their translations. I needed air. I had noticed a small red building across the side of the square earlier. I wanted to see it up close. It was maybe 15 feet across the front with barn-like doors. Over them on each side were neatly stenciled Stars of David. Could this have been the Brunehamel synagogue prior to the Nazi takeover of France? Had generations of Jews prayed here before fifty years ago? What had happened to those Jews when the Germans took the town? Were they all dead in concentration camps? Had the French townspeople hidden any of them? Had any survived?

The reception ended and other people crossed the square. I asked a uniformed Frenchman about the building. He produced a key and opened the doors, swinging them back so we could see the

interior. There was the town fire engine, ropes, buckets, coiled hoses ... and a hole in the roof. There were no benches, no altar, nothing that signifies a house of prayer and worship. I asked if this had been a synagogue? Those that listened shrugged their collective shoulders. I asked, "What happened to the Jews?" and pointed to the Jewish Stars. Blank looks again. I tried once more when we gathered in another place. I knew no more than when I first looked at that building on the square while the mayor was making brave speeches after the *Marsaillaise* and the *Star Spangled Banner* were rendered by the brass band. Suddenly my mind flashed to 1970. I was in gray Prague with other mental health workers. We had walked from the Jewish Cemetery with its strange Hebrew-scribed markers placed helter-skelter almost as if the earth had vomited them as loose teeth from its

mouth. I wept in the nearby synagogue and in the "Museum for a Disappeared Race". Hitler had planned this museum of Jewish artifacts, dishes, cooking utensils, candelabrum, spice jars, Torahs, yarmulkas, etc., like one would do to demonstrate the village life of pre-historic man. As I walked back to our bus, a cloud of sadness descended from the overcast sky. A tear wet my cheek and the sky opened and cried with me.

— *Barbara Simons*
Company H
32nd Armored Regiment



"A Time to Die and A Time to Live"
Acrylic collage by Bobi Simons, 1989.

Chapter 10

Mons

We were welcomed to Mons with World War II tanks, jeeps, half-tracks and other vehicles with marching bands. We could either ride in them or march with them if we wanted to. I decided to ride because of my bad knee. They really opened the city for us. It really hit very deep in our hearts.

After the plaque dedication and ceremony we went to the city hall to sign their history book. When I came out to meet my wife she was talking to one young soldier that was still on active service there. He asked my wife if he could take us out for the evening. He told us it was his duty. As a small child his father and mother told him never, ever forget the American liberators. "So I have to do this for you with pleasure on my part." I told him to stay there with my wife while I went to find John O'Brien, and I told him what was going on. He said that was okay with him as long as we were on the bus the next morning when it left. We went to a restaurant and had a delicious meal with wine and talked for some time. Then we walked around the city square with the cobble stone streets and stone and brick houses and buildings. What lovely stone architecture work on most of the buildings over there. I hope they never destroy all the lovely workmanship. It can never be replaced, nor would the younger generation be able to see it or read about it.

As we went around the square with cobblestone and a very large square, we stopped at the monument of the brass monkey and put our hand on its head and made a wish. There is a folk tale that goes with it from years ago that says that you will have good luck. He took us on a ride around the city and other places of interest. We went to his apartment for refreshments. His profession is commercial art and he presented us with a picture he had drawn. He told us he would like to take us all around for a week on him. But I told him we couldn't possibly as we had a very tight schedule we had to keep.

I liked the way they keep the old towns looking like they looked originally, not made over to our times. There are narrow streets leading into the very large square from every direction which blends into the hillside landscape. They wined and dined us to no limit with many souvenirs. They have not forgotten us, that is for sure.

— *Russ and Rita Eick*
486th AAA (AW) Bn



Russell Eick, left, and Bob Sullivan.

Chapter 11

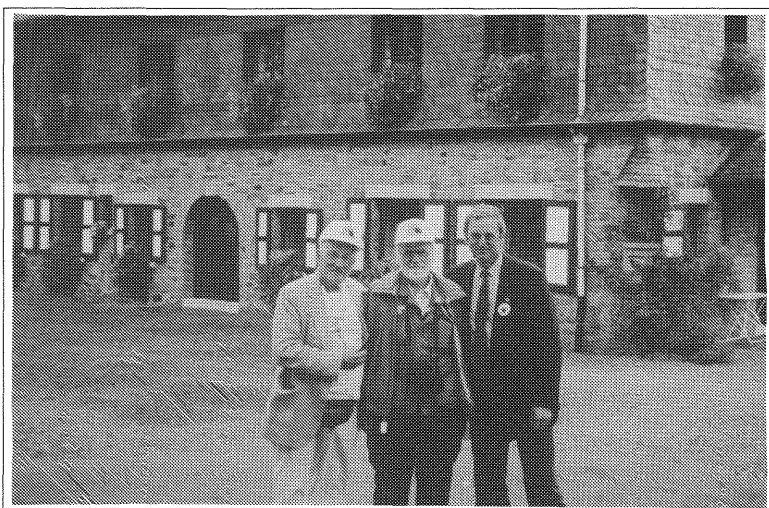
Lierneux

There I was, comfortably seated on our bus, trying to relax for a bit when, lo and behold, along came Bill Ruth asking if anyone had been to Lierneux during World War II. I responded, and Bill said someone had offered to take anyone to Lierneux who had been there during the war. We met with the gentleman and I told him that General Rose's Division Command Post had been there for a few days in January 1945.

It was the site of a rather large building which was an asylum for the mentally ill. We were being subjected to "incoming mail" from time to time and the patients who were all sequestered in basements made quite a bit of noise. They were being shifted elsewhere, out of danger, as quickly as possible by ambulances provided by the 45th Medical Battalion. The building was damaged somewhat from shelling — though for the most part, as I recall, was in good shape. The first night, while looking for a spot to rest, we entered what appeared to be an operating room and brushed glass fragments from an operating table, so that I might lie down and rest. That was not to be — someone found me and said that he had seen a sign stating that was a "contagious ward", though I don't recall seeing any such sign.

The gentleman who drove Bill and me to Lierneux, turned out to be a Baron, as well as a lawyer and a judge for that district! He said that on the way he would stop at his home for a bit. We met his wife, the Baroness, and were escorted to the terrace overlooking the lovely countryside. The Baroness brought some Gonzalez-Byass Sherry and glasses and we toasted the occasion and one another. I caught a Dutch word from the Baroness and asked her (in Dutch) if she spoke the language. Of course she did and was amazed that I was born not far across the border. She then went to the library and brought out a recently published book listing all the castles and chateaus in Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands and presented it to me as a gift. Turned out she and the Prince had put that book together. In the adjoining room there was a lovely photograph of her and another lady. We were told the other lady was the Queen and that they had been friends for many years. However time was of the essence, as we were to meet the rest of our group at a small crossroad restaurant for lunch, and we still had to go to Lierneux. The Baron was an excellent driver, knew the roads very well and shortly had us in Lierneux. I immediately recognized the building we had occupied fifty years

previously. He asked if we wished to enter the building and look around. I would like to have done so, but we had to meet the rest of the group and move on. However we took photographs. The Baron then drove us to the restaurant where the rest of the group was finishing their lunch. We invited the Baron to join us, which he did, however, there was no bill! We then took some photographs across the road, in a small park-like setting where a monument and old cannon were situated. We bid our kind host good-bye and traveled on.



Bill Ruth, Frank Sanders, and the Baron.

— *Frank Sanders*
Division Headquarters

Chapter 12

Limont

Let's go back to that day in 1944. It was early morning when Major Duffy Quinn called our commanding officer, Captain James McGhie, that we were desperately in need of fuel and ammunition. Our trucks had gone out the night before to get these supplies but they were feared lost.

Captain McGhie personally embarked on a search mission with one of our half-track crews. Carl Kieffer, another half-track crew member (the one I was with as radio operator) served McGhie's crew breakfast before they departed.

They were gone all day. Late that evening we got the report that the whole crew was killed. This impression was with our entire company for the rest of the war. After the war, as we came home to get on with our lives, several of our members contacted the families of our fallen buddies. It was learned that two members of the crew were not killed, but taken prisoner. Vernon Jensen from Plainfield, Nebraska, was blinded and Claude Dempsey, Kansas City, Kansas, was injured. Only a few members from our company knew this. We didn't correspond much after the war.

Then in 1986 I began a crusade to locate our members using the 1945 mailing list given us as we left Germany. The response was gratifying. I received so many letters I could not answer them so I started a newsletter. This past Fall I wrote our 32nd newsletter. During this period I heard about Jensen and Dempsey being alive. We got their addresses and wrote them. They both replied within 60 days of each other giving an eyewitness account of that September 8, 1944, ambush.

On January 10, 1987, Vernon Jensen wrote this account:

"I'll start as of September 7, 1944. We had moved into Belgium on mostly gravel roads. We went into bivouac near Liege, Belgium.

We found out during the night that our supply trucks had gotten lost. We set out the next morning to find them. Captain McGhie decided that we should take a nice, pretty paved road. We knew right away we were in trouble. Sure as hell, three or four miles out of Liege, the first shot came from point blank range from an artillery piece. The first shot missed us. The driver, DesGrandchamp, tried to speed up. I guess you remember how slow the pickup is on a half-track. The next one got us and McGrew and DesGrandchamp were killed instantly.

We were fortunate the track went down a steep embankment to a railroad without tipping over.

The half-track started burning and those of us that could started to bail out. I wanted to get DesGrandchamp and McGrew out too, but as Dempsey so delicately put it, "They're just hamburger."

Michael and myself were practically blinded, mostly by the repercussion. Dempsey had a large piece of shrapnel hit him in the upper leg.

Michael and I were bleeding enough so we laid face down in the ditch. We did have time to sprinkle sulfa powder over our faces. We took sulfa pills and a large drink of water.

Suddenly, there were two bursts from a machine gun. Michael was shot and killed. I was positive I was next. It never happened. I don't know why but I figured that Michael had his revolver in his hand. Dempsey and I were taken prisoner shortly after that."

Note: Vernon Jensen spent the rest of his life blind. He and his wife ran a movie theatre in Plainfield, Nebraska. He died about three years ago.

The following account was given by Claude Dempsey, March 11, 1987.

"After reading what Vernon Jensen wrote in the last Service Company Newsletter, I'll take events from there. We had pulled off and were to meet two engineer trucks that were to follow us back to the supply dump. Our half-track (Seldom Swift - the name of our track) and three light tanks were then to guide the supply trucks up. When the engineer trucks pulled in, a sergeant told us they had driven in on the road the night before. Captain McGhie looked at a map and it looked as if the road would lead back to the supply dump. As things turned out, we should have gone back the way we came in.

DesGrandchamp was driving. Jensen and Michael were manning the radio. As we came around an S curve, south of Liege, and turned west, a tiger tank, under camouflage started firing. I saw brush and leaves flying and a huge ball of fire. A shell exploded in the half-track. We went down an embankment but didn't turn over. Four of us got out. Jensen, Michael, Captain McGhie, and me. I didn't see the Captain again. I heard he was killed in an open field not far from us. There were German soldiers all over the place. Jensen and Michael could not see. Ammunition was exploding in the half-track. Michael was trying to crawl away from it. They shot him. I was hit in the left arm and thigh. I had lost a lot of blood and could no longer stand. When the Germans came to me, I handed over my gun. The German soldier was playing around with it and I thought he would shoot me with my own gun. Thank God, he didn't. Jensen and I were taken prisoner."

Note: Claude Dempsey was liberated by the Russians from Stalag II A on April 28, 1945. He was flown to Brussels then to LeHarve, France. After discharge he resided in Kansas City, Kansas. He worked as a car upholsterer and a truck driver. His war injuries finally disabled him in 1975. He passed away the summer of 1993.

As a matter of interest the home towns of those in the half-track crew are as follows:

Captain James McGhie - Jacksonville, Florida
Marvin J. DesGrandchamp - Warren, Michigan
Forrest E. McGrew - Abingdon, Illinois
Joseph R. Michael - Chicago, Illinois
Vernon D. Jensen - Plainfield, Nebraska
Claude Dempsey - Osceola, Missouri (Kansas City, Kansas after the war)

As the people of Limont were preparing for the fifty year celebration, they wanted to put the names of those killed on the beautiful monument that we all saw. It was erected in 1984 for a 40th year celebration. For forty-eight years the people wondered who was killed in the half-track. So Ferdinand Dessente, the very emotional curator of the Ardennes American Military Cemetery, wrote to the historian of the Third Armored Division Association, Haynes Dugan. Haynes turned the inquiry over to the editor of the Third Armored Newsletter. The inquiry appeared in the March 1993 Association Newsletter.

WHO CAN HELP M. DESSENTE ON GIs KILLED ON SEPTEMBER 8, 1944, AT LIMONT, below Liege?

Ferdinand M. Dessente, curator-guide at the Ardennes American Military Cemetery, 4121 Neurpre, Belgium, seeks information from someone in the 33rd Armored Regiment about the small action of September 8, 1944, in the vicinity of ESNEUX, which is about 3.5 km south of Tilff, which is itself just south of Liege.

AT/4 Joseph R. Michael was killed that day at a Sturn in the road just west of Esneux. Dessente contends that 16% of the total losses of the 33rd that month took place there and so far after action reports have failed.

Dessente's question is: Who was killed at LIMONT, the small place west of Esneux that day.
OF CC B 33rd A R.

Does anyone know?

— Haynes W. Dugan

I saw this and responded enclosing the eyewitness account of Jensen and Dempsey. I enclosed this final note to Ferdinand:

"I was one of the 74 members of the Third Armored Division Association who made the trip to Europe this past September. The experience of meeting so many wonderful people in Belgium and visiting the many towns and having the receptions and memorial services at Malempre, Houffalize, Malmedy, and Bastogne, and visiting the Ardennes American Military Cemetery and learning what CRIBA is all about, gives an added meaning to my writing of this account. I feel honored to be able to add these details so that many of those in the vicinity of Esneux that may have witnessed this action or heard about it can now, after 48 years, put names to the American soldiers. I'm sure the local Belgian people have honored and prayed for them.

When I return in 1994 I hope someone can take me to the site where this incident happened. You see, this action had an affect on my life, for I replaced Joseph Michael. I took his job in the company as radio operator."

Since this April 1993 letter to Ferdinand, I have been in constant correspondence with him and Rene Bihay, the President of the Legion of Tavier, who conducted the unveiling service the evening of September 8. Mr. Bihay also was in charge of the ceremony next day.

Lale and I were asked to be present for the unveiling ceremony. The rest of the tour was in Mons for another ceremony scheduled at the same time. The people of Limont wanted the unveiling to take place at the precise hour the ambush happened fifty years ago.

Lale and I left Paris early morning of September 8 and boarded a train for Liege. We were greeted by Rene Bihay and his wife. For the rest of the day we were treated in a royal manner befitting kings and queens.

Because of the rainy afternoon, they erected a tent to protect the dignitaries. The rain stopped about an hour before the unveiling ceremonies. The whole town of Limont showed up. Many children stood at attention, quiet and well-behaved, as speaker after speaker took the podium. They were just beautiful, similar to those darling children at Rotheux-Neupre.

Even though Lale and I and eight members of the First Armored Division, who were there as an honor guard, were the only Americans there, Ferdinand Dessente gave the account in French, then translated to English just for our benefit. It was a very courteous gesture.

Lale and I then unveiled the monument and our plaque along with two members of the First Armored. Lale and I asked them to join us. They were emotionally taken by this gesture. As we stood in silence I noticed these two soldiers sobbing. As we went back to our places they saluted Lale and me. Now it was our turn to sob.

We then were asked to lay a wreath at the monument along with the American Ambassador to Belgium. Then the children laid a wreath, then the mayor.

We were then taken to the Community Center where they had a banquet. We were the honored guests. Lale estimated approximately 300 people were present. It was a day Lale and I will never forget.

— *Bill Ruth*
Service Company,
33rd Armored Regiment



Bill and Lale Ruth thanking the First Armored soldiers.



Laying the wreath.



The monument at Limont.



Plus de 50 Américains à Anthisnes

Durant plus d'une semaine, on a fêté le 50^e anniversaire de la Libération à Anthisnes.

Après avoir baptisé la Place Aimé Tricmont à Limont et inauguré diverses stèles commémoratives à Anthisnes, Limont, Tavier, Vien, Hody et Villers-aux-Tours, on a célébré le jour anniversaire de l'embuscade meurtrière contre les américains à Limont...

Jeudi, les autorités communales, les habitants de l'entité et les écoles s'étaient donné rendez-vous dans le petit hameau de Limont pour rendre hommage aux soldats américains.

« Il y a 50 ans, dans beaucoup de villages voisins, c'était la joie, l'exubérance, les alliés progressaient rapidement, nous étions libérés. Hélas, Limont fut vite rappelé à la triste réalité car dans la matinée du 8 septembre, neuf militaires américains avaient rendez-vous avec la mort » a expliqué M. Bihay, président de la FNC Tavier.

En effet, comme l'a rappelé M. Dessente, les derniers éléments de la division « *Das Reich* » se prépa-

raient à parfaire leur œuvre destructrice déjà entamée la veille à Hody.

Neuf jeunes gens, neuf « *american boys* », qui avaient entre 20 et 30 ans, y ont perdu la vie.

Ainsi, en présence d'un survivant américain, d'un représentant de l'Ambassade des U.S.A. et de militaires américains, la cérémonie a commencé par un hommage musical du *Corps Royal des Cadets de la Marine*. Divers discours ont été lus après l'invocation par l'Abbé Géraerts et la prière de l'*American Legion* par M. E. Denis de Bitburg. Le Bourgmestre Jacques Tricmont a rappelé la volonté de chacun d'honorer la mémoire des soldats morts à Limont et aussi à l'impérieuse nécessité de rappeler aux jeunes générations les sacrifices endurés par les combattants belges et alliés.

Ainsi, le vétéran M. W. Ruth a inauguré une plaque commémorative de la 3^e Division blindée.

Le lendemain, plus de 50 soldats américains sont passés dans la commune dans le cadre de la visite des sites historiques qu'ils effec-

tuent en Belgique: Ils ont reçu une médaille de souvenir offerte par la FNC Tavier.

De l'occupation à la libération

Dimanche dans la matinée après la messe, la petite salle de Tavier était remplie pour admirer l'exposition sur le thème de la guerre.

Des centaines de documents, prêtés par des habitants, y sont rassemblés. C'est Mme Ancion, présidente d'honneur du FNC Tavier qui, en présence des autorités, a inauguré l'exposition.

On peut y découvrir, jusqu'au 18 septembre, une ancienne moto, des armes, des documents ou encore des médailles. De nombreux articles de presse retracent l'histoire de la guerre du début jusqu'à la libération.

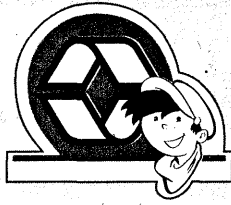
Un endroit de souvenirs pour certains mais aussi une façon d'apprendre pour les enfants des écoles qui visiteront cette exposition qui sera accessible tous les jours jusqu'au 18 septembre à partir de 15 heures.

Muriel Sparmont.

37.59



Le Corps Royal des Cadets de la Marine.



VERS L'AVENIR

Huy-Waremme

SAMEDI 10 ET DIMANCHE 11 SEPTEMBRE 1994

SUPPLEMENT AU N° 211

LIBERATION

Limont n'oublie pas le sacrifice des neufs Américains tués en 44

C'est en présence d'un vétéran américain, amis des soldats tués à Limont en 44 que s'est déroulée la cérémonie de commémoration au monument de la place Aimé Tricon. De nombreuses personnes ont témoigné leur gratitude en vers les soldats libérateurs



Ferdinand Dessente, lors de son allocution sur la tragédie de Limont. (Photo Vers l'Avenir)

Une cérémonie de commémoration a eu lieu ce jeudi à Limont, heure pour heure et jour pour jour, à l'endroit même où neuf soldats américains ont perdu la vie, le 8 septembre 44 à 18h30. De nombreuses personnes se sont rassemblées autour de la stèle pour écouter le révérend abbé Geraets dans un message d'espoir ainsi que la prière de l'Américain Légion par M. Denis.

Le grand moment de cette fin d'après-midi a été sans nul doute le récit de Ferdinand Dessente, employé au cimetière américain de Neuville-en-Condroz, qui après des recherches longues de trois ans, a rassemblé tous les faits connus de cette tragédie. Il en a écrit l'histoire : « un half-track et trois tanks légers étaient à la recherche de deux camions américains qui étaient manquants. Ils les ont trouvés à Rotheux. A Petit-Berleur, le capitaine a consulté sa carte et a changé l'itinéraire pour retourner à Esneux. Deux tanks allemands étaient camouflés à cet endroit, il y avait environ deux douzaines de SS. Le premier tank a laissé passer le camion américain. L'autre a ensuite fait feu et a manqué son objectif. Après il ont tirés tous les deux sur les cibles. Le capitaine a tenté de s'échapper par les champs, ici en face, mais il a été touché, il aurait été achevé par un SS. Tous les autres membres de l'équipage ont été tués sauf trois qui ont été faits prisonniers. Un de ceux-ci étant gravement brûlé est mort peu de temps après. Les deux autres ont survécus, mais aujourd'hui, ils sont décédés ».

Cinquante ans après, il n'a pas oublié ses amis

Parmi les personnalités présentes,

William B. Ruth, vétéran américain de Worthington, dans l'Ohio, qui est revenu 50 années plus tard rendre hommage à ses amis disparus à Limont. Le 8 septembre 44, il était resté au dépôt à Esneux. Parmi les victimes, plusieurs étaient ses amis et c'est avec émotion qu'il en parle en désignant leurs noms sur la plaque commémorative. Aujourd'hui, M. Ruth est âgé de 72 ans, casquette blanche et tenue décontractée, ses émotions sont pourtant bien vivantes, il évoque, les larmes aux yeux, la disparition de ses amis : « J'avais 22 ans à l'époque. J'étais déjà fiancé avec mon épouse ici à mes côtés. Nous avons libéré la Normandie, le nord de la France, les Ardennes et le centre de l'Europe. Je me

souviens encore très bien des victimes de Limont. J'espère par-dessus tout que mes enfants et mes petit-enfants ne connaîtront jamais de telles horreurs. Jamais plus ! ».

Un appel à la jeunesse

M. Bihay, président de la FNC de Tavier, a lancé un véritable appel à la jeunesse pour que jamais l'on oublie le sacrifice des soldats américains : « il y a cinquante ans, c'était la joie dans tous les villages, un peu naïvement nous pensions que les risques allaient disparaître, hélas Limont fut vite rappelé à la réalité. Neuf militaires américains avaient rendez-vous avec la mort. Ils avaient entre 20 et 30 ans et avaient le droit d'espérer vivre encore longtemps. Qu'avons nous fait de cette li-

berté si chèrement payée ? Je m'adresserais à la jeunesse dont la majorité garde encore un bel idéal : ne vous laissez pas emporter par des théories faciles, sachez que la démocratie et la liberté doivent se défendre tous les jours, mais gardez confiance

en l'homme qui est capable de réaliser de grandes choses ».

Le bourgmestre M. Tricon a également rendu hommage aux troupes américaines venues nous libérer au péril de leurs vies.

P. Du



Le message de M. Bihay a été écouté avec attention par les nombreux enfants présents. (Photo Vers l'Avenir)



William B. Ruth, vétéran américain évoque avec émotion les noms de ses amis disparus à Limont. (Photo Vers l'Avenir)

Une publication qui vient à son heure à Saint-Georges

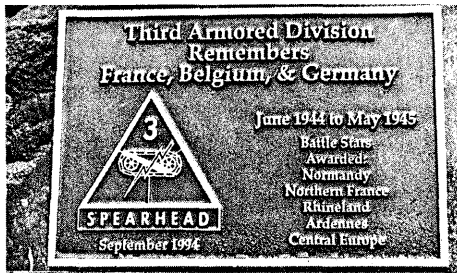
Après avoir vécu un quart de siècle dans la localité de Stockay où il vit le jour, Willy Dechamps, Sersésien d'adoption, a réuni ses souvenirs des années 1940-1950 dans un livre de 160 pages qu'il a intitulé « Le diable et la brouette ».

L'auteur y raconte les années de guerre qu'il a passées, avec sa mère, pendant la captivité de son père, ainsi que celles vécues en famille, dans l'immédiat après guerre.

Dans la prose de Willy Dechamps on retrouve une foule de détails pittoresques sur les prouesses réalisées par les parents pour nourrir et habiller leur progéniture à l'époque.

Le livre fourmille également d'anecdotes sur la vie dans le quartier populaire du Tige, les jeux des adultes, ceux des enfants, les traditions du village, la mentalité des gens en ces temps difficiles.

L'ouvrage est en vente au prix de 400 F (plus frais d'envoi) chez Henri Dony, rue J. Wauters, 147 à Stockay (☎ 041/75.32.73) ou chez l'auteur, rue des Liserons, 59 à Seraing (☎ 041/36.14.85).



La plaque commémorative américaine sur le monument érigé en l'honneur des soldats tués le 8 septembre 44. (Photo Vers l'Avenir)

LIMONT DOESN'T FORGET THE SACRIFICE OF THE NINE AMERICANS KILLED IN 1944.

A United States veteran was there for the ceremony of commemoration at the monument. Many people expressed their gratitude to our liberators.

The ceremony of commemoration was held on the same day, at the same time, of September 8, 1944, when nine United States soldiers were killed at 6:30 p.m. Many people gathered around the monument. A speech was given by Reverend Aabbe Geraets that included a message of hope. There was also a prayer by the American Legion. Ferdinand Dessente, an employee at the United States Cemetery in Neuville-en-Condroz, told his story. He has researched for three years and found details about this tragedy.

Among the people there, William B. Ruth, Worthington, Ohio, United States veteran, came back fifty years later to pay tribute to friends killed in Limont. On September 8, 1944, he had remained at the bivouac site. The victims were his friends and it was with a lot of emotion that he read their names on the plaque. Today, Mr. Ruth is 72 years old and looks relaxed, but the emotion is still there, evoked by the death of his friends. "I was twenty-two years old at that time. I was engaged to my wife who is here with me today. We helped liberate Normandy, the north of France, the Ardennes, and central Europe. I still remember the victims of Limont. I hope that my children and grandchildren will never have to face these horrors - never!"

Mr. Bihay, president of the FNC, called on the young people not to forget what happened: "Fifty years ago, people were happy, thought danger was gone. But nine U.S. soldiers were killed. They were between twenty and thirty years old and had a whole life ahead of them. Young people, be aware that there is a price to pay for our democracy. We have to defend it every day. But don't give up hope. Men can do great things."

(Photo caption, top left: Ferdinand Dessente making a speech on the tragedy of Limont.)

(Photo caption, bottom left: The commemorative plaque, offered by the United States, on the monument erected for the United States soldiers killed on September 8, 1944.)

(Photo caption, center: William B. Ruth, United States veteran, evokes with emotion the names of his friends killed in Limont.)

(Photo caption, right: The numerous children paid great attention to Mr. Bihay's speech.)

50 Américains à Anthisnes

Ils se sont souvenus : le 8 septembre 1944 neuf militaires US ont été tués à Limont

Durant plus d'une semaine, on a fêté le 50^e anniversaire de la Libération à Anthisnes.

Après avoir baptisé la place Aimé Tricnot à Limont et inauguré diverses stèles commémoratives à Anthisnes, Limont, Tavier, Vien, Hody et Villers-aux-Tours, on a célébré le jour an-

niversaire de l'embuscade meurtrière contre les militaires américains à Limont...

Jeudi, les autorités communales, les habitants de l'entité et les écoles s'étaient donnés rendez-vous dans le petit hameau de Limont pour rendre hommage aux soldats américains.

« Il y a 50 ans, dans beau-

coup de villages voisins, c'était la joie, l'exhubérance, les alliés progressaient rapidement, nous étions libérés. Hélas, Limont fut vite rappelé à la triste réalité car dans la matinée du 8 septembre, neuf militaires américains avaient rendez-vous avec la mort », a expliqué M. Bihay, président de la FNC Tavier.

En effet, comme l'a rappelé M. Dessente, les derniers éléments de la division « Das

Reich » se préparaient à parfaire leur œuvre destructrice déjà entamée la veille à Hody.

Neuf jeunes gens, neuf « american boys » qui avaient entre 20 et 30 ans, y ont perdu la vie.

Ainsi, en présence d'un survivant américain, d'un représentant de l'ambassade des USA et de militaires américains, la cérémonie a commencé par un hommage musical du Corps Royal des

Cadets de la Marine. Divers discours ont été lus après l'invocation par l'abbé Géraerts et la prière de l'American Legion par M.E. Denis de Bitburg.

Le bourgmestre Jacques Tricnot a rappelé la volonté de chacun d'honorer la mémoire des soldats morts à Limont et aussi l'impérieuse nécessité de rappeler aux jeunes générations les sacrifices endurés par les combattants bel-

ges et alliés.

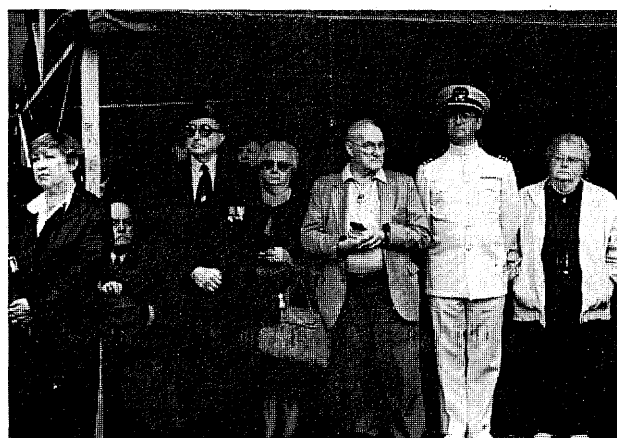
Ainsi, le vétéran M. W. Ruth a inauguré une plaque commémorative de la 3^e division blindée.

Le lendemain, plus de 50 soldats américains sont passés dans la commune dans le cadre de la visite des sites historiques qu'ils effectuent en Belgique. Ils ont reçu une médaille-souvenir offerte par la FNC Tavier.

Muriel Sparmont



● Devant les Américains, le Corps Royal des cadets de la Marine a rendu hommage aux combattants.



● Le vétéran américain, M. W. Ruth



● Une plaque commémorative pour les combattants américains à Limont.

50 AMERICANS IN ANTHISNES

They remembered: September 8, 1944, nine U.S. soldiers were killed in Limont

Ceremonies lasted one week in Limont. The United States donated plaques for the cities of Anthisnes, Limont, Tavier, Vien, Hody, Villers-aux-Tours. Last Thursday, school children and inhabitants welcomed the United States veterans.

"Fifty years ago, there was joy everywhere around here. We were liberated at last. But still nine United States soldiers were killed." said Mr. Bihay, president of the FNC Tavier.

Nine young people, twenty to thirty years old, were killed, indeed, by German soldiers in an ambush.

The ceremony with United States veteran William B. Ruth and a representative of the United States Embassy, started with music by the Corps Royal des Cadets of the Marines. A speech was given by father Geraerts. There was also a prayer offered by the American Legion.

Mayor Jacques Tricnont expressed gratitude to United States veterans and talked to the young people so that they would remember. Veteran William B. Ruth unveiled the plaque given by the Third Armored Division.

The next day, fifty United States veterans came to our town to visit. They were given a medal by the FNC Tavier.

(Photo caption, left: The Navy played for the U.S. veterans)

(Photo caption, center: U.S. veteran William B. Ruth and wife, Lale.)

(Photo caption, right: The commemorative plaque for the U.S. soldiers in Limont.)

1944-1994: pour être certain de ne pas oublier

La libération de la Belgique en 1944: vos médias en ont beaucoup parlé, et le Journal du Corps n'a pas à en réécrire l'histoire. Nous nous sentons néanmoins proches - «héritiers» pourrait paraître prétentieux - de la Brigade Piron. Nous étions donc présents avec ses vétérans à Bruxelles le 4 septembre 1994.

Les commémorations ont aussi tenu à associer l'armée d'aujourd'hui dans l'hommage rendu aux libérateurs alliés. Parler de toutes ces festivités est une gageure. Nous avons dès lors choisi celles du 3 septembre à Anthistes et Hasselt, auxquelles participaient des unités du 1er Corps.

Bruxelles se souvient



Le détachement canadien est précédé par le groupe «Canada Remembers».

La radio en émoi annonce la bonne nouvelle: Bruxelles est libéré. Une foule délirante envahit les rues lorsque les véhicules du «XXXth Army Corps» britannique entrent dans la capitale le 4 septembre. La brigade belge du général Piron les suit dans la foule. La population est en liesse. Les jeunes filles grimpent sur les tanks et cherchent ardemment un bout de papier sur lequel «Tommy» pourra signer. Les soldats sont embrassés et pourvus de boissons en abondance. Partout on applaudit, on rit et on s'amuse. Jour pour jour un demi-siècle plus tard, Bruxelles, la place des Palais et les environs sont de nouveau plongés dans les flonflons de la fête.

A tout seigneur tout honneur

Vers 16 heures, le piétinement des chevaux de la Garde Royale et les petits drapeaux agités frénétiquement annoncent l'arrivée du Couple Royal. Contrairement à ce qui se fait pour le défilé du 21 juillet, nos Souverains ne prirent pas place parmi les nombreuses autorités invitées. En effet, le Roi Albert II préféra s'asseoir parmi les héros de jadis, les anciens combattants et les résistants qui eurent aussi l'honneur d'ouvrir le défilé. L'émotion gagna la tribune, les gorges se nouèrent et ça et là per-

lerent des larmes sur les joues ridées. Dans son allocution, le premier ministre Dehaene remercia la Famille Royale pour sa présence et il fut chaudement acclamé, lorsqu'il insista sur le fait que cette période de notre histoire ne pouvait en aucun cas tomber dans l'oubli. Ensuite, les étendards canadiens, polonais, français, britanniques, hollandais, américains, tchèques et belges, représentant tous les pays qui jouèrent un rôle dans la libération de la Belgique, se rassemblèrent. Après un intermède exécuté par la Musique des Guides qui interpréta, entre autres, la Marche des Parachutistes et la Marche des Guides, vint finalement le défilé. La pluie battante qui tomba par intermittence ne parvint pas à gâcher l'ambiance et l'éclosion des corolles des parapluies donna encore plus de couleurs à la fête.

Sous les applaudissements soutenus, chaque pays défila musique en tête. La diversité des uniformes et les différentes manières de marcher au pas offraient un régal pour les yeux. Nos couleurs étaient représentées par des détachements du Régiment Libération-5e de Ligne, du 1er Bataillon Para, du Régiment des Guides, du 1er d'Artillerie, de la 10e Compagnie des troupes de transmission et du Service de déminage de la Force Terrestre placés sous le commandement du colonel BEM Van Dierendonck. Le tout fut clôturé par un largage de fleurs effectué par deux C-130 volant à basse altitude.

«V for Victory»

Toutes ces démonstrations militaires furent suivies par une grande fête populaire dans le parc Warande. Jeunes et vieux, militaires et civils purent retrouver un peu de l'atmosphère d'il y a cinquante ans. Des véhicules militaires anciens étaient dispersés un peu partout, de nombreuses «Andrew Sisters» circulaient la sourire aux lèvres tandis que les hauts-par-

leurs diffusaient du Glen Miller. Le manger et le boire ne faisaient pas défaut. Autour des nombreuses petites tables les anciens combattants ravivaient les souvenirs et se liaient d'amitié avec les jeunes, hommes et femmes, des différentes nations qui entre temps ont repris le flambeau. Sur la Grand Place, un «tattoo» militaire clôturait cette commémoration, qui signifiait bien plus que la célébration d'une victoire sur l'occupant allemand; c'était aussi le couronnement de cinquante années de paix pour l'Europe!

(SB: trad: JCC: photo: DP)



La délégation des anciens combattants salue la tribune royale.

«Last Post» à Limont

Pendant le week-end des 3 et 4 septembre, en de nombreux endroits en Belgique, on a fêté le 50e anniversaire de la Libération. La petite commune de Limont



Dis, monsieur, tu n'as pas un chewing-gum?

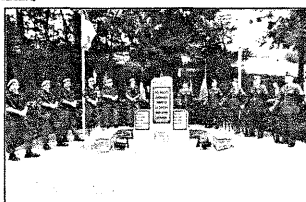
(Anthistes), retenue dans le cadre des festivités «57 lieux pour 57 mois d'occupations», a rendu un hommage plus particulier aux soldats américains lâchement tués dans une embuscade.

Malgré la fraîcheur matinale, la population, s'est rassemblée sur la petite place Aimé Tricmont. Portant des drapeaux, des médailles aux revers de leurs vestes les vétérans sont venus nombreux. Les détachements de la 255e Compagnie Maintenance et Dépot d'Aviation Légère et du 2e et 3e US Bataillon du Régiment d'Artillerie de campagne de Francfort ont rehaussé la cérémonie de leur présence.

Les stèles commémoratives furent fleuries par les autorités belges présentes, les représentants de l'ambassade américaine et les anciens combattants. L'émotion étreignit la foule lorsque retentit le «Last Post», et plus d'un vétéran a furtivement essuyé une larme. «Cela peut vous paraître ridicule, de laisser libre cours à ses sentiments cinquante ans plus tard», explique madame Joris. «mais c'est en de tels moments que l'on se rend compte que si les Américains n'avaient pas franchi l'Atlantique pour nous délivrer... C'est pourquoi, il faut se souvenir».

L'embuscade

À l'aube du 8 septembre 1944, deux chars allemands de la 2e SS Panzerdivision - Das Reich - ont pris position dans Limont. Masqués par les maisons et la végétation, dans un virage,



Les détachements belge et américain rehaussaient de leur présence la cérémonie

ils tiennent la route de Marche en enfilade. Surgit un convoi du 33e Régiment blindé américain (3e Division blindée US), quelques camions protégés par un char et un véhicule de reconnaissance blindé. L'escarmouche est brève et meurtrière. Les Allemands font feu presque à bout portant. Fuyant les épaves en feu, les survivants sont fauchés par les rafales de mitrailleuses. Deux blessés sont emmenés par l'ennemi, tandis que les habitants du village transportent les dépouilles mortelles dans l'école communale transformée en chapelle ardente.

Un demi-siècle après cet événement tragique, il ne reste que les souvenirs mélancoliques de la population reconnaissance.

(BB: photo: VS)

«Hell on wheels»

La libération d'Hasselt a connu deux temps forts. Le 7 septembre 1944 vers 10 heures, les premiers soldats américains de la «Second Armoured Division», mieux connue sous le nom de «Hell on Wheels», investissent la ville. Chacun poussa un soupir de soulagement, la guerre était finie... mais au-delà du canal de Kiewit la bataille faisait encore rage. Il v eut encore beaucoup de tués, avant que les Allemands ne soient définitivement écrasés par un violent tir d'artillerie américaine. Hasselt était libre! La ville libérée servit plus tard de «restcenter» afin de soigner les soldats blessés.



Les anciens combattants portent fièrement leurs drapeaux devant le Monument Provincial aux victimes de la guerre.

Cinquante ans plus tard, le 3 septembre 1994, on célébrait avec faste la fin des horreurs de la guerre. Mais avant les divertissements il y eut quelques instants de recueillement en mémoire des nombreuses victimes de la guerre. On commença à Hasselt par une messe de remerciement dans la cathédrale Saint Quentin, en présence de monsieur le bourgmestre Roppe, des ministres Claes et Dewaelle et de quelques anciens combattants. La haie d'honneur était formée par des détachements du 2e Bataillon d'Artillerie d'Hellerehen et du «2nd Battalion 3rd Field Artillery Regiment», issu de la division qui, en 1944, contribua à la libération de notre pays.

Au son de la musique de la société Royale Artistique Alexis Pierlot, le cortège se dirigea ensuite vers le Monument Provincial aux victimes de la guerre, où la circulation fut momentanément bloquée pour un dépôt de fleurs. Les treize anciens combattants présents était renforcés par une délégation de la 617 Munss, unité américaine qui conduisit l'attaque aérienne à l'époque. Après les dernières notes de la sonnerie «Aux champs», le dépôt de fleurs se termina dans un silence absolu. L'émotion se lisait sur les visages des anciens et lorsqu'on interpréta notre hymne national, l'un deux montra sa fierté en chantant à pleins poumons. La partie officielle de la cérémonie s'acheva par l'hymne national américain et un défilé devant une assistance clairsemée.

Pour terminer méditons sur cette citation de H. Nolens: «Lorsque les troupes libératrices entrèrent dans Hasselt, les langues et les accents étrangers se mêlaient aux pleurs dans l'allégresse générale. En effet, après quatre ans sous le joug, la joie était presque trop grande pour rendre conscience de la nouvelle situation en un clin d'oeil! D'un seul coup, tout était terminé! Les drapeaux belges interdits auparavant pouvaient ressortir sur le champ...» Celui qui n'y a pas participé, peut difficilement s'imaginer le calvaire que ces personnes ont enduré et les nombreux sentiments que ces commémorations réveillent. L'assistance et l'intérêt restent modérés... (WM: Trad: JCC: photo: PP)

Last Post in Limont

During the weekend of September 3 and 4 many villages and towns celebrated the 50th Anniversary of the liberation. The small town of Limont celebrated and paid a tribute to the nine United States soldiers that were killed in an ambush.

Despite the cold, the people gathered on the square. Veterans with flags were numerous.

Flowers were given by Belgian people to the representatives of the United States Embassy and former soldiers.

There was a great deal of emotion when the *Last Post* was played. Mrs. Joris said, "It may seem ridiculous to cry but it is on such occasions that you realize the importance of what the United States did for us. That is why we must remember."

THE AMBUSH

On the eve of September 8, 1944, two German tanks took position in Limont. They hid behind houses and trees. Then the Third Armored Division arrived. The battle was brief and deadly. Those who tried to escape the vehicles in flames were killed by machine guns. Two wounded soldiers were taken by the enemy. The inhabitants took the dead soldiers to the school, which was transformed into a chapel.

Fifty years later, there remains only the memories and the gratitude of the population.

Chapter 13

Rotheux (Neupre)

The Last Request Tour through Belgium, France and Germany was so much more than anticipated. We would never have believed the warmth and appreciation of the people of Belgium and France had we not witnessed it for ourselves.

Most outstanding for us were the children of Rotheux (Neupre) who were let out of school to greet us. Can you imagine row after row of smiling children's faces, waving flags at us as we walked by them. It brought tears to our eyes. Not only were they aware that American soldiers had come over and liberated them from Nazi oppression but they were participating in history — the 50th anniversary of their town's liberation.

The adults said, "Don't thank us, we wish to thank you. We owe you so much. We will never forget what you did for us and we will never let our children forget what you did for us." The truth of this was obvious because these little children were actually part of a ceremony commemorating the liberation. They were not only learning but living history. Being part of something means much more than just reading about it in a book. We wished our grandchildren could have been here and been part of this live history-making event.

In another indoor celebration, about thirty children ranging in ages from seven to thirteen were up on a stage entertaining us with songs. We sang along with them and when they sang *It's a Long Way to Tipperary* we all swayed with the rhythm. Can you imagine these Belgian children singing in English. It was just delightful.

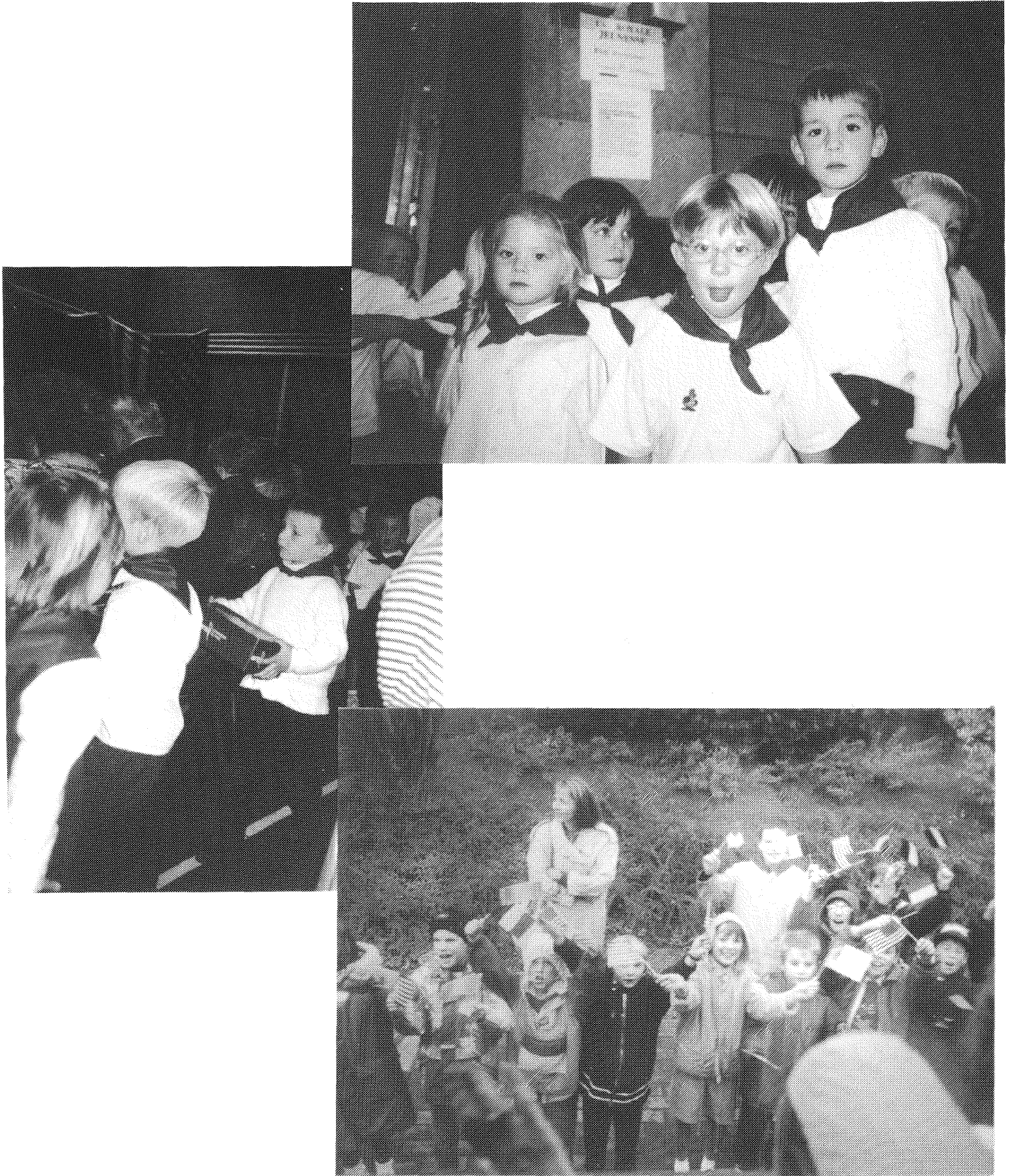
The younger children gave us gifts - some drawings they had done in school about the liberation and a dried flower arrangement set in half of a potato for a pot. Molly carried hers all the way through Europe and home.

The trip was truly an unforgettable experience. We loved every minute of it.

— *Bob and Molly Swirsky*
486th AAA (AW) Sp



photos from Molly Swirsky



Mille enfants pour accueillir les vétérans de la 3^e D.B. à Neupré

Quarante-deux vétérans de la 3^e division blindée de l'armée américaine qui libéraient Neupré le 7 septembre 1944 refont aujourd'hui le chemin de leur marche victorieuse. Pour les recevoir, un millier d'enfants de 2 ans et demi à 16 ans issus des trois réseaux scolaires de la commune ont formé une haie d'honneur et leur ont offert des bricolages « home made ».

Regroupés en association, les vétérans américains refont l'itinéraire de la Libération. Un périple qui passe par Neupré où ils ont été reçus, en compagnie de leur épouse, dans un climat d'émotion et de joie intense. A cette occasion, ils ont offert à la commune une plaque de bronze qui ornara désormais le monument aux morts de Rotheux. Plaque commémorative sur laquelle on peut lire : « La troisième division blindée se souvient de la France, de la Belgique et de l'Allemagne - juin 1944 à mai 1945 - Etoiles décernées pour les batailles de : Normandie, France du Nord, Rhénanie, Ardennes, Europe centrale ».

Belgium forever

Un très grand moment d'émotion lors de l'arrivée des vétérans américains au cimetière militaire de Neuville-en-Condroz. Et bien que les soldats inhumés ici soient surtout des victimes de la bataille des Ardennes, nos libérateurs, à la vue de cet impressionnant cimetière situé en terre perdue de vue depuis 50 ans, ont été profondément émus. Une émotion partagée par leurs épouses et le public présent.

Mais le moment était à la joie. De retour à Rotheux, les G.I.'s ont été acclamés par les écoliers de Neupré, drapeau à la main. Dans la salle omnisports, c'était l'euphorie : les enfants offraient aux dames américaines un bouquet de fleurs séchées et, aux vétérans, un album comprenant cinq photographies de la Libération. Et, après avoir partagé un même pique-nique, tous habillés aux couleurs américaines, ils sont repartis, saluant les libérateurs de leurs grands-parents d'un « bye, bye »... différemment prononcé !

Défilé de véhicules militaires

On se serait cru en plein tournage du « Jour le plus long ». La commune était traversée par une colonne d'une quinzaine de véhicules militaires dont des tanks et un M8 ; le tout gracieusement prêté par le Hamoir-Club 101 Airborne et son président Marcel Coreman ainsi que par le collectionneur Gérard Blaton.

En tout cas, une manifesta-

tion bien organisée, avec Croix-Rouge, interprètes, professeurs d'écoles, aides au service du repas et autres assistants bénévoles.

Merveilleuse Belgique

Les Américains ne tarissaient pas d'éloges. « *Belgium is wonderfull* ». Et, selon certaines indiscretions, ce serait chez nous qu'ils auraient été le mieux reçus, « *mieux qu'en Normandie, en tout cas* » !

Bien accueillis certes, mais un peu perdus. Que répondre en effet à la question d'une charmante épouse de vétéran qui demande : « *Pourriez-vous me dire où nous sommes ici ?* ». Tout simplement, dans le hall omnisports de Rotheux !

Patricia DEL MARMOL



« *Belgium is wonderfull* » confiait un vétéran très ému de l'accueil réservé à Neupré.

(Photo V.A.)

ONE THOUSAND CHILDREN TO WELCOME THE VETERANS OF THE THIRD ARMORED DIVISION

Forty-two veterans of the Third Armored Division who liberated Neupre on September 7, 1944, are back again. To welcome them, 1,000 children from two to sixteen years old formed an honor guard and offered them homemade gifts.

A congregation of veterans were in Neupre with their wives in an atmosphere of joy and intense emotion. They offered a plaque that will be hung on the monument of Rotheux. It says, "The Third Armored Division remembers France, Belgium, and Germany, June 1944-May 1945. Battle stars were given for the battles of Normandy, Northern France, Rhineland, Ardennes, and Central Europe."

There was intense emotion when the United States veterans arrived at the cemetery of Neuville-en-Condroz. Our liberators, as well as their wives and the public, were emotionally impressed.

But joy was the star on that day. Back in Rotheux, United States veterans were welcomed with cheers and flags. In the gymnasium, children gave dried flowers to the ladies and photo albums of the liberation to the men. They left after a small lunch and said "bye, bye" to their grandparents' liberators.

One would have thought it was the making of *The Longest Day*. A parade of about fifteen war vehicles crossed the town. The vehicles were from the Hamoir-Club 101 Airborne.

There was a well-organized ceremony with Red Cross interpreters, teachers, and volunteers.

The Americans were so happy. "Belgium is wonderful." Some even said they liked it better here than in Normandy.

But they still were a bit lost, as a veteran's wife asked, "Could you tell me where we are?" — just in Rotheux's gymnasium!

(Photo caption: "Belgium is wonderful," exclaims U.S. veteran Jim Howard as he is received by the people of Neupre.)



The people of Neupré thank

The brave soldiers who liberated them...

de population de Neupré remercie les meilleurs soldats qui Américains libérés

The school children
of Rotheux presented
us with this booklet.



Ceux qui ne se souviennent pas du passé,
sont condamnés à le revivre.

Those that do not recall the past
are condemned to live it over again.

(by Santayana, 1863-1952.)



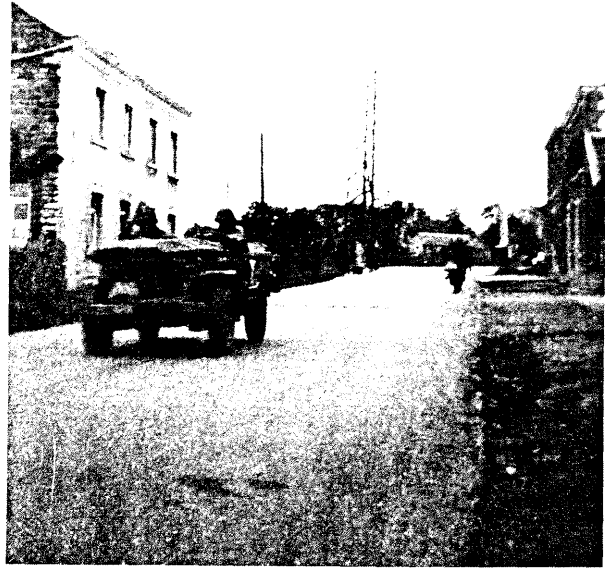
Neuville, rue du village, près de l'école primaire des garçons.

Village Street, near the boys primary school.



Rotheux, see-grant tank M3A3, rue Bellaine.

Bellaine Street.



*Plaineux, Grand route, jeep du 33^{ème} régiment blindé.
Main Road, jeep 33rd. Armored Regiment.*



*U.S. Military Cemetery Temporary, Neuville-en-Gondree, Belgium
Cimetière Américain (Provisoire), à Neuville-en-Gondree*

**Third Armored Division
Remembers
France, Belgium, & Germany**

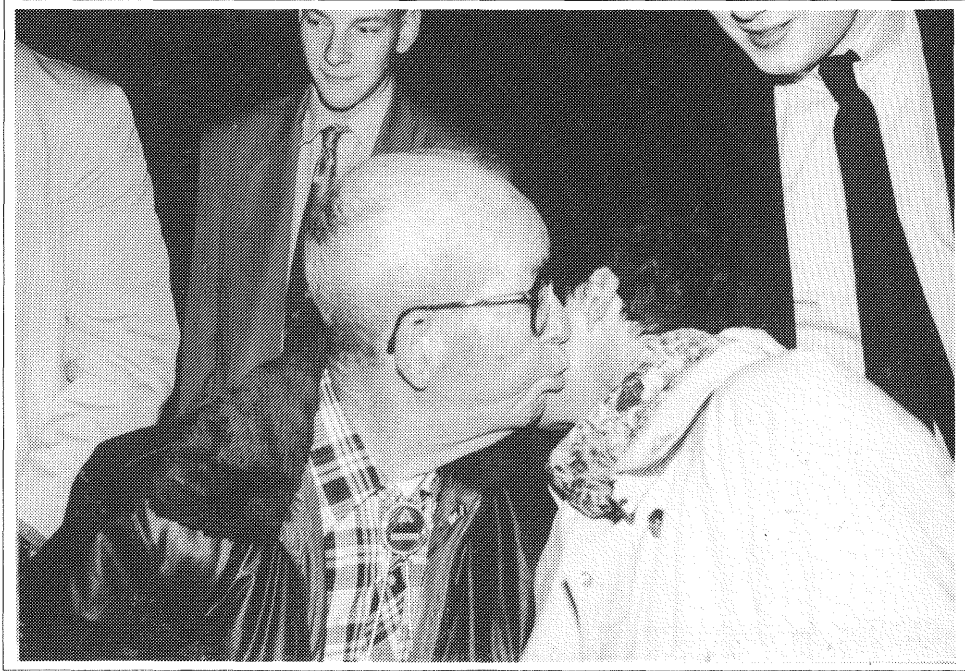


June 1944 to May 1945

**Battle Stars
Awarded:**
Normandy
Northern France
Rhineland
Ardennes
Central Europe

SEPTEMBER 1994

*Signe de reconnaissance par la 3^{ème} Armored Division Association
Cimetière en bronze offert par les vétérans.*



*Lucky boy, Bill Elms, gets his kiss in Rotheux (Neupre), Belgium.
Photo by Bernie Orie.*



Even the children greeted us. Photo by Carl Tucker.

Chapter 14

Liege

September 9, 1994 — at last we arrived at Liege, Belgium. Liege has special memories for me, it is one of the places I clearly remember from fifty years ago. One of the reasons I came on this trip was to return to Liege.

Going back to 1944, the G3 Supplement in *Spearhead in the West* describes the entry into Liege as follows:

"The direct route from Namaur to Liege the Division's next objective, was down the Meuse Valley. Down this corridor, the Germans were preparing to defend stubbornly.

"The Division Commander continued to take maximum advantage of the enemy's lack of complete organization by pushing rapidly. He sent Combat Command 'A' straight down the valley in a frontal attack, and ordered Combat Command 'B' to follow secondary roads on the high ground south of the river, approaching Liege from the southeast. CC 'A' met enemy roadblocks and strong points all the way in increasing strength. As they neared Liege they came under fire of anti-aircraft artillery batteries that protected the city. General Hickey and his artillery commander were in a position to observe these guns whose position to observe these guns whose position was a permanent installation including barracks. A withering concentration of time fire silenced them. Combat Command 'A' worked patrols into the city . . ."

That was September 7, 1944, almost exactly fifty years ago to the day. I remember it well because the patrol Combat Command 'A' that worked into Liege was my platoon. Our mission was to determine whether any bridges across the Meuse were usable, and see if any enemy remained in the city. As we approached the center of town we were greeted by what seemed to be thousands of people, who crowded around us forcing us to stop. Our tanks were covered with flowers so deep we feared that they were blocking the air intakes. Women climbed aboard the tanks to hug and kiss us, and we were showered with glasses and bottles of wine and champagne. Such was the welcome in 1944, would they remember us in 1994?

We arrived in Liege late in the evening at the Holiday Inn-Palais des Congres, and barely had time to check in and find our rooms before we had to get back on the buses to attend a 6:00 p.m. welcome ceremony. What a welcome it was! It was a place called the Exhibition of Liege, a very impressive old building that probably had been a palace. It was beautifully furnished with antique furniture, and tapestries, carpets, and paintings. There were the usual speeches by the mayor and dignitaries, and there were many citizens of Liege in attendance. Among the souvenirs I brought back I find that they gave each of us a medal with the inscription "Ville de Liege en temoinage de reconnaissance"; in English, "The city of Liege as witness of our friendship." There is also a coin with the inscription "Liege 50 years, Thank You, Honour to our Liberators, September 8, 1944." Then I also have a beautiful enamel pin with this inscribed "Liege, 1944-1994, Our liberty recovered".

As if this wasn't enough there is also a handsome diploma inscribed as follows: "Honorary Diploma, The town of Liege is pleased to award this TITLE OF GRATEFULNESS to Mr. Donald Crawford, member of the Armed Forces of the United States who took part in the liberation of the Belgian territory, the 9th September 1944, The Mayor Henri Schlitz." A copy is enclosed.

Of course, all this ceremony was accompanied by generous amounts of champagne and toasts. It was here among the many Belgian people I met Mr. Christian Kraft de la Seaux, a member of CRIBA (The Center of Research and Information about the Battle of the Ardennes); Mr. Kraft asked me if I had been in Liege in 1944. When I told him the story about the patrol into Liege, he became very excited and said, "I was among the crowd that greeted you. I was fourteen years old at the time and I remember people saying there was an American soldier with the tank patrol who spoke French." Later Mr. Kraft accompanied us during our two days in the Ardennes and one evening he took me in his car to trace the route I had taken into Liege in 1944. He also invited me to return and stay as his guest to continue documenting my experiences in that part of Belgium.

The welcoming ceremonies went on into the night with the signing of the official guest book, and other functions so that it was quite late when we finally returned to the hotel.

The next day was spent touring the Ardennes. Upon our return to Liege we went to a very impressive service, especially for us, at the Saint Jacques church to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the liberation of Belgium.

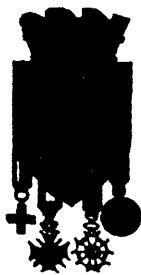
The following day, September 11, we visited La Glieze where we unveiled another plaque with the usual speeches and toasts with wine, etc. However, La Glieze was special because there was a wonderful museum dedicated to the Battle of the Bulge, and outside was a real German Tiger tank complete with the scars of our armor piercing rounds (which did not pierce the armor on the Tiger).

Following our all too brief visit in La Glieze, we proceeded to Herstal where we were welcomed by many citizens with a scrumptious luncheon which was followed by one of our best unveiling ceremonies complete with a U.S. Army marching band. My souvenir from Herstal is a large medal with the Third Armored patch and the inscription "HONOUR TO OUR LIBERATORS, 1944-1994". After the ceremonies we boarded a boat and returned to Liege on the river, a delightful afternoon.

Upon our arrival in Liege near the hotel, we proceeded to the monument to the Resistance where there was another unveiling and a ceremony on the bridge over the Meuse. Alas, this was to be our last ceremony in Belgium, for the following day we left Liege for Germany.

*— Donald J. Crawford
Company 'A'
32nd Armored Regiment*

1944



1994

Honorary Diploma
The Crown of Liège is pleased to award this

Title of gratefulness

to Mr. Donald CRAWFORD

Member of the armed forces of the United States
of America who took part in the liberation
of the Belgian Territory.

Given at Liège (Belgium)
on Liège the 9th September 1994

Chc. Mayer.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Henri Schlitz'.

Henri Schlitz



1944 - 1994

Belgium remembers

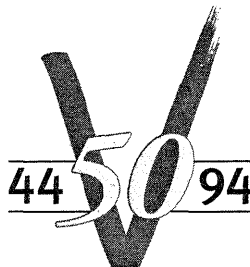
The people of Belgium pay tribute
to all those who took part in the liberation of the country,
in 1944-1945.

We remember with deep sorrow those who died
and those who were wounded. We are indebted to their bravery.
Out of their sacrifice comes our freedom.

To the gallant veterans who will take part
in the 1994-1995 commemoration we say:
“Welcome back, thank you, we shall never forget you.”

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Dehaene'.

Jean-Luc DEHAENE
Prime Minister of Belgium
Chairman of the National Committee



At Liege we were honored with another "State Dinner" at City Hall. The veterans wore suits and ties and the women their best evening dresses. As in Fourmies, the evening was surreal in that it may have been better intended for heads of state, or visiting royalty. But they made us feel, for certain, that we were equal to that lofty status by reminding us throughout the evening that it was fifty years to the day (September 9) that the Third Armored Division, with P-47 dive-bombers of the Ninth Tactical Air Force in support after fierce frontal attacks against heavy resistance on both sides of the Meuse River, gave them back their city. The evening ended in a formal ceremony with each veteran being called forward to receive a brevet of appreciation and bronze commemorative medal.

While in Liege we took a side trip through the Ardennes Forest where the Battle of the Bulge raged through the coldest winter in memory — 1944-45. We slept on the snow for over thirty nights and, when it was my turn on the bus mike, I explained my crew's system of survival in the continuous sub-zero weather.

"We found it best to sleep right on the snow. Our bedrolls were made from a small tarpaulin, which enveloped a baby crib mattress about an inch thick (we confiscated them from deserted German homes), a GI issued bedroll (a thin, hooded "mummy bag"), and two GI blankets. We wore our GI wool caps and field jackets, laid on our backs with a boot tucked under each arm and made it through the night. On occasion we would awake in the morning under a foot of snow. At night the Germans across the hill didn't bother us and we didn't bother them. During the day we wore overshoes three sizes too big and stuffed hay in them for insulation."

Where we traveled now in the Ardennes, we couldn't identify any familiar battlegrounds because the green, lush fields looked different without the deep snow.

It was difficult leaving Belgium, as it was, earlier, leaving France. In many cities and towns of both countries we were received by color guards, bands, school children, and attended over twenty-four plaque dedication ceremonies and champagne receptions that followed. We were made free men of many towns, were presented the gold Medal of Normandy, and were honored by receiving a Dipolma of Gratefulness signed by the Prime Minister of Belgium. But when we crossed the German border the celebrations ended. Even though many German citizens were appreciative of the Allies ending Hitler's reign of fascism and destruction of their great cities (at Stolberg, in the city council chambers, we were honored with a plaque dedication and reception, but without champagne), for the most part, understandably, the citizens didn't rush our buses waving flags. It was like returning to hometown America after going 0 for 4 in the World Series. Some of the vets chose not to wear their Third Armored caps, but most of us proceeded as normal tourists, never gloating or drawing unusual attention to ourselves.

— *Dick Goodie*
486th Battalion

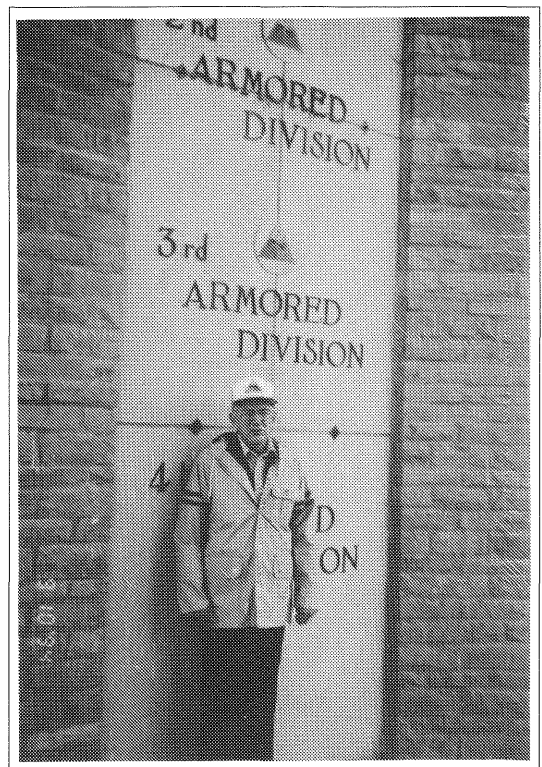
We left the hotel in Liege after a bountiful breakfast. The sun was shining as the buses pulled out, but it clouded over and began to rain as we approached Hotton. John said this was not a scheduled stop, but we found the people waiting with a band and flags to welcome us, so we stopped for another ceremony. We felt the people here were not as friendly as we had found everywhere else. The children did not return our smiles and greetings and would not even shake our hands.

We went on to Melinne for a commemoration ceremony. There were more plaque dedications and ceremonies in Grandmenil, Manhay, and Malempre. These towns are in the mountains and it is very cold and windy. We were all chilly and wished we had dressed warmer.

There was a nice reception at Manhay where we were served drinks and chips. The men were given a beautiful pin. When Bob tried to fasten his on his jacket he found it was defective. We were visiting with the interpreter who spoke good English and she gave him her pin. We stopped at a crossroads cafe for a nice lunch they had prepared for our group. We were not given menus, they gave us plates that had salad, french fries, tomatoes, chicken, ham, pork, and hot chocolate which was most welcome in such a chilly atmosphere. They make delicious french fries in France and Belgium. Someone said they are fried in beef fat, which is the reason they taste so good. Our lunch cost \$10 each in United States money. We rode over the highest point in Belgium, a ski area. They grow millions of Christmas trees there.

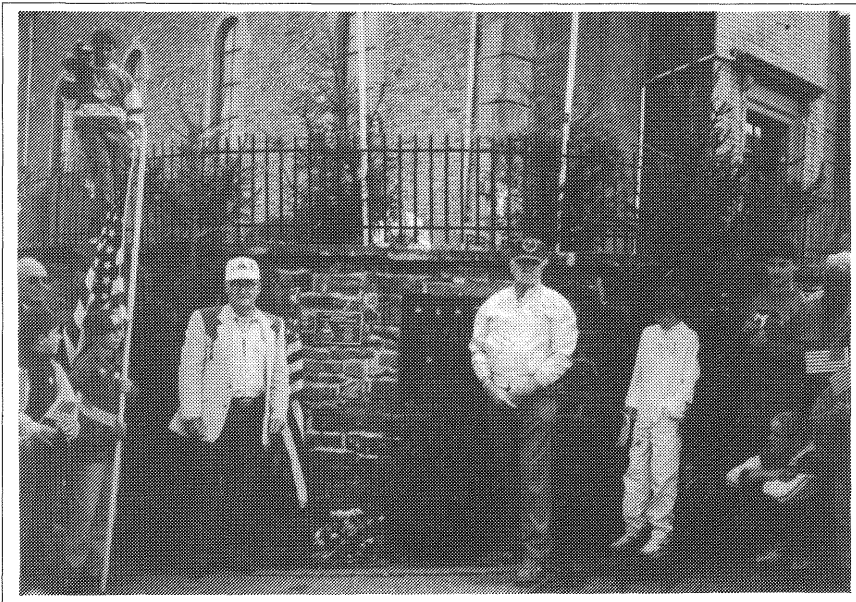
I found there were three of us named Doris on our bus, Doris Sullivan, Doris Howard, and myself, Doris Tanner. We rode through the Ardennes Forest to Bastogne which is a magnificent American Memorial. It is truly impressive with many columns and the names of each state around the top. It was still very cold and windy but the sun was shining which made it more tolerable. We did not have much time to explore the museum and when we were told it cost \$10 to enter we passed on it. We found the restroom facilities cost 25¢ each, they accepted any kind of money, French, Belgian, American, whatever we had. We made a quick tour of the gift shop and I found a spoon for my collection.

Bob Tanner in front of the monument in Bastogne.



On our return to Liege we stopped at Houffalize for another memorial and plaque ceremony. The monument here looked like it was just newly constructed and not entirely finished before our arrival. We walked to the recreation center for a very nice reception. I discovered my camera would not rewind my finished roll of 36 pictures. I put in a new battery, which did not help. I appealed to Eddie, the young Belgian who accompanied us all around while we were in Belgium and who took lots of pictures. He could not solve the problem and soon at least a half-dozen locals were gathered around, but it had them all puzzled. Our Belgian tour guide, Henri, took it for the night to see what was wrong. He brought it back to me the next morning and it was working again.

We got back to the hotel at 6:15 and hurried to change clothes to go to church at 7:00. We had a full bus to go. The church was very ancient and the service was specially in honor of their liberation by the Third Armored Division fifty years ago. After the service in the large sanctuary the protestants moved to an adjoining room for communion led by Walter Stitt, the Lutheran minister who was with our tour. The English wife of one of the leaders in that church came in to talk to us, and she was most interesting. She told us something of the arrangements they had made for our coming.



The plaque unveiled by Carl Tucker and Richard Roemer in Malempre.



It was raining again when we boarded the bus to go back to the hotel. Since it was Saturday evening the cafe at the hotel was full and we were directed to the bar. There we found Don Crawford and Bill Monger seated at a tiny table. We joined them and we all ordered tomato soup and caramel flans. It was a delicious meal with pleasant company. John O'Brien and friends came to eat at the next table, also. It was not as loud there either, as the band was playing in the dining room. When we prepared for bed we found a broken shampoo bottle in our bag so we had to clean up that mess before we could retire for the night!

*— Bob and Doris Tanner
Headquarters Company
32nd Armored Regiment*

As we arrived in the town of Hotton, to our surprise, the townspeople were waiting at the bridge (in the rain) to welcome us. As we joined them a man walked by wearing a red and blue Spearhead hat. I said to the fellow next to me, "Look at the old man with the Spearhead hat." A few steps farther on he turned around and said, "Old man?" To my complete amazement it was our own Doc Cohen! Two seconds later a hand slapped me on the shoulder and the guy said, "Do I know you?" It was my Company Commander, John Anderson from North Carolina. They had received special invitations to attend the ceremony commemorating the liberation fifty years ago of the towns of Hotton and Soy, which is where so much fighting took place during the Battle of the Bulge.

It was in this area that Combat Command 'R' headquarters commanded by Colonel Robert Howze and Regimental Headquarters Company of the 36th Armored Infantry Regiment had their biggest battles. Some good friends were lost in this area just before Christmas. Memories of what happened here just seem to live forever.

From Hotton we moved up the road to the town of Melinne where three plaques were unveiled. The first one in memory of Corporal Shields. The second plaque unveiled at this memorial was in honor of Robert L. Howze, CC 'R' Commander at the time fifty years ago. I had the pleasure of meeting the daughter of Colonel Howze, who also had received a special invitation to attend this memorial ceremony.

Thanks to the Last Request Tour, I now realize why we were needed to be part of World War II. The people of Belgium could not do enough for us on this tour, they remember it all so well and they are so grateful.

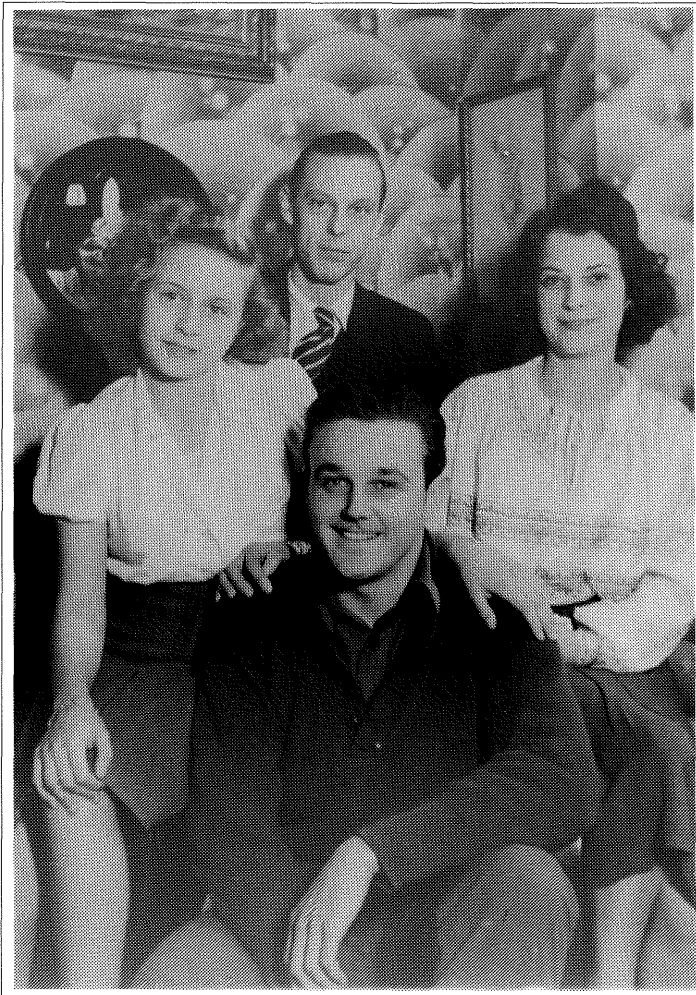
— *Elmer Lorenz*
Regimental Headquarters
36th Armored Infantry Regiment

Chapter 15

Dison

We have been greeted each day with the anticipation of meeting more Belgian friends, attending plaque dedications of our Third Armored, and being honored by people whom we liberated so long ago. It was September 9th, and we were lunching in the town hall at Neupre. Six "ancien soldats" and four of the wives were scheduled to be driven by private car to Dison where the townspeople were waiting to commence the celebration that they had been planning for the last two years. The members of our group who made the pilgrimage to Dison were Chester and Belle Davis, Paul Kaufmann, Aurio Pierro, Bill and Lale Ruth, Walter and Betty Stitt, and Meredith and me.

I particularly looked forward to this event because Henri Rogister, the CRIBA gentleman known to most of us, had been most helpful in locating the survivors of the Verviers' family who had befriended me. There had been a gentleman, his wife, and a niece. I was to learn that the gentleman and the niece were dead, but the wife, now eighty-four, survives. She lives near Brussels with her eighty-two-year-old sister who was the mother of the niece. Henri had apprised me of these facts when he met our plane at Brussels upon our arrival. He came armed with pictures, a letter from a grandson, and the intimation of a surprise at Dison. Verviers juxtaposes Dison so it was not too implausible that some descendant of the family would come to Dison to meet me.



*The family in Verviers that befriended Jim.
Left to right: Denise Cadiat (deceased), Charles Bleyfuesz
(deceased), Marie Bleyfuesz (84 years old)
and James in front.*

I had been experiencing difficulty breathing this day, but I was so eager to go to Dison, that when Henri Hofman, our driver, picked us up, I was determined to make the trip. In the days that followed, Henri was to become a close friend.

We drove through the lovely Belgium countryside, through Verviers, and as we approached Dison, we noticed people hanging out of their second-story windows staring ahead at some excitement down the road. Presently, we came upon the scene that so raptly captured their attention. The streets in the center of the town were crowded with people of all ages.

The school children, having been excused from classes for this big day, jostled for position, waving American flags, cheering, spilling over onto the streets as we passed. American flags were everywhere; on public buildings, on private homes, the streets and parks. In both Belgium and France, our flag flew side-by-side with their colors.

We had come to a park in the center of the town. The throngs of people crowded near, angling for a handshake or an acknowledgment. Each of us had been assigned an interpreter and a guide who was responsible for extricating us from the crush of friendly people. It became nearly impossible for our interpreters to stay at our side. In the midst of the activity swirling around me, I was interviewed for television; all of us were deluged by autograph seekers; all of us were positioned in the forefront of the pageantry. We were to be transformed into celebrities this day.

The Belgians are a loving, demonstrative people. They are a traditional people. The town squares all have statues to honor the great in their history. And the flowers! Everywhere were flowers. Their old soldiers and resistance fighters, all with their unit flags, their medals proudly displayed on their business attire, always participated in these ceremonies. No ceremony was complete without a band. It was moving to hear our national anthem included with the rendering of their national anthem. The officials of the town were identified by ribbon bandoliers fashioned in the colors of their flag. The speeches commemorating the liberation of their town by the Third Armored Division usually ended with, "Thank you for 1944! Thank you for 1945!"

And so it was in Dison. The mayor and vice-president of the Belgian House of Representatives, Yvan Ylieff, spoke to us. The Commissaire of Police, Patrick Bodeux, Madame Jongen, Madame Quoidbach, Messieurs Le Dain and Meunier, the interpreters and the guides, the men from CRIBA all contributed to the success of the day. I hesitate to mention these few whom I knew because I realize I am omitting many more who should be recognized.

At one end of the park was a large stone that had been draped pending the dedication. Chester Davis assisted in the unveiling of the Third Armored plaque that had been mounted on a large stone. Above the plaque was an enameled triangle of the Third Armored insignia embedded in the stone. Adjacent to these was a plaque bearing the American Eagle and the following inscription, "9.9.1944. 9.9.1994. En Hommage A Nos Libérateurs." Dignitaries solemnly placed flowers at the base of the stone. This park had been newly named this day, "Liberation Square".



Bill Ruth, Jim Matthews, Chet Davis at the unveiling in Dison.



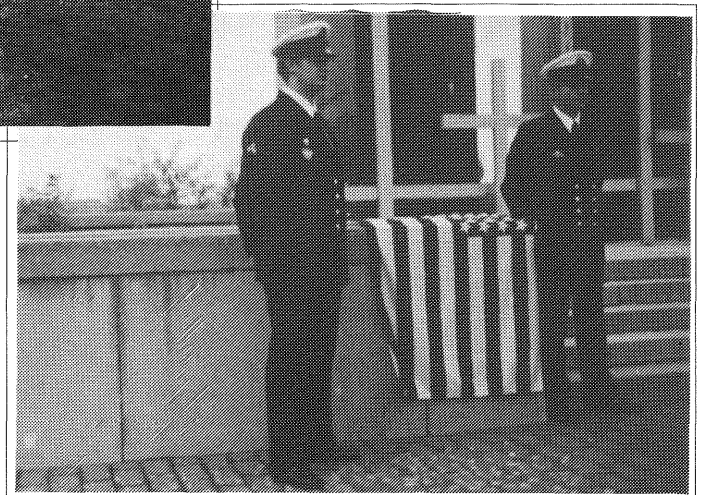
James Matthews signing an autograph for an unidentified Belgian gentleman in Dison.

A resistance fighter waiting for the ceremonies to begin. She was so tired, old, shabby and worn, standing there with her unit flag. It was chilly and she had no stockings and was wearing inadequate "jelly" shoes. She seemed so alone, but when the time came, she hoisted her flag and participated with the rest.



Memorial Rock in Liberation Square in Dison.

Resistance Memorial prior to the unveiling of the Third Armored plaque in Liege, Belgium.





At the memorial service and plaque dedication at Resistance Monument.



This photo was taken by Joe and Virginia Robertson in St. Jean de Daye on September 5, 1994. I did not have a picture of the two little French boys that "adopted" Jim and me. They were with us until we boarded the bus to leave. They stood, each with an arm around our waist. Whenever the French, Belgian and American national anthems are played, we, of course, stand with our right hand over our hearts in the civilian salute. On this occasion, when the anthem began (I do not recall whether or not it was French or ours), I extricated myself from my little guy's embrace so that I could put my hand over my heart. Out of the corner of my eye, I could see him shyly studying me. Soon, very slowly, his little hand crept up to his chest, and he stood there solemnly with us in that stance until the anthems were over. I loved it! Maybe he learned something! Incidentally, that day was my birthday and the sun shone.

It was time now, time for us to be escorted to the city hall. We headed up an entourage of townspeople who followed us into the hall. We were to be the honored guests seated on the stage for all to see. The Belgian and American flags, side by side, draped the backdrop behind us. Then came the gifts; flowers for the ladies, and large, gift-wrapped wooden boxes tied with the Belgian colors of red, gold and black for the veterans.

Caught in the bow of the ribbon was a certificate certifying our attendance as a distinguished guest "during the Liberation Day celebrated on September 9, 1994, commemorating the day, fifty years ago, when elements of the Third Armored Division entered our then two cities of Dison and Anrimont, to restore freedom". In our boxes were two bottles of wine made especially for this occasion and labeled with the Dison coat-of-arms with the Third Armored insignia superimposed on it. Included with the wine was a pewter plate with the Dison crest. It, too, was made for this fifty year occasion.

In the periphery of my mind, I was aware of the speeches and the enthusiasm of the crowd. I was trying to absorb all the stimuli around me. Someone came up to me and whispered in my ear that I was wanted at the microphone to talk to the assemblage. With the help of my interpreter, we threaded our way through the honorees to cross the stage. By this time, I was so overwhelmed by the attention, the adulation, by my recognition of all the effort that had culminated in this day, that I could scarcely speak. My heart went out to all of them as they waited expectantly for some stirring message. I commenced, but almost at once, I was overcome with emotion that I could only half-sob, "I love you!" Well, so much for my debut at the microphone. We made three newspapers that day.

I was trying to regain my composure, thinking my feelings could not stand being strummed any more, when I was informed that there was someone there to meet me. It was Henri's surprise in the personage of a surviving niece of the family about whom I had directed my inquiry. Her name is Anny Bleyfuesz, and she resides in Verviers. I broke down again as I hugged her. It was like coming full-circle after fifty years.

I had begun this chapter with the mention that I was having difficulty in breathing. Let me assure you that after this day in Dison, I was positively breathless.

— *James D. Matthews*
143rd Signal Corp

Faces In The Crowd

Some of you we know by name. Some of you are faces with no names. Some of you have asked us to write to you. All of you, in a very personal way, are etched into our memories of the most incredible journey of our lives.

Andre´ and Any, Denis and Catherine, you were the touchstones for what was to follow. You must have been very nervous, preparing to receive total strangers into your homes. We came away from Fourmies feeling that it couldn't get any better than this. We've already written to you and eagerly await your reply.

Mme. Balaes, you were a delight. You pointed out your summer home far up in the hills overlooking La Glieze. You come down every summer from Brussels with your husband to this beautiful resort town. You hastily scribbled your name and address on a scrap of paper seconds before the bus left. You pantomimed for us to write as we watched you through the bus window, and you managed to pass the note to us just as we were pulling away. We haven't written yet, but it's a promise we will keep.

Jeannine King, when you learned that we didn't have time to locate and photograph Bobby Brook's grave in the cemetery in Normandy, you told us that you would locate it and send a picture to us. What a neat gift that would be! If you've lost our address, we will send it to you. Believe it or not, we still have your business card with your name along side that of your husband, Peter.

Claude Isaac, on the bridge over the Meuse River in Liege, we overheard you say that you were disappointed not to have a Third Armored pin. I, Phyllis, gave you mine from my lapel. You, in turn, took a pin from your lapel and gave it to me. Later, we learned from your card that you are president of three important associations and delegate to the European Confederation. Big Wheel! We will send you the picture of you wearing the Third Armored pin.

M and Mme., we don't know your names, but you are the Jewish couple with whom we spoke at some length after the ceremonies on the bridge in Liege. You showed us the apartment building where you live and where you had a beautiful view of the Meuse until the Holiday Inn was built, blocking that vista. You were not at all happy about that. Madame, you celebrated your twentieth birthday in England on D-Day. The liberation of Belgium was especially meaningful to both of you. We wish we had asked your name.





Madeleine, we told you about a little girl named Madeleine in a storybook. "Yes," you laughed. "She was a sinner." Of course, you would have known. The Madeleine stories are set in France.

Mlle. florist in Fromental, you were alone in your little flower shop when we rushed in. Thank you for helping us wire flowers to Fourmies. We were desperately afraid the bus would leave us stranded, but when we implored, "Vite, vite, s'il vous plait," you rushed the order in time, despite our feeble French. We ran back to the bus feeling good because of you.

Dear little boy with the cherub's face, you toddled very reluctantly up to us with your shoebox gift, as somber as a judge, not at all sure you wanted to part with it. You were too shy to tell us your name, but we have your picture and the gift to remember you by.

Frau waitress, you were the sole attendant in the tiny stand-up restaurant in Cologne. You looked exactly the way we've seen German matrons pictured: tall, ample, pleasant-faced. You helped us choose our menu item, recommending our first-ever goulash soup. We were tired, the soup was hot and savory, and you were very kind to us American foreigners. "Ist gut?" you asked. "Ya, sehr gut!"

Mme. maitress, you were one of the brave teachers who brought their classes to the ceremony in Brunehamel. You were a true professional, controlling those lively children just enough on that exciting occasion. Further, you presented a handsome, striking figure in your white coat, black hat and expressive face. We salute you!

Mesdames of the village, you stood back in the crowd, reticent and shy; yet when we spoke to you, shook hands with you and took your picture, you seemed pleased and proud — yes, even thrilled. We wish we knew where to send the picture.

Little gray-haired lady, you were a standout flag bearer. There you were, keeping up with the best of the men. We didn't speak with you, but we certainly admired your patriotism and your pluck. We wonder if your husband had been a veteran. You, too, deserve a medal.

Dear friends, we were your guests for three wonderful weeks. You thanked us over and over for your liberation fifty years ago. Now we thank you for giving us this colorful kaleidoscope of vivid memories to cherish. It was hands across the sea, and as we say in Ohio, you were the heart of it all. Au revoir, auf Wiedersehen, good-bye.

Phyllis and Allen Knisley
391st FA and 67th FA

HOPITAL DE LA CITADELLE (After Dison)

It was early on September 10th. My husband, Jim, had sat on the floor all night with his back propped against the bed. He fought for breath. Using his hidden reserves, he had gone to the Liege exhibition, dinner and the ceremonies the previous evening. But today, we were waiting for the doctor to come to our hotel room.

We admitted a serious young man who, after a quick perusal of Jim, hurried back to his car for a portable electro-cardiogram machine. After consulting together with their limited understanding of each other's language, the verdict was hospitalization at once. We taxied to the emergency entrance of the Hopital de la Citadelle.

The hospital, perched high on a hill, built on the site of one of Napoleon's forts, commanded a view of the river Meuse, the whole city of Liege and the surrounding countryside. It could be seen from different directions as the taxi wound up the tortuous, spaghetti streets. The hospital loomed into sight resembling the fort it had replaced. It was huge and gray and forbidding. It was also new, modern and well-equipped, but barren and devoid of frills. Ten years ago this hospital had replaced an older Citadelle that had held our wounded from the Battle of the Bulge.

Once in emergency, we were attended with no delays. Speculation about a heart attack gave way to a diagnosis of spontaneous pneumo-thorax, a collapsed lung, not a life-threatening thing, but one that spelled the end of the tour for us. It was a sobering thought. How does one cope in a foreign country, alone, with no language skills and a sick husband? My anxiety was short-lived. I had not counted on the outpouring of affection and concern from both the Belgian people and the foreign community.

We did not have an orientation at this hospital. Without a word, Jim was whisked out of my sight. The only instruction I had was to watch my purse. Panic was setting in when he reappeared. He was trundled, on his bed, back to the examining room where it all began. One's bed was the transportation to and from x-ray and other departments in lieu of the use of patient carts. Matter-of-factly, he told me he had been in surgery. A catheter was inserted in the pleural cavity through an incision high on the chest. The other end of the catheter was put in a suction device to create negative pressure allowing the lung to reinflate. Jim happily announced, "I can breathe!" I digested the fact that one does not give permission for a procedure by signing any binding permission form here in Belgium. No malpractice suits here?

At last, Jim was admitted to the pulmonary ward. There I had my first encounter with a tall, imposing, red-haired nurse who scolded me in words I did not understand because I had hung Jim's clothes in the wrong locker. Her professionalism and determined stride had a distinct air of authority. Intimidated, I decided I would stay out of her way. All the nurses were curious about the "old soldier" and made excuses to come in and look him over. The red-haired nurse was to become his favorite.

Jim's roommate was a young, good-looking man who was a Belgian policeman. His name was Richard, pronounced Ri-chard'. He, too, had a collapsed lung. We were to learn that this condition was a young man's malady. So what was Jim doing here?

Late in the day, I taxied back to the Holiday Inn. The lobby was teeming with our group. Everyone seemed to know about our misadventure. Words of caring and concern boosted my sagging morale. Roy Hoskins, the British gentleman, introduced himself with offers of help. He and Reverend Walter Stitt were planning an ecumenical service that evening in Roy's church. I thought perhaps

I should attend and offer my own prayer that Jim's illness was not serious, debilitating, but not serious. I would pray on my own because, at that moment, I spied Henri Rogister hastening over with the offer to take me back to the hospital. That simple gesture commenced a friendship that grew throughout the time of Jim's illness as Henri assumed the responsibility of driving me to and from the hospital for the next sixteen long days.

I felt abandoned and keenly disappointed when the buses pulled away from the hotel the next morning. We had made friendships in a group so recently strangers, and we were looking forward to those friendships blossoming. We were to remain in Liege for twenty-six days. While I would not recommend an illness as a way to have a whole new learning experience, many positive things accrued from our enforced stay.

I became Henri's charge. He and Rene had me in their home every night for dinner. I met their sons. I was in the bosom of their family instead of the isolation of a hotel room. Henri and Rene were the ages of our oldest son and daughter. I shall always think of them as my Belgian family. If Henri had a dinner obligation, he didn't leave me to my own devices, but included me. One such evening was dinner at Baraque de Fraiture honoring the men who had held the cross-roads there during the Bulge. All the CRIBA men were there. I felt guilty having such a good time while Jim languished in the hospital.

Henri would be loathe to have me tell this story: In the generous spirit of all the CRIBA members he had been hauling me everywhere in his car at his own expense. I was so grateful to him and needed to do something for him. We had a lively discussion about the meaning of the word "reimburse" because it was my intention to cover his expenses. Henri wouldn't hear of it. I asked him if he knew the word "sneaky" because I knew I would have to be devious were I to "reimburse" him. No, he didn't know "sneaky". Did he know "sabotage"? Ah, yes, he knew that word. "Aha!" I told him. "I will sabotage you!" And I did. Surreptitiously, I stuffed a fist-full of francs in his glove compartment. The loss would be mine if I were to offend Henri by this gesture. I can only hope that he thinks of it as our private little joke.

I spent most of every day with Jim at the hospital. Strict visiting hours seemed to be waived for us. I had more than a casual interest in the hospital and its procedures. The Citadelle was a



Baraque de Fraiture. Left to right: Henri, Meredith, Rene.

government, regional hospital. The doctors and nurses were excellent. The nurses still wore white uniforms, and I witnessed bedside nursing such as I have not seen for some time in our hospitals. I was a very critical observer when one young nurse was changing Jim's dressing. Her technique was flawless. It was a joy to watch. I was relieved that Jim was in such a good facility. It was fortuitous that we were in an area that offered an excellent teaching hospital. If I were to fault the hospital for

anything, it would be the meager patient diet. While our hospitals overfeed the patients, here was the other extreme. Jim lost twenty-five pounds and came out so gaunt that I knew my work was cut out for me.

I was not the only recipient of attention. Madame Jongen, heading up delegations of people from Dison, visited Jim several times. They came with flowers, fruit, pastries, and that heavenly Belgian chocolate. They brought cards and letters from the mayor and other functionaries. They came with picture albums of the celebration in Dison, and video tapes of historical films tracing Dison's occupation by the Germans, films of the concentration camps, films of the liberation, and finally, a film of the liberation celebration complete with Jim's television interview and his "I love you!" to the people of Dison. One gentleman brought Jim antique issues of the *Yank*, the Army weekly. A lady brought him some pieces of the Berlin wall, and others came with English language books and magazines.

Roy Hoskins came often and bridged the language barrier between Jim and the doctor keeping us current on his progress. An English lady named Gillian visited many times. She brought Jim the wooden doll, Tchanches, one of the most representative characters in the theatre of Liege. Myth has it that Tchanches was born between two paving bricks in 760 in the "Outre-Meuse" district. An interesting legend of Tchanches chronicles his upbringing on gin (so naturally, he is always depicted with a red nose), his loyalty to Charlemagne and his death at forty from Spanish influenza. Regretted by the whole population, he became an example of the real "Liegeois": obstinate, love of mockery, big mouth, enemy of all splendor and ostentation, independent, but with a heart of gold and a readiness to fight for a good cause. A statue in his honor was erected in the Outre-Meuse district.

A charming lady named Bernadette came often with Henri and Rene. Her lament was that she was only six when the American soldiers came, and being too young, she didn't get to kiss them. Alas, when she grew to young womanhood, the soldiers were gone. But now! Now, here was one, held captive in his hospital bed and not likely to get away, and kiss him she would! And kiss him she did — every time she saw him! Bernadette knew that I stood on my little balcony watching the barges ply the Meuse while I waited for Henri to take me to the hospital. With this clue, she gave me an outstanding ink and watercolor of the boats in the yacht-basin with the Meuse in the background. Jim's picture, equally lovely, was of the Palais Des Princes-Eveques (Prince Bishops' Palace). These pictures will be assigned an important place in our home.

Jim's "celebrity" status did not go unnoticed. Ri-chard' opined, "You have more company that I do, and I live here!"

So, the days passed filled with the many kindnesses of my new friends. Daily, at breakfast, I would seek out the Americans (to hear myself speak English?). Many veteran groups came through. I wore my Third Armored pin, and the recognition thereof gave me a kinship with other groups who fought the same fight. One day, I found myself in the midst of the



Meredith, Bernadette, and Jim at Rene's house in late September.

Russian soccer team. Another day, I sat next to a young man from Italy. The ample breakfast buffet must not have sufficed, for the waitress brought him a large platter of five fried eggs, mounds of toast dripping with butter, a cereal bowl of jam, plus all the offerings from the buffet. I was fascinated as I watched him "inhale" all that which is forbidden fruit on my diet.

My permanent guest status at The Holiday Inn was such that Rene began referring to it as "home". In mock awe she would say, "Ooo! BIG kitchen! BIG dining room! MANY rooms!" I realized that in the midst of my worry about Jim, the stress of the unusual situation in which I found myself, I was having fun. Rene and Bernadette accorded me a respect such as I have not encountered at home. They carried my heavy purse, held the umbrella over my head, offered their arm when we walked any place, always looking after me in many small ways. Although I told myself that I was not in need of a Boy Scout yet, I was very touched by their ministering.

I was becoming concerned about the extent of our financial obligations at the hotel. I knew our tour group had special rates, but I had contracted many more days and the end of our stay was not in sight. I tentatively approached the front desk to inquire about "permanent resident status". The manager dismissed my query with a wave of his hand and said, "Oh, you get veterans' rates for as long as you are here." So very much was coming our way, we could not assimilate it all.

In recounting the many instances of hospitality — no, more than that — friendship accorded to Jim and me, I would be remiss if I did not mention the Liege Rencontre, the Ladies Club of foreign speaking women. Word must have gone out that there was an American lady stranded in the hotel (I would never be stranded as long as there remained one CRIBA member). Soon my 'phone was jangling with many offers of help. It was so much fun to have one's 'phone ring in a land where I was the stranger. It was as if I belonged. I no longer felt as if I were in quarantine in my hotel room. I could make appointments, and then I could run down to the lobby to greet the people behind the voices. Did you ever try to match up voices with faces! I just knew I would recognize them.

One such benefactor was Roy's wife, Margaret Hoskins. She took me to a home in Tilff where an intimate group of six ladies were meeting. They met regularly to practice their language skills and have a morning of stimulating conversation. In deference to me, they would speak English that day. Gillian would call just to chat as would Nora, an Irish lady, who also was a hospital visitor. Sometimes there were messages under my door or a gift on my dresser. One such gift was accom-

panied by Elmer Eckman's distinctive Greek fisherman's hat. Anyone on the tour remembers Elmer's hat. He had left it on the boat when the group disembarked to attend a memorial ceremony of the Resistance Monument on the bridge near our hotel. Madame Tasset, wife of the gentleman who presented the Patriotiques De Liege medal to our veterans, had seen me on the boat. She rightly assumed that I would see that it was returned to its owner. I am happy to report that Elmer is in possession of his hat again.



Barge on the Meuse. Liege, Belgium.

Jim's hospital stay was lengthening. Our hopes of rejoining the tour in a week were dashed when we passed the seventh day with no improvement. By the tenth day and still no improvement, a surgeon was called in. He explained to us that this thing, this hole, might heal in three months or so. The alternative was surgery. Inasmuch as air flight was out of the question, and, inasmuch as we could not remain away from our affairs at home for an extended period, we had but one option. Jim said, "Do it!"

Surgery was scheduled on the twelfth day, September 22. We would have been in England by now. Oh yes, we kept track on our schedule where our comrades would be daily. Jim had been a good sport, but now, the routine began to pall on him. He couldn't tolerate the strong Belgian coffee. He asked for tea. His red-haired nurse, uncomprehending at first, delighted in her recognition of "tea" and swung into a dah-ta-dah to the tune of "Tea for two, and two for tea," at which point Jim joined her with the words of that old song. They were to go into their duet every time she came into his room. It became their salutation.

I kept a solitary vigil in Jim's room while he was in surgery. Ri-chard' had gone home, and I was quite alone. My apprehension would have been heightened if I had known this surgical procedure is not done in America. However, in retrospect, I realize that if we had returned home by ship, Jim would have faced three months of rest there. Ah, fate is strange; strange that Jim should have a collapsed lung in Belgium where a surgical procedure for the condition was already in place.

You may be privy to some of my intimate jottings: "9/22/94. We have had six bad days out of seven; rain, cold, mist. Today is clear and bright. I can stand at the big window in Jim's hospital room and see for miles across the Belgian countryside. It is 2:07 p.m. Still no word from the doctor. Surgery was scheduled at 1:00. Does laser 'stitching' of a hole in the lung take so long? I don't know. Before Jim fell asleep from his pre-op hypo, he said the bright day was a good omen. I was not permitted to follow him down to the surgery door. So, I wait in his room. I was told, by gestures, to "sit! here!" More flowers and cards this morning. The gift list is getting ever longer. Such nice people! I want to go home — none of the approaching footsteps stop here. Ah! 2:25 p.m., Dr. Borlay stopped in. Jim is in intensive care. In pidgin English - like my French - Dr. Borlay said, "Just a little hole. No big operation!" Thank God! At that moment, I did not need to hear the surgeon tell me that it had been a rather large hole.

I was permitted to go into intensive care — just for a moment. Some people react from an anesthetic like kittens. They open their eyes, blink, briefly join the world and go back to sleep. Others can be loud and obstreperous. Jim tended toward the latter. He saw me and began proclaiming, "I'm all right! I'm all right! It wasn't too bad! I love you! I'm all right!" And I was all right, too.

Jim's red-haired nurse came to see him in intensive care. She stood at the foot of his bed and softly hummed "Tea for two and two for tea." With regret, we did not see her again. Jim was moved to a different ward with an all new staff of nurses. One of them came to his bed, waggled a finger at him, turned to me and said, "I love you." Perhaps that would be his new identification. Obviously, his post-anesthetic declaration had made the rounds.

Jim was discharged on September 26, the day we would have returned to America. His post-op orders were to remain at the hotel through September 30. Roy Hoskins began working on flight bookings immediately. Roy also served as my interpreter with the hospital social worker. I was grateful for the travel insurance that John O'Brien had provided for all of us. But, the hospital wanted the balance of the bill up front. One doesn't usually carry that kind of cash around. No problem. I would put the balance on my VISA card. Through Roy I learned, in disbelief, that the hospital did not take VISA, nor have the facilities to process VISA. Here was a big modern facility, and they could not process VISA? What to do? I asked Roy to see if it would be agreeable for

me to just go home and have the hospital send me the bill. That would simplify the dilemma. Roy hesitated a bit at presenting this outrageous proposal and seemed a might embarrassed. Reluctantly, Roy relayed it to the social worker. He listened, pondered, nodded, looked at me, and decided that was the way we would go. Such a nice man!

Nor did our good fortune stop there. In a flurry, I buzzed around and told the hotel people I was bringing my husband "home". We were all folks by now and they welcomed him back as if they were glad to have him back "home" too. Henri Rogister came to take Jim into the Ardennes on two separate occasions. He knew Jim had missed that part of our tour, and it was his way of making it up to him. We reasoned that Jim's convalescence would not be compromised if he were sitting in the car.

Henri's trip to America was coming up fast. We knew of his plans to go to Washington to further his research into the Battle of the Bulge, then, to continue on to Phoenix to attend the reunion of the Third Armored Division, a reunion we had wanted to attend. We had hoped that our flights would coincide so that we might all return together. With his departure date imminent, in true "mother-hen" fashion, I thought he should be home packing, but Henri thought it more important to take Jim into the Ardennes. Henri left for America on October 1. We were not to leave for four more days. Would we ever see Henri again?

Meanwhile, Henri Hofman, our driver to Dison, had been checking with our other Henri about our flight plans, because he, too, would take us into the Ardennes. Would we still be here on October 1? His tight work schedule allowed only for that day. Henri had made the trip from Verviers to Liege many times after work to visit Jim in the hospital. They learned much of each other and much about such diverse subjects as the economy, the school system, the tax structure, the churches, the rail system. Concerning the latter, Henri told of his inspection tours and familiarization of the channel-tunnel between France and England. All this was accomplished, laboriously, with the aid of French/English dictionaries and intense attention to word sounds. Constraints of time and space preclude detailing in depth all we learned. It was rewarding to be able to delve beneath the top layer of a different lifestyle. It should come as no surprise that I found our similarities greater than our differences.

Henri was devoted to Jim and me. He called Jim "James" and me "Merry". He teased me, joked with me and even scolded me such as the time I was determined that I was going to pay the hospital parking fee. Henri Rogister had always paid it. Our two Henri's and I were all leaving together. I was insisting, and Henri R. was saying, "No, no, no, NO!" Henri Hofman "shushed" me as if I were a child and said, "Merry, be quiet." I never did pay the parking.



Meredith and Henri Hofman in front of the Holiday Inn in Liege.

We had our trip into the Ardennes. Both Henri's had pulled all stops trying to help Jim locate a town whose name he does not know, but which is burned forever in his memory. It was during the Battle of the Bulge. He and two others had thrown their exhausted bodies down on the stone floor of

the narthex of a little church. In the morning, they had peered in through the sanctuary doors. Their senses were assailed by more of the shuddering horror of war. There, in the sanctuary, were the massacred bodies of all the women and children of the town. Both men are dedicated to research of the Ardennes and will keep looking for the town. We are committed to researching in our archives here.

After our trip into the Ardennes, Henri took us to his home in Dison for dinner. We met his pretty wife, Alice, and his charming nine-year-old daughter, Cindi. Alice was afraid we would be critical of her English. She was really quite good. Cindi and I discovered that we had many allergies in common. We had a beautiful evening. Jim's energy was flagging badly and it was time to go. It was so, so hard to say "good-bye". By the time I had left Belgium, I had said good-bye so many times, I thought my heart would break.

And then, there was Agnes. "The Liege Rencontre had told of the American lady. Was she too late to do something for me? Shopping perhaps?" I had had no opportunity to select little gifts for my family. Liege is not the kind of town that a stranger can explore easily. There were no shops around the hotel. There was a park that I had walked in until I heard that someone had been murdered there. Once Gillian had arranged a rehearsal on the buses. The morning on which I was going to brave the Liege bus system, the buses were on strike. So when Agnes offered to take me on a shopping trip, I enthusiastically accepted. We made a date.

It was Friday, September 30. Jim and I waited in the lobby. Would Agnes be one of the smart-looking matrons in classic clothing? Would she be young? Would we know her? At the appointed time, a petite, well-groomed, gray-haired lady came into the room glancing around indecisively. She seemed so timid. Was it because of her approaching meeting with the Americans? Much later, she was to confess that she had been terrified at the prospect.

We learned that Agnes was a Swiss lady, a widow. She was multi-lingual, but English was not her forte. Despite her timidity, she was a lady of resolve and dignity. She had come by bus, in the rain, to keep our appointment, and she was thoroughly soaked and chilled. We plied her with hot chocolate in the bar, and as she warmed from the chocolate, she warmed to us. We squandered our whole shopping time slot in this fashion and had to reschedule for Monday, October 3. Agnes would be spending her weekend with her daughter in Switzerland. She left us that Friday bubbling with enthusiasm at the exciting news she would have to tell her daughter.



"Sweet Agnes" and Jim resting from shopping trip in Liege.

Agnes returned on Monday. She was so distraught that she almost lost her tenuous grasp of the English language. Somewhere en route to Switzerland, her "portefeuille" had been stolen. Her money, her banking card, her I.D. card were all gone. No, she would not cancel our shopping trip. She had promised, and that was final. Well, this little eighty-year-old woman walked circles around Jim and me. Yes, Jim had accompanied us even though I was concerned about his overextending himself. As for Agnes, she was astounded that a man would come on a lady's shopping trip. She was delighted with him. I was so pleased to see her happy and enjoying herself.

Our time in Belgium was coming to a close. We were going through a period of ambivalence. We knew we had to go home, wanted to go home, but a part of our hearts would stay in Belgium. The Liege Rencontre was meeting at the Palais de Congres next to the hotel. It was Tuesday, October 4, and Agnes wanted me to come as her guest. I was busy finalizing our plans to leave that afternoon for Brussels, but no way could I reject Agnes. Besides, it was a wonderful opportunity to meet the many ladies who had shown an interest in me and to thank them for their kindness. Agnes squired me around, so proud that it was she who had brought the American lady. It was with humility that I perceived that by having me as her guest at the ladies' meeting, I was enhancing her prestige.

The hour had arrived to bid our farewells. Agnes went back to the hotel to say "good-bye" to Jim. She wept as he held her and kissed her. I escorted her to her waiting car and we both wept. I heard her sobbing as she hurried away. What had we done to her? Was it the same poignancy that we had been wrestling with all along, that of meeting someone and knowing that you could not make that person a part of your life? That you would come together briefly and then part? I had voiced this bittersweet anguish to Gillian. Her young years belied her wisdom. She had felt the same sense of loss but rejoiced in the enrichment to her life from those who passed through her sphere, touched her and moved on. I hold that thought and try to be grateful for it.



Jim, Madame Jongen, Meredith - departure for Brussels.

Through Henri Rogister, we learned that Madame Jongen had arranged to take us to Brussels. She had been a frequent visitor to the hotel during the nine days we were there following Jim's hospital discharge. She accepted me because I was Jim's "e'pouse", and because we could not communicate verbally, she would hug me, squeeze my arm or pat my hand to show her affection. Madame Jongen was "sixtyish" and very attractive with her face always wreathed in smiles. She was an influential official in her town of Dison and saw to it that Jim was lacking in nothing. It was she that called Henri nightly to check on Jim's condition, and it was she who arranged for the Minister of

Justice to intercede for us should we have any trouble scheduling our flight. And it was she that presented Jim with her personal medal, embellished especially for her, for her tireless work in the political prisoner of war organization. We learned that her aunt and uncle and her father were political prisoners of war in Auchswitz. Her aunt and uncle perished, and her father, his health broken, lived for four years after the liberation. Knowing her sacrifice for parting with this medal, Jim protested, trying to explain that he could never accept her generous offer. Henri interceded and quietly told Jim that he must accept it. And with deep humility, he did, and he wept again, this time in bewilderment.

Our flight left Brussels very early on Wednesday, October 5. For the balance of Tuesday, we packed, closed the door on our room for the last time, and waited in the lobby for Monsieur and Madame Jongen, Monsieur and Madame Munier, and Monsieur Ledain to arrive. They would convoy us to Brussels. Jim and I had presumed that we would make it to Brussels by our own devices. We should have known better. Madame Jongen wouldn't hear of it. Then we conspired to take them to dinner in Brussels. Again, we were thwarted. After checking into the hotel, the dinner treat was theirs. By now, we knew it was futile to protest. Finally, we could linger no longer. We had a 4:30 a.m. wake-up call. Our friends had a long drive back to Dison. The moment that we had been dreading had come. With hugs, kisses, tears, we said our good-byes. Monsieur Ledain held me by the shoulders, his eyes looking into mine so intently, so earnestly that I stifled a cry as all my compassion welled up from deep inside me. He said that which I had heard many times before, "Thank you for 1944. Thank you for 1945". And he was gone.

We left for the airport in the cold pre-dawn when the city had not yet roused itself. We were silent, lost in our own thoughts, yet each of us knowing what the other was thinking. I mused that even the taxi driver turned off his meter when he learned his fare had been a liberator fifty years ago. Even the taxi driver

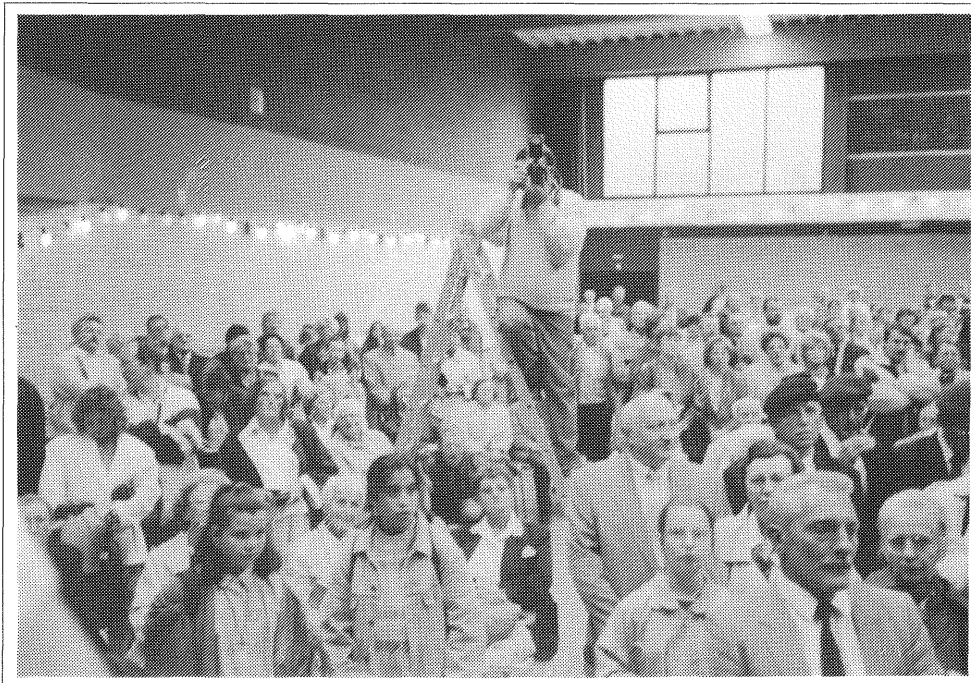
— *Meredith Matthews*

It would be impossible for me to identify which part of our tour moved me the most. All of it could be labeled 'moving', 'impressive', 'inspiring', or a dozen more adjectives. Finding the grave of my last tank commander at Henri Chapelle was moving. The ceremony at Dison, attended by a few of us, with the Belgian equivalent of the Attorney General was impressive. Riding in and driving (!) a restored jeep was exciting. Especially when it stalled at slow speeds. The children who walked in the parades and held our hands brought a warm feeling to the heart. Finding several places where we had parked our tank in Mons and Malempre brought back many memories. The generosity of our hosts and the dignitaries in the French and Belgian villages will be long lasting memories. And the wines and champagnes with labels made especially for this event, what a display of gratitude from these people! And our ecumenical Worship Service in Liege (you would expect a minister to mention that, wouldn't you?) added yet another spice to our adventurous tour.

Finally, one other ingredient made the tour special for me. My wife was along to share in the sights and sounds, and see the places she had heard talked about so often at our Third Armored reunions. Of course, after hearing all the stories about our goof-ups and goof-offs she kept shaking her head and saying, "How did we win the war?!"

A big hand to John O'Brien for putting together a tour that couldn't be beat.

— *Walter Stitt*
E Company, 33rd



A typical throng greeting us. Note the three generations in the picture.

D'anciens G.I. ont apposé une plaque au monument des Libertés liégeoises

Des G.I. ayant participé à la libération de Liège viennent de revenir sur les traces de leurs exploits d'il y a 50 ans. Ces anciens de la 1^{re} armée, 7^e corps, 3^e division blindée ont reçu une médaille du souvenir du Comité d'entente des groupements patriotiques de Lièges.

Cette cérémonie a eu lieu au cours d'une croisière sur la Meuse, à bord du « Pays de Liège ». Ensuite, les anciens G.I. ont apposé une plaque commémorative au monument des Libertés liégeoises, sur le pont Albert (*la photo*).



U.S. Veterans offered a plaque at the "Monument of the Liberties"

The G.I.s who took part in the liberation of Liege came back where they were fifty years ago. Veterans of the 1st Army, 7th Corps, and 3rd Armored Division, were given a medal by the Veteran's Association. The ceremony took place while they were on a cruise on the Meuse River. Then the veterans gave a plaque for the monument of the liberties on the Albert Bridge.

COMMÉMORATION

Spa à l'heure américaine

Dimanche, les cérémonies de commémoration du 50ème anniversaire de la libération se sont poursuivies dans la bonne ville de Spa : messe solennelle, dépôt de fleurs, plusieurs expositions et la sortie d'un livre...

La plus spectaculaire de ces expositions monopolisait une grande partie du quartier de l'Hôtel de Ville reconverti, pour la circonstance, en un parc pour véhicules militaires de collection. Des véhicules américains, bien entendu : camions, half-tracks et un impressionnant char Sherman qui pourtant, en 1944, faisait figure de dinky toy face aux terribles Tigres de l'armée allemande.

Moins massives, mais tout aussi populaires : les jeeps, les petites reines de la Libération. Qui se souvient encore que le nom de ces véhicules mythiques dérivait de l'abréviation anglaise G.P. pour General Purpose, soit tous usages.

Un livre, des clichés

Exposition, il en était aussi question à l'hôtel de Ville où la salle du Conseil accueillait une collection de photos, de documents et d'objets illustrant ces historiques journées de septembre, l'action des mouvements de résistance (A.S. 44, notamment) et l'implantation des troupes américaines à Spa (l'unité de guerre psychologique de la 1ère Armée, par exemple). Notons que cette exposition, quelque peu étouffée, sera accessible au Musée de la Ville d'Eau à partir du 25 septembre (et jusqu'à la fin de l'année).

A deux pas, le Poubon Prince de Condé abritait (jusqu'au 15 septembre) une exposition de

photos, dont quelques clichés d'exception : la fuite des chars allemands face au Poubon Pierre-le-Grand, l'arrivée des Américains à Marteau ou le dépôt d'essence U.S. de la Géronière (dont il sera encore question, lors de l'offensive von Rundstedt).

La plupart des clichés de cette exposition ont été rassemblés par l'architecte apadois Francis Bourotte qui a fait oeuvre d'historien en publiant : le 10 septembre très précisément - un ouvrage très détaillé sur les années de guerre à Spa.

Pour être complet, signalons encore que, durant tout le week-end, le Salon gris du Casino a abrité une collection de maquettes et de modèles réduits. Les visiteurs pouvaient également y visionner trois films d'époque, dont deux inédits consacrés au Premier Lancier à Spa en 1938 et 1939.

A.R.



A Creppe (Spa), une reconstitution originale.

(Photo Images Presse)

Allégresse et émotion à Dison

A Dison, les autorités communales, les anciens combattants et le Comité organisateur du 50e anniversaire de la libération recevaient, vendredi, cinq vétérans américains pour un week-end d'émotions et de formidable rassemblement populaire.

Après Bruxelles, le 9 septembre 1944, Léopold II, ex-prince royal, et le général de la Fondation Hardy et membre du Comité organisateur du 50e anniversaire de la libération, Dison et la région varétoutaise seront libérées le samedi 9 septembre 1944 par les blindés de la 3th Armored Division aux ordres notamment du général Maurice Rose qui sera tué au combat quelques jours plus tard. Cinquante ans plus tard, les an-

ciens combattants, les habitants et leurs enfants, retrouvaient cinq membres de cette armée libératrice pour deux jours de fête et de profonde émotion.

Reconnaissance émue

Yvan Ylief accueillait les cinq vétérans américains accompagnés de leurs épouses, vendredi après-midi, puis inaugura la « Stèle de la Libération » devant la foule se pressant sur le square, en plein centre de la commune. Le vice-premier ministre et traducteur occasionnel, Melchior Wathelet, était également présent pour saluer ces héros dont l'un d'entre eux, le Major James Matthews, avait foulé le sol disonais 50 ans plus tôt. « I love you », sont les seuls



De retour !

(Photo Images Presse)

mots articulés par M. Matthews à ce moment-là, trop bouleversé qu'il était par le chaleureux accueil que les Disonais lui avaient réservé.

Dépôts de fleurs aux monuments de Dison et Andrimont, messes solennelles, bal et banquet de la libération ont réuni, ce week-end, de nombreux habitants. « Malgré la fin de l'occupation, conclut Joseph Gélis, d'autres drames vont à nouveau surgir. Entre le 16 de décembre 1944 et le 7 janvier 1945, il y aura 54 personnes tuées dans l'arrondissement et 128 personnes blessées, hormis les victimes américaines de l'Athénée. En cette année jubilaire, dans le culte des millions de victimes, que le mot Liberté, le plus cher au coeur des hommes, apporte à tous l'éclat de ses promesses et de toute sa lumière ! »

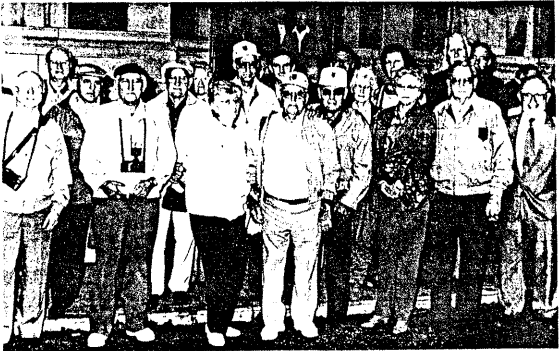


Ambiance émue et chaleureuse.

(Photo Images Presse)

Herve s'est libérée pendant trois jours

De très nombreux groupes ont célébré comme il se doit le cinquantième anniversaire de la libération de Herve. En fait, dès le vendredi, toute l'entité a été sillonnée par un convoi de véhicules militaires du Belgian Military Vehicle Trust, que l'on retrouve encore en action samedi dans la matinée. A 19 heures deux expositions orchestrées au centre culturel (jusqu'au vendredi 16 septembre de 10 à 18 h) et à l'école de la Communauté française (de 19 à 22 h jusqu'au vendredi 16 septembre, de 12 h à 14 h et de 14 à 18 h le samedi 17 septembre) se sont encore ajoutées des concerts choral et musical, un Te Deum, deux soirées de réjouissances et une réception en l'honneur de vétérans de l'armée américaine. Sans oublier l'inauguration de deux stèles, l'une, à la maison de repos en présence de témoins israéliens, l'autre Place de l'Hôtel de ville, marquant justement le 50ème anniversaire de la libération de la capitale du plateau herbagier.



La délégation américaine accueillie à l'hôtel de Ville.

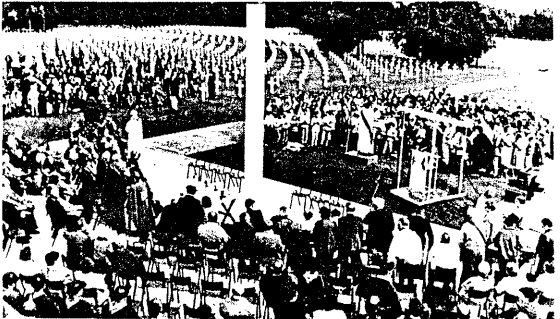
(Photo Le Jour-Le Courrier)

Cérémonie au cimetière américain

Dimanche, l'entité de Plombières a, à sa manière, commémoré le 50ème anniversaire de la libération. C'est ainsi que toutes les sociétés ont été invitées à rehausser de leur présence un office religieux célébré au cimetière américain de Hombourg.

L'office fut consacré notamment par le curé-doyen de Montzen Alphonse van Meisen, les choristes étant dirigés par le diacre permanent Guy Scheen. L'autre rendez-vous était fixé au hall sportif de Gemmenich, où le cercle cartholique des

Trois Bornes avait mis sur pied une exposition de cartes, documents et photos évoquant la période de la libération. C'est en fait que la fanfare militaire Bratislava s'est produite en concert pour le plus grand plaisir de très nombreux mélomanes.



Pendant l'office.

(Photo Le Jour-Le Courrier)

On s'est souvenu aussi à Baelen

Cinquante ans après sa libération, l'entité de Baelen s'est souvenue, dimanche. A l'occasion notamment d'un office religieux de reconnaissance à celles et ceux qui ont contribué au recou-

vrement de la liberté, et pour que règne la paix en Europe et dans le monde. Au terme de la messe, un hommage musical et fleuri a été rendu au monument aux morts des guerres, à l'en-

clois des militaires défunts de la guerre 1940, au monument 1890-1930 de la rue Longue, et, à Membach, au petit mémorial dédié aux Américains et au monument des morts des guerres.



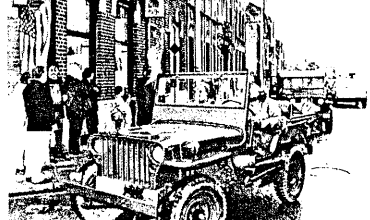
Hommage au monument de la rue Longue.

(Photo Le Jour-Le Courrier)



La stèle inaugurée à la maison de repos où 28 Juifs trouvèrent le salut. Parmi eux, M. Dombret, avec sa famille présente à l'inauguration.

(Photo Le Jour-Le Courrier)



La colonne du BMVT rue de la Station.

(Photo Le Jour-Le Courrier)

Les enfants « jouent » la Libération à Fouron

Durant tout un week-end, les Fouronnais ont commémoré le cinquantième anniversaire de la liberté retrouvée (voir « Le Jour-Le Courrier » de ce jeudi 8 septembre). On attendait deux vétérans américains : William Mester, de l'Illinois, et Dany Weismann, de New-York. Finalement, ils furent quatre, Mike De Angelis, présent dès le jeudi, et George Ciampa, lequel débarqua en terre fouronnaise le dimanche en début d'après-midi, alors qu'il y a un peu moins d'une cinquantaine d'années, il fut l'un des militaires à la base de l'aménagement du cimetière américain de Hombourg. Quatre vétérans G.I.'s qui ont apprécié comme il se doit l'ambiance totale qui a régné durant les deux jours, en ce y compris le dimanche après-midi, lors du spectacle présenté par les enfants. Avec des saynètes basées sur des faits réels (ou parfois fictifs) leur racontés par les parents ou grands-parents. Une manière d'intégrer la génération montante, comme on dit.



Comme il y a cinquante ans, mais en beaucoup plus jeune.

(Photo Le Jour-Le Courrier)

(Translations from previous page.)

(Allegresse et emotion a Dison)

JOY & EMOTION IN DISON

We had five U.S. veterans last Friday for a weekend of emotion and people gathering.

"Brussels was liberated September 4, 1944; Liege, September 8; Dison, September 9, by the GIs of the 3rd Armored Division under the orders of General Maurice Rose who was killed a few days after."

Fifty years later, the former soldiers, the people of Dison and their children met again, along with five members of the liberation army for two days of celebration and intense emotion.

Yvan Ylieff welcomed the five U.S. veterans and then unveiled the plaque in front of a large crowd on the town square. Melchior Wathelet, vice-prime minister, was there too, to salute our guests, among whom was Major James Matthews, who was there 50 years ago. "I love you", were the only words he could say. He was too emotional to say more.

People then gave flowers at the monuments of Dison and Andrimont. There were masses, a ball and a banquet, all attended by many people.

"Despite the end of the occupation (by the Nazis), other tragedies were to come. Between December 16, 1944, and January 7, 1945, 145 people were killed around here, 126 were wounded, not counting the Americans that were killed. The word 'liberty' was the most precious for us that year. You gave us light and promise."

(Photo caption: They're back!)

(Photo caption: Warm & emotional atmosphere)

(Ceremonie au cimetiere americain)

CEREMONY IN THE AMERICAN CEMETERY

Last Sunday Plombieres commemorated the 50th anniversary of the liberation. All the associations were invited to the mass at the U.S. military cemetery of Hombourg.

Mass was given by the Priest of Montzen, Alphonse van Melsen and Guy Scheen.

In the gymnasium of Gemmerich, there was an exhibit of postcards, documents, and pictures about the liberation. There was a concert by the musicians of Bratislava.

(Photo caption: The mass.)

(On s'est souvenu aussi a Baelen)

BAELEN REMEMBERED TOO

There was a ceremony in Baelen last Sunday, 50 years after the liberation. There was mass for our liberators from everywhere and hope of lasting peace in Europe and the world. Flowers were given at the monument, at the cemetery, at the monument of 1830-1930, and in Membach.

(Photo caption: At the monument on "rue Longue".)

Les Américains à Dison, cinquante ans après : **I LOVE YOU**

«*e*... le cri du coeur lancé par James Matthews aux Disonais rassemblés en grand nombre dans la salle des fêtes vibrante d'émotion lors de la Commémoration du 50ème anniversaire de la Libération.

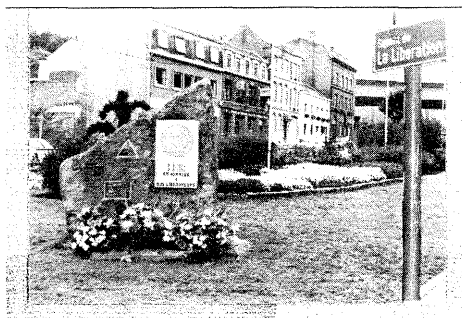
James Matthews était à Dison le 9 septembre dernier, mais aussi le 9 septembre 1944 avec la 3ème Division blindée américaine (Third Armored Division) et est donc à ce titre officiellement un des libérateurs de Dison. Bien sûr, il n'y fit que passer, mais sa présence à Dison à cinquante ans d'intervalle est plus qu'un symbole. Dison a su manifester à travers lui et cinq autres vétérans de l'armée américaine : Mr. Paul Kaufmann, William Ruth, Walter Stitt, Aurio Pierro et Chester David, toute la reconnaissance de la cité envers ceux qui sont venus nous délivrer de la peste brune,



L'instant précis où James Matthews lance son cri du coeur à l'égard des Disonais : "I love you". Nous aussi, et merci very much.



M. James Matthews et son épouse. M. Matthews est le seul Américain présent le 9 septembre à être effectivement passé par Dison. En 1944 comme en 1994



Ce square de la libération, décidé par le Conseil communal unanime du 21 avril 94, et le monument portant le badge de la 3ème division blindée américaine, ainsi que l'aigle américain et la dédicace aux libérateurs sculptés par le maître tailleur de pierre disonais Pierre Faniel restera pour longtemps le souvenir de la Libération, à l'instar du bloc de granit qui constitue le monument



Enormément de monde pour cette inauguration du square de la libération.



Emotion lors de l'exécution de l'hymne national américain.

(Translation from the previous page.)

It is the cry from the heart landed by James Matthews to the people of Dison gathered in a large number in the grand party room which was vibrating with emotion during the 50-year commemoration of the Liberation of Dison. His cry was "I love you." The people from Dison reply, "We love you and America. Thank you very much."

James Matthews was in Dison on September 9, 1944, with the American 3rd Armored Divison. Because of this, he, along with the other Americans here, were the offical liberators of Dison. The other members present for this commemoration were Paul Kaufmann, William Ruth, Walter Stitt, Aurio Pierro and Chester Davis. They were all responsible for delivering the people of Dison from the "black scourge" of Nazi occupation.

(Photo caption: The Liberation Square was decided to be the place of the plaque of the 3rd Armored Division, as well as the American Eagle and the sculpture by Pierre Faniel. They will remain as a reminder of our liberation on our granite monument.)

(Photo caption: Numerous people were there for the inauguration of the square.)

(Photo caption: There was much emotion when the U.S. national anthem was played.)

(Photo caption, bottom left: Children of all races and nationalities assemble to welcome those who defeated the Nazis in 1944, hoping they will never be the victims of totalitarian ideologies.)

REPORTAGE



Comme en 1944 ! Avec l'espoir que tous ces jeunes comprennent le sens de leur geste.



Les Vétérans de l'armée américaine objet de toute l'attention de ces dames



La police et la gendarmerie en grandes pompes.



Les six vétérans américains (et leurs épouses) fêtés à Dison le 9 septembre 1994.



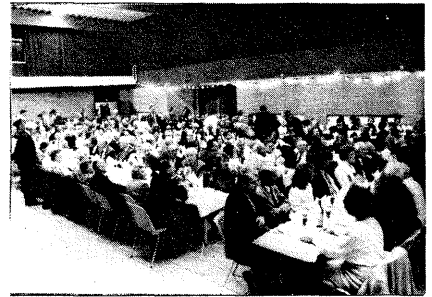
Mais qu'est-ce qu'elle peut bien lui raconter ?



Petit coquin, va !



A la santé, dear friend !



Le banquet de la libération, suivi du grand bal de la libération avait réuni beaucoup de Disonais à la salle des Fêtes...



Bis répétita (nous en avons encore trois comme ça, de ces photos)



... et parmi eux, le colonel en retraite de l'armée américaine représentant de l'ambassade US, Verhees Donald.

E. E. Esthétique Evelyne

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REPORTAGE

Rue Albert 1er, 37 à DISON
Ouvert le dimanche matin

(Translation from previous page.)

Top left: The young and innocent listen intently about what happened in 1944 hoping they will understand.

Second left: The six American veterans and their wives at Dison September 9, 1994.

Third left: Naughty boy! (That's Bill Ruth)

Bottom left: Once again (we have three more pictures like this).

Top center: The girls still love the American veterans. Bill Ruth signing autographs.

Bottom center: Cheers, dear friends! (Thats Chet and Belle Davis)

Top right: The police and gendarmes ready for the parade.

Second right: What is she telling Chet Davis?

Third right: The banquet for the liberation. Many people of Dison attended.

Bottom right: Among them, retired Colonel Verbees Donald, representing the U.S. Embassy.

Dison : ambiance retro et accueil plus que chaleureux aux Vétérans US!

Comme toutes les communes de l'arrondissement, Dison fête ses Libérateurs. 6 d'entre eux n'ont pas hésité à traverser l'Atlantique, 50 ans plus tard, pour être présents vendredi en la salle Luc Hommel. Le moins que l'on puisse dire, c'est qu'il y avait de l'ambiance...le petit vin de la Libération y était peut-être pour quelque chose!

C'est Yvan Ylieff qui donna le ton dès les premiers instants de cette grande réunion. Soulignant le courage et la détermination des forces Alliées, le député bourgmestre a cité l'appel du Général De Gaulle le 6 juin 44, un discours radio-phonique qui annonçait quelques mois plus tard la Libération de la Wallonie.

« Nous seront éternellement reconnaissants et sensibles à ce que la France a fait pour la Belgique » a-t-il conclu avant

de présenter les 6 vétérans américains assis à ses côtés: MM. Matthews, Kaufmann, Tuth, Stitt, Pierro et Davis. James Matthews, invité au micro, ne put retenir son émotion et lança un vibrant mais sincère « I love You » à l'assemblée.

Tandis que leurs épouses étaient fleuries, les vétérans de la 3ème division du 33ème bataillon de la Compagnie B recevaient de la commune une assiette aux armoiries de la commune et deux bouteilles de vin de la cuvée « Libération ». Place fut ensuite donnée à quelques pas de danse improvisés devant l'estrade... Ils sont vraiment incroyables ces Américains!

Le convoi de véhicules militaires prit ensuite la direction du Monument aux Morts place Roggeman et ce après la messe solennelle en l'église Saint

Fiacre. Des fleurs furent déposées à la pelouse d'honneur du cimetière communal et à la stèle Baguette de Mont. La journée se termina par l'exécution des hymnes nationaux par les ex-militaires et la signature du livre d'Or.

Notons que l'espace gazonné situé entre le bas de la rue Léopold et le pont de l'autoroute est officiellement baptisé « Square de la Libération », square dans lequel se dresse désormais une stèle portant le badge de la 3me division blindée américaine libératrice.

Enfin, sachez que vendredi 16, le centre culturel organise à destination des enfants les « 24 h pour la liberté ». Il s'agit d'un car cinéma pour lequel 2 arrêts sont prévus; l'un à Dison et l'autre à Andrimont.



I.M. ● Malgré les années, la « bouille » de ce vétéran US est toujours aussi sympathique!
Ph. Images Presse



● Les ex « G.I's » se sont déplacés à Dison avec leurs épouses.



● Beaucoup de monde à la salle Hommel de Dison pour cette commémoration.

Dison: Nostalgia and warm welcome for the United States Veterans!

Like the towns around, Dison celebrated its liberators. Six of them crossed the Atlantic again fifty years later. The atmosphere was joyful, maybe because of the wine!

Yvan Ylieff made a speech and quoted from General De Gaulle's broadcast speech of June 6, 1944, "We will always be grateful to America for what they did for Belgium." Then he introduced the six U.S. veterans: Messrs. Matthews, Kaufman, Ruth, Stitt, Pierro and Davis. James Matthews was asked to make a speech, but was too emotional and only said, "I love you." It was short but intense and sincere. Their wives were given flowers, veterans were given plates and two bottles of 'liberation' wine.

The people danced. These Americans are incredible!

The parade then went to the monument on Roggeman Square, then on to mass at Saint Fiacre's church. Flowers were donated at the cemetery and monument Baguette de Mont. National anthems were played and people signed the golden book.

The square was given the name of "Square de la Liberation". A 'cinema bus' about World War II will play films for the children.

(Photo caption, top: Despite the years, his face is still as sympathetic.)

(Photo caption, bottom left: Front-Bill & Lale Ruth, Chet and Belle Davis. Back-Aurio Pierro, Walt & Betty Stitt, Paul Kaufman, Henri Rogister, and Jim and Meredith Matthews.)

(Photo caption, bottom right: The Hommel Room was crowded for the commemoration.)

Chapter 16

Battle of the Bulge

At the 1985 Chicago Reunion while waiting in the lobby at the Continental Hotel for an elevator I heard someone call my name. Looking around I saw that it was Major (retired) Travis Brown. He had been my first company commander when I joined the Third Armored in the states. With him was Major General Richard Groves, then Commander of the Third Armored Division who was here from Frankfurt, Germany, to celebrate our reunion with us. He was accompanied by his entourage.

I asked him what he wanted and was told that they had been trying to get Colonel Hogan to come and join the celebration they have for "Hogans' 400" and have been unsuccessful. They have placed a restored tank in the little town of Beeffe in memory of "Hogans' 400". Every year the young soldiers of the 3rd Battalion, 33rd Armored, celebrate this memory by taking a trip to Belgium. Travis Brown told the General I had been a crew member of Colonel Hogan's tank and that I would know most of the details of our experience while in Marcouray. I was asked if I would be interested in representing Colonel Hogan.

After accepting the invitation the General assigned a soldier to gather all the information and to keep me informed of the next year's time and place of the "March Through History" celebration which was to take place June 1, 1986.

In late May I traveled to Frankfurt, Germany, and was met there by Lt. Joe Weiss, who was to be my host for two weeks. Two days after my arrival two more veterans of the old Third Armored Division joined us. They were Colonel (retired) William "Bill" Castille, 33rd Regimental Staff and Father John Donahue, C.P.S, formerly a Lieutenant tank platoon leader in the 2nd Battalion, 33rd Armored.

The three of us were treated royally and we were able to see all the new equipment and meet all the young soldiers who manned them. It was quite an experience to talk to all these young men.

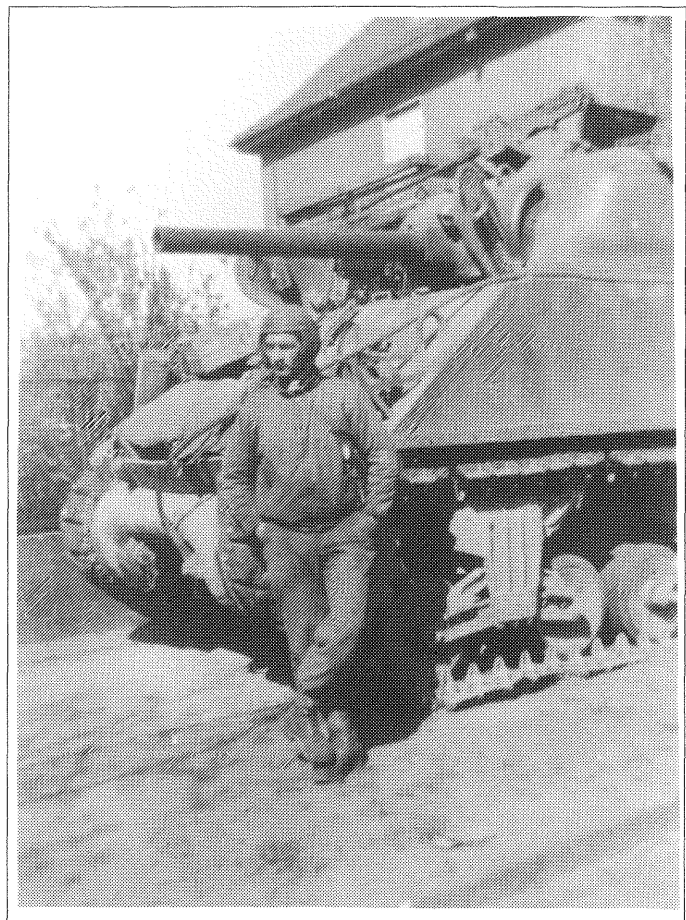
The day before we left on our trip to Belgium we were shown training films and were asked to tell some of our war experiences which we were happy to do.

— Clem Elissondo
3rd Battalion
33rd Armored Regiment

(Note: Clem Elissondo was on the Last Push Trip two years ago. When he learned that we were writing another book he asked if he could have a copy. When I explained that everyone who had been on this trip was contributing a story, he volunteered to write this chapter. Thanks, Clem.)



Colonel Hogan



T-4 Clem Elissondo, 1944.

The article on the following pages, sent by Clem Elissondo, appeared in the *Spearhead*, June 24, 1986.

Spearhead

"Excellence in Spearhead Country"

Vol. 34, No. 12
Frankfurt, Germany
Tuesday, June 24, 1986

Vets join 'Pickle's' March Through History

Story and photos by Dixie Lee Baker

"In the past 42 years I haven't been able to imagine vacationing in any place where it's cold."

"It's strange isn't it? Neither have I. When I hear about people going to Aspen for skiing vacations, I think they're out of their cotton pickin' minds!"

"It's funny. After all these years, the one thing that I remember most about the war is the bitter cold . . . the ice and the snow."

" . . . I never thought that I'd be here again in this lifetime . . ."

"Neither did I . . . you know, it's almost unrecognizable without the snow . . ."

Two World War II 3rd Battalion, 33rd Armored Regiment veterans are seated at the front of a luxury tour bus crossing the German border into Belgium. They are special guests of the "Pickles" battalion, who invited them back to participate in the fourth annual "March Through History," and the 25th anniversary of their old unit.

Col. (Ret.) William "Bill" Castille, commander of India Company, 33rd Armor, who also served on the 33rd Armored Regimental Staff, is sitting next to Clement Elissando, Lt. Col. Samuel Hogan's gunner and one of "Hogans 400" who made their famous escape through German lines on Christmas Eve, 1944.

Across the aisle is 1st Lt. John Donahue, platoon leader in the 33rd Arm'd Reg from 1944-1945, who suffered three battle wounds and later became a Paulist Priest. He is seated next to Chaplain (Capt.) Orlando V. Sunga, and they are engaged quiet in conversation.

The veterans look at the countryside, make comments of disbelief about it, and share with each other personal memories of fighting in this very same area during World War II some 40 years ago.

Occasionally there is laughter — a humorous incident may have been recalled. Then there is a more serious and intense exchange. Perhaps the memory of a "battle buddy" who was seriously injured or killed unexpectedly creeps in. But the affect on the veterans returning to the actual site of their unit's combat activity in WWII is most poignantly observed during their silent moments — the times when their eyes appear to be seeing more than any else's on the tour bus.

Aside from sharing their recollections with each other, the veterans sporadically went to the tour guide microphones and informally shared their WWII experiences.

Castille vividly recalls his appointment to Task Force Hogan.



WWII veterans Clement Elissando, center, and Col. (Ret.) William "Bill" Castille, right, share a moment with Sgt. James Murphy, Jr., left. The veterans shared stories and memories with the 3rd Bn, 33rd

Armor soldiers. They also signed many autographs for the troops. "Pickles" referred to the veterans as the "real heroes" of this year's 4th annual "March Through History."

"The series of events that led up to me being with Hogan were chaotic. I trained at a tank maintenance school as a tank maintenance officer. When I reported to the unit, I was told that I was to report to the navigational officer for the regiment. Once I got to the regimental office, I was told that I was to be one of Hogan's company commanders," said Castille.

"The one thing that stands out in my mind about Hogan is not what the military history books highlight. Sure, he was a great military leader and soldier, but nowhere have I read about his excellent ability to teach.

"There were many other soldiers in the same boat as me, we were out there to fight in combat without any training for the task. I recall it as though it were yesterday. Hogan reached into his knapsack and pulled out a dog-eared copy of 'The Tank Platoon in Attack.' For the next couple of weeks, he took troops like me and conducted a school on tactics. He was an excellent teacher. I truly believe that part of the success of the 3rd Bn, 33rd Armor, was Hogan's extraordinary ability to

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EFMB testing

See page 3

Photo by Bill Carter

'Pickles'

Story and photos by Dixie Lee Baker

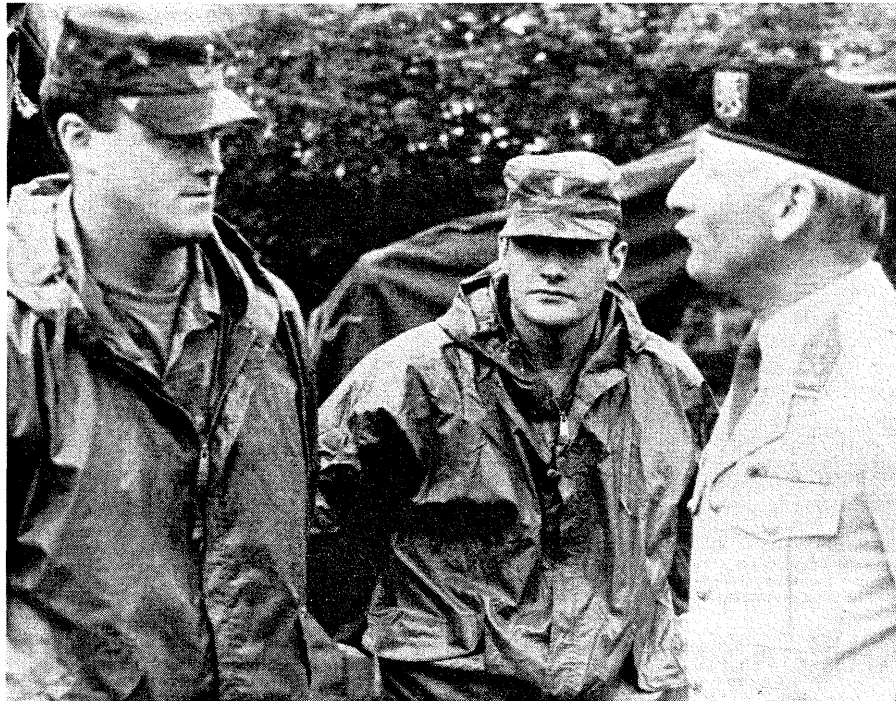
The "Pickles," 3rd Battalion, 33rd Armored Regiment, observed its Silver anniversary recently. One of the highlights of the celebration was the fourth annual "March Through History." The march is designed to allow the battalion to relive its past by touring the battlefields that their unit fought on during World War II. Approximately 300 soldiers climbed aboard tour buses at Coleman Kaserne, Gelnhausen, to begin the historical journey into their unit's history.

Soon after crossing the German border into Belgium, the tour began. The small trails and out-of-the-way dirt roads were pointed out by tour guides to the seven busloads of soldiers as they began to retrace their unit's history. They were the actual trails used by the infamous SS Col. Joachim Peiper, 1st SS Panzer Division, during WWII.

The tour buses stayed as close to the actual path that Peiper's battlegroup took as possible. Peiper's attack began on Dec. 17, 1944, in the vicinity of Lanzerath. At the Baugnez Road Junction, an American convoy of about 120 troops and 40 vehicles was suddenly attacked by reconnaissance elements of Peiper's battlegroup. The attack claimed the lives of some 20 soldiers. Many others surrendered and only a few escaped.

The tour bus stopped at a small cave located at the Junction. It was the hiding place for soldiers who escaped from Peiper's attack. Here, at the height of enemy fury, the Germans continued to shoot anything that stirred — American soldiers and the Belgian citizens who were harboring them. The incident was thereafter referred to as the "Malmedy Massacre." A monument commemorates this incident which, afterwards, influenced the behavior of the American soldiers towards the SS.

As the soldiers stopped at the various memorial sites where American soldiers



Left to right, 1st Lt. John Menard, 1st Lt. Thomas Centgraf, both of 3rd Bn, 33rd Armor, and L. Col. Andre Claeys, commander of the 2nd Guides Tank Battalion, Belgium Army, con-

verse outside the hospitality tents where Belgian citizens and "Pickles" soldiers celebrated the liberation of Belgium at the unit's Silver anniversary memorial ceremony and celebration.



Members of the Belgian Resistance Movement bear the flags of various cities throughout Belgium. Members of the

underground movement helped American soldiers to safety during fierce German fighting around their country during WWII.



Sp4 Ronald C. Clendenen, left, and Sgt. 1 right, inspect goggles in a German "Tiger" most formidable tanks of World War II. T

follow WWII path

gave their lives, there was always a hush of silence that swept over them. Cameras clicked. Heads bowed sporadically, in silent remembrance. They quietly stood in front of small bronze plaques, stone memorials and small chapels erected to the memory of their fallen comrades with sobering reverence. One young soldier commented, "So this is why I'm in the Army — to preserve the freedoms that these soldiers died for." He whispered the words slowly, as though he was understanding himself for the first time.

The buses then headed toward Marcoray — the site of the famous escape through enemy lines Hogan's 400 made on Christmas Eve, 1944. "Task Force Hogan" are the forerunners of the "Pickles." The troops debarked the buses on a highway that runs parallel to the actual path that Hogan's 400 used. The entire battalion walked the last six kilometer stretch of Hogan's route into the city of Beffe. Hogan's Forces did not sneak through enemy lines on the road the soldiers trekked, instead they traveled cross country, scaling the steep cliffs of the dense forests located in this mountainous region of Belgium.

Once in the city of Beffe, the ceremony began. Distinguished city officials, invited guest veterans who were WWII members of the 33rd Tank Regiment, Lt. Col. Andre Claeys, commander, 2nd Guides Tank Bn, soldiers from Belgium's 1st Lancers and 2nd Guides Tank Bn, soldiers from Belgium's 1st Lancers and 2nd Guides, as well as citizens from the cities of Beffe, Rendoux and surrounding townships, gathered for the brief ceremony, gala barbeque feast and celebration.

A cloud of barbeque smoke and aromatic odors were concentrated near the two celebration tents. The smell of chicken, steaks and hot dogs permeated the festival area.

Sp4 Lawrence A. Toller, HHC, 3rd Bn, 33rd Armor, began cooking at 10 o'clock in the morning for the approxi-

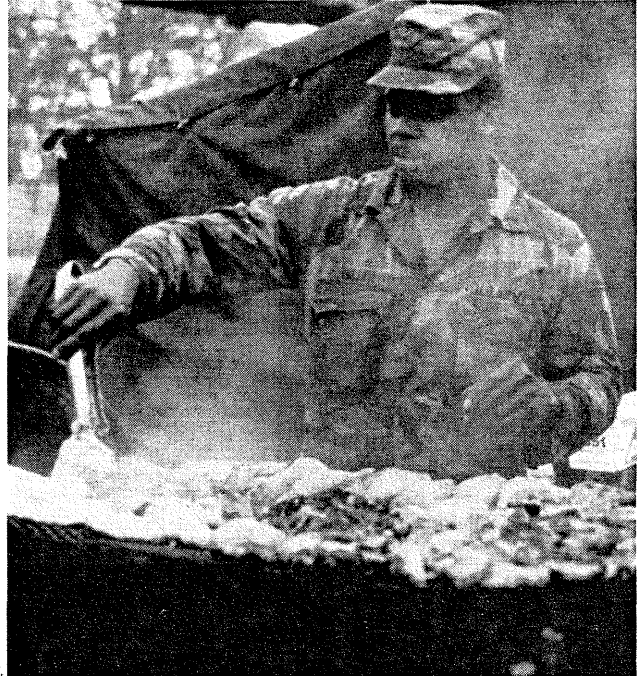
mately 700 Pickles and Belgian citizens who would socialize together well into the evening.

"This is my second year coming to our unit's "March Through History. Even though I spend about 10 hours over the grill, it's worth it. It's a celebration that commemorates what being in the military stands for . . . preservation of freedom. The next best way to make an important statement is through the stomach: everyone enjoys the food and the celebration, and that's my personal reward," said Toller.

The March Through History and wreath laying ceremony in front of an M4 Sherman tank on the city green, was brought to a close with the words of Maj. Daniel A. Magee, executive officer of 3rd Bn, 33rd Armor:

" . . . We stand here today in front of a monument that is very familiar to soldiers, a machine designed for killing. And as we stand here, we recall with pride and sometimes sorrow, the accomplishments of our regiment and the pain and sacrifices of the soldiers who fought and died in the Battle of the Bulge. But this tank is more than just a monument to past achievements and hardships. It is a symbol of freedom, and freedom is a precious thing; it is not just a gift, it is earned. It is earned through suffering and hardship, pain and death. Some writers have compared freedom to a fragile flower that lives and grows after being watered by the blood of patriots. Those who stand here today can do so because of those patriots who came before us . . .

"This tank also stands for a promise of the future. As we stand here with our Belgian friends and comrades, the 2nd Guides, who have fought at our side in the past, train at our side today, and who will fight, if necessary, at our side in the future. We promise that should duty call, we will answer that call. And, if we must, once again water that flower called freedom."



For the second consecutive year, Sp4 Lawrence A. Toller, HHC, 3rd Bn, 33rd Armor, barbequed enough chicken, steaks and hotdogs for the approximately 700

people who attended the ceremony . Toller began cooking the morning of the celebration and continued until all the soldiers and guests were fed, approximately 10 hours later.



Phillip Patterson, "Tiger" tank, one of the "Tigers" were

invulnerable to American tank fire — U.S. tanks could only stop them by knocking off a track or hitting it from the rear.



One of the many American memorials in Belgium read "TO THE PRISONERS OF WAR OF OVERSEAS WHO LIBERATED THE EAST DISTRICTS AND WERE THE VICTIMS OF NAZI CRUELTY." Beyond the

stone monuments, one in French and the other in English, a 30 foot wall displayed the names of the American soldiers killed at that site. Wreaths and freshly cut flowers around the monuments are placed there by Belgian citizens who have not forgotten.

VETS

From Page 1

teach, along with his leadership and intelligence," Castille said.

Castille was overwhelmed by the historical march, the commemorative ceremony and the friendliness of the people of Beffe and the surrounding cities.

"During the ceremony my attention was continually drawn to that old Sherman sitting out in the middle of the city green . . . there it was, that beat up tank, no tread, sad old cripple — it had really taken a whipping from the German tanks — but it represented so much. 'Beat up but proud,'" Castille continued.

"I will never forget the sight of the townspeople and the members of the Belgian Resistance Movement gathered around that tank during the ceremony. It reminded me of our struggles together years ago. It was not difficult for these small towns to become involved with the small units that participated in their freedom. We're talking battalion sized units that were befriended and helped by the people in these small towns. The sincerity of expression today is no less genuine than it was 42 years ago. This spontaneous outburst of emotion cannot be rehearsed or cooked up. It comes from sharing the depths and heights of feelings associated with war . . . death, suffering, victory, sacrifice and freedom," Castille concluded.

No less overwhelmed by the experience was Clement Pierre Elissondo, Hogan's gunner.

"I'm still pinching myself. . . I never thought that I would have an opportunity to visit this place again. It's both exuberating and depressing. . . thoughts of all the guys who were left behind and their families kept going through my mind. Then it forced me to ask myself, 'Why me? What made me so lucky to have lived my life and raised a family when all these men died?'" Elissondo pondered.

Elissondo recalls Task Force Hogan and the Battle of the Bulge.

"During the Battle of the Bulge, Task Force Hogan was wiped out. What wasn't wiped out we went back and destroyed. We could not have survived if we had anything with us besides our weapons.

"I remember when we were leaving and had to throw our helmets away. The Germans could recognize us by the shape of our helmets, so they had to go. We blackened our faces and hit the woods to escape the enemy," Elissondo said.

"I will never forget Christmas Day, 1944. I was sitting on the porch of an 82-year-old woman who would come to check her house in the daytime, then go to the caves to sleep at night. I had a packet of Nestea and a fried potato that I had found in the elderly lady's basement. The tank driver and I shared that fried potato and counted our blessings that we were still alive. Then all of a sudden, our bombers started flying overhead. I remember that we counted planes until we could not count anymore. It wasn't until some time later that we found out that we had bombed Berlin,"



Photo by Dixie Lee Baker

On the last leg of the six kilometer "March Through History," Rev. John P. Donahue, C.S.P. flanked by Sgt. Robert Earl McPherson, left, and Chaplain (Capt.) Orlando V. Sunga, right, head toward the ceremony area in

the center of the city of Beffe. Approximately 300 "Pickles" and 400 Belgian citizens attended the memorial ceremony and celebration commemorating the liberation of Beffe and its surrounding cities.

Elissondo continued.

"I hope this experience means as much to these soldiers today as it has meant to me and the other two veterans; I will never forget this," Elissondo concluded.

Rev. John P. Donahue, C.S.P., returned this year to participate in the week-long celebration. He was a guest of the "Pickles" last year, but did not have an opportunity to go to Beffe and "March Through History" with the unit.

"Being here brings back memories of two extremes — the freezing temperatures and the warmth of the Belgian people. The Belgian people really took care of our wounded men. I'll never forget that; the way they've received us here makes it quite obvious that they haven't forgotten either," Donahue said.

"I remember eating Christmas dinner at 10:30 in the morning. We knew that we had to move out early that afternoon, so we were having a morning meal. It wasn't a real festive time, though. We knew that the 3rd Battalion was completely surrounded and none of us knew what the outcome of that was going to be.

"This was the first hot meal that we had had in several weeks, but we were still sad . . . we knew our troops were surrounded and the waiting seemed almost unbearable," Donahue said.

"I suppose being here makes it all worth it. To know that we are remembered, respected, that the lives that were lost were not lost in vain, takes a lot of the pain away from the memories," Donahue concluded.

The veterans who participated in the silver anniversary celebration of the 3rd Bn, 33rd Armor, will long be remembered. They shared of themselves freely — willingly sharing personal memories of the good times — as good times go in combat — and memories of their pain and suffering. They signed autographs for the soldiers who referred to them as "the real heroes" during the anniversary celebration.

During a surprise retreat ceremony for the vets, Sgt. Maj. David R. Burger, 2nd Brigade command sergeant major, asked special permission for the assembled body to sing a song honoring the veterans. Permission was granted. A unisoned chorus erupted in the ceremony hall:

"Old soldiers never die, never die, never die,

Old soldiers never die, they just fade away.

Young soldiers wish they could, wish they could, wish they could,

Young soldiers wish they could, wish they'd fade away."

At the beginning of the song, there were a couple of chuckles in the audience. Before the song was finished, tears of remembering, pride and joy fell.

For your information

Cowboys-Bears tickets available

USAREUR Morale, Welfare and Recreation has acquired 2,800 tickets to the Aug. 3 Dallas Cowboys — Chicago Bears football game in London's Wembley Stadium.

According to the MWR spokesmen, the seats are excellent. Tickets will be available from Information, Tours and Travel offices. The tickets will be offered as part of a total travel package.

"Our plans call for military personnel to have optional travel packages, which will include transportation by air or rail. We're hoping to offer choices, including one to three overnights, as well as guided tours of London for those who purchase one of our ITT packages."

The MWR spokesman also indicated that USAFE would be participating in the ticket-travel package.

Additional information about the MWR plans for the London event will be available from local ITT office for information and reservations.

Power of Attorney

The Vehicle Customer Service branch, located in Bremerhaven, will no longer accept power of attorney for owner/agent registrations IAW USAREUR Regulation 190-1, paragraph 3-25D. The owner of the

POV must possess a valid USAREUR POV operator's license in order to pick up a POV from the Bremerhaven port.

Applicants who are not in possession of a valid license have up to 120 days to pick up their vehicle from the port. After the 120 days have lapsed and the applicant still does not possess a valid license, he/she must register the vehicle non-operational. At this time the POV must either be towed to the applicant's duty station or placed in the Bremerhaven community holding lot for no longer than 90 days.

Wearing of awards

Soldiers wearing unauthorized awards or entering them on their personnel records face prosecution for fraud. They not only compromise their integrity, but they could ruin their futures as well.

Claiming unauthorized awards is a dangerous practice because fraudulent awards cases can lead to separations, courts-martial, Article 15s and written reprimands. The unauthorized wear of awards and falsification of records are punishable under both the U.S. Code and the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

A soldier should never wear any awards if the slightest doubt exists as to his or her entitlement to the award or

without having written authority. A decoration or badge must be properly documented with orders, and each soldier should ensure that an award order is contained in his/her official personnel file.

Gasoline pump nozzle

The gasoline pump nozzle adaptors, mentioned in the May 9 Stars and Stripes article "ESSO stations in Germany changing pump nozzles," may be in short supply at some AAFES locations. Fortunately, the shortage is expected to be temporary.

Summer hires reinstated

Due to budgetary changes, according to the 3rd Armored Division Comptroller's Office, the 3rd Arm'd Div Summer Hire Program has been reinstated. For more information on the program, contact your local Civilian Personnel Office.

New Commanders

1st Bn, 40th FA

Under a sunny sky, 1st Battalion, 40th Field Artillery Regiment changed command in a ceremony conducted on Hutier Kaserne in Hanau June 10, when Lt. Col. William Yerkes passed the battalion colors to Lt. Col. Orin A. Durham, Jr. Durham arrives from an assignment as Inspector Division Chief, Army Material

Command Inspector General. Yerkes departs to become SGS for V Corps.

The 1st Bn, 40th FA was joined in the ceremony by their sister unit, the 545th Field Artillery from Lahstein, which provided an honor platoon composed of soldiers from B Btry, 545th Field Artillery and the 9th Airborne Battery, AMF.

503rd MP Co

The 503rd Military Police Company also gained a new commander recently, when Capt. Karen Forehand passed the company's colors to Capt. Roy R. Jenkins in a ceremony on Drake Kaserne in Frankfurt.

Forehand has commanded the company for over two years. Jenkins arrives from the 95th MP Bn in Mannheim, where he served as the battalion S-4.

2nd Bn, 32nd Armor

One of the original 3rd Arm'd Div units, the 2nd Battalion, 32nd Armor, gained its 24th commander recently, in a ceremony held on Ayers Kaserne in Kirch-Goenz, when outgoing commander, Lt. Col. William R. Vincent passed the battalion's colors to Lt. Col. John M. Kain.

Kain arrives from an assignment on the Department of the Army Staff at the Pentagon, Washington, D.C. Vincent, who has commanded the battalion since January, 1984, leaves to assume duties on the G-3 staff, V Corps.

The following items, sent by Bob Sullivan, gives important information about the Battle of the Bulge Historical Foundation and CRIBA.

BATTLE OF THE BULGE HISTORICAL FOUNDATION
P.O. Box 2516 • Kensington, MD 20891-0818 • (301) 881-0356

BATTLE OF THE BULGE VETERANS BEQUEATH LEGACY TO FUTURE GENERATIONS

On July 21, 1994, at a Commemorative Banquet, Fort George G. Meade Officers' Club, over 215 Battle of the Bulge veterans, their families, military officials, Embassy of Belgium officials, and Belgian citizens gathered to witness the unveiling of the handsome handcrafted Battle of the Bulge conference table and chairs. These impressive furnishings will be permanently placed in the Battle of the Bulge Memorial Conference Room upon its completion later this year in the Garrison Library, Fort Meade, Maryland.

In late April, Foundation members Dorothy Davis, William Greenville, Colonel William Holland (Ret.) and LTC Alfred Shehab (Ret.) and Colonel Robert G. Morris, III, Garrison Commander, Fort Meade, had traveled to Stavelot, Belgium, for a day of commemorations and ceremonies. These were special events at which the table and chairs were presented to the Foundation, and the City of Stavelot and Fort George G. Meade were officially joined as "Sister Cities". The memorial furnishings were transported by the Embassy of Belgium to Fort Meade in June.

The table is 16-1/2 feet long and 5 feet wide and was built of Ardennes oak from an area where bitter fighting occurred during the Battle of the Bulge. Inlaid in the top of the table are the actual insignia (shoulder patches) of the 45 American units (armies, corps, and divisions) that served in the Bulge. On the rim of the table, the craftsman Vincent Gaspar of Stavelot, Belgium, has engraved 157 pine trees to represent the 157 young and old Stavelot citizens who were massacred by German SS troops at the beginning of the Battle of the Bulge. The fabrication of the memorial table was made possible by the financial support from hundreds of veterans, their families and friends, and VBOB.

The 20 chairs for the memorial table were funded by generous donations of \$1,000 each by individuals and units wishing to remember their comrades. A brass plaque on the back of each chair identifies the donor. A twenty-first chair was presented to the Historical Foundation as a "Gift of Thanks" from the people of Stavelot. This chair will always occupy the head of the table and will be symbolic of those who made the ultimate sacrifice at the Battle of the Bulge. A citizen of Stavelot, Georges Pottier, who himself had survived the battle, kindly gave of his time to serve as the liaison officer of this project. Mr. and Mrs. Pottier as well as Vincent Gaspar honored the veterans of the Battle of the Bulge by their participation in the events at Fort Meade.

It was a memorable evening with impressive ceremonies by the Army Color Guard, 3rd U.S. Infantry (Old Guard), and members of the Fife and Drum Corps. World War II music during the dinner was provided by the U.S. Army Band Combo.

LTG John P. Otjen, Commanding General, First U.S. Army, and honorary chairman of the dinner gala, was the evening speaker and conveyed to the veterans the thanks of the present military forces for their sacrifices in World War II. General Otjen and Colonel Morris then presented to Mr. Georges Pottier (serving as the representative of Mayor Monville, Stavelot, Belgium) a "Sister City" plaque.

The dramatic conclusion of the evening symbolizing the passing of the history of the Battle of the Bulge to future generations was the unveiling of the table by grandchildren of those who served in the Battle of the Bulge --

Sarah E. Cantlon and Rebecca L. Cantlon. Granddaughters of: Sherman E. Cantlon, 2nd Infantry Division, 23rd Infantry (deceased), Colonel William V. Davis, 57th Field Hospital (deceased), Dorothy Steinbis Davis, 57th Field Hospital Kelly Greenville. Granddaughter of: William T. Greenville, 86th CML MTR BN
Matthew Plog. Grandson of: Howard Green, 6th Armored Division, 50th AIB
Megan Dunbar Shehab Speer. Granddaughter of: LTC Alfred H.M. Shehab, 38th CAV REC SQ, First U.S. Army

The dinner guests remained for several hours after the unveiling to take photographs, touch the table, reminisce with buddies, and talk with the skilled craftsman and friends from Belgium.

On Friday, July 22, a formal ceremony was held at Fort Meade with Colonel Robert Morris and Mr. Georges Pottier unveiling the Fort Meade "Sister City" sign in front of Fort Meade Garrison Headquarters. A similar sign will be installed at the entrance to Fort Meade.

In the years to come, these impressive memorials will remind all who view them of "the many who gave all of their tomorrows so that we might have our todays."

Dorothy S. Davis, R.N., Executive Officer, Historical Foundation
6900 Tilden Lane, Rockville, Maryland 20852, (301) 881-0356

August 8, 1994

What is C.R.I.B.A.?

CENTER FOR RESEARCH AND INFORMATION ON THE BATTLE OF THE ARDENNES (Battle of the Bulge)

This non-profit, non-political and non-philosophical association was born in 1980. Why has it been formed?

We remember the famous words: "Give victories to the people and they will not care about those who gained them". That is the reason why we have thought it would be right that people who want remember those events get together and spend a part of their time searching testimonies and documents to complete what was already said/or written on this awful chapter in the Ardennes history.

Young people who didn't know the war must learn that, sometimes in your life, we have to assume a responsibility even though it is not our problem: that has been what thousands of young Americans have done because they have been aware that the world is not made of individualism. We want also to remind the sufferings of the civilians who were suddenly involved in the hell of the battle.

What are our aims?

- 1) To associate all those who are interested in the events of the winter 1944-45. Luckily, CRIBA is not an organization of retired men, as a matter of fact 30 to 40% of our members are people who were not born at that time. They are taking a large part in the activities and we believe that is a token of long life.
- 2) To establish a detailed documentation on the Battle of the Bulge.
- 3) To inform our fellow-citizens and perpetuate the memory of the sacrifices of the soldiers and the civilians.
- 4) To preserve historical data and sites.
- 5) To be on friends terms with American Veterans.

Practically, what are we doing?

- 1) We have a monthly meeting in Liege, Belgium in which every member can take part. We put together the results of our researches and our activities. There is often a lecture and a debate on a subject about the battle.
- 2) We publish a quarterly publication which includes episodes of the battle, reports of our activities, ceremonies and meetings, interviews of soldiers and civilians and criticisms of books or documents.
- 3) We organize photos, books, and documents exhibitions.
- 4) We take part to all the ceremonies reminding the Ardennes' campaign but especially to the ceremonies of the Memorial Day in Belgium which take place in the American Military Cemeteries of Neuville-en-Condroz and Henri-Chapelle, but also in Baugez.

Finally, one of our most important activities is the welcome of American Veterans who come back to the battlefields. We help them to find the places where they have lived days which are indelibly engraved in their memories. We help them locate villages, houses, crossroads and people. Of course, a travel agency cannot satisfy your personal wishes but we in CRIBA want to do that. Sometimes we accompany groups and try to show them places of particular interest. Very often, we drive Veterans by small groups or individually to the specific places they want to visit again, places where they left a part of their heart.

And now, what are our aims for the next years? We hope to develop more and more contacts with Veterans and welcome them. Dear friends, if you come some day to our Belgian Ardennes, alone or by groups, let us know the time of your visit and you can be sure that we will find members of the CRIBA who will be happy to accompany you to the places of high interest for you.

There is another ambition we have. We would like to give to every participant of the battle the part of glory that he deserves.

In fact, when it is spoken about the Battle of the Bulge, people immediately think of Bastogne because they remember the "Nuts" remark of General Mac Auliffe and the fantastic ride of one of the greatest soldiers of all times, General Patton.

For us, Bastogne is a very important chapter of history. We have a great admiration for the sacrifices of the fighting men and of the civilians in Bastogne. **But we cannot forget that the Battle of the Bulge was also the Battle of Saint-Vith, Elsenborn, Manhay, La-Gleize, Celles and many other villages where small groups of courageous men have fought against the German Armies.** We don't forget that the Battle of the Bulge was the battle of more than half a million men. We wish that the lights of glory also shine for them and we believe that our people will never, never forget them.

Your contacts to CRIBA:

- 1) Head Office, CRIBA, 22 Thier de la Chartreuse, B 4020, Liege, Belgium
- 2) President of CRIBA, Andre Hubert, 29 Rue du Centre, B 6674, Langlier, Belgium
- 3) Secretary of CRIBA, Pierre Gosset, 20 Rue des Fraisières, B 4041, Vottem Belgium

BELGIANS WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER

Chapter 17

Bois-et-Borsu

Four years ago at a Third Armored convention John Barclay, a Mess Sergeant with the 33rd Armored, Service Company, met Henri Rogister, a member of CRIBA. John asked Mr Rogister if he would look up the Lardot family who lived in Bois-et-Borsu during the war and had housed some men from Service Company in December 1944 and January 1945. Shortly after his return to Belgium Mr. Rogister wrote to John telling him the good news that he had found Laura Lardot, who was the daughter of the family, still living at the same home. He said that Laura was very excited and happy to hear of news from the Americans who had stayed at her home. She inquired about each one of them saying that they had lived together as family. Laura asked for pictures of the men. Because my late husband, Ray, had been one of them I wrote a letter to Laura enclosing pictures and sent it to Mr. Rogister who translated it and delivered it to Laura. Since then we have been keeping in touch through Mr. Rogister.

This September, on our first morning in Liege, Mr. Rogister met me in the hotel lobby after breakfast to introduce himself. I was so glad to have the opportunity to meet him and thank him in person for all that he has done for us.

At the U.S. Cemetery at Neuville-en-Condroz I was surprised and happy to find that Laura had come to meet us. She was with the Genon families. The three Genon brothers were part of the family that Bill Ruth had stayed with during that winter of 1944-45. The Genons invited Bill and Lale to dinner at their home Sunday night. Arrangements were also made to include Laura, Dee Dee and Don Dill and me. We had all been to La Glieze and Herstal that day and had returned to the hotel by riverboat. There was a memorial ceremony and plaque unveiling at the Resistance Monument on the bridge adjacent to the Holiday Inn. It was here that I had the pleasure of meeting Henri Rogister's wife, Renee.



Left to right: Betty Coons, Henri Rogister, Renee Rogister, Aurio Pierro.

The Genons had two cars waiting to take us to their home. We were glad to learn that we would have two interpreters with us. They were a couple who had lived in New Jersey for years and now lived in Belgium.

Before we arrived at the Genons, Bill Ruth asked to be driven to Laura's home nearby so that I could see it and that he could take my picture by the front door. Ray had often mentioned the Lardot family over the years so this was the pinnacle for me — my reason for deciding to go on this tour.

As we got out of the cars at the Genon's, Laura, and the Genon wives came out to greet us along with a daughter who had a camcorder. After the warm welcome we enjoyed wine, a delicious meal and lively conversation. Laura had with her the pictures and letters we had sent to her and also a small wooden box left with her in 1945 by the men from Service Company. In the box was an American dollar signed by one of the men and a Third Armored patch. On the top seven of the men had signed their names. Laura treasures these mementos and with a smile says, "You can look, but don't touch." The box is fifty years old now and fragile. Now in her seventies, Laura bubbles with enthusiasm and you can tell she must have been a beautiful young lady.

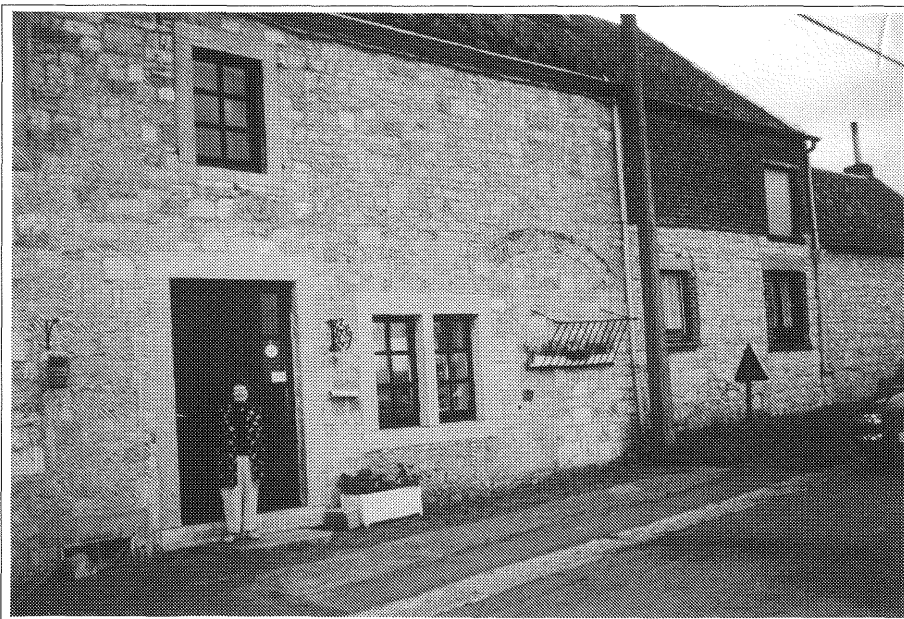
The Genon brothers, who were in their teens in 1944, remembered that "our Bill" used to crow like a rooster and, of course, he demonstrated that he could still do this.

Just before dessert, a local newsman came to the door and asked if he could interview the Americans. He probably thought he would ask a few questions, take a picture and leave — but remember, Bill Ruth was there! I bet that man could have written a book when he left.

The generous, warm-hearted people of Bois-et-Borsu and all the small towns, villages, hamlets, of Belgium are so thankful for what the Americans did for them.

The older generation has not forgotten their liberators and obviously have made sure that their children and grandchildren know and understand what happened at that time because they believe that to not remember is to invite history to repeat itself and that is their worst fear.

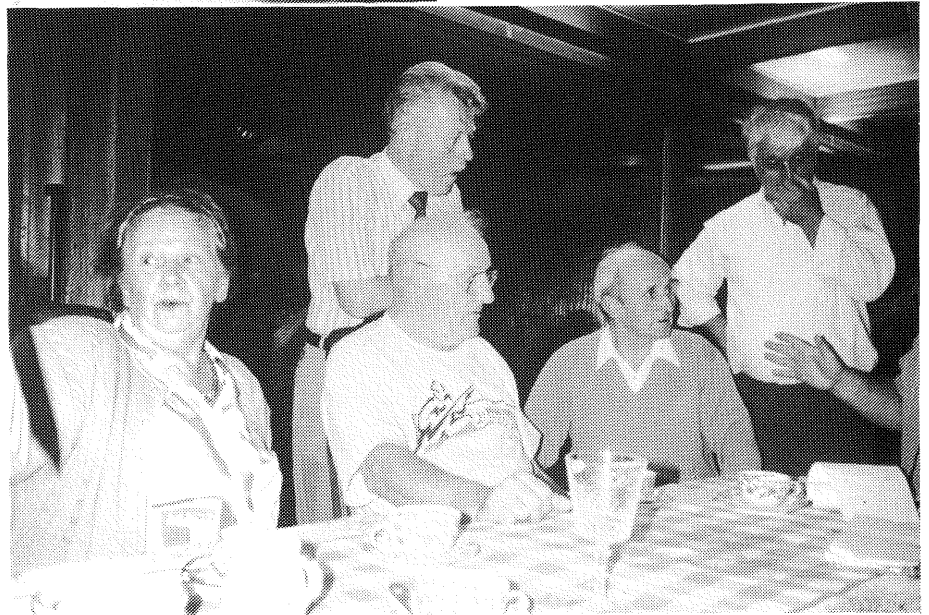
*— Mary Valliere
Husband served with
Service Company
33rd Armored Regiment*



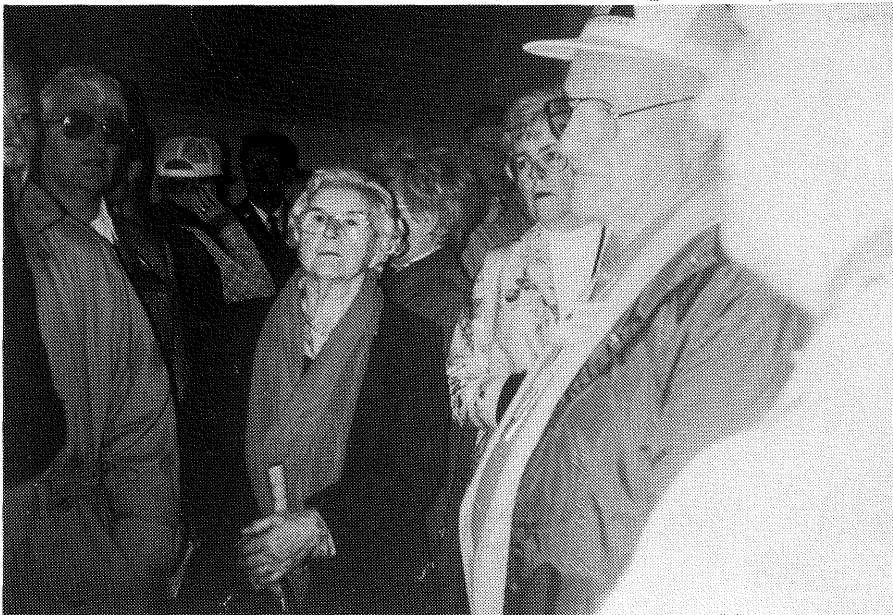
Mary Valliere in front of Laura Lardot's home.



*Dinner at the Genon's.
The newsman is at the
head of the table.*



*The lady who interpreted, three
Genon brothers and Bill Ruth
talking to the reporter.*



Jackie Genon, Laura Lardot, Bill Ruth.

LIBERATION

Les boys sont revenus saluer les kids de Bois-et-Borsu

Les vétérans américains de la Third Armored Division Spearhead se souviennent de leur formidable épopée au moment de la libération de l'Europe. En ces premiers jours de septembre, ils ont refait, exactement comme il y a cinquante ans, le périple de Londres à Berlin, passant par la Normandie et notre pays. Quelques uns d'entre eux ont tenu à faire un détour par Bois-et-Borsu pour y saluer les trois kids (gamins !) Genon dont ils firent la connaissance à la Noël 1944.

Depuis quelques semaines, un groupe de 80 Américains, anciens tankistes de 3e division Spearhead de la 1ère armée U.S., commémore, de singulière manière, leur libération de l'Europe. De juin 1944 à mai 1945, ils ont vécu une extraordinaire suite d'événements historiques et héroïques : le débarquement en Normandie, les premiers et terribles combats dits de la « Poche de Falaise », la per-

cée en direction de l'Allemagne, libérant au passage notre pays, la bataille d'Aix-la-Chapelle, puis celle des Ardennes et enfin d'Europe centrale jusqu'au jour de la capitulation.

A l'occasion du cinquantième anniversaire de cette campagne, la « Third Armored Association » organisait, pour ses vétérans, un pèlerinage, conduisant, exactement comme alors, de l'un à l'autre de ces lieux. Ces



Souvenirs des retrouvailles des kids, Xavier, Roger et Jacky Genon, à l'arrière-plan, des boys et de leurs épouses.

(Photo Vers l'Avenir)

jours derniers, ce périple les avait amenés en région liégeoise. Nous les avons déjà rencontrés, à l'occasion de cérémonies officielles, à Limont et à Neuville-en-Condroz. Dimanche passé, cinq d'entre eux étaient à Bois-et-Borsu, au domicile des Genon, pour de sympathiques et chaleureuses retrouvailles.

Vertes campagnes

Animateur principal et cheville ouvrière de ce voyage, le soldat Bill Ruth avait été, au sein de la division Spearhead, le chroniqueur-historien des opérations. Dans ses carnets, il avait soigneusement consigné les noms des villages traversés, des personnes rencontrées et les événements vécus. Ils ont été, il y a quelques années, objet d'une publication aux Etats-Unis. Y figurent, nous a-t-on assuré, quantités de détails qui sont restés ignorés des populations libérées. On nous en a promis copie.

Au milieu de ce document, un nom et une carte postale : Bois-et-Borsu. Bill Ruth avait gardé souvenirs particuliers de son passage en terres condrusiennes, marqué par l'accueil des gens du pays. Agronome de formation (il allait devenir professeur à l'université de Columbus, Ohio), il fut aussi frappé et séduit par les verts paysages « beautiful green » presque identiques à ceux de sa Pennsylvanie natale.

Peintre condrusien aux USA

Il y a deux ans, sa carte postale à la main, il était une première fois revenu dans la région où sa division s'était repliée lors de la bataille des Ardennes. C'est ainsi qu'étaient renoués les liens avec la famille Genon.



Une carte postale de Bois-et-Borsu conservée un demi-siècle, au fond d'un tiroir, quelque part aux U.S.A., dans la perspective, aujourd'hui réalité, de retrouvailles.

Pour raisons stratégiques, la division faisait, au moment de l'offensive Von Runstedt, mouvements de va-et-vient de Bois-et-Borsu à Tohogne. De ce village aussi, Bill Ruth avait gardé souvenir très ému, notamment des liens d'amitié avec un certain Lucien Dumont. Ce résistant était aussi, à ses heures, peintre amateur. L'une de ses toiles (un paysage condrusien) orne toujours aujourd'hui un salon quelque part en Ohio. Le vétéran aimerait en retrouver la trace ; ses recherches précédentes, en 1992 s'étant révélées infructueuses.

Le regard sévère des parents de Laura

La rencontre de dimanche soir, autour d'une bonne table, fut l'occasion de se remémorer quelques glorieux moments et nombre d'anecdotes. Joyeuse fête, mais sans excès : les vétérans se souvenaient d'un réveillon où « papa Genon s'était mon-

tré un peu trop généreux avec le cognac ».

Parmi les invités, une voisine, Laure Lardot, vingt ans à l'époque... pour le plus grand plaisir des boys qui s'en souvenait parfaitement : « Nous étions tous amoureux d'elle. Plus tard, nous avons souvent parlé, entre nous, du méchant regard du papa de Laura, dès que nous approchions de la maison Lardot. » Laure, quant à elle, avait retrouvé cadeaux et billets signés de ses amis américains, présents ce jour.

Enfin, souvenir le plus hilarant : Bill refit, avec le même succès, pour les trois gamins de Bois-et-Borsu (qui ont aujourd'hui de 56 à 64 ans) ses désopilantes imitations d'animaux de basse-cour, dont celle toujours absolument irrésistible du dindon. Souvenirs gravés dans les mémoires pour un nouveau demi-siècle.

L.H.

(Translation from previous page.)

The boys came back to salute the kids of Bois-et-Borsu

The U.S. veterans of the Third Armored Division Spearhead remember their tremendous epic through Europe for the liberation. In these days of early September they took the exact same trip as fifty years ago from London to Berlin, via Normandy and our country. Some of them insisted on coming to Bois-et-Borsu to salute the children of the Genon family they met Christmas 1944.

A group of 80 former tankers of the Third Armored Division Spearhead are celebrating the liberation of Europe in a special way. From June 1944 to May 1945 they experienced an extraordinary series of historical and heroic events: landing in Normandy, the first terrible battles at the cliffs and the trip toward Germany, liberating our country on their way, and the battle of Aachen, and the battle of the Bulge and finally the battle of Central Europe until the Germans surrendered. For the 50th anniversary of the Liberation, the Third Armored Association organized a pilgrimage to places where they were fifty years ago. They came to Limont and Nueville-en-Condroz. Last Sunday, five of them were at the Genon's house at Bois-et-Borsu. They had a nice reunion.

One of the main organizers of the trip was William Ruth who was a radio operator in the Spearhead Division. He had noted the names of villages, people he had met, events he had lived. This was published in the United States a few years ago. Some details we even ignored. In this document there was a postcard of Bois-et-Borsu. Mr. Ruth has nice memories of his stay here. As a farmer (who was about to become a college teacher in Ohio) he was fascinated by our green countryside. It was similar to Pennsylvania where he was born.

Two years ago he came to our region and had met the Genon family again. Mr. Ruth had also been to Tohogne. His memories of their village are very emotional. He formed a friendship with Mr. Lucien Dumont, a member of the resistance who was also a painter. One of his paintings is still in Mr. Ruth's living room in Ohio. The veteran would like to know where exactly the Dumont house is located.

On Sunday they had a big dinner and talked about war memories. Not too much alcohol was consumed, since they remembered a party when Papa Genon had been too generous with his cognac. Among the guests was Laura Lardot (who was twenty-years-old at that time). Veterans said, "We were all in love with her." Laura had kept autographs from them. Finally, Bill imitated the rooster as he used to for the kids of Bois-et-Borsu. It was a success again.

(Photo caption, top right: A picture of the postcard given to Bill Ruth on January 1, 1945. He brought it back to show the Genons. He stayed here in 1944-45.)

(Photo caption, bottom left: Pictured are Xavier, Roger and Jacky Genon, Bill and Lale Ruth, Mary Valliere, Don and Dolores Dill.)

Chapter 18

U.S. Cemeteries at Henri Chapelle and Margratten

The following information is from the December 1992 issue of *The Bulge Bugle*:

"There is one thing you dare not forget and that you must keep eternally engraved in your heart. It is the memory of those men who came from far way, from overseas and clung to the ground, fighting one against ten, falling down under bombing and shelling for the name of LIBERTY.

And when you will pass before a military cemetery, when you will see the little white crosses adorning the tombs of soldiers of Baugnes, of Steumont, of Rochfort and of so many little villages of the Ardennes, from the depths of your heart cry to them...THANK YOU." By Andre' Defer, a Belgian writer.

— *Frank Sanders*
Division Headquarters

In the years to come these impressive memorials will remind all who view them of "The many who gave all their tomorrows so that we might have our todays."



The archangel in front of the 8,000 graves.

We had made our good-byes to the Nicholas Rahir family the evening before. We had spent the previous days and nights being feted, loved, and gifted by the wife and sons of Nicholas, a Verviers Belgian underground partisan of World War II. Yale had been made a member of that family when his company liberated Verviers during the Bulge. Nicholas is gone but we were all reunited in 1960, and again in later years so that his sons got to

know our son and daughter, too. Nicholas and Jeanne's grandchildren are grown and some married with children so our reunion lunch was with over thirty Rahirs. We were all so moved by each other. Our experience with the Belgians was the same through the years. Their gratitude is long-lived and remembered. In 1960, a little old Belgian lady seated next to me on a Sabena airline thanked me for all Americans for the great President Hoover who kept the Belgians from starving

after World War I. Walking about Bastogne, Verviers, Brussels, and Liege, we were thanked by strangers on the street who recognized Yale's Third Armored cap.

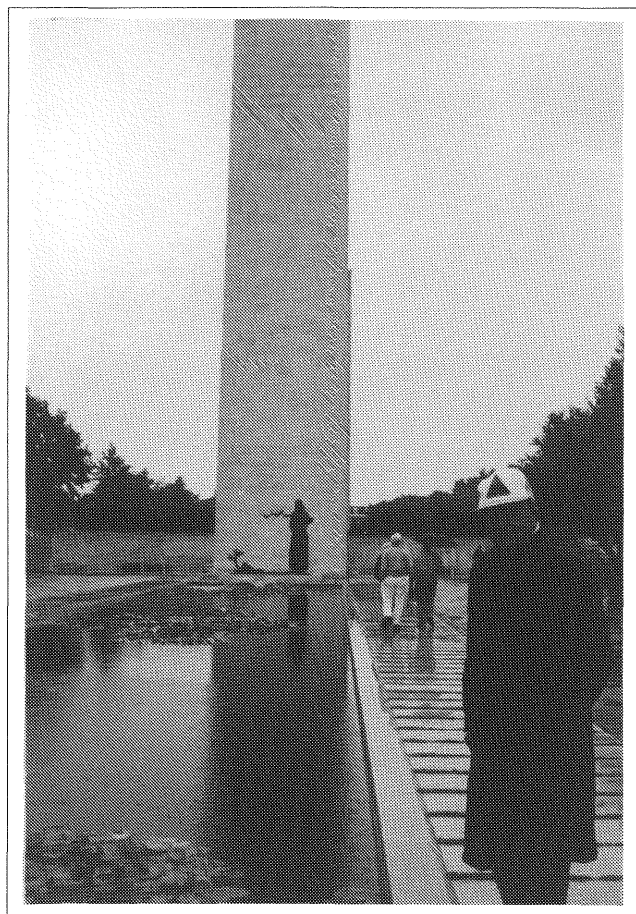
It was raining again as we visited the U.S. Cemetery at Henri Chapelle. We spent some time inside the memorial building examining the exhibits that showed the war in maps on the walls and the thrusts of the various outfits in the battles. Each memorial that we saw had an altar with both Christian and Jewish symbols. The approaches, the landscaping, and statuary expressed the high value that the United States places on its war dead. The atmosphere though solemn, was beautiful and simple, befitting the rows upon rows of graves marked by a cross or a Star of David, set into well-tended carpets of grass. Henri-Chapelle commemorates almost 8,000 soldiers who died during the First Army's drive, September 1944, through northern France into Belgium, Holland, Luxembourg, and Germany and the bitter Battle of the Bulge as well.

The soldiers came from all 48 states, Washington, D.C., Panama and England. In thirty-three cases, two brothers lie side by side. Ninety-four headstones mark the graves of unknown soldiers. In front of the grave area is a bronze statue of an archangel bestowing laurel upon the heroic dead. Nearly all the graves have been adopted by local Belgian families who visit the cemetery with flowers on religious holidays and weekends.

One of the Rahir sons, his wife and daughter found us on the portice. Their daughter had been unable to meet us during the two days we spent with the Rahirs and so they drove to the cemetery. We embraced again and the Rahirs helped us find the grave of Robert Schlesinger, a lieutenant Yale had known on the battlefield.



The Rahirs and Simons.

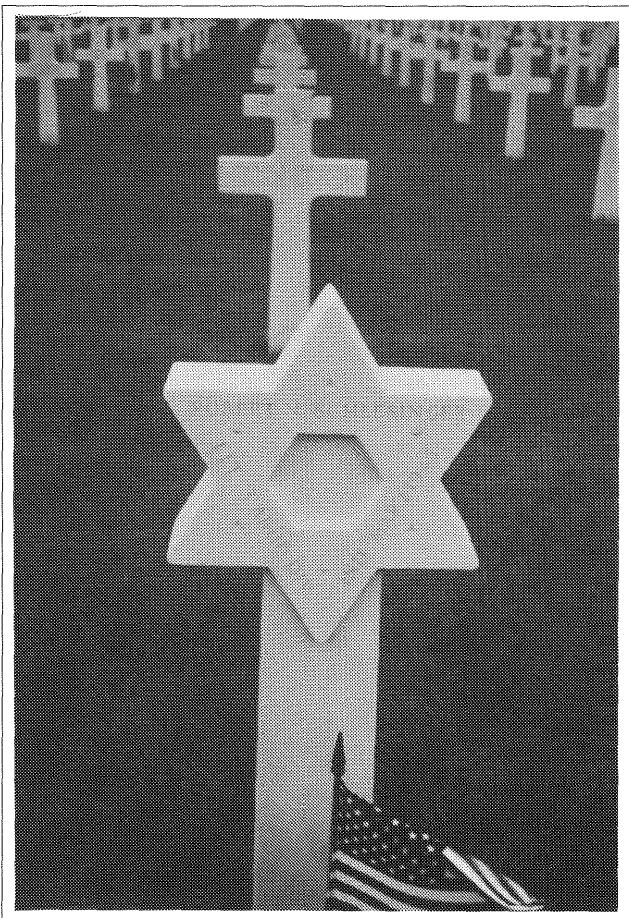


The female figure of Peace with doves flying.

We took pictures and Yale said the Kaddish - a prayer of mourning. Yale told the story of Schlesinger's death. We said our au revoir's again and mounted the bus steps. Our next stop was the American Netherlands Military Cemetery and Memorial in Maastricht, the first large city to be captured in Holland.

The road in front of the cemetery was an old Roman road. It was used by Napoleon in his conquest of the region. Fruit trees, as well as deciduous trees, were planted in the meadows flanking the road. The north and south walls of the Missing of the Court of Honor bear witness to 1,722 missing men whose remains were either never recovered or positively identified. A female figure of Peace with doves flying behind her sets a tranquil mood. General Maurice Rose is buried here in a front row just like the doughboys around him. He was the son of a Denver Rabbi. He rose from the ranks. He converted when he married. He told his men, "No raping, no looting, no fraternizing. That is not how American soldiers should be remembered in Europe." He was killed near Paderborn in an ambush on the same day Yale was wounded by snipers. The two men in front of and behind Yale outside the tank were killed. Death here in the cemetery washed away all the blood and physical pain of that war fifty years ago, but we remember the horror, nonetheless.

— *Barbara and Yale Simons*
Company H
32nd Armored Regiment



Lt. Schlesinger's grave.



General Rose's grave.

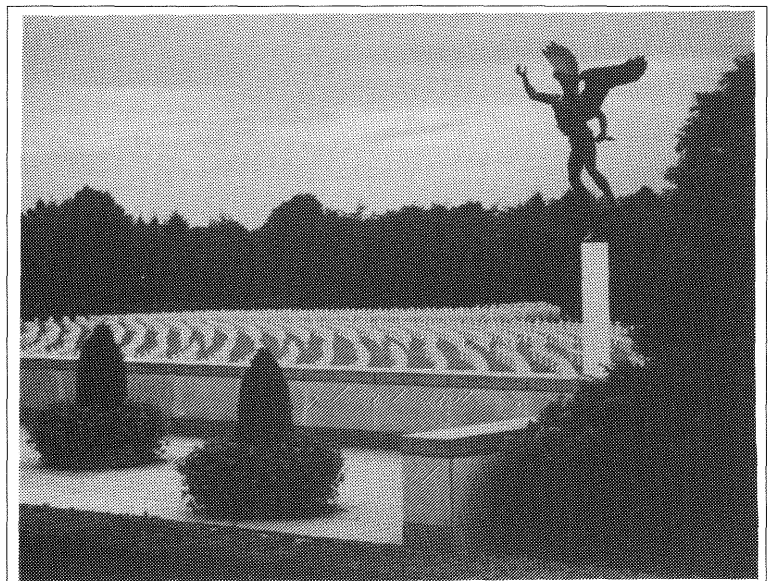
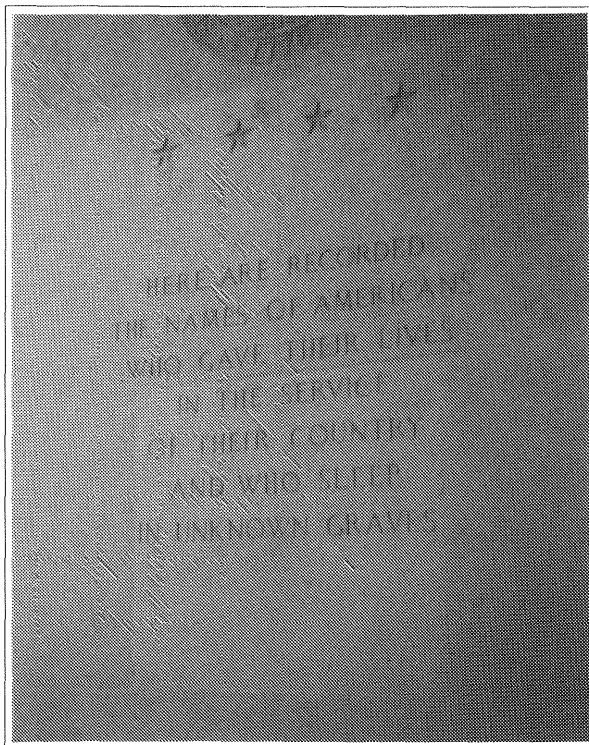
Before the trip, I was never aware of the existence of CRIBA. This organization, non-profit and non-political, was founded in 1980 and supports the American equivalent organization, The Battle of the Bulge Historical Foundation headquartered in Fort Meade, Maryland. This support includes financial support for the Foundation and aid to any veterans who visit Belgium.

The organization's aims are to preserve historical areas and data; to perpetuate the memory of the Battle of the Bulge and the sacrifices involved; and lend any possible assistance to American veterans.

Dorrie and I were fortunate to meet Pierre Mawet, one of the eleven only and elected representatives of CRIBA. He not only acted as our guide at Bastogne but gave us large posters, a Battle of the Bulge plate, pins, and written material about CRIBA. Pierre refused to accept any thanks for his many kindnesses but repeatedly said, "Never thank a Belgian. We owe you too much."

On our visit to the Henri-Chapelle Cemetery, Roland St. Amour and I were able to locate and visit the grave of one of our buddies from C Battery of the 486th who was killed in action on September 29, 1944. This was a very touching and sad moment but also seemed to make the whole trip worthwhile.

— *Bob Sullivan*
486th



The highlight of the trip for me was finding the headstones of my two best buddies. The article which appeared in a local paper sums up my feelings.

— Luke Arends
Company A, 33rd AR

Vet recalls second visit to north France

SPARTA TOWNSHIP

By Charley Moore
The Grand Rapids Press

While Luke Arends is out picking apples in the orchard, his mind sometimes wanders to the little town of Fourmies in northern France, by the Belgian border.

The Sparta Township resident visited there Sept. 2, exactly 50 years after he — and the rest of the American 3rd Armored Division — liberated it from the German Army.

Arends said the welcome couldn't have been warmer for him and a busload of his World War II buddies. They even stayed with French families.

"There were some old guys in Fourmies who had been French resistance fighters when France was under German occupation," says Arends, 77.

"They had beat-up French flags. When we got out of the buses, they cheered and clapped, and they all cried. It made me feel 10 feet tall."

They sang "The Star-Spangled Banner" and the French national anthem, then everybody went into the town meeting hall for champagne.

"Pretty soon the corks started popping. It tasted good. Almost changed me from a beer drinker to a champagne drinker."

Arends' group received similarly hearty receptions in Lieges, Belgium, and in other Belgian and French towns.

"We've had our freedom 200 years now and don't appreciate it. They do, especially those old fellows who were under the Germans. They know what freedom is."

Arends was born and raised six miles from where he lives now at 9222 Kenowa Ave. NW, Sparta Township, and has been on that

farm since 1954.

In 1957 he discovered a different kind of tree on his land and named the apples on it Paulareds, after his wife Pauline. She died about two years ago.

Arends, known in the area by his nickname of Luke, has sold his farm to his son, George, but he continues to stay on the farm and have fun just being out in the orchard.

Arends has another son, Dave, three stepchildren, 12 grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.

Arends was in the army "four years, three months, 12 days and 15 minutes."

As a young soldier, he preferred tank duty to digging holes with the infantry, although it was "just something we had to do."

Arends was one of only two men in his platoon of 20 who was finished his duty without an injury.

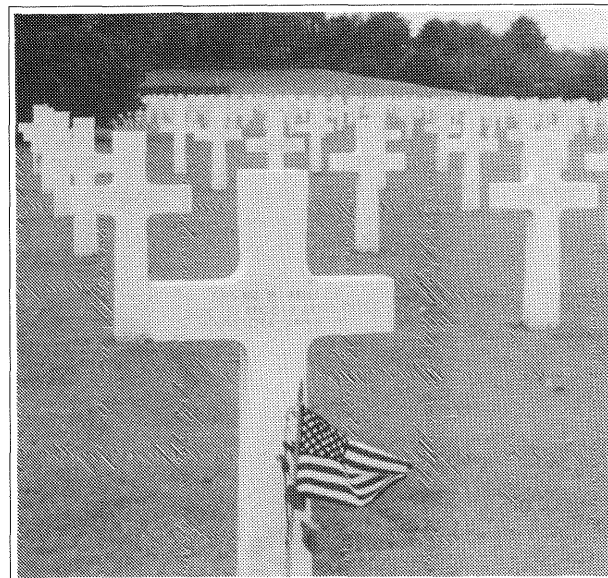
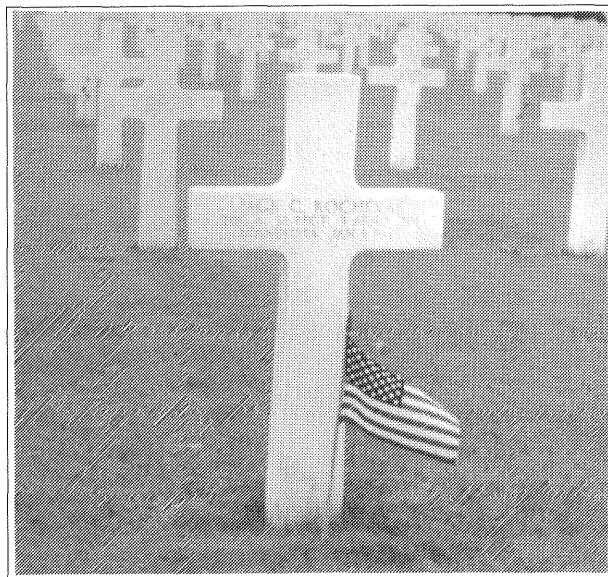
He recalls serving under Gen. Courtney Hodges, commander of the 1st Army, of which the 3rd Armored Division was a part. That division was called the Spearhead Division because "we led the 1st Army going across France and Europe. It was the first unit into Germany."

"One fellow said he wouldn't take a million dollars for what we saw, and another said he wouldn't do it again for a million."

In the Henri Chappelle cemetery in Belgium, near where the Battle of the Bulge took place, he noticed the crosses marking the burial places of his two best friends, Jack Kochevar and Ervin Miller. Both were killed in that battle.

Miller had borrowed Arends' sleeping bag, and was killed when a shell hit the building where he was asleep.

"Seeing those crosses was the highlight of the trip for me," he says.



I would like to comment on the four cemeteries that we visited: The U.S. Cemetery at St. Laurent, the U.S. Cemetery at Neuville-en-Condroz, the U.S. Cemetery at Henri-Chapelle, and the U.S. Cemetery at Margratten. At these cemeteries as we disembarked from the buses there was a lot of noise and talking as we marveled at the beautiful entrances to the cemeteries. Then as we walked through the entrances complete silence prevailed as everyone stood and viewed row upon row of white crosses. I honestly believe you could hear a pin drop, it was so quiet. There were thousands upon thousands of white Italian marble crosses and Stars of David markers. They stood out so beautifully against the well-manicured green grass. It makes no difference if you were a private or general, all the markers are the same. Our own General Rose is next to a private.

At the Henri-Chapelle Cemetery I was able to find the grave of one of my special buddies, Elwood Kreuger, from Wisconsin, who was killed at Hotton on December 23, 1944. As I knelt by his cross and my wife took our picture, it almost seemed like he said, "It's all right - there was a real need for our being here and the Belgian people remember and care. Thanks for coming." As we walked away from his cross I said to my wife, "Now this makes the trip all worthwhile."

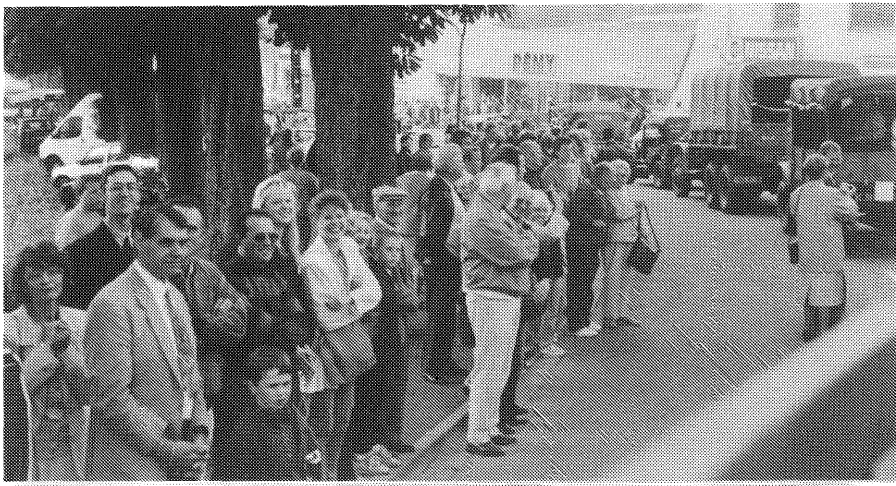
— *Elmer Lorenz*
Reg. Hq.
36th AIR



Those who served under General Maurice Rose pay their respects at his grave in Margratten, Holland. Photo by Bernie Orie.



Russell and Rita Eick at the Normandy American Cemetery. Photo by Russell Eick.



Dick Goodie says, "It was difficult leaving Belgium, as it was earlier, leaving France. In many cities and towns of both countries we were received by color guards, bands, school children, and attended over twenty-four plaque dedication ceremonies and champagne receptions that followed. We were made freemen of many towns, were presented the gold Medal of Normandy, and were honored by receiving a Diploma of Gratefulness signed by the Prime Minister of Belgium. But when we crossed the German border the celebrations ended. Even though many German citizens were appreciative of the Allies ending Hitler's reign of fascism and destruction of their great cities (at Stolberg, in the city council chambers, we were honored with a plaque dedication and reception, but without champagne). For the most part, understandably, the citizens didn't rush our buses waving flags. It was like returning to hometown America after going 0 for 4 in the World Series. Some of the vets chose not to wear their Third Armored caps, but most of us proceeded as normal tourists, never gloating or drawing unusual attention to ourselves.

Chapter 19

Breinig, Cologne

"It was right there," I said to my wife as we passed near Breinig, pointing out the bus window to a long, open, green field of rolling terrain. "We were there during the siege of Aachen, the first German city to fall. The autumn rains had turned the fields into seas of mud making our armor inoperative. While an element of our tanks was in Aachen, we were outside the city, assigned to Division Artillery, 105s and Long Toms, giving them protection against enemy strafing attacks with our dual purpose, automatic 37 mm cannon and twin 50-caliber machine guns.

"The artillery and P-47 Thunderbolts pounded Aachen for seventeen days. Our eardrums withstood the artillery firing around the clock. The big guns were so close to our position it is a miracle we weren't powder burnt. During the day we stood in the mud and watched the Thunderbolts wheel upward and continually divebomb and strafe the ancient city. In the center of the battle, our good friends, the First Infantry Division, repulsed several major attacks before counterattacking against fanatical resistance on the final days of the siege. The Big Red One took their normal losses but stacked up many more of the enemy. Always it is the infantry that clears the houses-one-by-one.

"Since we couldn't move through the mud, near our half-track we built shacks, made out of four barn doors, a tarpaulin roof, a 25-gallon oil drum for a stove, and fashioned seven bunks along the walls with poles and cut up saw belts. And we waited for Aachen to fall and the cold weather to freeze the fields so we could move again. In the end, eighty percent of Aachen was destroyed."

The bus moved past the field and along the highway toward Cologne.

Our bus pulled up to the Pullman Mondial Hotel, behind the Cologne Cathedral, where we stayed for two nights. Like most major German cities, most of the buildings in Cologne are less than fifty years old. The original city was bombed to rubble. But the Cathedral survived with only minor damage to its north spire. Among our group, Cologne was perhaps the more popular city we visited. Behind the Cathedral, along the cobblestone street that runs near the Rhine, there is a sidewalk cafe with white chairs and white, circular tables, and yellow and blue umbrellas that will certainly be remembered when we think of Cologne and the casual hours we lingered there.

After Cologne the tour included an afternoon cruise down the Rhine, from Coblenz to Assmanshausen. Along this stretch of the Rhine, the hillsides are very steep and covered for miles with vineyards, their perfectly, symmetrical rows dropping in straight lines to the black



The Rhine River.

road that runs along the river. Close along the banks, we sailed past many quaint villages with enchanting stone and half-timbered homes nestled comfortably against the steep, green hillsides. We must have counted thirty ancient castles high up in the hills. The Rhine Valley is one of the more lush, tranquil, picturesque areas on earth. Little wonder that the political leaders in Bonn are disturbed these days over the circulating news that the Capital will be returned to the concrete carpets of Berlin by the end of this century.

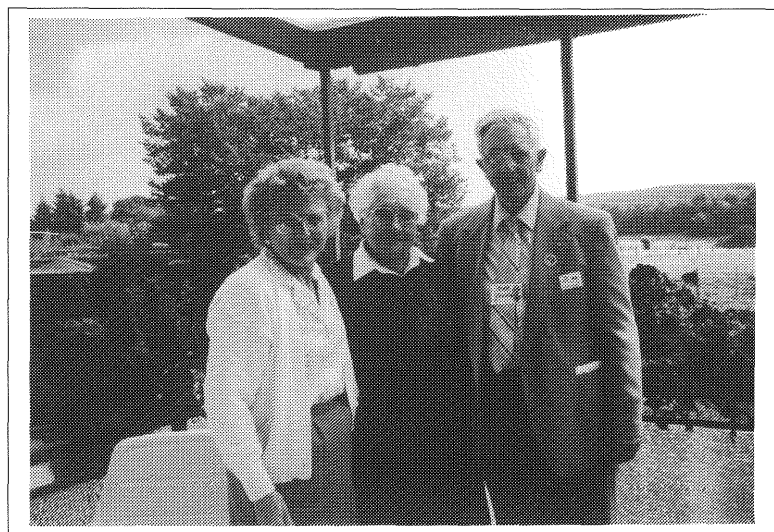
— *Dick Goodie*
486th Battalion

Before we left on this trip to Europe, I wrote to a German family with the name of Kaiser that I met fifty years ago. All I had were pictures taken at that time and an address. The German consul in Chicago, Illinois, gave the necessary address and codes.

In September 1944 my Company E took over this German family's three-story home as our command post. The German family remained in the home along with our officers and fellow GIs. Barbara was a single woman and a nurse and was taking care of her nine-month old nephew, Willie Kaiser. Her crippled father also lived in this family home with her. She had two brothers who were Catholic German Chaplains and were killed at the Russian Front.

I received a reply to my letter from Willie Kaiser, who is now 51-years-old. He wrote that his Aunt Barbara was delighted to receive copies of the old photos, and invited us to spend the day with her and her family. Willie picked us up in Liege, Belgium, at 10:00 a.m. and drove on the Autobahn to Breinig. Aunt Barbara waved to us from her second story window as we drove up to her home. As she hugged us, tears crept into our eyes. Her lovely niece, nephew, and grand-niece greeted us warmly. Since she doesn't speak English, Willie translated for us. She spoke of how she appreciated the leftover food that was given to her instead of it being thrown into the dump. She shared the leftovers with neighbors who gave her soap. The soap was used by the neighbors who had babies to wash their clothing.

Barbara is 85-years-young and still lives in this same home which has been remodeled. The home fifty years ago had a dirt basement where we stayed when aerial burst or artillery were bursting overhead. They also had an attached shed for their cow. The yard is brilliant with colorful garden flowers. The Germans, French, and Belgian people love and grow beautiful flowers.



Barbara Kaiser, center, with Alice and Bob Young.

We visited St. Barbara's Catholic Church down the street from their home. We attended Mass there in 1944. The Church is still beautiful and well maintained. A quaint German restaurant and bar served us a delicious German lunch. A visit to an old castle in Stolberg was a first for us. In fact, this was Barbara's first visit to the castle. An elevator took us to the second level which led out to a beautiful stoned garden area.

Willie invited us to his home for delicious German pastries. His lovely wife and neighbor greeted us warmly, and we enjoyed looking over old snapshots of their families. The neighbor lady was born after the war. Her brother, who was six at the time in 1944, was in one of the pictures that was taken then. His sister related to us that his life was a very unhappy time for him and he had taken his life in April 1994.

We were driven back to the Holiday Inn in Liege, Belgium, via the Autobahn. Bob slept through the ride but Alice was in the rear seat repeating many prayers as Willie was traveling very fast on the rainy highway.

Our U.S. Cemeteries are very well maintained by local people but the United States pays for their excellent care. The U.S. Cemetery at St. Laurent, France, is where Bob located the gravesite of Gene Kirschbaum, who was the first GI killed in our Company E. He was only 18-years-old. There was another lad, Bob McKinney, who was listed as missing in action, also from Company E. Indeed this was a very emotional moment for me. On September 12 we visited the U.S. Cemetery at Henri Chapelle, Belgium, where I found twelve gravesites of my buddies along with one of my original officers that were buried there.

Alice and I enjoyed this whole trip to Belgium, France, and Germany. We wish to thank John and Dennis O'Brien, Bill Ruth, Aurio Pierro, Walt Stitt, and all our dear friends we met on the buses. It was great.



Bob & Alice Young, Aurio Pierro, Walt & Betty Stitt, on the Sunset Cruise on the Rhine River.



Barbara Kaiser and T-5 Earl Lopez, 50 years ago.



Bob Young and a German lad, 50 years ago.

— *Bob and Alice Young
2nd BN, Company E
33rd AR*

Bob and Alice Young's story about Breinig prompts me to add the following from our *Last Push Book*. It aptly describes a follow up of their story, especially the part about St. Barbara's Catholic Church. The Breinig, Stolberg, Musbach, Busbach area became very familiar to us because it was the longest period of time we spent in one area during the war.

Why visit Breinig? Well, we Service Company members spent ninety days here, September 19 until December 19, 1944. Why this much time? Well, *Spearhead in the West* best describes why. I quote from page 99:

"Battered and finally at a standstill, the Third Armored Division had wound up one of the amazing armored force operations in the history of warfare. Eighteen days from the Seine River to the Siegfried Line; and now in a last climatic surge of strength, the Division had smashed through that legendary West Wall into the confines of greater Germany. They, like an athlete who has breached the tape of victory and stands exhausted, the Spearhead paused, vehicles were demanding maintenance, men were haggard with fatigue. There were scarcely 100 tanks of the original 400 left in proper operating condition. Supplies had begun to lag. Much of this supply was still funneling through the floating piers in Normandy. Now the entire First Army had reached Germany's borders but the Third Armored and First Infantry Divisions were out on the point of a salient and it was impossible for them to advance further until their flanks were secure. Therefore, the battle of attrition, which was hoped to be of short duration, began. Thus, our 90 day stay in Breinig."

This was definitely the longest we stayed at any one location during the war. Consequently, it has left some memories.

We had no problem finding our old command post. We knew it was right off the main road leading to Kornelimunster on the western edge of Breinig. George and I immediately recognized the old apple orchard where many of our Service Company were bivouacked. The apple orchard has not changed in these 48 years. The trees are still there (maybe some replanted). The old barn that received an artillery hit that killed several of our men (Joe Kne and Fred Robinson) is still there, but has been converted into a home. Cows are still in the orchard.

We recognized where our field kitchen and supply trucks had been located.



The famous Dragon Teeth of the Siegfried Line still stand near Stolberg.

The row of houses that many of us were billeted in are still there, with slight revisions here and there. The command post is the same.

We later asked for our wives' reaction as they stood back and watched us in our excitement. Here is what they said:

"Our trip was like watching teenagers on a 'high', jumping up and down in their excitement when they each spotted the house they lived in during the war. They jumped out of the car before it stopped. They were so

excited that they kept talking so fast they stumbled over their words. 'We found it -- we found it!! I don't believe this! It hasn't changed. This happened here (pointing to a spot). Do you remember this or that?' We just stood back and watched them enjoy. They were on an emotional high. One of the changes they noted was that there is no mud. The street is now paved. There are sidewalks and curbs."

You Service Company members would be amazed to see Cologne today. We remember it as a dead city when the Third Armored took it along with the 104th Timberwolf Infantry Division. Koln was nothing but rubble. Devastation, not only from the Third Armored battle, but from the bombing raids by the American and British Air Forces. We remember the knocked out tanks near the Cologne Cathedral. We were also impressed to see that this beautiful cathedral was one of the few buildings still standing.

We remember seeing the Hohenzollern Bridge lying submerged in the Rhine River. We remember the hundreds of freight cars and oil tankers resting in silence on the bombed-out sidings, the twisted rails that looked like pretzels and the many bomb craters.

Our hotels were a stone's throw from the Cathedral and the railyards and river. As we walked around I remember Bill Wall saying, "I wonder who won the war?"

*— Bill Ruth
Service Company
33rd Armored Regiment*



A note from Bill Ruth's diary:

October 30, 1944: "Go to church regularly. As I look around I see women, old men, and children praying the Rosary. I'm sure they are praying to the same God I am. Are they praying for the same things my Mom and Dad and I are praying for? Are they praying for their sons, brothers, husbands, and fathers safe return as I am? Are they praying for the war to end soon? From the fervant and sombre expressions I am sure that they are."

*St. Barbara's Catholic Church.
Because we were in Breinig for
90 days the people trusted us and
we were able to attend
their services.*

Chapter 20

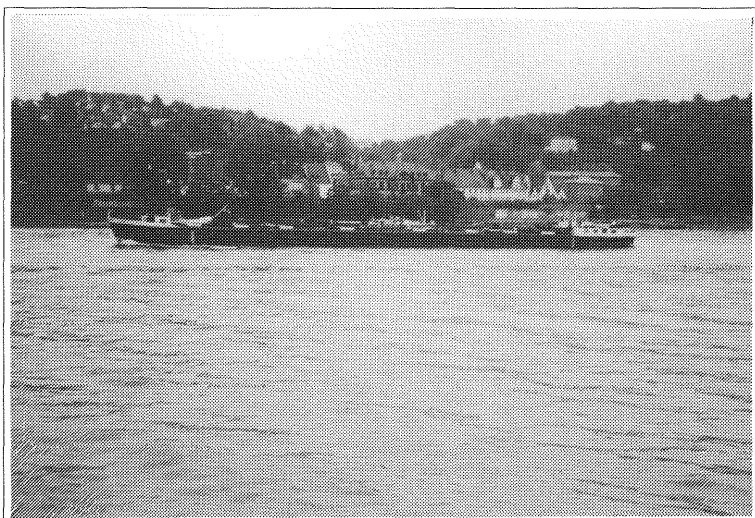
Rhine River Tour

The Third Armored Division tour arrived at the Coblenz steamer pier around 11:00 a.m. on September 14, 1994. We were going on a four-hour cruise up the Rhine River.

It was a cool, windy day and after spending an hour up on the deck I decided to go below to get warm and have lunch. Our cruise was very exciting in spite of the cold weather.

I did not realize this but the Rhine River is the most important navigable river in western Europe. It is about 830 miles long. The river flows through Switzerland, Germany, and the Netherlands before discharging into the North Sea.

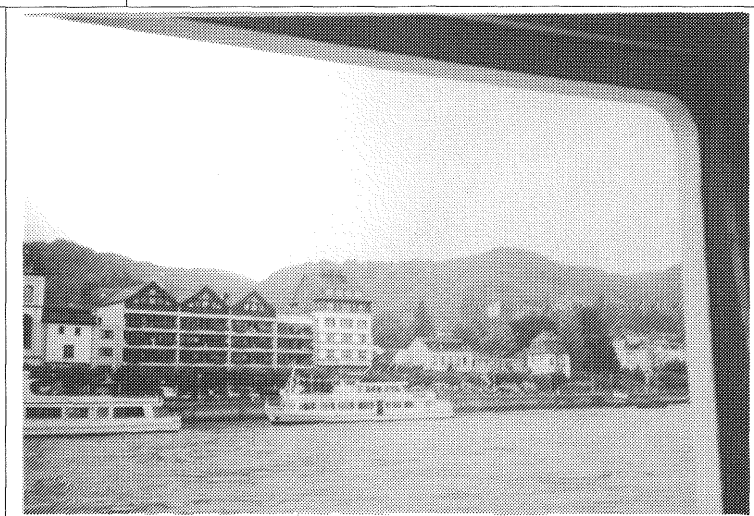
Cargo ships carry iron ore, coal, and petroleum products daily. Traffic on the river is very heavy. The land along the Rhine is a great industrial valley and is known for its wines from the vineyards on the steep slopes. Our steamer passed many cargo ships and a few tourist steamers like ours. We passed the famous Loreley Rock where legends say the Loreley is supposed to have lured Rhine boatmen onto the rocks by her singing.



Cargo ship on the Rhine River.

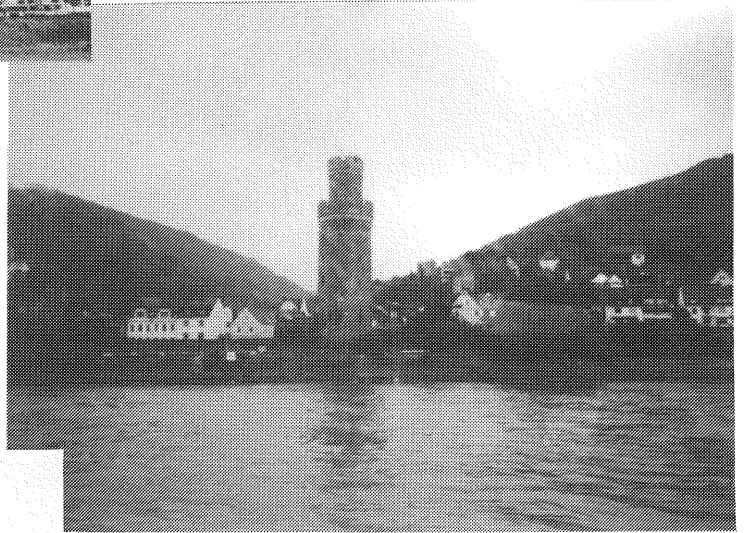
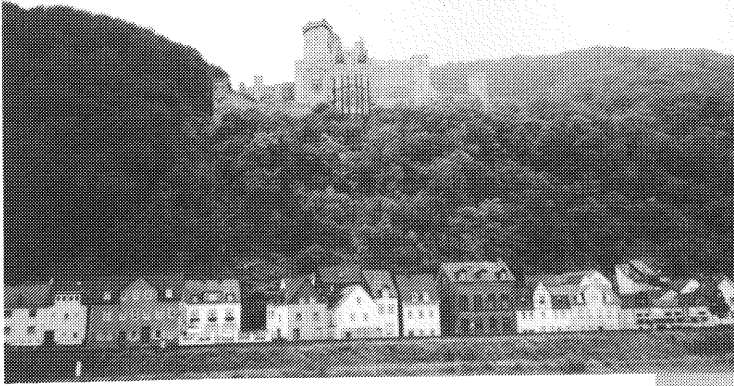
I have always wanted to tour the Rhine River. I know that I couldn't have had a better group of people with which to share this cruise.

— *Rosalie Root*
Husband served with
Service Company
54th Regiment

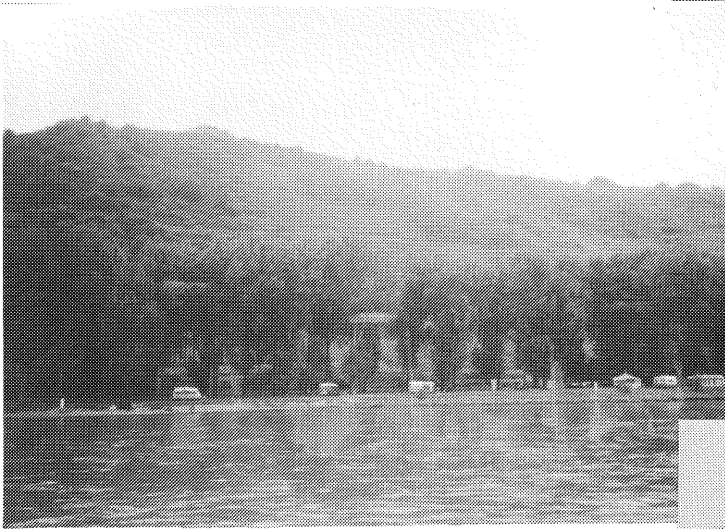


Tourist steamer on the Rhine River.

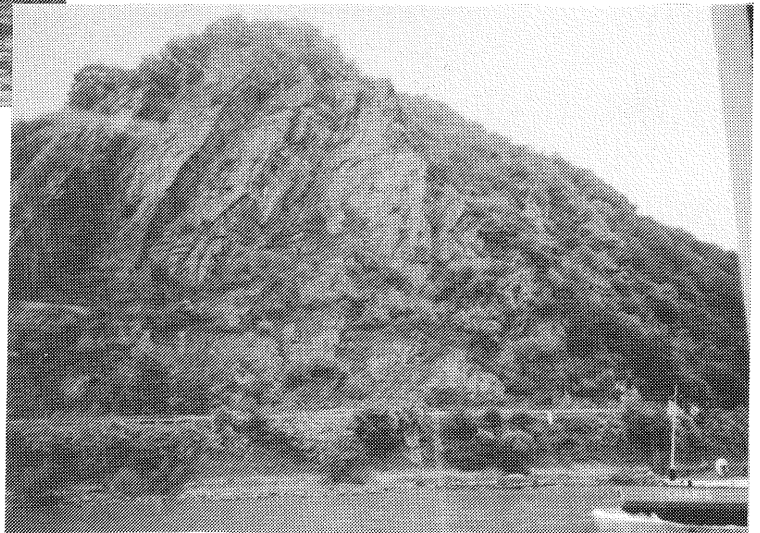
*Landscape, towns, and castles
along the Rhine River.*



Vineyard along the Rhine.



Loreley Rock



Chapter 21

Friedberg

After a 6:00 a.m. wake-up call and buffet breakfast at our hotel in Essen our buses left at 8:00 a.m. for Friedberg and a visit with the 67th Armored. It was a cold, windy day and with only light jackets on we were chilly. There was an orientation upon arrival and then a visit to the museum of old World War II army vehicles. That was great! Many of the veterans climbed into the tanks, half-tracks, jeeps, etc., and tried to remember how it was fifty years ago. Included also were the uniforms, ammunition, guns, pictures and other memorabilia. It was rather difficult to take it all in with the crowd of people there. In the middle of the morning they served hot coffee which hit the spot since everyone was cold. We can't say enough about the Army personnel that was at various points along the way — they were very polite and helpful. They could not have been more helpful. I think they were pleased that so much interest was shown by these soldiers of fifty years ago. Our bus took us out to the field where we watched several teams go through the obstacle course. It made us tired just watching them! Oh, to be in shape like they are. We applauded and cheered them on.

At noon we were treated to a lunch prepared in a World War II field kitchen. We had noticed a "cook" stirring something which turned out to be pea soup with cut-up wieners. It was hot and delicious. The soup was served with coke and dark bread (German breads are good). It made a good lunch and I think we all enjoyed sitting at the long tables they had set up in the field area.

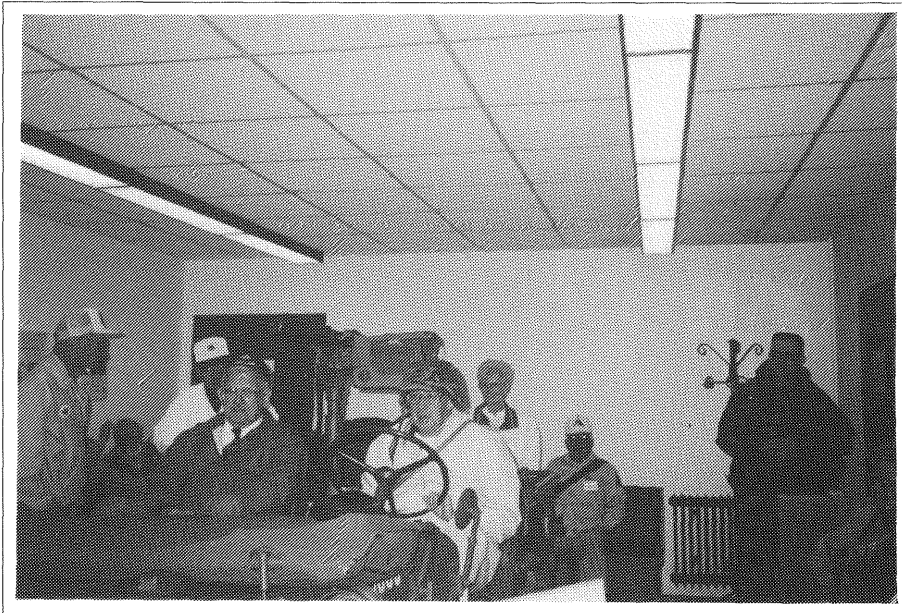
In the afternoon several of the officer's wives volunteered to take any of the women who were interested on a shopping trip in to the village of Friedberg, which they said was a quaint place with a castle at one end of the main street. About ten of us decided to go shopping. Our bus driver drove us in and agreed to pick us up later. We roamed around looking in the various shops (everything is expensive over there!). I asked our leaders to please take me to a shop that sold sweaters because I didn't bring enough warm clothes along on the trip since the weather was unseasonably cold for that time of year. Several of us found sweaters — what a great feeling to be warm again! After the shopping, we were to decide on a tour of the castle or a visit to a "German Tea Room". Surprisingly we opted for the latter and so sat there and had some delicious German tortes. Then time was up and we headed back to the spot where we were to meet our bus driver. When we got back to the base we toured a modern field kitchen and were shown how many meals can be prepared in it. The latest field rations were great, packages of chicken stew, tuna and noodles, etc., with their own heating unit enclosed. The samples we tasted were delicious. We even got one to take home with us.

While the women went shopping, the men had a chance to inspect and take a ride in the many vehicles they have to train in now. I rode in one of the tanks, and then also in a half-track, which was the vehicle I rode in through the entire invasion. It brought back many memories. I still can't understand how Jim Turner, our half-track driver fifty years ago, could stay awake for such a long time, especially the times we had to drive at night with no lights.

As Ruth mentioned earlier the personnel there was simply great to all of us. I guess they realized that we "old codgers" did a pretty good job during World War II with the equipment we had. We all were really impressed with the newest tank that was there. They gave us an excellent report on its firing power, range, speed and many other features. It is much more advanced than the machines we had.

After all the inspections and speeches and trial rides, a social hour followed where we met more of the personnel and mingled at the Officer's Club. We had refreshments and even won prizes. This was followed with a dinner, where we formed a line and passed through the cafeteria. We were served good American food which was enjoyed by all. A few speeches, followed by some awards and then we boarded the buses for the ride back to the hotel. The end of a great day!

— *Bob and Ruth Clarke
Company E, 32nd AR*



Bob Clarke getting the feel of a World War II jeep again.



Bob Clarke getting a ride in a new tank. Jennifer Coker is the Tank Commander.

Not all the heroes were on our side

By Frank Woolner

Editor's note: Frank Woolner served with the 703d Tank Destroyer Battalion before joining the Division G-2 office in September 1944. In the months immediately following the close of the war he wrote the division history, *Spearhead in the West*. This article first appeared in the 3d Armored Division Association Newsletter in 1972.

IT IS, THEY SAY, the business of a war correspondent to record history without fear or favor, to present the truth and let those proverbial chips fall where they may. This, I say to you, is utter nonsense. My disillusionment began in a city called Stolberg, and I will let you judge for yourself.

Initially, since I am a writer by trade, Hq. 3d Armored Division yanked me out of a line company of tank destroyers on the day we punctured the Siegfried Line. Thereafter, I was designated a "public relations specialist, G-2," which meant division combat correspondent, writing stuff for rear echelon civilian newsmen. For me it was a new lease on life: I had to be up front, but never on the point. I became a junior-grade historian, an observer and a scribbler of things world-shaking.

AT THAT TIME we were engaged in a lot of house-to-house combat in Stolberg. I seem to recall that General Terry Allen's "Timberwolf" Division was in there, plus elements of the Spearhead — and particularly the 36th Armored Infantry Regiment. Since I am an avowed coward, I never wanted to go into that cauldron of flame and destruction — but this was 1944, and an order was an order.

So I went up when things were reasonably quiet, and the dogfaces told me a story that should have been clarified all over the world. I wrote it, and I got my wrists slapped but good.

The dogfaces of 36th told me — and remember, I was not there — that they'd been involved in a hell of a fire-fight right in the center of industrial Stolberg. You know how it was — burp guns clattering so rapidly they sounded like sheets of canvas tearing, mortars crumping, the steady beat of light machineguns and the heavy stut-ter of the 50s. Casualties were considerable on both sides, and the medics had their work cut out.

IT WAS, AS I mentioned, house-to-house fighting — the grim, close-quarter combat that always falls to infantrymen, those heroic warriors who die in windows and are never given their rightful due in the annals of warfare.

There was a street which served as no man's land, rimmed by the shell-pocked and bullet-spattered building of a city in torment. The fire was intense, and our dogfaces attempted a rush which was defeated. Curiously, in view of the tremendous torrent of steel pouring down, over and across that horrible thoroughfare, only one American sol-

dier was cut down before his colleagues scurried back to the safety of stone walls.

The stricken soldier was wounded and he writhed on the pavement, calling for help in full view of the embattled German and Spearhead troops. A gale of fire blistered over his head. It would have been suicide for one of our medics to go out there: indeed, the fire was so intense that all movement was stymied. The opposing forces hammered away — while a man screamed in agony.

SO SUDDENLY THAT all combatants were caught by surprise, a German soldier ran out of cover. He was unarmed. He pounded out into the street, lifted the wounded American in his arms, and continued right across that bitterly contested boulevard into the rubble positions of the 36th Armored Infantry Regiment.

And, miracle in hell, the guns halted their infernal clatter. For a blessed few minutes the krauts stilled their weapons and we, open-mouthed, did likewise. The battlefield observed a few moments of armistice. No guns fired.

He came staggering in, bowed by the weight of a wounded American dogface, a lean, muscular German infantryman smelling, as they all did, of sweat and Cologne. He dropped his burden and without a word, scuttled back across the road while no man offered ill. For one moment in time and space, we were all human beings again, hating our business, wanting to preserve life. That kraut deserved the Knight's Cross and the Congressional Medal of Honor and the Victoria Cross all lumped together. He was, when you come to think about it, quite a man.

I wrote the story, and Major Haynes Dugan, Division's Public Relations Officer, shook his head while he read it. "Hell of a good thing," he muttered, "but we can't use it."

Dugan knew, and very shortly I learned, that truth is a first casualty of war. You warp the facts to make a case, and you never admit a spark of humanity or chivalry in the enemy. Perhaps that's necessary.

But I think we can waive the rules now: after 30 long years it can't be verboten to tell how a German soldier was brave enough to risk death in saving the life of a hated Ami.



For several days Jim had not been feeling well. He did not venture far from the bus, but enjoyed what he could see. By the time we reached Geisson on September 14, it was plain that he needed medical attention. It was a scary situation for a couple who spoke no German.

At the hotel the desk clerk spoke English. He called a doctor. Jim was diagnosed with acute bronchitis and taken by ambulance to a hospital. I followed in a cab down narrow streets to what looked like a loading dock. It proved to be an emergency entrance.

For a long time I sat out in a dark hallway. Finally, I was called to the emergency room. I was reminded of pictures I had seen of hospitals during the war. It was predicted Jim would need to stay four or five days. I had to pay the bill up front. I was able to get funds from a bank nearby.

The next day, Thursday, Jim was loaded into a minivan and transferred to another building.

We were desperately anxious to leave by Sunday in order to join the group in Berlin. The doctors refused to discharge Jim Sunday. On Monday they did let him go. Of course, he was still very weak.

We took a cab to the station. How would we find the right train? An English gentleman guided us and helped with the luggage. We had to go down a long flight of stairs and up another, with no time to spare.

In our compartment were several elderly people who remembered much about the war. One German woman helped us change trains in Kassel for Berlin. Here again, there was a ramp up and another down to be negotiated, with only seven minutes to catch the train.

On this train was an elderly couple and a young German gentleman who was just returning from the United States. He spoke English very well and acted as translator.

From then on our trip was very pleasant. The German couple had a lot of interesting things to say about the war, and many questions to ask Jim. They gave us cakes and candy and containers of orange drink. I remembered some Third Armored souvenirs I had. They were pleased with the trinkets I gave them.

There was no end to their helpfulness when we reached Berlin. The first question was, at which station should we get off? All we knew was the name of our hotel. The Germans helped with our luggage and got us a cab to the hotel.

We were surely relieved to see familiar faces when we entered the lobby.

— *Jim and Doris Howard*
Headquarters
32nd Armored Regiment

Chapter 22

Marburg, Berga, Dessau

No one wrote about the period of September 16-18. I would like to take the liberty to describe these three days by extracting from the *Last Push* book what we saw and experienced since our route was similar then as it was on this trip.

We will be driving on the German Autobahn heading toward such towns as Limburg, Rennerod, Herborn, Gladenbach, and then Marburg. We made the 70-mile trip to Marburg with much more ease than we did in 1945.

It is beginning to rain. The thought occurs to some of us on the bus that it is a blessing it didn't rain yesterday. We would not have been able to go out in the field and we would have never realized what we were missing. We all agreed that if it rains, today is the day for rain because we will be driving a total of 206 miles. We will be kept dry in our bus.

As we drove north, we marveled at the country of the Ruhr valley and the beautiful landscape as we passed small villages nestled in the foothills of the mountain ranges. We wondered where in the heck these people work?

Along the way, near Limburg, we saw two herds of white tail deer. Limburg is the town where the cheese got its name. We saw a group of soldiers in the Rennerod area. They were performing some kind of field exercises. As we headed to Marburg many of us reminisced about our long 70-mile trip back on March 29, 1945.

We had the experience of seeing our first stripped auto today. There were several versions about how this happens. We saw about six other stripped vehicles in the course of the trip. One version is that it was just ripped off (New York City style). The other version is that because of the high cost of junking a car in Germany, people park their old junker on the highway, take their license plate, and scratch off their serial number and let the vultures pick it clean. We talked about encountering many freed slave laborers. They were French, Belgian, Polish, and Russian. We reminisced how happy they were as they waved to us.

As we approached Marburg we talked about what we remembered back in 1945. We knew that Marburg was a one-time rabid center for Nazism. We remembered the thousands and thousands of German prisoners waiting to give up. We were going so fast we just waved them toward the rear as we took their guns, hoping that some other group would herd them up.

John O'Brien told an interesting incident about taking hundred of prisoners. One German soldier began to cry and John asked why he was crying. The soldier said, "I'm home on leave to see my mother." John said, "OK, give me your gun. After you have your visit, then you can give yourself up."

We have since learned that Marburg is a university town. We notice the beautiful flower boxes in the towns. The Germans in this area seem to take great pride in their homes and gardens. They sure love ivy and geraniums. We saw a lot of elderberries today. The trees, for the most part, are similar to ours.

This day also reminded us of the barnyards connected to houses in the towns we went through. We saw a lot of this 48 years ago. We also decided that a real estate agent would starve in Germany. There are no houses for sale. When they do get a listing the smaller houses start at \$200,000 plus.

After leaving Marburg, we headed toward Paderborn, passing through Gottingen, Munchhausen (remember Baron Munchhausen of "*Were You There Charlie?*"), Frankenberg, Korbach, Brilon, Bredelar, Scherfede, and Lichtenau. These towns were very interesting and beautiful little villages. Looks like we are in ski country.

As we approached Paderborn we talked about the fierce fight the Germans gave us. It had been the Fort Knox of Germany. The Germans tossed all their soldiers from the armored school at us. We entered Paderborn on Easter Sunday. We found Paderborn a mass of ruins in 1945. This area is where General Rose was killed. There is no evidence of the scars of war but you can tell the difference in buildings. The newer ones replace all the rubble we remember.

Lale and I will never forget an incident at Marburg where we stopped for lunch. It was raining and we didn't want to get wet. I had picked up some of those 'new fangled' rations at the base of the 67th Armored (the ones you strike a match and heat up the water inside a plastic bag). Bill Elms (Little Bill) and Elmer Ekman had the same idea, so the four of us were permitted to stay in the bus as Roger locked us in.

Well, we had a fun time trying to figure out how to cook our lunch. Bill Elms and Elmer were as comical a pair as Lale and I had seen in a long time. Through trial and error we finally got our spaghetti heated up. It was delicious! Thanks, Bill and Elmer, for a very memorable 'lunch in a bus'.

We left Nordhausen and headed toward Leipzig. We passed through Sangerhausen and Berga. Berga is the town where I was when we received the good news that the war was over. This is the general area where most of us were when the war ended on May 8, 1945. So when I am asked where I was and what I was doing when the war ended, I say I was on guard duty in Berga, Germany, when my 1st Sergeant came to tell me the good news. "Hey, George Herman (that's what the guys called me), the war's over."

As we continued our trip toward Leipzig the shabby, drab, desolate towns and landscape persist. Houses are in need of repair and paint, streets are in disrepair, churches are without crosses and all look dilapidated. There are fewer cars and traffic. People walk around listless and there are few smiles. There are no cattle and very few dogs and cats. Once we saw a large grove of fruit trees which seemed out of character.

As we discussed what we were seeing on the tour bus, we began to ask questions, maybe make a few assumptions. I believe Jim Cronen said it best, "If you don't own something, why take care of it?" The workings of Communism! The Russians stripped East Germany and took title to all their land and homes. It just broke the people's will. When the Americans took over their sector of Germany, they not only gave everything back to the West Germans, they physically and financially assisted the West Germans.

There was a bright side of this day. We saw a successful operation of electric trolley cars in Nordhausen and Leipzig. Also, we observed large trucks hauling sugar beets and coal.

I kept promulgating the idea that if parents and high school kids can raise \$60,000 to \$100,000 for their high school bands to go to a major bowl game on New Year's Day just to perform for five minutes between halves, why not raise the money for a ten-day tour of East and West Germany. Give the kids one-half or a full credit and call this a "study of capitalism and communism".

As we neared Leipzig at dusk we noticed a large settlement. It was dark but there were no street lights. The houses were dark also. We would see an occasional light in a room. What an eerie feeling. We were surprised to pass one bedroom that was well lit and observed a woman standing in the window - nude.

We begin the last day of our push. We will drive via Delitzsch, Jessnitz, Raguhn, then west to Thurland and Quellendorf and on to Dessau. Dessau is the farthest advance the Third Armored made during the war. On April 23, 1945, we received orders to pull back. We were told to pull back to rest and tune up our equipment in preparation for the final assault of Berlin. This never happened, thank God. The war ended.

The tour today was emotional to many of us. Back on April 23, 1945, we were pulling out of our bivouac area amidst a barrage of incoming artillery and mortar fire. In our minds there was always the horrible fear of death during these last days of the war. Yes, Dessau, a town many of us will never forget. The day started hazy, but cleared later on. As we pulled out we realized even in daylight the place was still shabby and dirty.

We had an interesting stop at Raguhn. It was here that under the leadership of General Mark Clark the Americans met the Russians on the bridge and turned over the Eastern Territory of Germany to the Russians. We stopped at a restaurant for a pit stop. While we were there we all bought a snack and became aware that the townspeople were very curious about our group. The restaurant we were in had very high ceilings and a plank floor.

Aurio Pierro told us his experience at Raguhn back in 1945. He was with the Loveladys Task Force and their mission was to take the town at the crossroads that we were near. He told of his column being held back by an anti-tank gun or tank. Three of their tanks were knocked out. Lovelady asked Aurio if he knew where the firing was coming from. He wasn't sure. There was a tank that came into Aurio's view. He thought he had knocked it out. Before his crew could relax their tank was immobilized by a German bazooka. They were able to get the guy and, lo and behold, a large group paraded out and surrendered. After this objective Aurio's crew headed out to Thurland. Aurio was later able to identify the buildings where his crew encountered gunfire.

Some of the Loveladys Task Force were captured at Thurland. Later on Aurio's crew came upon these former prisoners of several hours. They were so happy to see Aurio's crew.

My diary says: "At 2:00 a.m. on April 16, 1945, we were alerted to small arms fire, what seemed to be a few hundred yards away. What happened, the Germans made a counter-attack and re-took the town down the road from us. Three GIs who escaped came running toward us to tell us the Germans were heading our way. We stood in readiness manning our guns. They never showed up. The next day our tanks and infantry recaptured the town, including 100 of our own men that were captured the night before."

On this trip I was able to identify an area where we had been bivouacked. I had an eerie feeling as we identified the area we were in when instructed to pull out under an artillery bombardment. I didn't realize that Dessau was such a pretty town.

Elmer Ekman, 83rd Recon, told about breathing a sigh of relief as he left Dessau. He said, "You know we all knew the war was nearly over." He was one of two men left from his 3rd platoon in D Company and boy, "I've come this far and I, like many others, didn't want to get hit on the last days."

I asked Lale and the other ladies to give us an overall impression of the area that we had been traveling through these past few days. These comments summarize the group's impression of East

Germany: "People look sad. There is an absence of farm animals, even dogs, chickens, and cats. The farm land is all weedy except for cash crops of sugar beets. There are no hay crops, nothing. East Germany is very depressing. The streets are dirty and need repair. A lot of buildings need a lot of repair and paint. Older buildings stand in shambles. They stopped short 45 years ago and haven't progressed at all. Suburbs are poorly lit at night. Just the main square in cities are lit at night (Leipzig as an example). The side roads off main highways are not paved, they are dusty dirt roads. The cobblestone roads in the town are very narrow. Sometimes our buses had to stop and let oncoming traffic pass. People don't even smile. Their clothing is very drab and shoddy. We are getting the feel of what the people of East Germany went through. As we head northeast toward Berlin we begin to notice improvements in the landscape. We are beginning to see more color, more flowers, and the land is being cared for better. We even passed a place selling swimming pools. We have just passed a church sitting there in ruins, near Duben."

We were grateful for the opportunity to take some detours, get off the main highways and have a chance to see some of these towns off the beaten trail. As we approach Coswig we find people staring at our two buses as if they have never seen anything like this before.

After the detour at Coswig we enter the Autobahn at Koselitz and find we are 66 miles from Berlin. We enjoyed watching a crew repair a septic tank at a rest stop. The foreman got mad at me as I talked to his crew. I was holding them up. Adam Eisenhauer came by and I asked him to find out what they were doing. He verified that it was the septic system serving the restaurant. The foreman then chased Ike off.

Our driver tells us that we are the first Americans the natives have seen since 1945. This is hard to believe. We encountered a collector of marks at this rest stop. You have to pay to use the facilities. They have people sitting at a table collecting money to use the bathroom. Ike got a kick out of listening the crew questioning why I was so nosey. "Why is he asking all those questions?" The crew asked Ike, "Do you think he has all the answers?"

Dennis informed us that we have traveled 3,200 kilometers since we arrived at Normandy. That according to Lale, equates to 2,000 miles. This doesn't count the channel crossing, our bus tour in England or our flight across the Atlantic.

We just crossed the old East/West Germany border as the old guard house stands idle. John-Paul says it used to take two hours for each tour bus to pass through the checkpoints. The Russians enjoyed toying around with the tourists. They would have all the people out of the bus and make them open their suitcases. They checked everything, even under the bus.

As we passed the border we saw crews working, still tearing down the wall that meandered along the border. We are beginning to see a traffic jam as we near Berlin. As we enter Berlin we see a hustling and bustling of people and cars. We run into a good old American type traffic jam. Young people are congregating in a festive mood. The sidewalks are crowded. We pass the Cadillac embedded in concrete at a 45 degree angle. We find this part of Berlin to be very beautiful with tree-lined streets. This town is alive and it's only 4:00 on a Thursday afternoon.

We have just completed our final push. We arrived at the Best Western Hotel President in Berlin. Not far from us stands the old church that was bombed and destroyed. It has been kept this way as a grim reminder of the war. There are many new buildings which emerged from the rubble of World War II.

— *Bill Ruth*
Service Company
33rd Armored Regiment

Chapter 23

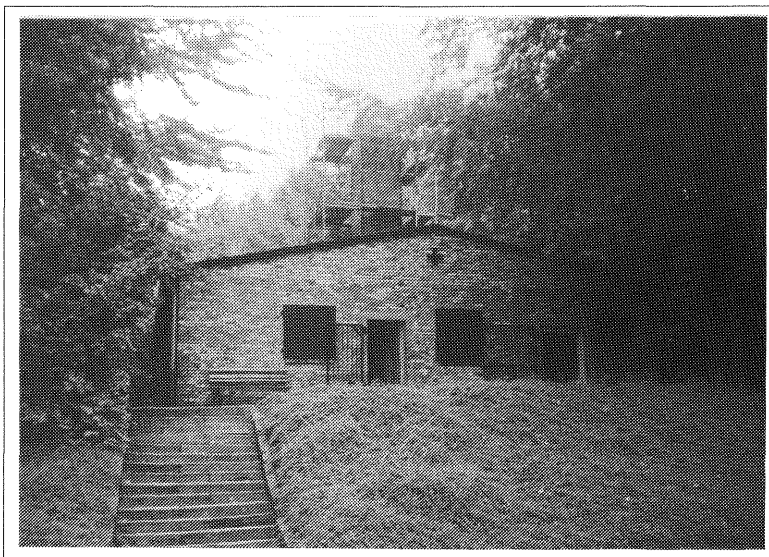
Nordhausen, Leipzig, Berlin

On Saturday, September 17, we were preparing to spend what was probably the most interesting, educational, and sombre day of our trip. It was a day that would take us across the border of what was East Germany on our visit to the Nordhausen concentration camp.

We crossed the west to east border at 11:30 am. with the zig zagging fence that was constructed. (Boy, that put a lot of people to work when they built that fence.) Typical remarks heard on my tape: *Unbelievable, difference of night and day; they haven't repaved the streets since World War II; many cobblestone streets are dirty; how drab the buildings are, they haven't had any paint in years; the buildings need lots of repair; many houses are abandoned, the houses don't have any flowers; no flowers in window boxes as in West Germany; the fields are unkempt; we didn't see any cattle, not even dogs or cats; there is less traffic, people can't afford cars; in Nordhausen, we saw a lot of street sales, most manned by foreigners; clothing people wearing is old and worn out; car dealerships beginning to show up; no time to build buildings; they are operating out of tents or sheds. We see community gardens where there are many people living in small 8 x 10 sheds. At first we thought they were tool sheds. But then we saw people living in them using their furniture.*

We went through Bad Driburg, Brakel, Godelheim, Beverungen, Uslar, Hardegsen, Northeim, Gieboldehausen, Herzberg, Gunzerode, and on to Nordhausen. Will we ever forget Nordhausen? Some on our tour felt it was the low point of our trip. Why? Because of the nature of the camp, the cruelty, the atrocities that were reviewed. This we wanted to forget.

We saw the building where their museum is housed. They have only begun on this project since the unification of East and West Germany. They are asking everyone to submit anything or information that may help to enhance the museum.



The Nordhausen Concentration Camp still contains two large ovens. Photo by Carl Tucker.

We saw the gas chamber, crematorium, ovens, and what was left of the barracks foundations and concrete floors. We viewed the monument they have erected. What we were looking at in this elaborate setup was merely the barracks for housing the slave laborers. The men were marched to and from the factory tunnel.

The following briefly describes the tunnel: Dora was a factory in itself. It consisted of two parallel tunnels driven into the side of a hill for a distance of two miles. The tunnels were built in the late 1800s. The tunnels were formed by



Carl Tucker with statues honoring prisoners of the Nordhausen Concentration Camp. Photo by Olga Tucker.

digging for limestone. So they were already there waiting for Hitler to decide to build his V2 factory safe from bombing raids. Here the slave laborers turned out the V1 and V2 weapons. There were side entrances to these tunnels. Some of the entrances were closed, shut during the war by allied bombing. The tunnels are now being used by many corporations for storage of materials that need to be stored in cool places. There was a lot of beer in the tunnels.

— *Bill Ruth*
Service Company
33rd Armored Regiment

We visited Leipzig and Berlin two years ago when we made the trip with John O'Brien's Last Push tour. At that time we found these places to be very dismal and about fifty years behind the times. West Berlin was not so distressed but East Germany depressed us.

On this trip, those of us who made the trip two years ago, found a great improvement. Windows were washed, curtains hung, flowers planted, fields plowed and planted, and streets cleaned. There were smiles on people's faces. There were cars everywhere, even car dealerships. These towns are bustling places of rebuilding.



Maureen Connors and Lale Ruth.

Outside Leipzig there was construction of a new sprawling shopping mall. It looks like it will compete with that large mall in Minneapolis that people rave about.

There was construction everywhere in Nordhausen. There were new grave markers in the cemetery. The others were taken by the Communist Reign for their own use in construction. Everywhere there are stacks of lumber, plastic pipe for water lines, brick or stone. There was scaffolding on many of the churches and other large buildings. The paint-up-fix-up mode prevailed.



People busy with water line construction.

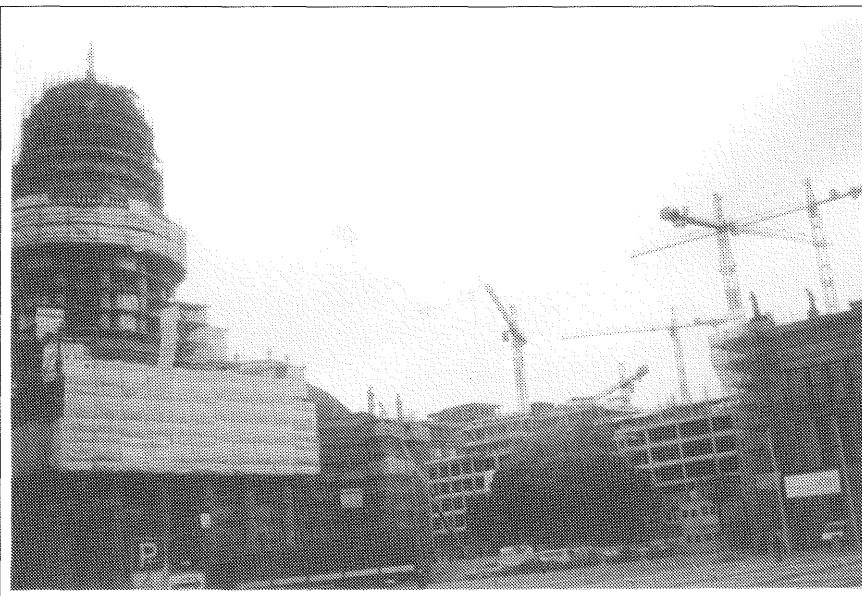
I would love to have a penny for every foot of scaffolding we saw in Berlin. I would be very rich. The streets were closed because of construction. Large cranes were everywhere — on one corner we counted eight cranes. Two years ago we saw none. If anyone is out of work in these places it is because they don't really seem to want to work. The jobs are there.

We are sure common market money is behind all this but it does put a brighter outlook on their city.

— *Lale Ruth*



Smiling town folk.



Cranes in East Berlin

Monday morning many of us took off on our own. We bumped into each other as we strolled the streets and everyone kept saying to go to the KaDeWe Department Store. It was most unusual. The vast array of consumer goods was mind boggling. Most unusual was the fish market found on the sixth floor. We found the goods were very expensive.

We Americans, so used to shopping in the suburban shopping centers where we have the convenience of parking, couldn't figure out how the crowds that we saw could drive downtown, fight the traffic, pay their parking and then go to the sixth floor to buy fish or bakery items. It was most unusual. We later learned that this was the largest department store on the continent. We could not get over how "chick" the women dressed to go shopping. The salespeople were well dressed also. Yes, people in Berlin dress to shop. We learned that KaDeWe means "Kurfhaus De West," or "The Department Store of the West."

As we walked along the streets of Berlin we mused as we saw all races, colors, and nationalities and suggested that Hitler would have a fit if he saw all this co-mingling with the super race he had tried to develop. We listened to Chinese speaking German to a group of Africans.

We stopped and studied the plaque and monument to the victims of all the concentration camps. It said, "*Let us not forget.*"

We can't figure out how these people can afford to live. We studied a window where they had electric ranges. They were priced in the neighborhood of \$2,500 to \$3,000, not Deutsch marks, but calculated into dollars. (We all got pretty good at this, remember?) There was a gas range at \$1,500 and another gas range for \$900.

We saw the balcony where John F. Kennedy made his famous remark, "*Ich Ein Berliner.*"

Driving through Berlin we realized that the city was not only one of concrete but there was also plenty of greenery on the beautiful tree-lined streets. We noticed the church bells ringing. We were told that young people wait until Friday afternoon to get married so they can have the whole weekend to party.

We saw the Tempelhoff Airport which played a major role during the blockade in 1948-49. The Russians tried to push the Americans, British, and French out of Berlin but after eleven months the Soviets gave up. The armada of planes that hauled supplies to keep the Germans alive prevailed. There is a monument dedicated to the 73 airmen that lost their lives during this period. When you consider that a plane was either landing or taking off every 60 seconds during this period, there had to be some crashes. As we went through the seventeen sections of Berlin (they are similar to boroughs) we were informed that the degree of destruction ranged from 65% to 95% during World War II.

We learned that many Turks and Italians came to Germany in the 60s and 70s due to the lack of available manpower. Consequently, many of the foreigners who came in as laborers have achieved success and wealth.

Now there are many Romanians, Russians, Asians, Arabians, Saudis, and East Germans migrating to Berlin causing the problems we have been reading about. Unemployment is rising. We learned that in Berlin 60% are Lutheran, 12% Catholic, and 28% have no religion.

We visited the Brandenburg Gate. We enjoyed the "street hawkers" selling their wares. Many European cities in the early days had walls around the city for protection. Of course, they needed a gate to enter or leave. Thus the origin of the Brandenburg Gate.

Near the Brandenburg Gate is the Reichstag. We heard so much about this during Hitler's heyday. In this immediate area, part of the Berlin wall is left standing. It is a reminder and memorial to those that lost their lives as they tried to escape to freedom.

Actually there were two walls. There was a buffer zone which was a no man's land. A person trying to flee had two walls to get through. If caught between the two walls he was like a caged animal with very little chance to escape the gunfire of the guards.

Checkpoint Charlie was a very interesting stop. Trying to visualize what it was like back in the days of going back and forth between East and West Germany was a sobering thought.

There was a sign on the wall that says, "There are times, people, and events on which and only whom history can pass final judgment. The only thing that remains to be done by the individual is to report on what he saw happening and what he heard." This was a quote from Titus Livius.

The following quote was also on the wall: "Some called this the 8th wonder of the world or the monument of the century. Historically, the first border produced in series erected around a whole country and a whole city. This wall is left as a reminder of grief of the Hitler war and subsequent division of Germany and Europe and is to be a monument for human disillusion at the same time. Worldwide it was believed that the structural reformability of the GDR (German Democratic Republic) and not only the desire for freedom and the strength of the non-violent struggle from Moscow to East Berlin, from Leipzig to Warsaw and Prague and Budapest."

*— Bill Ruth
Service Company
33rd Armored Regiment*



The Berlin Wall. Photo by Carl Tucker.

The wall is 160 kilometers long and was built in 1961. Germans were not permitted to cross the wall. After much bitter debate and ten years later the Russians finally gave in and allowed the East and West Germans 30 days visitation rights per year. A total of 500 people were killed trying to escape. We also learned that Berlin is 345 square miles and has a population of about 4 million people. Berlin has 23 boroughs. You can still see war damage from World War II. A lot of graffiti can be found on walls of buildings and side streets.

Our tour guide told us over the bus microphone that the rubble trucked from Berlin made a major mountain. Now united, Berlin is still recovering and we counted over one hundred sky cranes, working to recreate the once beautiful city. Not far from Brandenburg Gate, she pointed to a pile of broken concrete in the center of a large, vacant field.

"That's what is left of Hitler's bunker," she explained, "where he committed suicide."

And looking out of the bus window, I thought: How close he came. How very close. Had he developed the atomic bomb first, within forty-eight hours an SS military governor would have occupied every state capital in America; and their first order of business would have been immediate construction of slave camps and cremation ovens!"

I stared out across the vacant field at the pile of rubble and thought: How proper. A most fitting monument to a madman who came close to plunging the world back into bondage and worse.

Officially and symbolically, it was the end of our trip. The next morning we were at Heathrow in London where we transferred to a B-747 for the seven-hour trip home. Once out over the ocean, when the big plane leveled at 35,000 feet, there was time to begin the memory process of all we had seen.

— *Dick Goodie*
486th Battalion



Left to right: Bob Young, Dennis O'Brien, Don Dill, Bill and Lale Ruth, and Gene Turcotte, in Berlin.

Chapter 24

Farewell to Europe

The members of the tour spent nineteen days together. We experienced many happy and emotional moments. We were welcomed with open arms, flowers, wine, champagne, beer and sweets throughout Europe. We had become one big family.

Our farewell dinner was held at the restaurant in the Hotel President around 7:00 p.m. There were a few speakers. I am sorry to say that I didn't have a chance to record any of the speeches.

We had a great surprise!! One tour member was hospitalized a few days for a lung infection. He was released in the afternoon of our last evening together. This was a happy moment to see Jim and Doris there sharing our farewell dinner.

After dinner there were a few pictures taken of our group. Before I realized it the hour was getting late and time was running out. It was impossible to say good-bye to everyone.

The next morning our group wake-up call was 4:30 a.m. with breakfast at 5:30 a.m., leaving at 6:30 a.m. for the Tegel Airport with a departing flight of 8:30 a.m. There wasn't time to say many good-byes.

It was a very emotional time for me. The tour was splitting up with sixty-one going home and twenty going on to England.



— *Rosalie Root*
Husband served with
Service Company, 54th AR





John O'Brien receiving his birthday gift from Rev. Walter Stitt at the Hotel President in Berlin. Photo by Bernie Orie.

Betty Coons, John and Dennis O'Brien.



Bills Elms with the Howards.

Photos by Rosalie Root.

John O'Brien's parting remarks.



Following is the "Farewell Speech" that was given at our farewell dinner:

F"The tour two years ago Mama and I went on we thought was the greatest. It was until this 50th Anniversary with all these people and children giving us such a tumultuous welcome everywhere in England, France, Belgium, and yes, even in Stolberg, Germany. You just try to tell the people the best you can about it. Mama and I hope we have contributed our part. You people have all been so nice. You are welcome to come and visit us in what we like to think of as the "Beautiful State of Maine". How can we thank them enough, John and Dennis O'Brien, for putting two tours together like these. Let us never forget the people we represent and all the boy's that weren't able to be here. God Bless you all and God Bless America."

— *Eugene Turcotte*
486th Battalion, 3rd AR



Gene Turcotte driving this 'ducee' truck in the Fourmies parade of vehicles.



*Our drivers, John Paul and Roger.
Photo by Carl Tucker.*

Chapter 25

England

Dottie and I arrived in England on September 15. We thought we might help Martyn Lock with the preparations for the arrival of the English tour. Martyn had taken care of every thing. We did go to Stockton House on Sunday to talk about the scheduled visit the following Thursday and at that time we met the new owners, Cathy and Chris Langridge. They gave us a private tour. I was billeted at Stockton House in 1943.

The caretaker, a woman they had met previously with Martyn had taken over my digs. I was certainly surprised to see what they had done to our bare room over the garage. The room was 45-50 feet with a pot-belly stove in the center and bunk beds for about twenty GIs. It was now an apartment of four rooms.

On Thursday at 11:00 a.m. Chris and Cathy met us and greeted the busload of veterans. They had moved into Stockton House two and a half weeks prior to our visit. They are a delightful couple with two teen-age sons. Cathy is American, Chris is a graduate of Cambridge University and was a member of the rowing team. They are now renovating Stockton House. It had been vacant for many years. He took us to the Chapel and showed us where he was going to place our plaque and also stated that he would like some pictures and mementos of the Third Armored personnel who stayed there. Stockton House is over 400 years old. The ceilings are a thing of beauty; cement carvings of people and flowers, immense fireplaces measuring at least twelve feet across. The Langridges took the entire busload through this beautiful old house and, of course, served tea and cakes in the Chapel.

Oh yes, I forgot to mention that Dottie and I stayed in Warminster at Ye Old Belle Hotel. It was very nice and we enjoyed the food. Warminster, the home of the 33rd AR, was a mid-size English town and is still a military post for the British Army. Martyn also lives here and we explored the

town from one end to the other. Dottie bought me a walking stick that everyone liked. I told them it was purchased right in their town!!!



Gene Turcotte, John O'Brien, Erwin Sadow, Marvin Dickinson.

On September 20 we joined the bus tour and stayed at the Potters Heron Hotel in Ampfield. The front of the hotel has a thatched roof, the rooms are nice and the breakfasts were buffet with more than enough delicious food. We were ready for the day's adventures. The bus ride to Wincanton was two hours, leaving at 1:00 p.m.

Following is a brief summary of the numerous events that we participated in during the next two days.

September 20, Wincanton - 3:00 p.m. (Division Rear)

A reception with coffee, tea and cakes.

September 20, Cucklington - 4:30 p.m. (143 Signal Company)

The whole town was out to greet us with speeches, coffee, tea, and cakes.

September 20, Bruton - 6:00 p.m. (Division Headquarters)

Pims party at the Redlynch House. This is a beautiful manor house. We were served Pims cup and delicacies. We were shown the tree that was planted by General Watson. There was a large turnout and many accolades for the Third Armored.

September 20, Frome - 7:30 p.m. (54th Armored Artillery Battalion)

We were greeted by Town Crier, Stephen Haberfield, who was the "best dressed" at the World Championship 1993. There was a big reception upstairs in a local restaurant. At the close of this day we certainly put on a little weight.

September 21, Milton-on-Stour - 9:30 a.m.

September 21, East Knoyle - 11:00 a.m. (486th A.A.)

There was a plaque ceremony at the Church of St. Mary.

September 21, West Knoyle - 12:30 p.m.

There was another reception with coffee, tea and cakes. People asked about Colonel Dunnington. I told them he was doing fine but had a few eye problems. They must have loved this man, just like his men loved him.

September 21, Mere - 1:30 p.m. (703 T.D.)

The whole town turned out for the plaque ceremony. We had a light lunch.

September 21, Longbridge Deverill - 3:30 p.m. (83 Recon)

This was a big ceremony with lots of press and picture taking. The plaque was embedded in tank tracks. Very impressive. The townspeople knew a lot about the 83rd and asked a lot of questions. Children made pottery coasters with the Spearhead logo and name of town. It was lovely.

September 21, Sutton Veny - 5:00 p.m. (36th Armored)

Once again a big turnout to welcome us. The Vicar gave a sermon and placed the plaque at the church entrance. More tea, coffee and snacks.

September 21, Warminster - 6:00 p.m. (33rd Armored, 391st A, 67th Armored FA)

A sermon was delivered at a very old church built about 1400 AD. It was sure cold inside. The British Legion was represented with flags. The history of the Third Armored Division was distributed by Erwin Sadow. We then walked to St. Boniface where we had a delicious buffet supper. The mayor of Warminster, Ann Coventry, a very beautiful lady, gave a speech and a heartfelt welcome.

September 22, Foothill Bishop - 9:00 a.m. (23rd Engineering Battalion)

A large crowd greeted us at the church. The plaque was imbedded in the stonewall at the entrance of the church. There was lots of cheering.

September 22, Stockton House - 10:30 a.m. (CCA, 45th Medical, Training Headquarters)

The Langridge's gave a guided tour of Stockton House. The plaque will be mounted in the Chapel.

September 22, Codford - 11:00 a.m. (32nd AR and Maintenance Supply Battalion)

This was the biggest celebration. It started at 11:00 a.m. and continued until 8:00 p.m. At 11:00 a.m. we were welcomed at the George Hotel. At 11:45, in St. Mary's Church, the Rev. John Tipping, Rector and Honorary Chaplain to the Codford Branch of the Royal British Legion (like our American Legion) gave a resounding sermon. He knew more about our Third Armored than we did. It was something special. I am sure a copy of this sermon will be printed somewhere in this book.

At 12:45 p.m., at the Codford Club, there was a most generous and elaborate buffet for us and invited guests with numerous speeches and presentations. At 2:00 we toured Stonehenge. At 5:30 p.m. there was a tea dance at Codford Club. Again, there was more food and drinks. It was said that it took a celebration like this to bring out the people. It was special to them. Erwin danced with Martyn's mother and aunt. Bill Ruth had several dances and kisses.

At 7:00 p.m., at the Woolstore Theatre, which used to be NAFFI (like USO) during 1943-44. The show consisted of songs from the World War II era. The local townspeople were in the show. They entertain in this theatre all year. It was very entertaining and very well done. They also sang British songs of that era.

After the show we went to the George Hotel across the street. It was a full, wonderful day. No one wanted to leave the pub. We had so much fun there.

I would like to praise John O'Brien and Martyn Lock for arranging this great program. They tried their best to knock us out, but the old Spearhead spirit kept us going. It was a great tour. The British people treated us like royalty wherever we went. They appreciate all we have done to help secure their freedom.

As you know, Martyn and I have been corresponding for almost three years. He must have written at least 500 letters to fellow Spearheaders, V.I.P.s, Generals, Ambassadors, Senators, etc.,



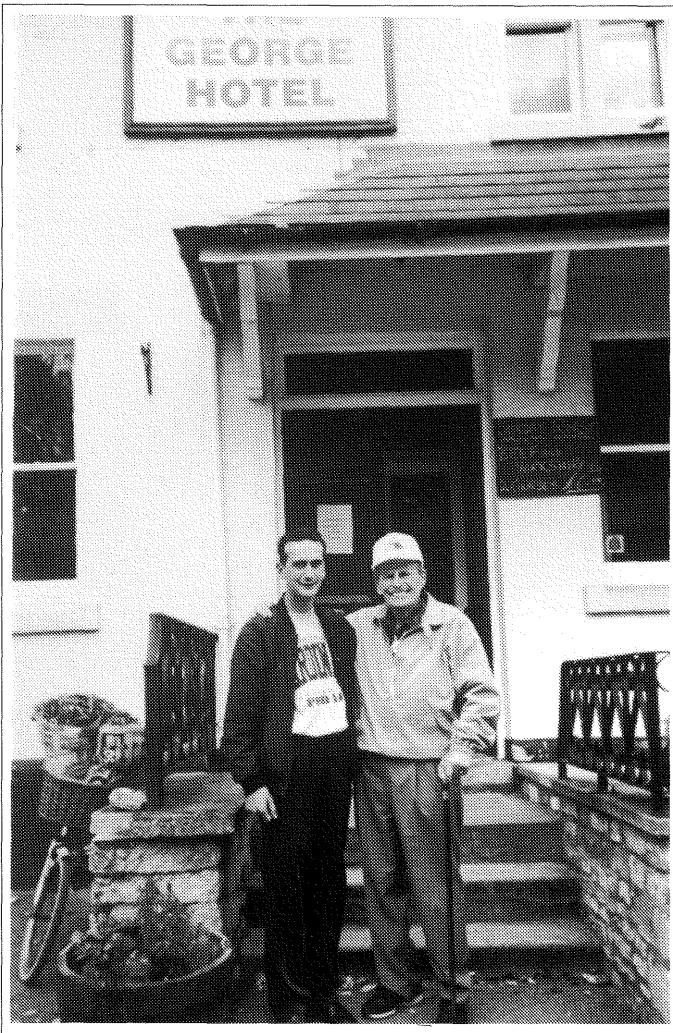
trying to set up a tank memorial for the Third Armored. He finally located a Sherman tank, M4A4, on the Salisbury Plains firing range. It was missing two boggie wheels and the track on the left side. He had been promised help by several people and none came through. He finally ran into a fellow by the name of Malcolm Beacon, a tank restorer, who promised to help.

Malcolm could not get our tank fixed up in time, but he and Martyn managed to get the tank on a retriever and bring it to Codford for us to see. They were supposed to stop the tour and let us view our tank on the way to Stonehenge. They stopped the bus for a split minute and drove on.

Florence and Dick Roemer.

Our President from the National Chapter had a citation made for Martyn to be presented to him for his hard work on behalf of the Third Armored. A new *Spearhead in the West* book was also to be given him, at 12:45 p.m. at the Codford Club with all the townspeople and those of us on the tour. The emcee, a Brigadier, was praising the Third Armored. When he had finished I asked to make a presentation to Martyn Lock. He said, "Wait a minute, I'll be right back." He talked to some of his friends and came back and said, "No, give it to him on the bus." I was madder than hell, and told him, "If it wasn't for Martyn Lock, none of us would be here and this affair would not have been arranged for this 50th commemorative year."

We ended up giving Martyn the gifts on the bus and I told the story to our group. Bill Ruth got up and took his Third Armored watch off and gave it to Martyn. Tears came to his eyes. He was overwhelmed with the presentations and the love that everyone on the bus tour showed him. I think everyone gave him a kiss. Reverend Tipping was on the bus. He came over to me and said, "Erwin, don't feel too bad, this is a British trait. They are all V.I.P.s retired from the Army and Martyn is a cab driver. It is class distinction. I know Martyn had a very nice day. He, in my estimation, is a very nice young man."



Martyn Lock and Erwin Sadow.



Erwin Sadow, January 17, 1944, taken by the south gate of Stockton House.

A Special Word to All Spearheaders:

In every small town we visited elderly ladies showed us pictures from 1943-44 asking us if we knew them. ARE THEY LOOKING FOR YOU???

A Little Humor:

Bill Elms, the lover boy was looking for his old "love". He seemed to always be talking to some lady???

Millie Putnam, plumbing corrected when Dottie walked her to emergency in Warminster.

Millie Putnam was locked in an elevator alone for 45 minutes at the Royal Horseguards Hotel. Then it was she who set the fire alarm off twice and we all scurried to the lobby. It seems she changed her smoking room to a non-smoking room because that is all they had.

On our return to Ampfield one night the bus driver was reading his map and noted that he had to detour because the overpass on the road was too low. So he picked another route. He ventured upon a cement road that was no wider than a sidewalk and had so much foliage that we thought we were in a Malaysian jungle. Branches were hitting the roof of the bus and it reminded Dottie and me of when we were in South Africa and the baboons were banging the top of the van. We got a little stuck and since it was getting late we were all sort of planning to sleep on the bus overnight. The driver said, "No way." He would get us out. He sure did and liked us so much because not a one of us complained. We were giddy with laughter and, of course, each Spearheader had a plan of action. We did get back to the hotel late. We all did laugh. The bus driver said he never had such a great group. Spearheaders we are!

— *Dottie and Erwin Sadow*
CCA

Whoopie! Today (September 20) we gain one hour. Our wake up call is 4:30 a.m. After breakfast we 'load up' and leave at 6:30 a.m. This is our last Voyages Emile Weber bus ride.

At the Tefel Airport we board British Airways and fly to Heathrow Airport in London. Heathrow, a busy airport, has a plane landing every two minutes and six miles apart. After going through customs John O'Brien leads us to another bus. Our driver is Richard Powell. As he helps us on or off the bus, he calls some of us 'luv' or 'me darlin'. Mind you the 'some of us' were women.

We have three new passengers: Mr. and Mrs. Dave Putnam, California, and Marvin Dickinson, Kansas. Later Mr. and Mrs. Erwin Sadow join us also.

Bill Elms told about an amusing incident that took place a long time ago. General Rose was using a particular house for his headquarters. Whenever the generator was turned on, the fuse would always blow. Elms, being with the Adjutant General, said that he might raise a ruckus but he would locate the problem. He connected wires together and when the smoke spewed, he found that a bullet was lodged in the wood and was touching the wire. He fixed the problem, said 'bye-bye' and was gone. Has he changed in fifty years? Not at all.

We learned from our bus driver that in English weights, a stone is fourteen pounds.

We arrive at the Potters Heron Hotel near Romsey, Hampshire. This is a very attractive hotel with a traditional thatched roof. Soon we are back on the bus to make a 3:00 p.m. appointment at Wincanton.

The countryside is dotted with hills and meadows inhabited by sheep and cattle. The trees and shrubs are of many sizes and varieties, some starting to take on their fall colors. In some fields we see what appears to be wheat stubble in Windrows. Quaint houses are nestled amid the greenery. The very old and very large Salisbury Cathedral sits off in the distance. The English countryside has not disappointed my imagination.

Wincanton is famous for its steeplechase races. We arrived at Wincanton and were given a lovely reception, tea, coffee, and cakes. The people are so friendly. They told us about a B17 coming home from a mission. After dropping its load, it was hit by flack. It sent SOS signals and tried landing in Spain. It was disabled in Toulon, France. The plane made it to this area and crashed. No one survived. This summer a dedication ceremony was held and one thousand people attended.

We departed Wincanton at 4:00 p.m. and made a stop at Cucklington Village Hall. It sits alone by the side of the road. Fifty years ago it was used by the USO. Here Richard enjoyed visiting with area farmers.

During the war Richard received a back injury and compound fractures in his hand while in Cologne, Germany. He was first sent to Riems, France, for surgery and later to the hospital at Blandford, England, where his fingers had to be reset. Blandford is only twenty-five miles from Cucklington. We were told that the name has been altered.

We were to arrive at Bruton at 6:00 p.m. Since we were a tad ahead of schedule we agreed to visit a pub. The Red Lion Pub was within earshot so that was our choice. No one under fourteen was allowed. I told the proprietor that I was fourteen-and-a-half, could I please enter — no problem. I had my first ale in an honest-to-goodness English pub. Everyone sang and had a happy time.



*Town Crier, Stephen Haberfield, and Olga Tucker.
Photo by Carl Tucker.*

We were back on the bus, heading for our next appointment, but not for long. The bus had a coughing spell so we sat by the side of the road. Actually we were on the bus and there was very little passing room. A line of shrubs scratched one side of the bus while on the other side we watched a herd of cows graze. While we waited for the bus to be fixed, Elmer told us the story about the man who bought a canary that was old and one-legged. The buyer complained to the seller. The seller asked, "What do you want? A singer or a dancer?" Still we waited. Cars went by, even a library bus passed. At last the cough was cured. We were late for our appointment. We threaded through a tree-lined lane to get to Redlynch House. This place was used

as a headquarters for General Rose. Presently seventeen people live in the two domiciles which are treated as condominiums. The hosts had a Pims party for us. I apologized to a lady for being late. She giggled and said, as she leaned against the wall, "We thought there wouldn't be anything left after all our tasting." The drinks were made with a lemonade base with gin and floating veggies.

The sun was low in the sky when we left Redlynch to go to Frome. Again we were greeted with overwhelming kindness. This time one of the greeters was Stephen Haberfield, World Champion Best Dressed Town Crier. We walked up a steep hill to the George. A table of lovely food and drink was set for us in the Royal Navy room. A live band played for dancing and listening.

We left the party by 10:00 p.m. or thereabouts, to go to our hotel. We finally arrived at the hotel around midnight. We knew that our bus driver was lost when we were creeping down this very narrow lane, trees scratching both sides of the bus as well as its top. I'm just glad that he was doing the driving. I would still be looking for a way out. We were all very tired after our hectic day of parties, bus breakdown, and getting lost.

— *Richard and Florence Roemer*
Company F, 33rd AR
Reg. 3rd, A Division

Thursday, September 22, loomed as a lovely morning with some cloudiness and just enough chill in the air to remind us that fall is not far behind.

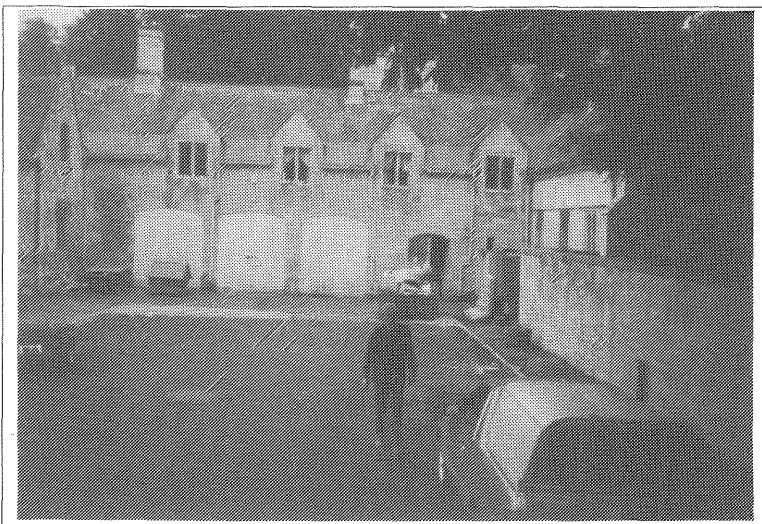
At ten bells we arrived at the estate called Stockton House. This house was built in 1580. The home had not been inhabited for a number of years. But recently a young couple by the name of Chris and Cathy Langridge have purchased it. They, along with their two young sons, are in the process of moving in and at the time same time are renovating it. Cathy is from Maryland. Chris must have been an oarsman for Cambridge University according to the display of oars and trophies above the massive fireplace in the main room at the entrance to the house.

Stockton House was used as headquarters for General Hickey during World War II. Erwin Sadow, who served as radio operator for the general, pointed out his living quarters. They were located above the service doors.

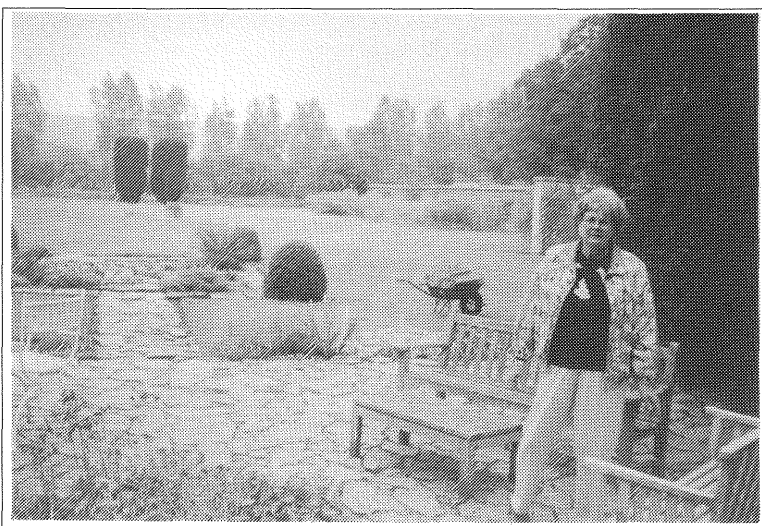
Mrs. Langridge prepared and served tea and coffee in a room near a garden area.



John O'Brien and Richard Roemer at Stockton House.



Erwin Sadow's quarters were above the white doors.



Florence Roemer in the garden area at Stockton House.



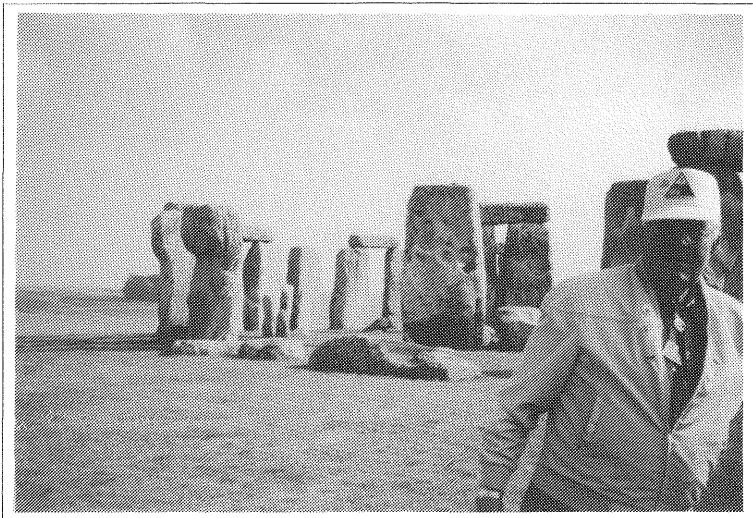
St. Mary's Church, Codford.

We took our leave and went to Codford to the St. George Hotel, where there was a welcoming coffee. Here there were soldiers in army vehicles. We were invited to ride in them. Several of the ladies opted to ride in the back of a truck to make the trek up the hill to St. Mary's Church. This beautiful old church sits on a hillside with an expanse of green lawns and a backdrop of trees. Tombstones are planted on either side of the walkway leading to the entrances. Inside the church we participated in a service commemorating the visit of veterans of the Third Armored Division (Spearhead) to Codford. The service was led by the Rev. John Tipping, Rector and honorary Chaplain to the Codford Branch of the Royal British Legion. The national flags were laid on the altar and after Reveille, wreaths were laid. The hymns, sermons, and prayers were beautiful expressions of thanksgiving and praise to God for all His mercies and to remember those who, in the example of Christ, laid down their lives in the cause of justice. When the service concluded we went to the Codford Club for lunch and visiting.

During my visit with Rector Tipping, I was told that the one person responsible for putting all this together was Martyn Lock. His efforts have helped elevate cooperation between the communities through Wilshire and the surrounding towns. Martyn also made sure that the people of Codford received a printed history of the Third Armored Division accomplishments. When we again boarded the bus for departure, Erwin Sadow presented Martyn Lock with a citation and Bill Ruth presented him with a wrist watch.

Our tour guide for the afternoon was Romy Wyeth. We traveled through the Salisbury Plains and our destination was Stonehenge. A vast military training area has been in the Plains for one hundred years.

The Stonehenge is an odd circular array of huge ancient stones jutting out of a pre-historic landscape. The purpose for the existence of the henge is shrouded in old legends and new theories. The period of the construction at Stonehenge covered 550 years. Quoting Romy, she states, "In the early Bronze Age between 2000 BC and 1500 BC, the powerful dynasties with their great flocks and herds invaded the plains. They traded in weapons and bronze tools manufactured on the continent and into their graves they took the evidence of their wealth - pottery, weaponry, jewelry, and sometimes tools." These burial mounds are still obvious in the landscape.



Richard Roemer at Stonehenge.

We returned to Codford for tea followed by a tea dance. Later in the evening we went to the community theater for fun filled entertainment of poetry and musical numbers date to the World War II era. And when the curtain comes down on the final patriotic performance it is time to bid farewell to the beautiful people of Codford and return to the Potters Heron Hotel.

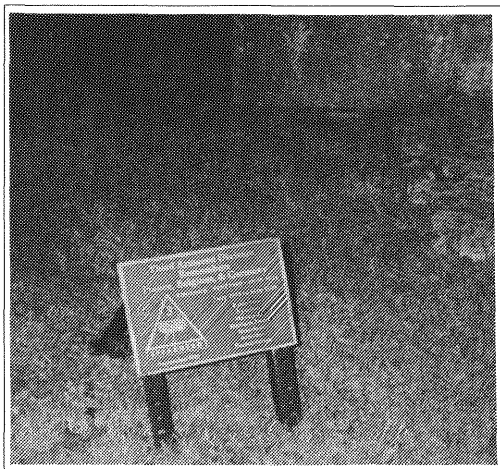
— *Florence Roemer*



Right to left: Richard Roemer, Bill Elms, Martyn Lock, Erwin Sadow, Carl Tucker.

In 1943 if one were driving from Wincanton to Bruton in Somerset County, about half the distance one would come upon a road leading off to the left. If one drove down the road a short distance and turned left one would enter the 1943 Redlynch Estate, and soon come upon a great building which was the site of the Division Headquarters Company. Although the building is still there, the estate has been considerably rearranged into what seems to be two adjacent buildings. The old entrance mentioned previously no longer exists, at any rate one could not use same to enter Redlynch. The new entrance is located just prior to the aforementioned road to the left. It was always a lovely area and still is, however there has been a metamorphosis into condominiums. The rest of the estate is still there, including the lake and the swans. Obviously, one would have to be pretty well off to live there.

The residents gave us a hearty welcome with refreshments and food and we were shown around the immediate area. They wanted to hear from us, as the only one present who had lived at the Redlynch Estate in September of 1943. Several people asked me to say a few words. I first asked if the swans were still as mean as they were in 1943-44. There was much laughter about that as well as verification that they are still mean. I told the audience of our arrival from the United States and that a British Sergeant-Major was assigned to us, to show us the ropes as it were. We still have nothing to resemble a British Sergeant-Major. This one had been in Africa and at Dunkirk, so he knew what he was about. I told the audience that one evening he showed us the way to Bruton across the farm fields and that he introduced us to the pubs of Bruton. We came back with him that evening feeling pretty good and singing and stumbling along the way. He was a terrific guy and after a short time left us to return to his own unit. Our hosts enjoyed the stories, and we lifted the glasses once again before leaving for another rendezvous.



Our plaque in Redlynch.

Our visit to Codford in Somerset, England, was a very special visit indeed. It all began one fine morning at St. Mary's Anglican Church, where British and American Brass were in evidence, plus many local officials and townsfolk. There was a special memorial service in the church that day and a fine talk by the Anglican Priest. He certainly had done his homework, so to speak, because he even mentioned the sardine rations in the California desert.

One very amusing story he told took place on the Salisbury Plains, where, as many will recall, we often were on maneuvers. Shepherders could run sheep in certain areas, provided they were moved out of the way when necessary. The sheep followed well worn paths. He pointed out that one shepherd passed soldiers training nearby who could not see the worn sheep paths which, at a certain point, turned sharply to the right. As the lead sheep reached the turning point, the shepherd shouted, "right wheel". The sheep immediately turned right to the utter amazement of the troops!



The lady in the hat is the Mayor.



The Tea Dance in Codford.

He gave a wonderful tribute to the the Third Armored Division and to General Rose. It was pointed out that the Division was first into Germany, first through the Siegfried Line, first to take a German town, and made special reference of the brilliant maneuver of General Rose, after crossing the Rhine - 100 miles through the enemy lines in 24 hours! Also, he sadly mentioned that General Rose was shot from a Tiger Tank near Paderborn. The situation at Nordhausen, where the V2 and V1 which were targeted toward England, were manufactured by slave labor working under inhuman conditions inside the mountains. Many of us recall the walking laborers who were so very thin from lack of food.

After the services we boarded the bus to visit other places. We were due to come back that evening for special entertainment. We traveled to Stonehenge for a guided tour and then returned to Codford for tea and a Tea Dance before going on to the theater.

That night we were guests of the entire community. The people of the town had worked long and hard and prepared a musical presentation. They did a terrific job and were marvelous singers. The songs were from the Civil War, the Boer War, World War I, and World War II, including, of course, *Lili Marlene*. I recorded the church service and the song fest on dictation cassettes and then transferred them to regular size cassettes (boosting the volume a bit) so that they might be enjoyed by all. After the entertainment we repaired to a local pub and soon the place was filled with the townspeople. We were thanking them all for that they had done for us. They told us that the townspeople had been at odds with one another about various things, and that our coming had brought the town together. We drank beer, sang, talked with all about the wonderful service and entertainment that had been presented to us. Eventually we had to leave amid hugs, handshakes, and kisses.

— *Frank Sanders*
Division Headquarters

Accepting the plaque at East Knoyle where my outfit, the 486th AAA (AW) Battalion had been stationed in England, I mentioned two English boys who would come down to the gate and we would give them candy, gum, etc. Sure enough, out of the crowd stepped a fellow saying he was one of them. He had been ten-years-old and his brother was twelve-years-old. I said, "You boys were *red-headed*". He said that was right and that he wished that his older brother could have been here, too. Imagine after fifty years something like this happening. I wondered over the years if something like this would happen and it did.

— *Eugene Turcotte*
486th AAA (AW) Battalion
3rd Armored Division

First of all the Potters Heron Hotel in England is probably the most unique and prettiest place one could find to stay at, near Ampfield, in a beautiful woody setting and everything was so "Englishy". Even the pumping of the toilet to get it to flush! I believe our visit to Codford was most memorable for me. I had stayed in the Codford-Warminster area for nine months before the invasion and it really seemed strange to be back here after fifty years. I tried to recognize different areas, but outside some of the older buildings, everything seemed so different. The people were great to us that day. We started out with tea and coffee at the George. Then an inspiring church service with flags at St. Mary's Church. At noon they hosted a buffet lunch at the Village Hall, a fairly new building. Our bus then took us to Stonehenge in the afternoon where we walked around and looked at the odd stone formations. We had heard a lot about it and couldn't imagine what it would be like. We drove into Salisbury for a visit to the Cathedral, but by that time we were too weary to walk around much more. We then went back to the hall for the Tea Dance and supper. It was fun to watch some of the different dances the Codford people did. They really entered into the occasion. But so did we - the great music made you want to dance. Several people brought old snapshots of fellows from our Division and wanted to know if we recognized any of them. One of the pictures I did recognize; Lt. Colonel Boles, my old company commander at Camp Polk, Louisiana. They even knew that he had passed away a few years ago. After the dance we went into town to the theater where the people of Codford put on a musical with songs from all the wars. It

was just great, lots of local talent, everybody enjoyed it immensely. After the show we all walked across the road to The George for drinks and conversation. Nobody wanted the day to end. A good time was had by all! Back to the buses.



Potters Heron Hotel. Photo by Carl Tucker.

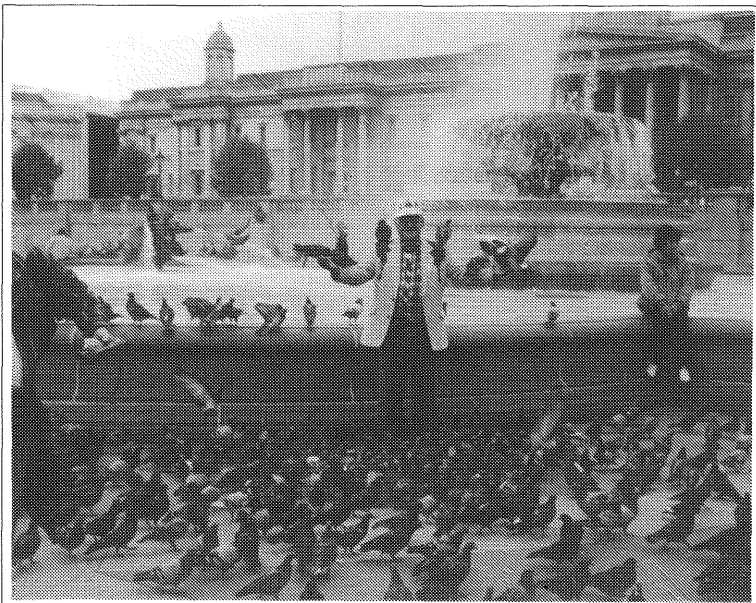
Looking back it was difficult to remember all the things that took place in this area. Besides all the chores we had each day, it was fun to "borrow" a few potatoes and grease from the kitchen and make our own "chips" on our stove in the Quonsett huts at night. We spent a good share of our free time in Salisbury, where there were lots of things to do. We met a family there and the father made me a beautiful shoulder holster for a 32-caliber gun (I had confiscated it in a raid through a munitions factory in Germany) when I came back on a furlough.

Overall, our trip to Europe was something we will never forget and we will treasure the memories for the rest of our lives. It was especially great to have had Aurio Pierro, Walter Stitt, and Bill Ruth on board. They were able to remember so many things and got up and conveyed their stories to everyone. It was especially great for some of us who have forgotten many of the events that happened fifty years ago. Thank you all!

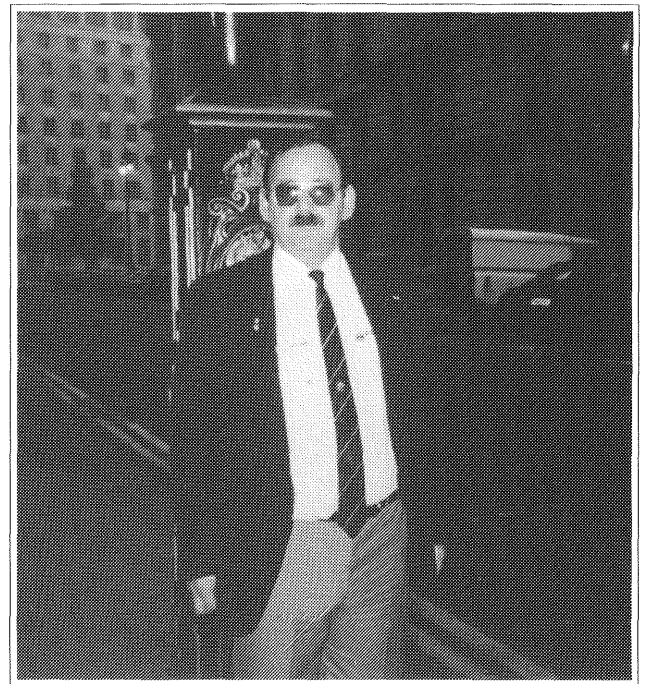
— *Bob and Ruth Clarke*
Company E, 32nd AR



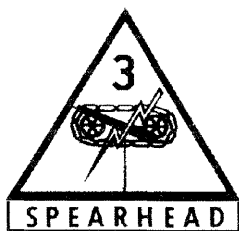
Carl Tucker feeding the lion in Trafalgar Square in London. Photo by Olga Tucker.



Carl Tucker feeding the pigeons in Trafalgar Square in London. Photo by Olga Tucker.



*Richard Powell, our bus driver.
Photo by Bill Ruth.*



THIRD ARMORED DIVISION ASSOCIATION

Tank Memorial to the 3rd Armored Division at Codford, England, Sept. 22, 1994

From Camp Polk, La., to the California Desert, to Camp Pickett, Va., to Indian Town Gap, to Camp Kilmer, to England. Years of training had forged a mighty fighting machine that was to Spearhead the U.S. 1st Army from Omaha Beach to the Elbe River.

The Third Armored Division won five battle stars: Normandy-Northern France, Ardennes, Rhineland-Central Europe.

Ripley's Believe It or Not had this to say about the 3rd Armored Division:

- * First to fire a shell into Germany.
- * First to breach the Siegfried line.
- * First to cross the German border since Napoleon.
- * First to capture a German town.
- * First to shoot down a plane from German soil.
- * Greatest one-day advance in history of mobile warfare: 101 miles.

Because of the name 3rd Armored and the 3rd Army are so similar, General Patton received a lot of publicity that really belonged to the 3rd Armored Division.

History tells us that the 3rd Armored Division defeated the following units that were irrevocably the best the German Division had to offer so decisively, and in many cases more than once, that these units may be considered destroyed by the Spearhead Division:

- * 6 Panzer divisions: the 2nd, 9th, 11th, 2nd SS, 9th SS, and 12th SS.
- * 4 Infantry divisions: the 12th, 353rd, 363rd, and 560th.
- * 3 parachute divisions: the 3rd, 5th and 6th.
- * 1 Panzer grenadier division: the 3rd.

We did not come off unscathed. The division had close to a 3x turnover in dead and wounded.

Major General Maurice Rose was killed in battle, leading his troops in Germany. He was a great leader and admired by all his men.

The esprit de corps that made this division great still exists today. Lt. Gen. Lawton Collins said, "The 7th Corp of the U.S. 1st Army, consisting of the 1st, 9th and 3rd Armored Divisions were the elite corp of the entire U.S. Army."

Martyn Lock of Codford, England
Erwin Sadow of Scottsdale, Arizona

2,214 killed in Action
7,451 wounded in action
706 missing in action
10,371 total

Thanks to Irwin Sadow for providing a copy in English script and Frank Sanders for providing a tape of Rector Tipping's homily. Both sources were used to finalize the following.

Transcription of services at St. Mary's Anglican Church, Codford
Ephesians - Chapter 6, Verse 11

Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

That text aptly describes the cause for which the free world fought World War II. The forces of evil had overrun Europe and Britain stood alone - vulnerable. Then on December 7, 1941, something happened which would change the course of the war, a snippet of news on the radio that caused Churchill to ring President Roosevelt. In two or three minutes Mr. Roosevelt came through. Mr. President, "What's this about Japan?" "It's quite true," he replied, "they have attacked us at Pearl Harbor. We are all in the same boat now." Churchill goes on to write, "No American will think it wrong of me if I proclaim that to have the United States at our side was to me the greatest joy. At this very moment I knew the United States was in the war, up to the neck and in to the death." And later Churchill quotes a remark made to him more than thirty years before, that "the United States is like a gigantic boiler, once the fire is lighted under it there is no limit to the power it can generate." This was the event that eventually brought the Third Armored Division to Wiltshire and Codford.

From that great continent across the Atlantic to the lanes and villages of rural England, came the Americans with their tanks. This was to prove a mighty fighting machine - symbolized by its insignia, which is on the cover of your service sheet. The triangular badge, each component of which had a symbolic meaning. The predominant colors of yellow, red and blue are those of the basic arms, cavalry, field artillery and infantry, all components of the armored command. The superimposed symbols have a more modern meaning. The tank track is for mobility and armor protection, the cannon for fire power, and the bolt of lightening to designate shock action. The most modern element of the patch is the Spearhead Flash which was authorized by Major General Maurice Rose, who was the commanding General of the Third Armored Division, and who was later killed in action by a German pistol shot from the turret of a Tiger tank. So what a lot of meaning and sad memories are bound up in that simple insignia.

For the best part of a year, from September 1943 to June 1944, the Third Armored Division trained on the wet and cold of Salisbury Plains. This must have seemed such a contrast to those days in the Mojave Desert in California where many of the men will never forget the constant diet of goldfish, sardines, sardines, and more sardines, also known as desert trout. Home tenants on the Salisbury Plain were allowed to graze sheep on the ranges provided they were moved when firing was to take place. They would normally follow one of the many tracks which had been made by earlier generations of sheep. On one occasion when a well-known shepherd, called Truckle Mundy, was bringing his flock back they passed a number of American soldiers who were training in the area. The track that the sheep were following could not be seen from where the troops were standing. What the shepherd knew is at a certain point it turned sharply to the right. Just as the leading sheep reached the turn, the shepherd shouted at the top of his voice, "Right wheel." The line of ewes immediately turned to the right. The Americans were amazed. "You trained your sheep to do that with us?" "Of course," answered the shepherd, "they will do anything I tell them."

But even amid that wet and cold winter in Salisbury Plains, the Americans also became part of the community. The local youngsters, many of whom had never known a peacetime Christmas, enjoyed the gum and the chocolate and the Christmas candy of America. The men made good use of the English Taverns. For nigh on nine months the Third Armored Division lived among our people until that day in mid-June when they, too, joined the mighty fighting machine that was set to destroy Nazi Germany. To quote from their history, "There behind were the green fields of England, and there ahead were the tall poplars of Normandy. Each man looked at his neighbor and thought 'I wonder how many of us will come back!'"

And with what distinction did the Third Armored Division make their contribution. One authority lists their achievements:

First to fire a shell into Germany,
First to breach the Siegfried line,
First to cross the German border since Napoleon,
First to capture a German town,
First to shoot down a plane from German soil,
First great one-day advance in history of a mobile warfare: 101 miles.

What memories that list must evoke in the minds of the veterans. I quote from the front page of the *Daily Sketch* for Tuesday, August 8, 1944, "We took to the ditch and then saw American tanks going into action against German tanks looming out of the thick grass. It was a tank battle reminiscent of the Western Desert. The tanks lurched at each other spitting fire through neatly stacked hay bundles. A farmhouse was obliterated and the farmer stood there staring in amazement, pitchfork in hand, at the sudden eruption of war in his acreage."

But there were other memories not so easily forgotten; the horrors the men saw as they liberated Nordhausen Concentration Camp whose inmates worked on the V1 and V2 rockets that were fired on London.

Yes, the Third Armored Division of the 1st U.S. Army, 7th Corps, had a proud record of achievements and many memories. Some of them set to music, in words like this: "We have a story to tell you about our proud division, what it achieved, what we achieved with good supervision, on that Third Armored Division from First Army Seventh Corps, won the title, call me Spearhead."

At long last Germany was broken. Then to quote again from their history book, "The Spearhead went back on April 25, 1945. Back until the artillery was just a whisper in the distance. And then there was no artillery at all. There was just the warm sun, the green meadows of springtime and peace. It was all over.

Early in November each year we in this island have a Royal British Legion Remembrance Service, rather like the service we've had today. The Royal British Legion was founded in 1921 to look after the interests of ex-service men and women. All over the country in November men and women gather together to remember those who gave their lives for freedom.

There is a lovely poem of Remembrance in *The History of Spearhead*. It's called *Nor any Word*.

God raised them high; that in the mold and clay;
As black and moldered sheaves; repose the while;
That were in life all wild, high heeled and gay;
Within their vein and stem; which now lie vile
In death; Make me the proper quittance; then
build we aloft some shape in stone; some pride;
To seat remembrance in the thoughts of men;
And honor those who poured out youth; who died.
There is no measure; no device of hand;
For us who live where sun can kiss our live;
Nor ought of any voice for all who stared
Beholden to those few; except that lies
within the reaches of our hearts; unheard;
And will abide no name; nor any word.

We hope you enjoy your day here as you revive your memories, see the places you knew. Although it has changed such a lot in the villages, yet Salisbury Plains remains much the same, wild and lonely, still sometime wet and cold, and still some Sherman Tanks around. One of which we happen to have here in the village as a permanent memorial to the Third Armored Division.

I began with the words of Churchill, let me end with some more. As the United States entered the war, Churchill writes, "So we had won after all. Yes, after Dunkirk, after the fall of France, after the horrible episode of Oran, after the threat of invasion, when apart from the Air and the Navy we were an almost unarmed people, after the deadly struggle of the U-Boat war, the first struggle of the Atlantic, the first battle of the Atlantic gained by a houndsbreath, after seventeen months of lonely fighting and nineteen months of my responsibility in dire stress, we had won the war. England would live. Britain would live. The Commonwealth of Nations and the Empire would live. The British Empire, the Soviet Union, and now the United States bound together with every scrap of their life and strength. United we could subdue everybody else in the world."

And we did together win victory over the evil forces which were threatening to destroy the world. The cost of that victory in human lives and suffering we remember. Especially today when our American veterans are here with us to share in this act of remembrance and to give thanks to God for our freedom.

Yanks Welcomed The 'Dooce-and-a-half'

Alongside the welcome which Codford gave to the American GIs was another minor drama of nostalgia - the tale of the truck and the tank.

The old World War 2 truck and its driver turned up, and joined in the events.

The old Sherman Tank also turned up, on a huge trailer, but was at the margins of the happenings.

Fresh-faced

The US Army truck was driven by a young man who seemed to have sprung straight from the leafy lanes of England in 1944.

He was dressed in the full GI gear, including one of those sleek jackets which contrasted with the British Army's hairy battledress, and also what we would call spats.

Was he some Rip Van Winkle, who had stayed asleep since 1944 and somehow preserved that fresh-faced look of the young GI?

No, it was 19-year-old Clive Stevens from Marlborough. He has succumbed to the nostalgia of the Yanks in England in 1944.

That's how he got the gear. He has been to the United States, travelled from Pennsylvania to Georgia visiting veterans' organisations over there. Veterans gave him different bits of dress and equipment that they had held on to.

"It's gone from an interest to an obsession," he said, as he munched cake at the sumptuous tea dance provided for the American visitors and their friends at Codford village

hall. Clive drove up in a big American lorry painted in greenish khaki, and marked with a big white star. It was just the kind of large US Army truck which used to get stuck in the winding lanes of England in 1943 and 1944.

Painted up and decorated with nets and hand-grenades (which turned out to be plastic toys), the American lorry was welcomed by the veterans.

They were so pleased to see it that, when the time came for them to proceed from the village hall to the memorial service, several of them climbed on the back, and Clive drove them up to the church.

"I had such a good response from the guys," said Clive, "because I am the age they were in 1944, you see".

Clive brought only one lorry: he

could have brought four, because he has been doing them up to 1944 condition.

This wasn't Clive's only outing with his 'dooce-and-a-half' - that is, a 2½ ton GMC6 X6, if we have got the numbers right.

Convoy

During the Arnhem commemoration, he drove over to Belgium, and then joined the Operation Market Garden route. The route which the Guards Armoured Division took in the drive to reach Arnhem, but which was halted at the Nijmegen bridge.

This time, 700 vehicles drove up the route to Arnhem, in a convoy led by tanks.

"It was a privilege to be there," said Clive.

This time, the journey from Leopoldville in Belgium to Arnhem took just 15 hours.



Clive Stevens in US Army gear.

... While Tank Got Bugged Down

While the US Army lorry beeted about, the Sherman tank got bogged down in a miasma of arrangements which didn't happen, or just went wrong.

Surprise, surprise, the Sherman tank did finally turn up — which was a bit of an embarrassment to the organisers of the Yanks' visit to Codford.

It was all the idea of 31-year-old Martyn Lock, a Codford man who now lives in Boreham Field, Warminster.

Timetable

The Parish Council agreed it would be a good idea to have a tank on a plinth to commemorate the Yanks in Codford. They even got planning permission.

However, the tank (when it finally materialised) was thought to be too much of a wreck.

They would take it if, and when, it was restored, Martyn was told.

Meanwhile, plans for the big day went on, and it was a tight timetable, with a church service, a lunch, a tour of Salisbury and Stonehenge, the tea dance, and a show plus singing in the Woolstore.

The tank wasn't included in the arrangement.

With the Yanks expected on the Thursday, the Parish Council chairman, Colonel Jim Bradley, received a phone call on the Monday.

It was Martyn Lock. He was offering to bring the tank.

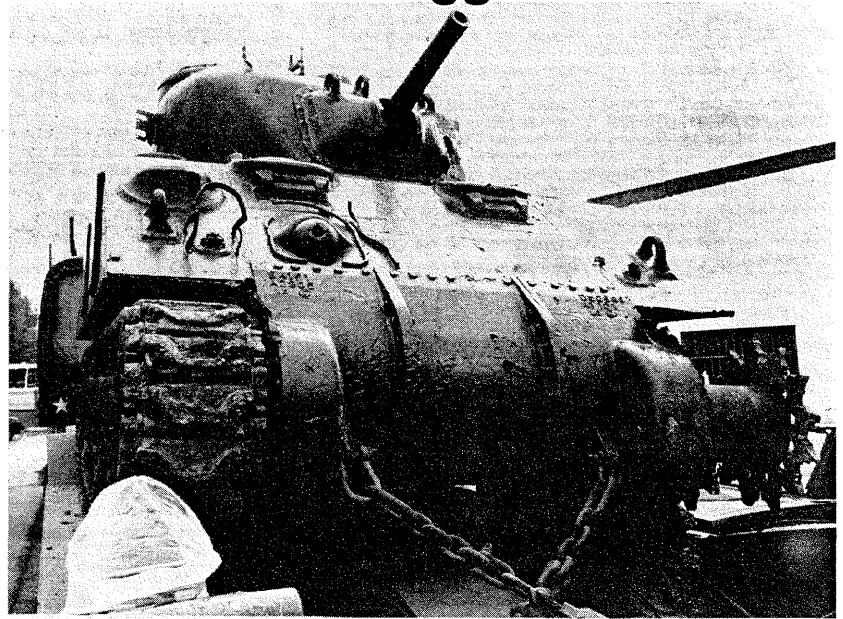
The Colonel politely refused.

Inquiries

On the Tuesday night, one large tank arrived in Codford, on a trailer. It was bulled up, but still a bit battered and with one track missing.

After various toings and froings, the tank was allowed to stay on the forecourt of John Smith's garage, until the celebrations were over.

A pity, for that bit of the com-



memoration. For Martyn had been the original driving force behind the Americans' visit.

He made a lot of inquiries to find out about the units who were stationed in and around Codford in 1943-44, and he got in touch with the veterans to start the ball rolling.

Or, as it was reported in February 1993, "Anglo-American relations are due to be cemented thanks to the interest of local man, Martyn Lock."

Sometimes there are slips 'twixt cup and lip.

FROME'S LEADING WEEKLY

SOMERSET STANDARD

No 8,479

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 1994

35p

... and the 3rd Armoured Div is back



A party of veterans from the 3rd Armoured Division (that's how they would spell it) made a whistle stop tour of the West Country and visited Frome, where they were billeted during the war. They are seen outside the George Hotel with the Mayor, Mr John Birkett-Smith and the Town Crier, Steve Haberfield, looking at the plaque

THE Stars and Stripes and the Union Jack joined the carnival bunting in Frome this week.

They were flown outside the George Hotel to welcome a party of veterans from the United States 3rd Armoured Division when they visited the town.

The visit was part of a tour

which also took in France, Belgium and Germany.

The veterans revisited all the locations where men from their division served during 1943 and 1944.

The men were met outside The George by the Mayor, Mr John Birkett-Smith, the town crier, Steve Haberfield and the

president of the Royal British Legion, Mr Jock Garland.

The visitors were shown a plaque fixed to the front wall which had been placed there to commemorate their unit's earlier visit to the town.

The group then visited the British Legion Club for an evening of reminiscences.

TAXIMAN'S ANGER AT PARISH BRUSH-OFF FOR NOT-SO-INCREDIBLE HULK

Battle alert as old tank gets marching orders

By David Humphrey

TAXI driver Martyn Lock is looking for a new home for an old Sherman tank after claiming the village that agreed to take it has turned cool on the idea.

But parish councillors in Codford, near Warminster, insisted yesterday they were still prepared to accept it — but only when restored.

They found a site and won planning permission from West Wiltshire district council to display the American-made tank in the village.

This followed an approach by Mr Lock, aged 31, who has researched the village's wartime ties with the U.S. 3rd Armoured Division.

Impossible

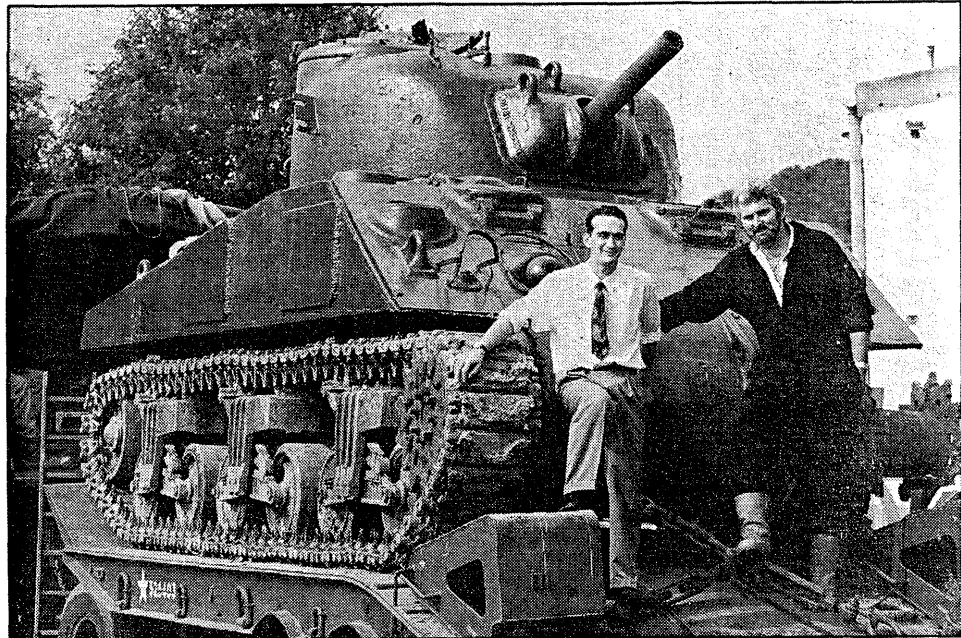
On Thursday 16 ex-members of the division stationed in the area before D-Day were guests at special celebrations arranged in their honour.

Mr Lock, who lives in Warminster, had the tank brought from Somerset and put it on the forecourt of Codford's service station for the old soldiers to admire.

But the veterans were never given a proper chance to look at it, he claims.

Mr Lock discovered the tank on the Larkhill artillery range where it had been used for firing practice.

"When I first approached the council they were thrilled



Battle-scarred old warrior ... Martyn Lock (left) and Malcolm Beaton with the Sherman tank aboard a transporter

about the idea of displaying it," he said yesterday.

"Planning permission was obtained and everything went well until I asked if I could bring the tank to Codford to work on it.

"They dropped the idea and said they didn't want it in the village until it was fully restored.

"This made it impossible for me, because I cannot do the

work on Salisbury Plain as the ground is so soft."

Now Mr Lock is offering the tank, which he hopes to have fully restored by the New Year, to any one of 13 other towns and villages in West Wiltshire and North Somerset that had close associations with the 3rd Armoured Division.

"It's a shame that Codford isn't going to get it, because I grew up there," he said.

Codford parish councillor Romie Wyeth said: "We told Martyn we would love to have the tank, but that when it arrived it had to be in pristine condition.

"It was made clear he couldn't bring a hulk from Salisbury Plain and stick it here as a war memorial — it would look ridiculous.

"But even though he's had it for 18 months, it's still a hulk

with a track missing."

She said Mr Lock had agreed with the council that the tank could not come for the veterans' celebrations.

"But then it came, which caused us a fair amount of concern.

"If he'd asked if he could bring it for the Americans to look at, it's very possible he would have been able to do it. But he didn't ask."



Ready for D-day ... American troops, including Erwin Sadlow



Memories ... ex-GI Erwin Sadlow revisits Codford



The Mayor of Warminster, Ann Coventry, receives a commemorative plaque from GIs John O'Brien and William Ruth

GIs given a warm welcome

MEMORIES flooded back for a band of former American GIs when they made a nostalgic return to Warminster and Codford this week.

The 16 ex-soldiers who visited their old Wiltshire base were members of the 3rd Armoured 'Spearhead' division stationed at Codford, East Knoyle and Fonthill Bishop with Stockton house an administration centre.

They arrived at Warminster on Wednesday evening with a special service of commemoration at St Lawrence Chapel.

Warminster mayor Ann Coventry lead a group of councillors who welcomed the former soldiers to the town and was presented a plaque from John O'Brien a former captain.

At Codford, the next day, the small rural community turned out in force to welcome the old soldiers with special celebrations arranged in their honour.

They attended a special service in St Mary's Church with US airmen from Mildenhall and soldiers from the Prince of Wales regiment forming a guard of honour.

Codford parish council arranged a special lunch for the veterans in the new village hall.

Ex GI Erwin Sadlow recalled his days at Codford.

"Memories flooded back to me as I arrived in the village. It hasn't changed much in all these years. I can remember the old place as if it were yesterday."

In the village pub, The George, a photograph was on the wall featuring Erwin with some of his war time colleagues.

Then it was off on tour of Wiltshire including Stonehenge passing an American tank that was planned to go on display in the village as a memorial to the American soldiers.

The tank, a M4a4, had been brought to the village by Martyn Lock and Malcolm Beaton.

Martyn, born in the village, has been researching the village's wartime ties with the US 3rd Armoured division.

Warminster



■ British and US servicemen provide a guard of honour as veterans arrive for the special service at Codford St Mary's church

Old GIs come back to base

By Trevor Porter

■ MEMORIES flooded back for a band of former American GIs when they made a nostalgic return to Warminster and Codford this week.

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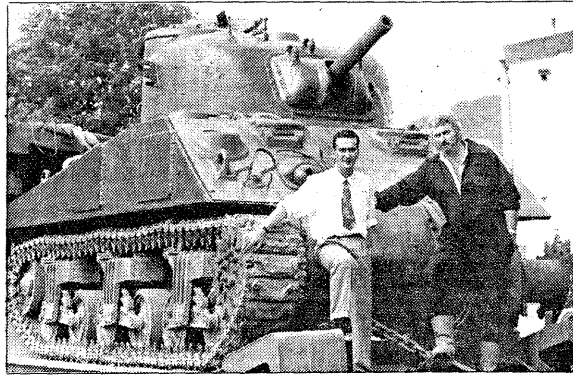
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■ Martyn Lock, left, and Malcolm Beaton with their tank

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"Memories flooded back to me as I arrived in the village. It hasn't changed much in all these years. I can remember the old place as if it were yesterday."

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The tank, a M4a4, had been brought to the village by Martyn Lock and Malcolm Beaton.

Martyn Lock, born in the village, has been researching the village's

wartime ties with the US 3rd Armoured division and brought the tank along for the former soldiers to see.

But the coach did not stop so the veterans had no chance to look at it, claims Mr Lock.

"It seems the village has turned cool on the idea of having the American tank on display," he said.

But Codford Parish Council insisted it was prepared to accept it but only when restored.

"The tank has a track missing on one side and isn't suitable as a memorial till it is fully restored. We have told Martyn we would love to have the tank, but only when it arrives in pristine condition," said parish councillor Romy Wyeth.

Warminster Journal

No. 5,844

FRIDAY, 30th SEPTEMBER, 1994

24 PENCE

Conquering Heroes Here They Come

They came, they saw, they conquered the hearts of the people of Codford. Half a century after the friendly invasion of the 3rd Armored Division, they returned to the West Country on Thursday, 22nd September.

Sixteen veterans ranging in age from late sixties to 81 showed the stamina and spirit that took them onto Omaha Beach and beyond. They went through the Battle of the Bulge to the Elbe River, winning five battle stars and gaining the proud nickname 'the Spearhead Division'.

They were the first to cross the German Border since Napoleon, the first to fire a shell into Germany, the first to capture a German town, the first to breach the Siegfried line, the first to shoot down a plane from German soil, and made the greatest one-day advance in the history of mobile warfare up till then: 101 miles.

The George

Last week, starting out from Winchester, they first visited the site of their wartime HQ, Stockton House.

They started and finished their day in Codford at the George Hotel, in between eleven action-packed hours of festivities and events.

At noon they attended a Remembrance service at St. Mary's Church. Brigadier Simon Firth, chairman of the local Royal British Legion branch, welcomed the veterans.

The Rector, the Rev. John Tipping, conducted the service, and the lesson was read by Major P. Brandli,



At the sign of the George, Codford.

a US Army Exchange Officer to the British Directorate of Infantry.

America was there in force: an honour guard from the US Air Force Base at Mildenhall, officers from every combat section of the US Army: the infantry, the armor, the cavalry and the artillery, representing the US Embassy in London.

Buglers came from the 1st Battal-

ion Prince of Wales Own, based at Warminster.

After a lunch hosted by the British Legion, the veterans and their wives set off on a guided tour of Stonehenge and Salisbury Cathedral, returning to a packed village hall for a tea dance hosted by the Parish Council.

Enthusiasm

In the evening they returned to what had been the American Red Cross site, the Woolstore Country Theatre.

Jan Bradley had put together a programme of music, poems and sketches about the American Civil War, the Boer War and two World Wars.

The Woolstore Players' performance had the audience singing and stamping with enthusiasm.

The day was a resounding success, with the American visitors visibly touched at the warmth of their reception and the way local people had opened their hearts to them.

Bill Ruth of Ohio wondered what they had done to deserve such a welcome – fifty years ago they earned their places in history: battle stars for Normandy, Northern France, Rhineland, Ardennes, Central Europe.

Yankee Dave Asks After His Girl Of Long Ago

It was the poignant moment which had to happen. One of the Yank veterans of 1944 – revisiting Codford after 50 years – asked about the girl he left behind.

Eighty sprightly Americans – in their seventies and eighties – have been spending a month visiting the battlefields of 1944. France, Belgium, Holland, Germany – and finally, their jumping off ground in England.

About 15,000 Americans were stationed on Salisbury Plain, many of them in Warminster and Codford.

Of the 80 who came back last week, 16 visited Codford. Of them, only two had actually been stationed in the village

during the war. The two are pictured outside Codford Church, before the service in memory of their many comrades who died at D-Day and after.

Dave Putnam (left) from California and Bob Clarke from Wisconsin, were based in Codford for nine months from September 1943.

Naturally, they received local hospitality which was repeated on a grand scale in the village hall last Thursday, when it was a reunion of villagers, as well as hands across the sea. The tables groaned with goodies prepared by the locals.

Dave Putnam looked back with nostalgia. He asked about his wartime sweetheart, the love of his life, fifty years ago.

Had anybody seen her? Did anybody know her?

Well, what was her name? Sorry, can't remember. It was a long time ago!

But he did want to meet her, if anyone knew where she was.

Sadly, the locals couldn't remember her.

Any more details? Well, her father worked in leather, and, once, the girl had brought him a leather holster as a gift.

Even with that information, Codfordians drew a blank. No-one could recall a leather worker.

So Dave went on his way disappointed – though no doubt he enjoyed the sing-songs, and the late-night session in the George. (It was finally brought to an end by that great English institution, chucking-out time.)

However, industrious parish councillor Romy Wyeth has done some asking around since the Yanks' visit.

Some of the older villagers can remember a man who worked in leather, a saddler, Mr. Ingram, who had two daughters.

He left the village years ago, and nobody knows what happened to him.

So, for the moment, the trail goes blank.

Who knows? Perhaps that young girl of 1944 is still alive and well in Wiltshire, with her memories of the glamorous young American for whom she made a leather holster.



Yanks at Codford: veterans Dave Putnam (left) and Bob Clarke came back last week, to revisit old haunts and – who knows? – to meet the girl Dave left behind.

Chapter 26

Summary

The following articles sent by Dick Goodie and Leonard Kyle sum up our trip.

LOCAL: Maine veteran recalls nostalgic trip

Portland Press Herald

Volume 133, Number 122

EST. 1867

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FRIDAY
NOVEMBER 11, 1994

Fifty years fade on old battlefields

• A group of veterans tours Europe's battlefields, and a flood of emotion greets it everywhere.

By DICK GOODIE

MAUBEUGE, France — It was 10 in the morning when I stepped off the bus with 43 other veterans of the Third Armored Division.

A large crowd waving American and French flags had gathered in front of Town Hall. Even before our buses had stopped, "Vive les Américains!" they shouted. "Welcome back, Lafayette!"

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dick Goodie is a free-lance writer who lives in Portland. A recreational runner and speedwalker since his basic-training days in World War II, Goodie is the author of "The Maine Quality of Running." He has written a manuscript for a novel set during the war, "War and Love in Belgium."

It was Sept. 2, and we had come for a nostalgic bus tour of old battlegrounds. But we had no idea of the emotional experiences that awaited us.

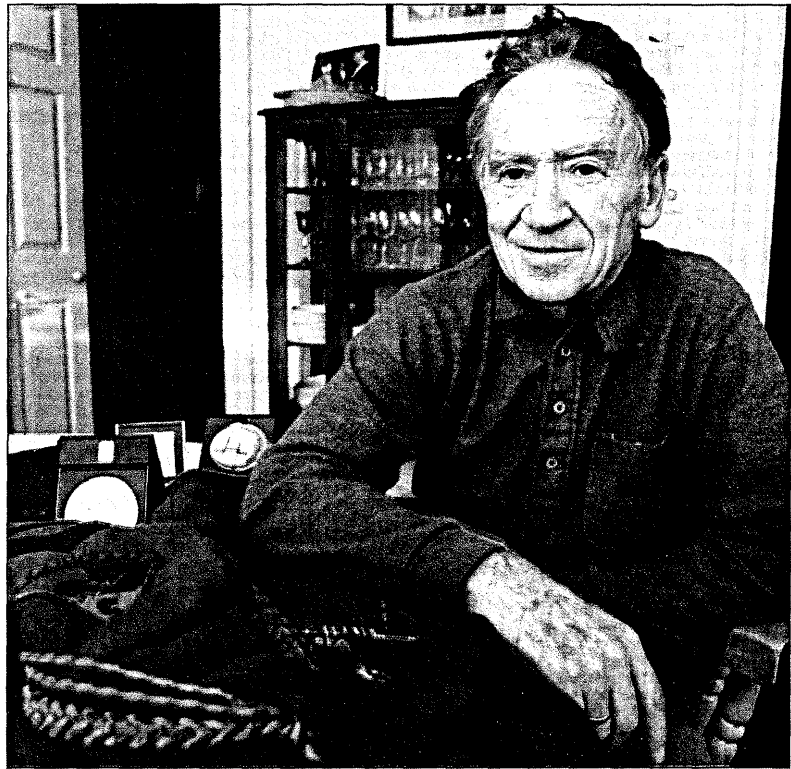
In town after town, village square after village square, we were greeted as if we had liberated Europe yesterday, not 50 years ago. At a time when American towns have a hard time mustering a good crowd for a Veterans Day parade, this trip reminded us all how fragile and costly freedom can be.

Maubeuge's mayor greeted us in perfect English as the crowd swarmed. "Your tanks entered Maubeuge in early afternoon, around that corner," he said. "Fifty years ago."

Just then, a band came marching down the street, followed by a color guard of Resistance fighters, their lined, well-weathered faces locked in serious expression. Holding their colors rigidly, they wore suits, ties and shining medals of valor on their left breasts.

I was standing with a fellow tourist, Jim Howard, who back then

Please see VETERAN, Page 4B



Staff photo by Doug Jones

Dick Goodie sits with his uniform jacket and the medals bestowed on him and other veterans who earlier this year revisited the land they liberated 50 years ago.



Dick Goodie of the Third Armored Division, in 1945.



VETERAN

Continued from Page 1B

was a tank commander from Texas. As a restored Sherman tank roared past, he lifted a finger to his eye. Jim had five tanks shot out from under him and lost 17 men.

Parading behind the band, the mayor led us down the street lined with people, past the stone houses with U.S. and French flags fluttering in the windows.

Later, we walked back to town hall, where we were invited for a champagne lunch. It was an unusual time for champagne — 11 in the morning. But that was to happen often on our tour through France and Belgium.

Aged farmers wave

The next day, they piled us into the backs of some restored American military trucks and ammo carriers and paraded us over the same route we took 50 years ago (only in reverse) from Fourmies to Hirson.

Aged farmers at the end of their pasture lanes waved as we passed. Hundreds of people lined the route, especially in the small hamlets, but when we arrived at the open market square at the center of Hirson, more than a thousand had gathered.

We stepped down and mingled with the crowd, grasping outstretched hands, and some of the young even asked for autographs. One elderly man said: "Thank you for 50 years of freedom."

Many in the crowd wept. It was hard to maintain a soldierly composure, but we managed.

Many Resistance fighters spoke to us. After sadly mentioning their comrades who had been killed, tortured or deported to German slave factories, they proudly related their heroics: the enemy ammunition dumps they had destroyed, bridges and rail trestles dynamited, communication lines cut, and other acts of sabotage against the Nazis.

At exactly 10 minutes to 4, church bells around the square began chiming. Everyone grew silent.

"Why are they ringing the bells?" I asked a Resistance fighter.

"Because it was the exact time your division came here 50 years ago to give us back our freedom," he replied.

Help from the bombers

At Normandy, we visited the areas around the landing beaches. The hedgerows — tall, tangled and thick at the base, which once contained Allied armor and infantry for 49 days — looked the same.

If a tank found a lane through the thick, earthen walls, it was quickly blasted by a waiting German 88. Seemingly for days without end, because of non-stop machine-gun fire, it was not possible to walk across a field in Normandy; you crawled along the hedgerows and, like a groundhog, lived in holes dug under them.

But at 11 a.m. on the 49th and final day of the invasion battle, the Piper Cubs appeared over the front, as we were told they would, and sprinkled the air with strips of finsel to foul enemy radar.

Then came the heavy bombers from England, more than 2,000 of them, to carpet-bomb an area five miles long and a mile wide, stunning the enemy long enough to allow us to break through at St.-Lo. It gave us blessed freedom of movement from the confining hedgerows.

9,386 grave markers

At the American cemetery above Omaha Beach, lined in long rows in perfect military precision, there are 9,386 white marble Latin crosses and Stars of David. More than 300 of the headstones mark the graves of unknown soldiers.

We walked down the long, hushed rows. Many of the markers identi-



Schoolchildren line the streets to greet the veterans of the Third Armored Division in every city, town, village and hamlet during the soldiers' nostalgic bus tour of old battlegrounds.

fied the soldiers as those of the 1st or 29th Infantry Divisions — the two units that stormed Omaha Beach.

That afternoon, at the ancient Abbaye-aux-Dames in Caen, we were presented the Medal of Normandy in a solemn ceremony. All veterans who participated in the Battle of Normandy are eligible to receive this gold medal during this 50th anniversary year.

Quickly surrendered

Near Soissons, I remembered an incident from the war.

One night we stopped in a sugar-beet field to wait for fuel, and positioned our halftrack as outpost a short distance away.

Our seven-man crew had a system for guard duty. We placed our bedrolls in a line and the man with the watch had to sit up for two hours before passing the watch onto the next man.

But that night, after an exhausting day-and-night run across France, someone in the middle of the line fell asleep with the watch. Luckily, toward daybreak, I heard the crushing of the sugar beets, like a cow walking through a cabbage patch, and looked up to see eight Germans, standing apart, about 50 yards away, silhouetted clearly in the moonlight, their rifles held before them.

Seeing our vehicle, they paused, not sure if it was manned — deciding, I had supposed, whether to attack or retreat. I barely lifted my head and spoke quietly to the fellow on the far end of the line: "On my signal we'll both jump up and rush them." We did. They quickly surrendered without a shot being fired.

Belgium a battlefield

After what Belgium has been through, there is little wonder in the fact that many mayors' speeches held a variation of the phrase, "Those who do not remember their past are condemned to relive it."

And what a tumultuous past the small country (slightly larger than Maryland) has experienced.

Because of its location between two antagonistic neighbors, France and Germany, it has supplied battlefields for most of the world's greatest conflicts, and its citizens are always in the middle of the path each time the tanks come.

Since Julius Caesar started the parade with his legions in 57 B.C., foreign armies have entered, retreated, made stands, crossed, crisscrossed and double-crossed Belgian territory so often that the custom has become habit forming.

Twice this century Belgium has been invaded.

Flowers convey message

In one hamlet, an elderly lady approached my wife and presented her with a bouquet of flowers and a note.

She spoke no English; we spoke no French, but that wasn't necessary. We communicated with our eyes.

The story was clear. She was there 50 years ago as a young girl, and you could tell by the moistness in her eyes that she remembered. My wife read the note:

"This bunch is for you. It is not well made nor the prettiest.

One flower is still missing: It is the one my heart is trying to pick.

Accept these flowers and There won't be any one missing."

Georgette Chardin
5 September, 1994
The two women wept and embraced.

Death in an old hamlet

During the Battle of the Bulge, one of our first positions before Christmas 1944 was a small hamlet with stone houses and an ancient church.

To get there we had to follow a road beneath a long hill that the Germans controlled, and from which they fired mortars at us all the way into the hamlet.

Shells splashed on the frozen ground and the shrapnel clanged against the side of our halftrack. There was a foot of snow on the ground. Halfway in, a Jeep came toward us and stopped.

A major told me to set up there, that he was going for tanks. Just then a mortar exploded between our vehicles and the major's head slumped on his chest. Shrapnel had pierced his helmet. He had no chance.

We continued along the road. It was late afternoon of a freezing, gray day and it began snowing. The hamlet was deserted. At the church I looked in and saw the townspeople

huddled in the pews under heavy, dark clothing. Their dead were lined in a row in the center aisle.

Surprise in foxhole

When our tour buses crossed the German border, the celebrations ended.

Many German citizens were appreciative of the Allies ending Hitler's reign of fascism and destruction; at Stolberg, in the city council chambers, we were honored with a plaque dedication and reception, but without champagne.

But for the most part, understandably, the citizens didn't rush our buses waving flags.

Approaching Cologne on highway E-40, there is an embankment that looks like an abandoned rail bed. It was there, in late February 1945, that we camped. We set up our halftrack on the embankment with a clear view of the field below.

I was down in that field looking for a turnip to boil for supper when the bombers came over. There was a low cloud cover but we were sure from the sound of the engines that the planes were friendly. Later we learned we were right; they were twin-engine B-26 Mauraders that had mistaken us for the enemy, not realizing that we had advanced so close to Cologne.

I fell between rows in the turnip garden, and for the first time was caught in the middle of a heavy bombing. The explosions picked me up and slammed me back to earth, then rolled me from side to side.

I managed to run away and dived into my hole. What I saw there made me think I was suffering from concussion: an attractive blonde wearing a tan trench coat. She was sitting on an empty, five-gallon gas can in my foxhole. "What are you doing up here?" I asked.

Her name was Iris Carpenter, and she was a war correspondent for the Boston Globe. She wanted an interview. She lit a cigarette, and after I recovered from the shock, I lit a cigar.

We talked for an hour. She was the first American girl I had seen or talked to for over a year. It was a very pleasant interlude. The bombers had passed over, but the

shelling was heavy, coming in from the river toward Cologne.

I think the cigar smoke finally drove her out of the foxhole. I told her to be careful as she ran for her Jeep. My folks mailed me the piece, from the front page of the Globe, dated Feb. 28, 1945.

A leader lost

As our bus passed a crossroads outside of Paderborn, Germany, I grew silent as I thought of what had happened there March 30, 1945.

We in the Third Armored were to leave Marburg at daybreak, swing north, and in a four-pronged attack capture Paderborn, 90 miles away. There we were to link up with an attack from the north. The idea was to encircle the Ruhr and deny the enemy vital war equipment.

When we arrived at the crossroads, the Germans' Tiger tanks knocked out 11 of our lighter Shermans 50 yards apart, broadside. Then one of the Tigers began zig-zagging up the column.

Before it was knocked out by an infantryman with a bazooka, the tank had crushed halftracks, trucks and Jeeps as if they were paper-mache floats in a holiday parade.

Our division leader, Maj. Gen. Maurice Rose, was killed by a Tiger at dusk that night when his Jeep came face-to-face with it on a narrow road. The terrible news quickly spread down through the ranks. America and the division had lost a great tankman and leader.

On the morning of the second day, I was standing on the hood of my halftrack, watching a tank battle 800 yards away with my glasses. I was trying to find a target suitable for our 87mm gun when an armor-piercing shell slammed through the hood of the halftrack, passing under my boots and above the engine, but touching neither. Another in a series of lucky misses.

At Nordhausen, Germany, our division found the factory that built the V-1 and V-2 rockets that had plagued London and other cities.

The factory was in a tunnel 600 yards underground and two miles long, dug by forced labor. In April 1945, when we approached the slave camp, the released prisoners — those who were still strong enough to walk — came flooding across the field toward our armored column.

We gave them every bit of food we were carrying on the halftrack and all our cigarettes. I even parted with a box of my prized cigars.

Always the children

Our buses stopped at a tavern on the Mulde River, near Dassau. The tavern was near a bridge over the brown, narrow river, under a canopy of poplar trees.

It was the last familiar place on our pilgrimage — the last point of the division's penetration into Hitler's Germany. We all went into the tavern for a final salute to the old days.

Someone asked me what I would remember most about this trip.

I remember the children. In every city, town, village and hamlet we visited, schoolchildren lined the streets as our two buses rolled by.

The youngsters, with their teachers, stood along the narrow roadways, waving small flags and yelling "Welcome back, Lafayette!"

I asked a teacher, "The children are allowed to be released from school for this?"

"Oh, yes," she answered. "This is their history class."

Most heart-warming trip ever

Leonard Kyle of Fort Fairfield, a member of the 3rd Armored Division in World War II, toured for the first three weeks of September in Europe with the 3rd Armored Division Association, revisiting ground covered fifty years ago. The 3rd Armored landed in Normandy 25 days after D-Day, then went on to liberate approximately 35 towns and cities in France and Belgium, and the city of Stolberg, Germany.

Kyle called the trip back "the most heart-warming trip I ever took in my lifetime." While traveling, the group stopped at about 25 sites for plaque dedications. Leaving from JFK International Airport on September 1, the 87 members of the group assembled in Brussels for the start of their motorcoach tour. Their first stop was General Maurice Rose's headquarters in Quevy leGrand, at the Chateau Warelles. General Rose was killed at Paderborn, "the Fort Knox of Germany" and is buried in the American Military Cemetery in Holland. General Rose, who was about 50 when he was killed, entered the Army as a private and died as a (two-star) Major General.

The first plaque dedication was at Maubeuge, France, after which the group moved on to Fourmies where they stayed two nights with host families. Kyle said that his host family, M. and Mme. Alfredo Ferraz, could not have been more kind or welcoming. They turned themselves inside out for him, although M. Ferraz, from Portugal, was only two years old in 1944 and



Leonard Kyle

Mme. Ferraz was not born until after the war was over.

While staying in Fourmies, the group was feted by the entire area, with plaque dedications, parades, memorials, and Glenn Miller music by a live band. All the schools were closed along the entire route, to allow the children to see these men who had done so much for their families and country. The veterans gave away Kennedy half dollars to children throughout France and Belgium as souvenirs of their visit.

Leaving Fourmies, the group traveled through Normandy, touring the beaches and the U.S. cemetery. More plaque dedications and receptions highlighted this portion of the tour, and visits with townspeople. The group stayed in hotels after Fourmies.

On Wednesday the 7th of September, the veterans toured Paris, leaving the following morning for Brunehamel, where there was another plaque dedication and a reception with local veterans. In Mons, the group enjoyed a reception in the City Hall and a 3rd Armored Division plaque dedication.

More plaque dedications and receptions characterized the rest of the trip through France, and then it was on to Germany. More receptions and dedications were held in Germany, and some veterans were interviewed for German TV documentaries and the Cologne Historical Museum.

The group cruised up the Rhine, passing the beautiful castles and vineyards and villages. They then rode by bus on the Autobahn to Giessen to their hotel. On the following day, the veterans visited the 76th Armor at Friedberg, where they enjoyed demonstrations of latest equipment, training methods and vehicles. They visited with the soldiers and, following lunch prepared in World War II field kitchens, had an opportunity to ride in and drive some of the latest armored vehicles as well as some of World War II vintage.

Again on the Autobahn, the group sped through Germany, stopping at the infamous Nordhausen concentration camp, which had been liberated by the 3rd Armored Division. General Hickey of the 3rd Armored made the area civilians bury the dead from this camp upon liberation. The V-1 and V-2 rockets were built there. Then

the tour moved on to Dessau, where the veterans met up with the Russians. It was here that, after 221 days of combat, the 3rd Armored was relieved by the 9th Division.

On the last day, the group toured Berlin. Berlin has a population of three and a half million people. Kyle said all of them were on the road at the same time. "It was a tremendous traffic jam!" They visited a seven-story department store (VISA accepted!) where "everything imaginable" was sold, including meat. Kyle noted that Hitler's bunker was situated next to the Brandenburg Gate, but no marker of any kind exists, as Germany doesn't want the "skinheads" to know where it was.

Kyle was astounded that he arrived home so quickly. He left Berlin at 8:30 in the morning and arrived at the Presque Isle airport by 9:00 p.m., including a two-hour stopover in Boston.

Chapter 27

A Parting Letter

What a wonderful and exciting trip! We felt privileged to be able to join with the Third Armored Division group and to enjoy all the activities.

Probably our most impressive recollection of the entire trip was the intense appreciation of the people where we visited. We realize that since they still live in the countries which were marked by the fighting they are constantly reminded by the rebuilding of their towns and cities, by the scars on the old buildings and by the losses of family members. We are sure the return of the many veterans after fifty years renews old memories, both pleasant and sad. God bless them — we hope they never have to endure such sacrifices again.

We were also deeply affected by the fact that they are teaching their children about the war and are instilling in them the importance of remembering the past. Remember driving into the towns and seeing the crowds of welcoming people there to meet us? And remember the large number of children and young adults? They are not allowing them to forget.

Almost every week we have correspondence from people we met in Belgium and France. They cannot express strongly enough how much they remember and appreciate our intervention in the war and the sacrifices our boys made to save the people of their countries. Our return, after fifty years, was a symbol of our remembering shared experiences with them.

But now the trip is over and it's time to pack it all away. Fifty years ago participating in the fighting left many impressions on our young men. Lives changed — goals changed — bodies changed. And now, fifty years later, the one thing that remains is to instill in the next generations the futility of war.

Best wishes to you all.

Don & Dolores Dill
4th Infantry Division
8th Regiment

WHY BUY A POPPY?

by Deborah Owen
Indianapolis, Indiana

Colonel John McCrae spoke of the needless bloodbath in World War I. He was a Canadian physician, soldier, and poet. He was born in Guelph, Ontario, and graduated from the University of Toronto. In World War I he became the chief medical officer at a hospital in Boulogne, France, and witness firsthand the ravages of war on man, beast, and earth.

The poppy is a delicate flower admired for its gracefulness. It may grow in many places in a variety of colors. The White Opium Poppy has grown in the orient since ancient times. Rivaling its beauty is the Shirley Poppy grown from seeds, the Iceland Poppy (which grows as far south as Colorado), and the California Poppy which blooms in a variety of colors. The most showy of them all is the oriental Poppy with its red, orange, white, or salmon blossoms. There is at least one more kind, and that is the common Corn Poppy. It grows wild in the grain fields and grassy meadows of Europe.

Miss Moina Michael was perhaps the first to see the wonderful symbolism of the flower that grew thick in Flanders field, where brave men fought one of the bloodiest battles of World War I. She thought of the crimson-cupped flower trod beneath the feet of desperate and dying men, catching their precious blood. She lobbied far and wide to have the flower recognized officially as a symbol, a reminder every year, of that Great and terrible War.

On November 9, 1918, Miss Michael picked up a book and read the poem by Colonel John McCrae called *We Shall Not Sleep*. The poem has since been renamed *In Flanders Fields*. There is a Flanders Field cemetery in Belgium where over 350 crosses stand.

IN FLANDERS FIELD

*In Flanders fields the poppies blow between the crosses row on row,
That mark our place, and in the sky the larks, still bravely singing, fly.
Scarce heard amid the guns below.
We are the dead.
Short days ago We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow, Loved and were loved, and now we
lie, In Flanders fields.
Take up our quarrel with the foe, to you from falling hand we throw the Torch - be yours
to hold it high,
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow in Flanders Fields.*

At that moment Miss Michael pledge to "keep the faith and always to wear a red poppy of Flanders Fields as a sign of remembrance and the emblem of 'keeping the faith' with all who died." * (From the book *The Miracle Flower* written by Miss Michael) Feeling compelled to make note of her pledge she quickly wrote:

WE SHALL KEEP THE FAITH

*Oh! You who sleep in "Flanders Fields," Sleep sweet — to rise anew!
We caught the torch you threw and, holding high, we keep the Faith with all who died
We cherish, too, the poppy red that grows on fields where valor led,
It seems to signal to the skies that blood of heroes never dies,
But lends a lustre to the red of the flower that blooms above the dead In Flanders Fields.
And now the Torch and Poppy red we wear in honor our dead.
Fear not that ye have died for naught, we'll teach the lesson that ye wrought In Flanders Fields.*

And so began the hunt for artificial red poppies.

Courtesy of Bill Ruth, reprinted from a World War I newsletter. There are only 18,000 World War I veterans living today; their average age is 97 years old.

Appendix

Directory of Tour Members

Lewis Arends

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(616) 887-9664
Company A, 33rd AR

Jack & Alice Brewer

86A Eatoncrest Drive
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(908) 542-7484
Company B, 32nd AR

Bob & Ruth Clarke

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Company E, 32nd AR

Julia & Jennifer Coker

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Tour nurse

Elizabeth (Betty) Coons

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Field Artillery, 33rd AR

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54th FA Battalion

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391st FA and 67th FA

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143rd Signal Corp, detached to CCA

Richard & Theresa Miller

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Third Armored, 1950s

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Co. B, 33rd AR, Task Force Lovelady

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Maintenance Company, 32nd AR

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Prescott, Arizona 86301
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Yale & Barbara Simons
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The following transcription was submitted by Donald Crawford.

LIEGE

Saint James' Church
Place Saint Jacques
B-4000 Liege, Belgium
Dean: Father Louis HOUSSA

Saturday, September 10, 1994, 19:00 hours

**Ecumenical Commemoration Service
on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary
of the Liberation of Belgium**

Greeting and Welcome

We greet you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. The Europe of today is a very different place from that of 1944: old foes are now friends, and we are united and strong in our defense of democracy. Joined together as Christ's people, we are here to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Liberation of Belgium, and most particularly that of the Province and City of Liege, and the parts played in that Liberation by the civil and armed Belgian Resistance and the combined Allied forces of all nationalities, but most particularly by the United States Army Third Armored Division, representatives of which we welcome wholeheartedly to this ecumenical service of remembrance and thanksgiving.

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Posting of the Colors

Standard Bearers please post the Colors.

National Anthems:

Kindly stand to attention for the National Anthems of Belgium and the United States of America.

Belgium: La Brabanconne

(Translation for information only)

O Belgium, O beloved motherland,
Our hearts and arms are yours;
Our blood is yours, O homeland;
We all swear it, you shall endure!
You shall forever remain great and beautiful;
And your unvincible unity
Shall have as its everlasting watchwords:
The King, the Law, and Liberty;
Shall have as its everlasting watchwords:
The King, the Law, and Liberty;
The King, the Law, and Liberty;
The King, the Law, and Liberty.

U.S.A.: O Say, Can You See

*O say, can you see,
by the dawn's early light,
What so proudly we hailed
at the twilight's last gleaming,
Whose broad stripes and bright stars,
through the perilous fight,
O'er the ramparts we watched
were so gallantly streaming?
And the rockets' red glare,
the bombs bursting in air,*

*Gave proof through the night
that our flag was still there;
O say, does that
Star-spangled Banner yet wave
O'er the land of the free
and the home of the brave?*

Invocation

Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the presence of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily glorify your holy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Hymn: Praise to the Lord, the Almighty

*Praise to the Lord,
the almighty, the king of creation!
O my soul, praise him,
for he is your health and salvation!
Come, all who hear,
brothers and sisters, draw near,
praise him in glad adoration!*

Praise to the Lord,
above all things so mightily reigning;
keeping us safe at his side,
and so gently sustaining.
Have you not seen
all you have needed has been
met by his gracious ordaining?

*Praise to the Lord,
who shall prosper our work and defend us;
surely his goodness and mercy
shall daily attend us.
Ponder anew
what the almighty can do,
who with his love will befriend us.*

The Ministry of the Word:

Old Testament Readings:

Isiah 2:4

He will settle disputes among great nations. They will hammer their swords into ploughs and their spears into pruning-knives. Nations with never again go to war, never prepare for battle again.

Isiah 11:6-9

Wolves and sheep will live together in peace, and leopards will lie down with young goats. Calves and lion cubs will feed together, and little children will take care of them. Cows and bears will eat together, and their calves and cubs will lie down in peace. Lions will eat straw as cattle do. Even a baby will not be harmed if it plays near a poisonous snake. On Zion, God's sacred hill, there will be nothing harmful or evil. The land will be as full of knowledge of the Lord as the seas are full of water.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Choral Music: May Peace Come

(Translation for information only)

Our swords shall become plowshare,
Our spears shall become harvest scythes.
May the peace of God come!
Countries shall no longer take up arms,
Soldiers shall stop preparing for war.
May the peace of God come!
May peace come upon our land,
the peace of God for the nations!
May peace come between brothers,
the peace of God in our homes!

The newborn shall play over the snakehole,
The young child shall touch the viper,
May the peace of God come!
Goatkids and lions shall lie down together,
Wolves and lambs shall feed together,
May the peace of God come!

The Almighty shall breathe upon us,
And the desert shall flower like an orchard,
May the peace of God come!
The tenderness of God shall cover the world
better than water covers the ocean depths.
May the peace of God come!
Divided peoples shall shake hands together!
Evil and cruelty shall stop,
May the peace of God come!
Prisoners shall sing hymns of liberation;
Refugee camps shall change into gardens!
May the peace of God come!

New Testament Reading:

Romans 8:31-39

If God is for us, who can be against us? Certainly not God, who did not even keep back his own Son, but offered him for us all! He gave us his Son - will he not also freely give us all things? Who will accuse God's chosen people? God himself declares them not guilty! Who, then will condemn them? Not Christ Jesus, who died, or rather, who was raised to life and is at the right-hand side of God, pleading with him for us! Who, then, can separate us from the love of Christ? Can trouble do it, or hardship or persecution or hunger or poverty or danger or death? As the Scripture says, "For your sake we are in danger of death at all times; we are treated like sheep that are going to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we have complete victory through him who loved us! For I am certain that nothing can separate us from his love: neither death nor life, neither the present nor the future, neither the world above nor the world below - there is nothing in all creation that will ever be able to separate us from the love of God which is ours through Christ Jesus our Lord.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Hymn: All People That on Earth Do Dwell

All people that on earth do dwell,
sing to the Lord with cheerful voice:
serve him with joy, his praises tell,
come now before him and rejoice!

***O enter then his gates with praise,
and in his courts his love proclaim;
give thanks and bless him all your days:
let every tongue confess his name.***

The Lord our might God is good,
his mercy is forever sure;
his truth at all times firmly stood,
and shall from age to age endure.

Gospel Reading

Luke 1:68-79

Let us praise the Lord, the God of Israel, for he has come to the help of his people, and has set them free. He has provided for us a mighty Saviour, a descendant of his servant David. He promised through his holy prophets long ago that he would save us from our enemies, and from the power of all those who hate us. He said that he would show mercy to our ancestors and remember his sacred covenant. With a solemn oath to our ancestor Abraham he promised to rescue us from our enemies and allow us to serve him without fear, so that we might be holy and righteous before him, all the days of our life. You, my child, shall be called a prophet of the Most High God. You shall go ahead of the Lord to prepare his road for him, to tell his people that they will be saved by having their sins forgiven. Our God is merciful and tender. He will cause the bright dawn of salvation to rise on us and to shine from heaven on all those who live in the dark shadow of death, to guide our steps into the path of peace.

This is the Gospel of Christ.

Praise to Christ our Lord.

Hymn: The Strife is Past, the Battle Done

***The strife is past, the battle done;
now is the victor's triumph won -
O let the song of praise be sung,
Alleluia!***

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Death's mightiest powers have done their worst:
and Jesus has his foes dispersed -
let shout of praise and joy outburst,
Alleluia!

***On the third day he rose again,
glorious in majesty to reign -
sing out with joy the glad refrain,
Alleluia!***

Lord over death, our wounded king,
save us from Satan's deadly sting
that we may live for you and sing,
Alleluia!

Address by Father Louis HOUSSA

Hymn: praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven

Praise, my soul, the king of heaven!
to his feet your tribute bring:
ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,
who like me his praise should sing?
Alleluia, alleluia!
praise the everlasting king!

***Praise him for his grace and favor
to our fathers in distress;
praise him still the same as ever,
slow to blame and swift to bless:
Alleluia, alleluia!
glorious in his faithfulness!***

Father-like, he tends and spares us;
all our hopes and fears he knows,
in his hands he gently bears us,
rescues us from all our foes,
Alleluia, alleluia!
widely as his mercy flows.

*Angels, help us to adore him -
you behold him face to face;
sun and moon, bow down before him,
praise him, all in time and space:
Alleluia, alleluia!
praise with us the God of grace!*

Praise, my soul, the king of heaven!
to his feet your tribute bring:
ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,
who like me his praise should sing?
Alleluia, alleluia!
praise the everlasting king!

Prayers:

The Lord's Prayer:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day
our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive
those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**
Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi:

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:
where there is hatred let me sow love,
where there is injury let me sow pardon,
where there is discord let me sow union,
where there is error let me sow truth,
where there is doubt let me sow faith,
where there is despair let me give hope,
where there is darkness let me give light,
where there is sadness let me give joy.
O Divine Master, grant that I may:
not try to be comforted but to comfort,
not try to be understood but to understand,
not try to be loved but to love.
Because it is in giving that we receive,
it is in forgiving that we are forgiven, and
it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.
Amen.

Prayer for Bereaved Families and Friends of those killed in the Liberation:

O almighty God and most merciful Father, as we remember these your servants, recalling with gratitude their courage, we hold before you those who mourn their dead and we ask for your compassion. This day brings them memories of those lost in the Liberation of Belgium fifty years ago, and we pray that you give them your consolation, and your assurance that their family member, comrade or friend is alive now and forever in your holy presence.
Amen.

Prayer for War Veterans:

For those who have been true and brave, who served their country well in her hour of need, for those who remain permanently disabled as a result of their injuries, and especially for those who gave even their lives to free us from the Nazi yoke so that we might live in freedom and peace:

*We unite our prayers
and give you thanks, O God.
Moment of Silence in remembrance of those who died so that we
might live in freedom and peace*

Taps (Last Post)

Hymn: Battle Hymn of the Republic

*Mine eyes have seen the glory
of the coming of the Lord;
He is trampling out the vintage
where the grapes of wrath are stores;
He hath loosed the fateful lightning
of his terrible swift sword;
His truth is marching on.*

*Glory! Glory! Alleluia!
Glory! Glory! Alleluia!
Glory! Glory! Alleluia!
His truth is marching on.*

He has sounded forth the trumpet
that shall never call retreat;
He is sifting out the hearts of men
before his judgment seat;
O be swift, my soul, to answer him;
be jubilant, my feet!
Our God is marching on.

*In the beauty of the lilies
Christ was born across the sea,
With a glory in his bosom
that transfigures you and me;
As he died to make men holy,
let us die to make men free!
While God is marching on.*

Retiring of the Colors

Standard Bearers please retire the Colors.

Benediction

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord; And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always.
Amen.

Dismissal

Full communion not yet being established between our sister churches, Holy Communion will be celebrated for the Roman Catholics by me here, and for other Christians by Chaplain Walter Stitt of the Third Armored Division Group in the Narthex Chapel.
Go in peace, to love and serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The following articles were sent by Chet Davis.

Extracted from the *New York Sun* Newspaper, October 4, 1944:

"THIRD ARMORED DIVISION LEADS THE WAY"

Sun reporter reveals it was this unit that brought blitz home to Germany.
By. W.C. Heinz, Staff Correspondent of the New York Sun

"With the First Army in Germany, 4 October -- It now may be revealed that the unit that spearheaded the American drive from the banks of the Seine to the borders of the Reich was the Third Armored Division of the First Army.

This outfit was made up of a lot of fighting guys who, in odd moments when they weren't cutting the Germans to ribbons, were running up to you and asking why everybody was writing about the Third Army and not about the Third Armored Division. It was difficult to explain to these guys that censorship allows you to write about armies in the line but not about divisions.

It was especially difficult when they showed you a letter just arrived from home which remarked what a wonderful job General Patton and his boys must be doing.

'Whoa, we're the guys who took Soissons and Chateau Thierry,' these GIs would shout, and some of them would be quite mad. 'But the Stars and Stripes we read said it was the Third Army. What's the matter with you writing guys anyway?'

You couldn't know how many guys shouted things like that all the way across Belgium. They shouted it at you while they were digging in as you passed by, and you remember one tank sergeant who had to shout very loud because incoming mortar shells were plopping all around. 'Dammit!' he was shouting and you thought he was going to take you apart, 'You're a newspaper guy, and I've just got to get this off mind...'

So you stood there and nodded your head up and down while the sergeant shouted at you, and you tried to pull your helmet down to your waist, as you do every time stuff seems to be coming in faster than it is going out, and you waited for censorship to give you the go ahead on one of the most amazing divisions in this campaign.

You think you know a little about this spearhead division because you were with it from the time it crossed the Belgian border at 4 p.m. on September 2, until it crossed the German border at 2:15 p.m. on September 12. With the Ninth Infantry on the right and the First Infantry on the left, they brought the blitzkrieg right back to the land of its birth, at a speed its inventors never dreamed was possible.

- continued -

FRONT LINE GENERAL

But what you learned from the Third Armored Division is that an armored division is not only what it looks like on paper, is not only tanks and self-propelled guns and armored cars, but is mostly men from the General down to the GIs. Major General Maurice C. Rose came out of the first World War as a second lieutenant, and the first time you saw him in this war he was in a jeep about sixty feet behind the first tanks as they crossed the Belgian line. You don't see many generals up there.

That first night in Belgium was the night the Tiger tanks were crashing through the command post trying out the way, and you don't find many command posts up that far. You don't find many headquarter companies taking a couple hundred prisoners a day, either.

'In this division,' said Private Angelo Vacaro of 17 St. Joseph's Street, New Rochelle, New York, that day when he was giving you one of those New Rochelle haircuts, 'we've got the best officers in the whole American Army. Me? I'm just a private, but I know.'

Then there was that afternoon of September 19 on that hillside, just on the western outskirts of Stolberg. At the top of the hill about 100 yards away, the tank that had been first in our line was burning, and bits of flying shrapnel were clunking off of guys helmets and you watched the General to see if he would duck just once. He didn't, and the junior officers didn't either.

But an armored division, among other things, is maps, too, and telephone wires. It took 300,000 maps to get this division from the beaches of France to the borders of the Reich, and there were times when the division was moving so fast that it had to push off with nothing but French road maps, before Captain William Fairchild of Hutchison, Kansas, could get tactical maps for it. There are guys, too, like Staff Sergeant Kenneth Doncaster of St. Petersburg, Florida, who have to take those maps up to the companies in the middle of the under fire.

And when you ask Lieutenant Robert L. Milnes of Chicago, who the New Yorkers might be who helped to string 1,300 miles of telephone wire from Division Headquarters to combat commands of this armor on the move, you found you couldn't publish the names anyway. There were only two; one was killed and the other was wounded.

Then there is that self-propelled, automatic weapon, anti-aircraft battalion of Captain Bill Prewitt of Corpus Christi, Texas, which is really an anti-anything battalion. To their credit they have three tanks, a dozen half-tracks, thirty trucks loaded with personnel, and one troop train.

When the historians finally get around to writing the history books, they may eventually do justice to the Third Armored Division. They may get around to telling how in ten days it liberated Mons, Charleroi, Namur, Verviers and Liege in Belgium and was the first division to capture a German town. But that is unimportant now. What is important is that when you see the Third Armored Division again you hope those GIs will stop shouting at you — especially when mortar shells and heavy stuff seems to be coming in faster than it's going out."

Extracted from an English Paper:

FROM THE SEINE TO GERMANY

By Robert Reuben

"U.S. Army Headquarters - Monday. The American Third Armored Division was the spearhead of the United States drive through Belgium, fighting its way from the Seine to the German Border in twenty-seven days, it may now be revealed.

Leading the Division and riding always at the front of his troops was the Commanding General, a tough, daring soldier, winner of the Silver Star three times, who rose from enlisted ranks, and became a lieutenant in the last war at the age of seventeen.

The Division, originally one of the units that led the breakthrough west of St. Lo and later helped to encircle and destroy a large section of the German Seventh Army — began its drive on the night of August 26, when it received orders to bridge the Seine and head for Belgium.

Striking into eastern France in 'multiple column' formations and in the face of tank, tank destroyer and armored opposition, the Division headed straight for Sedan, but on August 31, suddenly wheeled North, cut across the border into Belgium with several columns and captured Mons.

The maneuver blocked off German troops retreating into Germany, and just before dawn on September 3, elements of several German divisions tried to break through the armored lines. Day and night the battle raged with service troops, engineers, cooks, military police, staff officers, taking part in the melee that at one time was battling in the area of the Division Command Post.

Without pause the Division pushed off for Namur, liberating town after town as it went. Despite uncertain supply conditions the Crack Division Engineers bridged the Meuse, and the Division went through Namur and headed for Liege. Gas and other supplies lagged behind the columns, but Liege was surrounded and fell in quick order.

Roetgen, first German town to fall was captured that day. The village of Eupen, half German and half Belgian, fell next as the Division began feeling out the Siegfried line. On September 12, the column breached the German west wall."

Il y a cinquante ans en Belgique



Un certain nombre de photos du Signal Corps ne sont pas localisées. Ainsi, la légende de ce cliché mentionne seulement qu'il s'agit du 3^e bataillon du 22th Infantry, qui progresse en direction de la frontière allemande. Dans le journal de l'officier chargé des opérations de la 4^e division US, on lit que le 22th Infantry partit vers l'est, en deux colonnes, le 11 septembre 1944. La colonne de droite prit la route de Brisy et Rettigny. Elle atteignit Couvy vers 12 h 30. Celle de gauche emprunta celle de Courtil et Beho. Elle eut maille à partir avec des éclaireurs allemands, tout près de Braunlauf, à 16 h 40. Fort de cette information, nous avons refait cette route, pour situer la scène. Nos efforts ont été récompensés dans la rue de la Gare, à Courtil.

(Photo N.A.W. 1115C194161 - Peter Taghoni)



Eupen fut la dernière grande ville belge à être libérée par la 3^e US Armoured. Le 11 septembre 1944, les tanks du Combat Command Bougainot pénétrèrent au centre de la ville, vers 13 heures, selon l'historique de la division, ils se rendirent compte petit à petit que la ligne Siegfried n'était plus très loin. A Eupen, les Américains n'eurent pas droit à l'accueil chaleureux qui leur avait été réservé dans les autres villes belges. Dans les rues désertées, aux noms écrits en allemand et en français, flottaient aussi bien des drapeaux blancs que les couleurs belges. Sur cette photo, faite peu après la Libération, beaucoup de poteaux indicateurs allemands ont déjà disparu.

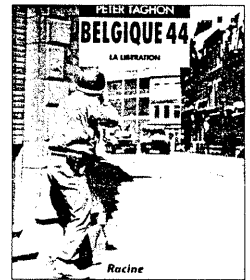
(Photo N.A.W. - Peter Taghoni)



Ici, nous sommes à Barbencon, le 24 septembre 1944, où se déroulèrent les premières fêtes en l'honneur de la Libération. Sur ce véhicule chargé de prisonniers de guerre, nous reconnaissons comme gardiens, à droite Richard Conreur et à gauche Albert Rolin. Ce dernier, de même qu'Oscar Canne - l'homme qui porte un casque allemand - était un réfractaire au travail obligatoire. Pendant des mois, ils se cachèrent tous les deux chez Jules Rolin.

(Photo A. Rolin - Peter Taghoni)

Les photos de nos pages consacrées à la libération de la Belgique étaient extraites du livre de Peter Taghoni publié aux Editions Racine, à Bruxelles



Après avoir franchi la Salm dans la matinée du 12 septembre 1944, à Grand-Halleux, le 24th Cavalry Squadron se rendit à Stavelot. Vers 11 heures, il prit contact avec le 4th Squadron. Le Stuart M5 qui passe ici avenue F. Nicolay appartient au 759th Light Tank Battalion, un bataillon blindé qui appuyait les opérations de reconnaissance de la cavalerie. Ici aussi, de longues files de gens souhaitent la bienvenue aux libérateurs

(Photo De Backer - Peter Taghoni)



Aux environs du 12 septembre 1944, la majeure partie des Ardennes était libérée. Ces G.I. qui posent à Eynatten, à côté d'un poteau frontière belge, appartiennent au 16^e régiment d'infanterie de la 1^{re} division US. Le reporter du Signal Corps a noté leurs noms : il s'agit du sergent Louis C. Diamond, des privates Darwin H. Barnett et Joseph A. Medeiros. Lorsqu'elle entra en Allemagne, la 1^{re} division US rencontra une violente résistance. Des barrières bloquaient les routes, qui étaient truffées de mines.

(Photo N.A.W. 1115C194845 - Peter Taghoni)

50 Years Ago In Belgium

Photo caption, top left: This is the 3rd Battalion of the 22nd Infantry, headed to the German border. They were headed east, in two columns, on September 11, 1944. The right column headed toward Brisy and Rettigny and arrived at Gouvy around 12:30 p.m. The left column went to Courtil and Beho. They met the Germans near Braunlauf at 4:40 p.m.

Photo caption, top right: Eupen was the last big town of Belgium to be liberated by the Third Armored. They arrived downtown on September 11, 1944. They became aware that the Siegfried line wasn't far. They were not welcomed in Eupen as they were in the other towns of Belgium. The streets were deserted. Street names were in both French and German. White and Belgian flags were in the streets. In the picture, after the liberation, many German signs were already gone.

Photo caption, center left: This is Barbencon, September 14, 1944, the first ceremonies of the liberation. Vehicles were loaded with German war prisoners. Among them: Richard Conreur and Albert Rolin. Like Oscar Canne (man with German helmet on) he did not accept "slave work". They hid for two months with Jules Rolin.

Photo caption, bottom left: After crossing the Salm River the morning of September 12, 1944, in Grand-Halleux, the 24th Cavalry Squadron came into Stavelot around 11:00 a.m. There was contact with the 4th Squadron. This Stuart M5 belongs to the 759th Light Tank Battalion. Again, many people had gathered to celebrate our liberators.

Photo caption, bottom right: Around September 12, 1944, almost all of the Ardennes had been liberated. This GIs belong to the 16th Infantry unit of the U.S. First Division. Sergeant Louis C. Diamond and Privates Darwin H. Barnett and Joseph A. Medeiros. When they came into Germany, they encountered a strong resistance with blockages and mines on the roads.

Il y a cinquante ans en Belgique



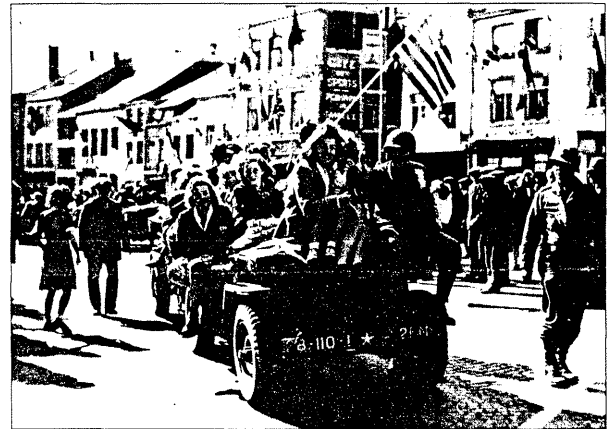
Cette fois, Spangle a photographié une famille belge. Cinquante ans plus tard, lorsque nous avons sonné à la porte de cette maison, Grand-Route, quel n'a pas été notre étonnement de nous trouver face à face avec Alice Louis. Elle s'est reconnue dans la jeune dame de la photo et se souvenait parfaitement des circonstances dans lesquelles cette photo fut prise, le 10 septembre 1944. Elle nous a raconté comment, vers 12 h 45, juste après l'arrivée du 22nd Infantry Combat Team, on exhuma les drapeaux qui avaient été cachés dans les caves pendant la guerre. Puis elle identifia les autres personnes. De droite à gauche : Firmin Louis, Marie Collinet, elle-même, Mélanie Genot et, les Stars and Stripes à la main, Jean-Baptiste Collinet. Notons le tromblon, assez rare, sur la carabine M1 du G.I. (Photo N.A.W. 1115C194074)



La 3rd Armoured ne rencontra que des difficultés en progressant vers Verviers. Le plus dur échu une fois de plus au Combat Command B. Les hommes du général Boudinot furent arrêtés à plusieurs reprises par des champs de mines, et une batterie allemande de 88 mm tira sur deux Sherman. De ce fait, le Combat Command ne parvint pas à libérer Verviers le 9 septembre 1944. Cela se passa mieux pour le Combat Command A : les tanks du général Hickey arrivèrent à Verviers vers 20 heures. Mais il faudra attendre le lendemain pour que la ville soit complètement nettoyée. L'équipage de ce Stuart M5, Crapaurie, semble apprécier l'allégresse générale. (Photo CRIBA - Peter Taghoni)



Le 102nd Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron soutenait le flanc de la 5th Armoured. Comme on peut le voir sur cette photo d'Henry, les missions de reconnaissance étaient dangereuses. En début d'après-midi, le 8 septembre 1944, la colonne était entrée dans notre pays près de Sommethonne et se hâta vers Virton. Dans la vallée, entre Villers-la-Loue et Houdrigny, un canon antichar allemand tira et toucha le premier M8 à hauteur de la maison située rue de la Halte, n° 12. Le tank brûla et deux des occupants périrent. Quelques civils se sont rassemblés autour des corps carbonisés. Une simple plaque, sur le mur de la maison, rappelle cet événement. (Photo-Bartoux)



Dans la matinée du 10 septembre 1944, le commandant de la 28e division US donna l'ordre au 110th Infantry de foncer sur Bastogne. Vers 11 heures, l'avant-garde du 2e bataillon était à l'est de Marvie, sur la route Bastogne-Wiltz. Le 3e bataillon se trouvait déjà à l'ouest de Bastogne. Lorsque le gros de l'unité défila sur la place Saint-Pierre, l'enthousiasme atteignit son paroxysme. Annie Lebrun est juchée sur une jeep Willys du 2e bataillon. Cette jeune Bastogarde se maria quelques mois plus tard avec un Américain.

OU EST CE ?

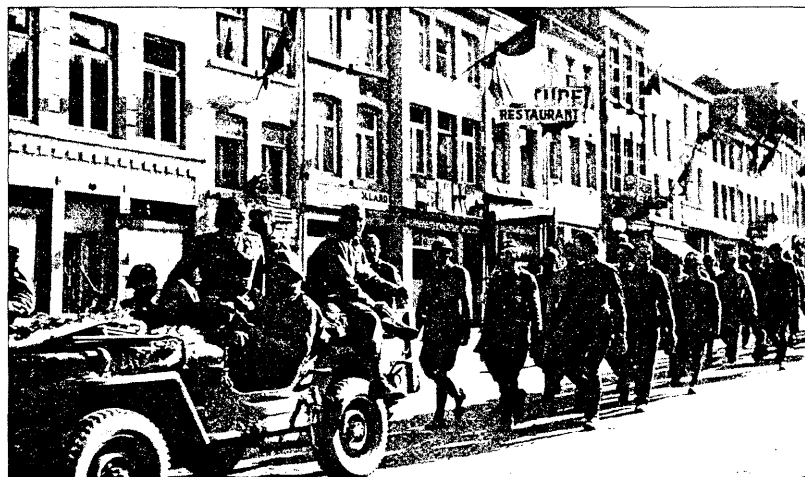
La grande photo ci-dessous a été prise quelque part en Belgique durant les journées de libération du pays. A quel endroit ? Les réponses doivent parvenir à :

Concours Libération
Vers l'Avenir
BP 149
5000 NAMUR

avant le jeudi 15 septembre à minuit UNIQUEMENT sur carte postale.

Formule à utiliser :
La réponse à la question du 10 septembre est :

Un seul prix sera distribué chaque jour du concours par tirage au sort entre les bonnes réponses. Il s'agit du livre de Peter Taghoni « Belgique 44 » paru aux éditions Racine.



La Résistance apporta une aide précieuse aux Américains, pour leur permettre de progresser rapidement dans les Ardennes, comme en témoignent les événements de Bastogne. Le 3 septembre 1944, elle effectua des opérations de guérilla à Lavaselle, à la suite de quoi l'état-major se déplaça au Bois des Valets. Le 9 septembre 1944, le groupe d'Hubertmont prit contact avec les troupes américaines et leur fournit tous les renseignements nécessaires pour attaquer Bastogne. Dans la nuit du 9 au 10 septembre, il envoya même des patrouilles offensives. Les pelotons 1 et 2 du sous-secteur de Bastogne se rassemblèrent dans le bois, près de Marvie, et effectuèrent une percée jusque dans les Jardins. De là, ils appuyèrent les actions de la 28e division US et entrèrent à Bastogne avec les G.I. Le correspondant du Signal Corps Cedicks photographia leur traversée triomphale rue du Vivier. Les résistants parmi lesquels beaucoup d'anciens combattants du 2e chasseurs ardennais, ont revêtu leur uniforme de 1940 pour défilé dans la ville de garnison. (Photo N.A.W. 1115C194072 - Peter Taghoni)



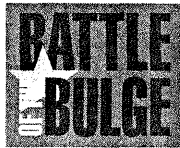
(Translation from previous page.)

50 Years Ago In Belgium

Photo caption, top left: A photographer took a picture of a Belgian family. Fifty years later, we rang at the door of this house on Grand-Route and bumped into Alice Louis, the young lady in the picture. She remembers the circumstances in which the picture was taken on September 10, 1944. Around 12:45 p.m., after the arrival of the 22nd Infantry Combat Team, people brought their flags out of the basements where they were hidden during the war. She also gave the names of the other people in the picture.

Photo caption, top right: Members of the CCB of the Third Armored Division encountered difficulties as they headed toward Verviers.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Today, The Dispatch marks the 50th anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge, described as the greatest pitched battle between German and U.S. forces during World War II. The battle began with a surprise German offensive Dec. 16, 1944, and ended in late January 1945. The experiences of central Ohioans involved in the battle are recalled in stories here and in *Insight* on Pages 1, 4 and 5B.



The Columbus Dispatch

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11, 1994



World War II veterans Bill Ruth, left, and Donald Dill, with their division yearbooks open to pages depicting the Battle of the Bulge
Jamie Sabau / For The Dispatch

Nazis' last big offensive

By David Lore
 Dispatch Staff Reporter

IT WAS HITLER'S BABY, and that's why veterans of the Battle of the Bulge still wonder what the *Fuhrer* expected to achieve in the final bloody assault through the Ardennes region of Belgium and Luxembourg 50 years ago this week.

"The man fascinated me because he changed our lives," explained Bill Ruth, a radio operator with the 3rd Armored Division who helped turn back the last great German offensive during World War II. "We were some 16 million American males — and there were some women, too — and he took us out of the prime of our youth, and we spent four years overseas."

Those whose lives were only disrupted were the lucky ones, the Worthington resident noted.

More than 15 million died in combat during the war, a toll that included an estimated 19,000 Americans who died during the six-week battle that erupted with a surprise attack along the Belgian-German border the week before Christmas in 1944.

*Hitler's surprise
 attack 50 years ago
 left indelible mark*

Historians tell us that Adolf Hitler surprised even his own generals when he ordered the attack Sept. 16. Rejecting a strategy of tenacious withdrawal, Hitler gambled his reserves on a massive strike toward Antwerp, Belgium, in hopes of splitting advancing American and British forces.

"It was a last-gasp effort, and it had all the hallmarks of a Hitlerian flash of genius," said John Guilmartin, associate professor of history at Ohio State University. "Strategically, he put all of

Please see **BULGE** Page 2A

Germany's eggs in one basket. But if you're afflicted with Hitler's all-or-nothing, victory-or-death set of goals, it made sense."

By late 1944, Germany was in desperate straits, having lost nearly a half-million men on the Western Front since the Normandy invasion and being ground down by more than 500 Russian divisions advancing from the east.

Hitler hoped the assault would split U.S. and British forces — militarily and politically — and destroy as many as a third of the 50 Allied divisions strung out along the German border in Belgium and Luxembourg. Some think the *Fuhrer* was trying to buy time to develop new weapons or negotiate a separate peace in the west.

Before dawn on Dec. 16, three German armies — more than 200,000 soldiers supported by nearly 600 tanks — smashed into four front-line Allied divisions across a 50-mile front, achieving surprise and, at least initially, causing panic and confusion.

Guilmartin said Germany had major advantages: the element of surprise; a brilliant general staff; overcast weather which grounded Allied planes; and superior weaponry, including the heavier, better-armed Tiger tanks.

"Whenever you could hear their tanks around you, it would make your hair stand on end," recalled Donald Dill of Lewis Center, Ohio, a rifleman with the 4th Infantry Division in the Ardennes. "You knew they had you if they wanted you. The Germans could go right through our tanks, but our shells would just bounce off their tanks."

The Germans also introduced several new weapons to the fighting in Europe, including jet aircraft, mini subs, and the V-1 and V-2 rockets.

The V-2s did the most damage, said Orla Coakley of Upper Arlington, an Army staff sergeant assigned to the 13th Transportation Corps at Antwerp during the fighting. They

were faster and more destructive than the V-1s or "buzz bombs," and couldn't be detected before they hit.

Hitler, Guilmartin said, was ignoring evidence that should have convinced him that the attack was doomed to fail.

Germany's main strategic weakness, he said, was a lack of trucks and fuel. Except for the elite Panzer units, the German army depended on horse-drawn wagons to move supplies.

By December 1944, fuel shortages were critical, Guilmartin said. At one point, some German pilots used cows to drag their airplanes onto the runway to avoid having to use gasoline to taxi.

Allied air power — unleashed after the skies cleared Dec. 23 — also stacked the cards against the Germans, he said, as did the tenacity of the American fighting men.

"Hitler probably underestimated U.S. forces because they were relatively new to combat, because of his racism, and because of his view that Americans were soft," Guilmartin said. "But it turned out we were pretty damn tough."

"They were professional soldiers," Dill said of the Germans, "and we were just citizen soldiers."

GIs, he said, were surprised by the fanaticism of the SS Panzer soldiers, who frequently preferred death to surrendering.

The Americans were quickly hardened, though, not only by combat but by German atrocities committed against Belgian civilians and Allied prisoners of war.

Ruth kept a battlefield diary, and his Dec. 16 entry foreshadowed the tone of the fighting to come:

We have heard that the Germans have just begun some heavy

action. Intelligence informed us that it was all or nothing. The Germans planned to take NO prisoners — it was kill or be killed.

Dill recalled, "I wasn't fighting for the United States of America; I was fighting to save my hide. I'm patriotic and all, but it comes down to you or somebody else."

The ferocity of the fighting in and around such places as Bastogne and St. Vith seared the memory of the Ardennes campaign into a generation of fighting men. But Guilmartin said Allied air raids against German rail lines, canals and marshalling yards had already determined the war's outcome.

"By January 1945, the German economy was gone, and at that point, where the front lines were was irrelevant," he said.

The campaign will be remembered as "that last important shock" in Europe, even if it doesn't rank with the Normandy invasion or Midway among the decisive battles of the war, Guilmartin said.

Nevertheless, William Tayman, president of the Battle of the Bulge Association, describes it as the biggest battle ever fought by the U.S. Army, involving more than a million men and resulting in more than 82,000 Allied casualties and more than 100,000 German casualties.

Belgium surely remembers the Bulge, said Ruth and Dill, who recently returned from 50th anniversary celebrations of that nation's liberation.

"They appreciate their freedom — they appreciate what we did," Ruth said, noting that huge crowds turned out in the rain to welcome U.S. veterans.

Children in Belgium, he said, spend two hours a week learning the history of World War II.

"This woman over there told me, 'You guys saved the world,' " Dill said. "I never looked at it that way: I was just trying to save my neck. But it hurts me today that young kids don't know anything about it, and that they don't care about it."



Guilmartin

Brutal weather was as big a foe as Germans

By David Lore
Dispatch Staff Reporter

"Sir, this is Patton talking. The last fourteen days have been straight hell. Rain, snow, more rain, more snow — and I'm beginning to wonder what's going on in Your headquarters. Whose side are You on, anyway?"

From Patton's Prayer (1944)
Lt. Gen. George S. Patton Jr.

Even during the heaviest fighting of the Battle of the Bulge, the enemy wasn't *always* in a soldier's face.

The weather, though, was another matter.

"We were in snow up to our waists," recalled D.W. "Bill" Davis of Columbus, a machine-gunner with the 70th Infantry Division. "1944 was the worst winter in Europe for 100 years."

"From Dec. 16 to Christmas, we had constant cold weather — sleet, rain and snow," said Bill Ruth of Worthington, a radio operator with

the 3rd Armored Division. "Vehicles were falling off the narrow roads; it was chaos."

Chester Ball of Hilliard, a forward observer with the 5th Infantry Division, said troops borrowed sheets from Belgians for camouflage and used explosives to dig foxholes in frozen ground.

Richard Slack of Marion, Ohio, a tank commander with the 32nd Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, remembers the time a tank froze to the ground overnight.

GIs wore anything they could beg, borrow or steal.

"I would put on my summer underwear, my winter underwear, a collared sweater, a wool shirt, another sweater, wool pants, a combat suit that was blanket-lined, and when I got cold I'd put on my Mackinaw," Slack said.

"My feet I kept warm with British wool socks I had picked up."

Don Schuster, a gunner with the 78th "Lightning" Infantry Division, remembers slogging through mud armed with 10 pairs of socks "stuffed

down the front of my shirt, over my back, around my waist — anywhere I could."

The Rev. Carl Dodrill of Malta, Ohio, recalls a paratrooper who couldn't take off his boots for 17 days because the shoelaces were frozen.

"When he did take his shoes off, two toes came off — that's what the Battle of the Bulge was," said Dodrill, a sergeant with the 82nd Airborne Division.

Trench foot — a circulatory disease caused by long periods of inactivity in cold, wet conditions — became epidemic.

"We had boys coming in by the hundreds with trench foot, and we didn't know anything about it," said Dr. Robert Kirk of Bexley, who served with the 197th Station Hospital in England.

In previous wars, Kirk said, the blackened toes of trench-foot victims had been amputated, but — based on the Army's experience in Alaska — orders went out in 1944 to spare the knife and give the feet time to heal.

"Some of it was self-inflicted,"



Associated Press file photo

U.S. infantrymen trudge through snowy woods in Belgium's Ardennes Forest at the start of the Battle of the Bulge.

he said. "It was a good way to get out of that terrible place."

Under such conditions, hot chow was welcome but rare.

Donald Dill of Lewis Center, Ohio, a rifleman with the 4th Infantry Division, remembers only one hot meal during six weeks at the

front — and it was served up by the Germans.

GIs, Dill said, captured a German food wagon and quickly wolfed down the meat-and-bean stew aboard.

"That was German food, but it was good," he said. "It was only later

that we continued up the road and found where they had butchered the horse."

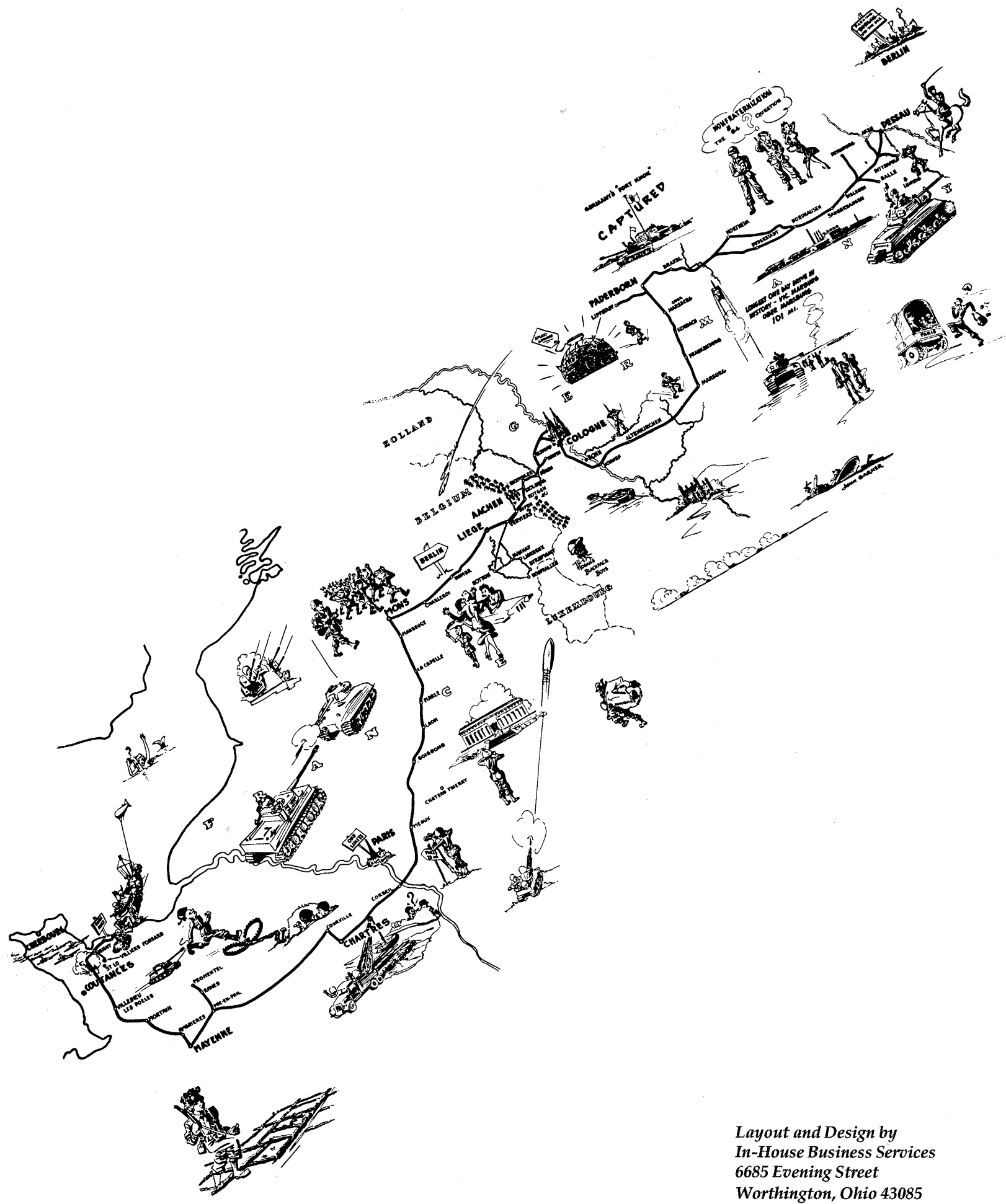
Dispatch reporters Robert Albrecht, Kevin Mayhood and Jim Woods contributed to this story.

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O GOD
WHO ART THE AUTHOR OF PEACE AND LOVER OF CONCORD
DEFEND US THY HUMBLE SERVANTS
IN ALL ASSAULTS OF OUR ENEMIES
THAT WE SURELY TRUSTING IN THY DEFENSE
MAY NOT FEAR THE POWER OF ANY ADVERSARIES



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