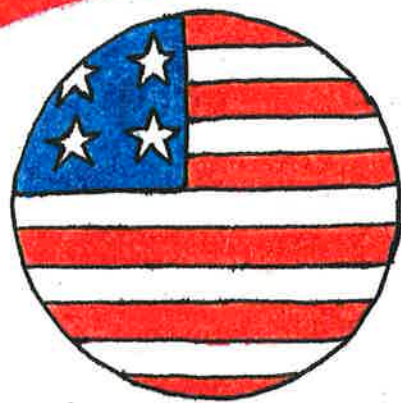


79th



IVS



314th Regiment

WW
II

June 1944
to
Dec 1945

BA

Recalling Action: Serving the 314th Infantry Regiment

Willie Leroy Kemmerlin, Company I, wrote a long letter to his mother in mid-June 1945 from Czechoslovakia. He recalled some of his action from the assault landings to the end of hostilities. Merle Buck, co-host of the 2006 reunion, is the daughter of the late Sgt. Kemmerlin.

Well, I am back with the Third Army now. I have been with every one of our armies over here except the Fifteenth. In England, before the invasion I was with the Third Army until a few days before D-Day. The First Army was making the invasion so we were transferred to the First to take part in the invasion.

We were supposed to hit the beaches right behind the assault troops, but the weather was so bad and the Channel so rough we were delayed several days in sailing. The beaches were quiet except the exploding of mines when I landed. I could hear the artillery a few miles away.

I will never forget the first attack we made a few days later. I will try to describe a little of it, although it could never be described in words or pictures as rough as it really was.

To begin with, our planes were to knock out the big guns just before we jumped off. So, right on time, came the planes and gave the Jerries a working over, after dropping a couple of bombs on us first. As soon as the bombing was over we moved out for the attack.

The Jerries threw a few shells at us as we started, but pretty soon it was all quiet. I guess everyone figured this was going to be easy. We were two-thirds of the way to our objective when all Hell broke loose. The guns that the planes were supposed to have knocked out started pouring shells into us, and machine guns and rifles opened and bullets were flying like hail. Men were going down in every direction! Some-



Willie Kemmerlin after his decorated service in Company I, 314th Regiment

how, and I still don't know how, I found myself alone. No one was to be seen anywhere. With my ears ringing from the crack of bullets I ran behind a hedge-row that was about chest high. The hedge-row was built of stone blocks with dirt piled against each side, so I thought it would be good cover. I found out pretty soon that I was wrong.

One of the 88 crews spotted me and figured I would make a good target, so they went to work on me in a big way. The first thing I knew, a shell tore a hole through the wall about ten feet in front of me. I thought it was time to move from that spot so I ran farther up the wall to get out of his range. But running didn't do much good because he put another one through the wall right in front of me. I had to turn the other way, but I didn't get far before the same thing happened. No matter which way I turned the same thing happened.

How long that kept up I don't know, but it seemed an eternity. All I know is that I finally got so exhausted from running back and forth, and so choked on dust and powder fumes from the shell bursts, that I flopped on the ground and waited for the next one to blow me to pieces. I was so tired, scared, and mad

too, because I couldn't get away from those guys, till I remember saying, "To Hell with it. I will never get out of here alive so I might just as well get it over."

I lay there on the ground for a few minutes and nothing happened; in fact they had quit shooting at me. I guess they thought they had me when they saw me go down. Pretty soon I was rested enough to go again, so I decided I was going to try to get out of there. But they saw me when I got up and the fun started all over again.

I decided that if I could get around the corner of that wall and get behind the next wall that ran almost directly towards the Germans, that maybe they couldn't get to me so easily. But in order to get around there I would have to climb a big gate as high as my head, and that was risky business with so many bullets flying around and the trees full of snipers.

I decided to take a chance, so I climbed that gate. But, just as I ran around the corner, a shell blew the top of the wall off almost in my face, so back over the gate I went. And so did the shells. By this time the old wall looked like a sieve. I took a minute out to look around. In the next field I saw my lieutenant running across the field toward the next hedge-row so I decided to follow him. That meant climbing that gate for the third time, but I didn't hesitate, over I went. When he reached his wall, he took a look around and saw me, so he waved me to come on and I didn't need any urging. I found he was lost from the platoon the same as I was, but he didn't have the fun I had. That is where I got away from that gun, and don't think I wasn't glad to get away. He and I then went forward to look for the others boys and found them in a lot of trouble. We soon had to withdraw and that was no easy job. That was when one of my best buddies was killed. He and I went part of the way back to-

gether but got separated on the way. When I got back to our starting point, I found he was killed on the way back.

It may be hard to believe that I went through that without getting a scratch. It is hard for me to believe, too, but it's a fact. I call it a miracle. Mom, you don't know just how close you came to losing your boy that 21st day of June 1944. I have had lots of close calls since then, but none that lasted as long as this one. Most of them lasted only seconds.

For instance, the morning of the Fourth of July, when one of our artillery shells missed my fox hole by two feet, or the day I was standing in the doorway of a house with another boy and a mortar shell landed in the yard, killing the boy that was standing there with me. Yet I didn't get a scratch.

Getting back to my story, when I was playing hide and seek with the 88. In that little engagement that lasted only a few hours, my company lost about 90 men out of about 170. Those Jerries played a trick on us. They kept quiet until we got almost on top of them, then they gave us everything they had, and that was plenty.

There is plenty more I could talk about. I would like to tell you about following Patton across France, but I will leave that for some other time, and holding the bridgehead across the Seine River, where the Jerries caught us by surprise early one morning and almost ran us into the river. However, we made a counter-attack and cleaned them out.

In another letter, Sgt. Kemmerlin described another action.

After a few days rest we were back in action again. Then followed some tough fighting until the break-through at St. Lo.

One day during that time, a machine gun was bothering us from a house up ahead, so the CO sent me and another guy out to put it out of action. We made it to the house without being seen by the Jerries. There we found a Jerry leading a horse around the courtyard. The other guy wanted to shoot

him, but I insisted we capture him because there were probably others around. Boy, was he surprised to see us! I thought for a moment he would try to shoot it out with us. But he dropped his gun and came walking to us. Then I saw a couple run past a window in the house, so we started shooting up the joint. Pretty soon they were yelling inside and waving a Red Cross flag. I yelled to them to come out. After threatening to open up on them again, three came out with their hands up. But I saw there were still more in there. So while I took these back to the CO, the other stayed on guard. When I got back, we finally persuaded them all out three or four at a time. Had to help them make up their minds with a few more shots through the window. They told us they had some wounded inside, so we went in and found three wounded. While all this was in progress I noticed a white flag waving from the window of another house. I waved them to come out, so out walked five. Their nerve failed be-

fore they got to us and they dived in a ditch. We put a few bullets around their heads and they came out of that ditch, fast. The two of us got about 25 prisoners right there, but we sure had our hands full for a while. We got that machine gun, too. They had thrown it in the yard behind the house. Don't tell me those "super-men" don't scare.

Sgt. Kemmerlin was awarded the Silver Star for this action. His citation said in part, "The indomitable courage, initiative, and fidelity to duty displayed by Sergeant Kemmerlin reflect great credit on himself and the Armed Forces of the United State."

Sgt. Kemmerlin was wounded in France in September and hospitalized in the United Kingdom. He rejoined the 314th in December, saw action in the Alsace Lorraine, and made the final crossing of the Rhine River. In the Army of Occupation, he served in Witten-Ruhr and in Czechoslovakia.



*Front: Don Carl and Willie Kemmerlin
Back, from left: Carl Loar, Jack Odum, Bill Little, Bob Kern*

**In Gratitude of the Men of Company I
Whom we have had the
Privilege to Know and Love.**

Merle and Lucky Buck

Sgt. Willie Kemmerlin

My Hero from the Greatest Generation



Yesterday, Today, and Forever

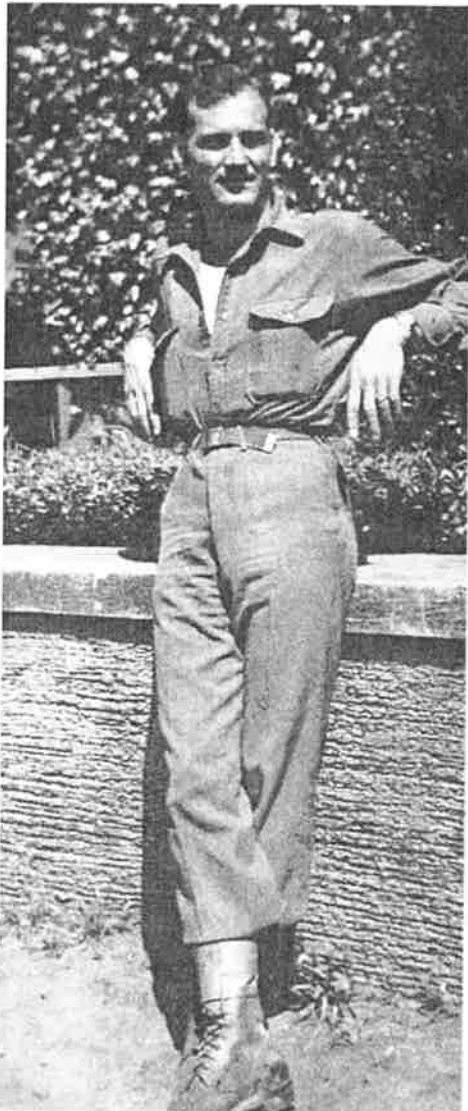
Merle Kemmerlin Buck

Staff Sgt. Samuel (Sam) E. Barnett

July 20, 1920 - April 7, 1976

WW II, BSM and OLC

Wire Chief, 314th Regimental Headquarters Co.



*Sam was a very
simple person*

A very dedicated soldier

**Dedicated by Joseph W. Campbell
Lineman in Sam's Crew**

Dortmund, Germany 1945

My Time With the 79th

Told by Jan Joosten

Written and submitted by

Ruud Bouman, his son-in-law

At the end of March 1945 I was marched off to the east with hundreds of men from many countries who were in Germany for the *Arbeidseinsatz*, the German version of slave labor.

I was with two other guys from Holland, Piet Beekmans and Auke. We felt the East was trouble for us, and that the Americans must be in the West. We decided to go slowly to the end of the column, and when we saw a chance fled into a small ditch. When the column was out of sight, we ran into the countryside.

We came to an abandoned swimming pool in a small town, and we stayed there for three days and nights without any food or water. German patrols were swarming around, but we did not know if they were looking for us or just on patrol. We could not stay forever in the pool, so we took our chance and started walking to the West.

After we had walked for half a day, suddenly a tank was in front of us with soldiers pointing their guns in our direction. We put up our hands and said we were Dutch. The words "Dutch" and "Deutsch" (German) sound alike, so they first thought we were German soldiers in civilian clothes. After they checked out our papers a tank brought us back behind the frontline. That, near Lipstadt on April 3, 1945, was my first encounter with the 79th Division.

We were gathered there, with all the other foreign "workers," in a small castle till an officer came and asked who could speak German and English. I spoke a little German and English so I volunteered. I got a U.S. uniform and helmet and became an interpreter with the 79th Infantry Division. In the fol-



lowing weeks I helped CIC personnel interrogate Nazis and other Germans.

I can remember Pvt Hanenberg, who was a very nice guy and helped me to find my way in the 79th. I also can remember a guy named Durain. Other names I can't really remember, but I still can see their faces; they were all great guys.

I was stationed with Tech Sgt Jack, a small guy who was really great. Piet and Auke, with whom I fled from the Germans, did kitchen duty with the 79th.

The time we stayed near Pilsen was relaxed. Several times I went with a bunch of other guys in a big GMC truck, accompanied by a Jeep, to the Pilsen Brewery, a one-hour drive, to get beer for the 79th troops.

In July 1945 I found out that my hometown, Amsterdam, Holland, had been liberated on May 5, two days before my twenty-second birthday.

I had been in Germany for almost two years. Suddenly I got a little homesick and wanted to go back to my family. I told that to Lt. Col. McCormick, who could understand it well. He arranged for me and the two other Dutch guys to go home. The next day a GMC truck stood ready, with two drivers, to take us back to Holland. Great service!

A few days later, after a long drive, I was finally back in liberated Holland with a lot of memories and respect and

warm feelings for the guys of the 79th Cross-of-Lorraine Division and all the other soldiers who brought peace to Europe.

And maybe because of the long drive home in the GMC truck, I later became a truck driver.

I got married, had two boys, and have lived life in peace since those wartime days.

How it All Began

On Aug. 16, 1943, I had to report to the Germans at the Central Station, Amsterdam—my hometown. With about 20 other Dutch guys, all about 20 years old, we were deported by train to Berlin. We arrived at Reinickendorf, an industrial part of Berlin, and were brought to a barracks that would be our home for the next months.

We worked in a factory that made airplane parts. My job was to file small metal parts made for the wings. It was simple work, and we worked normal hours during the day. We were free to go into Berlin in the evenings.

Nights in the barracks were terrible because of heavy bombardment on this industrial part of Berlin. Twice we had to flee the burning barracks when it was hit by phosphorus bombs. Shelters were for Germans only; we took cover under benches in a small park nearby, knowing they didn't give much protection; several Dutch guys did not survive the bombings.

Because of the bombardments, after three months I decided to flee Berlin. With Nico Gijssen and Dick Blanken, we walked about 18 miles to a small town and there got on a train that we hoped would take us back to Holland. On the train, however, were some kids of the Hitler Youth who looked at us, and I guess they saw that we were foreigners and tipped off the police. At the next station, Minden, the police came in and we were arrested.

During the interrogation, I told the police the reason we fled Berlin, and the police—who treated us well—could understand and arranged for me to work

in a butter and cheese factory in a nearby small town called Frille. Nico and Dick had to work in a machine factory in Minden.

Working in a butter and cheese factory during wartime had its advantages. Every week I went to Minden to see Nico and Dick, taking a small suitcase full of butter and cheese. We cut the cheese into small pieces so we could trade them for clothes. When we fled Berlin, we had left behind everything we owned.

Once on the train to Minden with my small suitcase, an old German man said that he knew what was in my case because he knew I worked in the butter and cheese factory. He told me that if I were caught with stolen goods, I would end up in a concentration camp. Although I didn't know what was going on at this time in those camps, I listened to his advice and stopped stealing butter and cheese.

I had worked about six months in the butter and cheese factory when, af-

ter an argument with another worker, I was transferred to Eisenbergen, a small town on the other side of Minden, to work in a bakery.

At that time in Germany you could get bread only with food stamps—so there were lots of stamps in the bakery. I stole stamps and sent them by letter to my brother, Ab, who was a forced laborer working in Koln. A German guy addressed the letters for me so the post office men would think it was a “normal” German letter and not open it. Ab and his fellow workers were always happy when mail came from Eisenbergen and they had more to eat.

At the end of 1944 I heard that there had arrived a big group of Dutch people

from Rotterdam who had to work on the railroad at Rintein. Once a week I walked five miles to bring them food stamps that I had hidden in my hat. In the time I worked in the bakery, I stole stamps for at least 6,000 pounds of bread. Compared to people who had to do hard labor, I was lucky in the places where I was forced to work.



Jan Joosten and the mother of Ruud Bouman, Jan's son-in-law, posed for this photo at Clervaus, Luxembourg, which the families visited in 2004



T/Sgt Robert D. Deese
Serial No. 14021388
June 17, 1923—December 27, 1994

Robert “Bob” Deese, born in Charlotte, NC, loved and honored his country and enlisted to serve in the US Army September 20, 1940. He was a Technical Sergeant 60mm First Class Gunner and trained men for infantry combat. He rarely spoke of his service days in World War II because he saw many friends wounded or killed in action. In the Rhineland he was severely wounded November 19, 1944, evacuated to the 9th Evac Hosp and back to the US to several hospitals including Camp Butner Army General Hospital in NC and Welch Convalescent Hospital in Daytona Beach, FL, where he was discharged March 18, 1946. He was employed by the US Postal Service and retired to Surfside Beach, SC in 1979. He worked part time for the Myrtle Beach International Golf Club and was a 7-handicap golfer. Throughout his life, he was patriotic, was a loving husband to his wife, Dorothea Wheeler Deese, and a dedicated father to his 5 children, Phyllis, Dorothea, Susan, Peggy, and Robert. He had 10 grandchildren and 16 great grandchildren.

The family of Robert D. Deese proudly honors all American servicemen, past and present, for their dedicated service and sacrifices made for all in the name of Freedom

The Seine River Bridgehead—Aug. 1944

Reported by Frenchwoman Marianne Heloin-Vanura. Her great-grandmother and two aunts told her their memories

On Saturday noon, 19 August 1944, the 79th Reconnaissance Troop (several Jeeps, armoured cars, and tanks) entered into Epone. The Germans, who were settled into the chateau operating an important radio directed to Great Britain, called *Calais One*, had left the day before, dynamiting the castle at 3 p.m.

On Sunday, 20 August, and following days, field artillery and anti-aircraft companies settled in the park of the chateau, uphill and downhill on the bank of the Seine River. The Corps of Engineers started a pontoon bridge under enemy attack.

Daddy (Andre) was 16 years old at the time and was up the hill harvesting with my Grandfather Louis.

When they had some free moments, the soldiers came in the village at the little café near the church. The Sergeant family (true name), who lived nearby, cooked leek pies for the soldiers. Their daughter, Marie-Louise, had learned English and had a dictionary.

One of the soldiers, Alphonse Lacroix, spoke French (probably French Canadian). When the soldiers left Epone, probably on 29 August, all the soldiers wrote their names on the last page of Marie-Louise's dictionary. She then recorded the names and addresses in her address book. Six years ago, when she recounted her memories to me, she still had her 1944 address book. I have a photocopy of the pages. Marie-Louise is now 83.

The list follows. I have been trying to locate them now. My search has been unsuccessful except for Lieutenant Eddie Leonard, after an incredible

search, finding that he was now deceased. His wife and daughter knew nothing about their Dad's wartime experiences; his daughter sent me a photocopy of a photo of her father taken in the 1950s—at least I could put a face with the name.

Five years ago, when I sent this list to John Sword, I & R 315th, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, he wittily named the GIs on the list, "The Leek Pie Signers." Sword's World War II accounts are in his book, *Grumpy's Trials*.

Here are the names from Marie-Louise's 1944 address book:

S/Sgt. Alphonse Lacroix, ASN 32046813, Battery C 552nd FA Bn (Home address in 1944: Burlington, Vermont.)

Cpt. Herman F. Wilt, Troop B 106 Cav (a recon unit) lived in Rosehill,



Marianne's aunt Elise Camus (on GI's left), with GI Paul McCrobie, Albertine Gaucher, and Jean Blaise, welcome the 79th Recon to Epone on 19 August 1944.

Virginia in 1944.

Frank Spencer, ASN 18136540, Hq Co 113 TD Bn

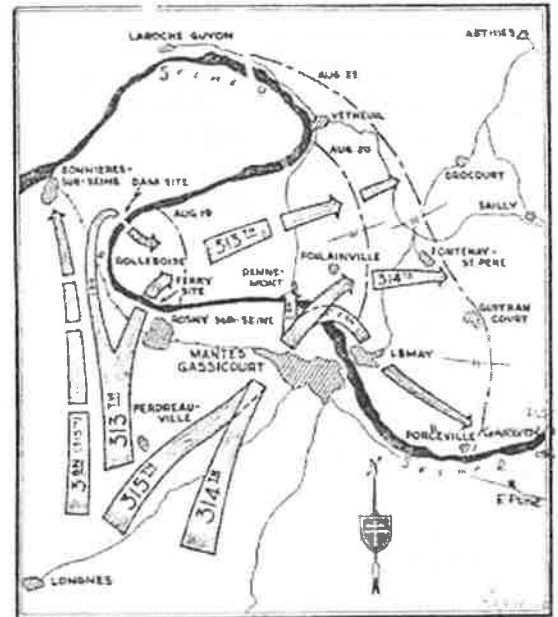
Luke Lewis Hadley, 975th DA Bn, Hq Btry, Sacramento, California

Pvt. Vincent Cook, ASN 31240892, Btry B, AAW Bn

Lt. Eddie Leonard, ASN 0425325 – RP Hq C.O.D. 582nd Sig AW Bn

This map of the Seine River bridgehead shows the lines of attack of the regiments of the 79th Division. After crossing at Mantes Gassicourt, the 314th moved to the east. First battalion took a sharp right to Gargenville and Epone—where Marianne's family celebrated the advance.

On the next page are two more photos: one of a group of French Resistance fighters; the other of three GIs with French civilians, including Marianne's aunts and great-grandmother.



NY Times photo. Introduction used in published edition. (1944) Progress photo on the following page and 1st of

Other Recollections Of Some Liberated By the 314th

Julien Kreitz, a current resident of the Bridgehead area, reported memories as of August 1944 recalled by family who were there at the time.

My grandmother, Nicole Kreitz:

The first Americans we saw were large African-Americans. They camped at our house on the farm. There was a night air raid, and they hid with us in the dugout trench behind the farm. They didn't stop repeating to us, *Boches couic* (a slang expression about the Germans) and making the gestures of a cut throat. They gave us candy and chewing gum, and after the four years that we had just lived through, it was really paradise.

Great Uncle: The Americans set up a big treatment facility near my home. One day I accidentally walked into a tent and saw appalling things for my young age of 8. The surgeons were amputating with a saw, and the limbs were cut and then thrown into buckets. One day a German got out of a truck; he was probably insane from combat and ran around screaming and howling. He was shot down with a gun before my eyes. Another time, as we had a shortage of everything during the occupation, I asked a soldier for a pair of shoes. I saw him take them off a dead comrade. It was the war.

Grandfather: I especially recall many air-raid warnings. Mantes had been abundantly bombed by the Allies. My mother worked in a factory, and she was working there one day when it was bombarded. We had to jump over many bodies to get out and take refuge in a shelter. I don't have many exact memories of the liberation, unless it is the chewing gum and the American cigarettes that my dad smoked.



This group of the French Resistance fighters also took part in the 79th Division's crossing of the Seine River in August 1944. Second from right, standing, is Marcel Aubril, who later served in the 79th Division. Frenchman Julien Kreitz provided this and other photos of the Seine Bridgehead action, as well as memories of three family members—in the column at left.



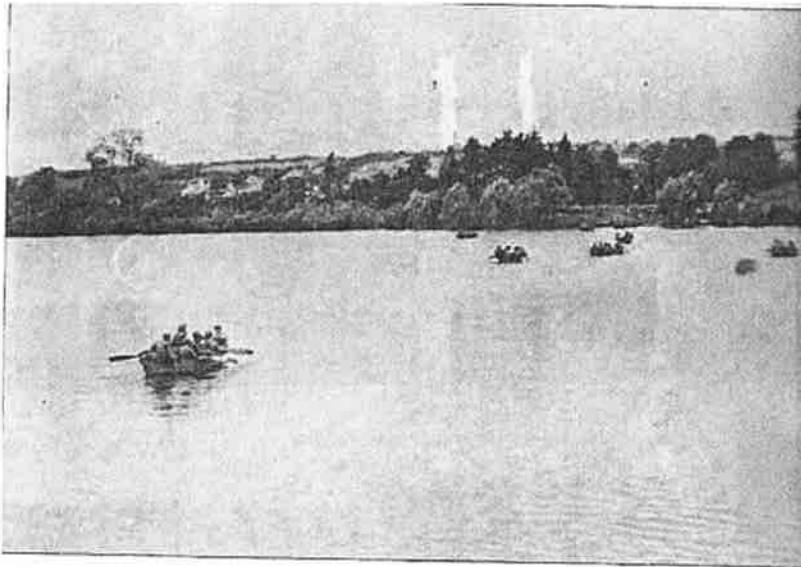
Three GIs and a Jeep of the 79th Recon stood for photos with Epone residents in the background. Marianne offers these identifications: Aubrey Storey, of Ohio, is at left—he died in action later; the next GI was not identified. Paul McCrobie is next. The young woman in the window at right is Elise Camus, Marianne's great aunt. Her Aunt Jeanne holds what may be a wine bottle, Great-grandmother Julie (dark dress) looks on. The civilian man to her right is Jean Blaise.



1st Battalion entering Mantes



*Col. Warren Robinson, Regimental
Commander*



79th Division GIs crossed the Seine River



Men from B or C Company



GIs with wounded German soldier



Jeeps floated across the Seine



Lt. Bacchus's patrol



Patrol returned with a German soldier



Above at left: Capt. James Flannery

Right: Col. Teague's 1st Bn



Also at the Seine Bridgehead:

Memories of Action, Tragedy, and Courage

Lt. Robert Dove, years later, included this account in his memoirs.

On the afternoon or early evening of 21 Aug 1944, we took the beautiful Chateau (castle) of Fontenay-St-Pere away from a German unit that then set claim to the woods to the north. We were soon cooking an evening meal in the chateau complex, but we didn't get to eat there. We had to retreat south to the nearest woods as the 1st Battalion of the 314th Regiment out-ranked the 79th Recon Troop for the chateau. We didn't get to eat in the woods either. An "underground" report arrived with an out-of-breath Frenchman: 40 FFI had captured 40 well-armed Germans in an Arthies chateau, and the FFI were low on ammunition. With no supper and 40 minutes of twilight, we brushed the local enemy aside and off we went—probably to Drocourt.

I dismounted long enough to give a French family four packs of cigarettes, and in French, English, and sign language, I rattled off: "Eggs, large hamper with straw in the bottom, pommes de terre, vegetables, and fromage, if possible." I remounted to be faced with complaints: "You just gave away four packs of our cigarettes, as you don't smoke—you're unbelievable." I answered, "You don't even know if we're coming back, but remember that house."

In Arthies there were no 40 FFI, 40 POWs, nor 40 German enemy. But I liberated nine bottles of good wine—and gave away three packs of "our" cigarettes.

When we returned to Drocourt, there was the hamper, large and heavy. "Our cup ran over." A woman gave us two hens in a wicker cage but would take nothing in return. It was dark; we were rear guard, and no one knew of



Lt. Dove of the 79th Recon Troop

our bounty. We ate well for days, in secret. CO Captain Beaver got the hens, and we graciously gave him a few eggs—with pomp!

A historian now living in that Seine Bridgehead area, Bruno Renault, has written on events related to the military action. Marianne Heloin-Vanura, our "correspondent" from Epone, translated and sent us Renault's material on some tragic events of that time.

On the afternoon of 21 Aug 1944, M. Gerard de Francmesnil, owner of the Chateau of Arthies, and his group of FFI, succeeded in crossing the German lines to go to the Americans who had just arrived. They proposed to help, telling the Americans the location of enemy forces that were dominating the American positions. The French-speaking liaison officer told M. Francmesnil that his unit was a reconnaissance unit stuck there until the rest of the logistical regiment arrived; they had no arms to give to his group. The FFI returned

to their positions, hiding on the road from the Germans—who had escaped from the Falaise pocket in Normandy and were going north to Belgium.

The FFI captured 11 Germans, who were pushing bicycles; they took their arms and ammunition and threw them down a trapdoor of a cellar in the chateau. M. Francmesnil asked his mother to sit in a heavy armchair over the trapdoor to guard the prisoners.

FFI on guard told him, when he left the chateau, that Germans in a car (a Traction Citroen), an armored car, and a truck were arriving. The chateau is located on a curve in the road at the start of the village. The FFI attacked the Germans, using grenades they had taken from their German prisoners. The truck was set afire, Germans answered with gunfire; some were killed, but one or two escaped. One of the FFI was seriously wounded.

M. de Francmesnil's wife, Henriette, rode his bicycle to tell Americans to come and take the prisoners. They came for the prisoners, but could not take the wounded. The Francmesnil family and all the FFI left the chateau and spent the night in a farm. The Germans bombed the chateau that night

Historian Renault also recounts the tragedy of reprisals inflicted by the Germans.

In the early hours of Tuesday 22 Aug 1944, Germans (probably SS troops) arrived with two trucks. In villages of Arthies, Aincourt, and Charmont, they took civilian hostages. Among them were Lucien Aghilon, 16, Gabriel Bailly, 34, two Andrieux brothers—Lucien, 17, and Rene, 19—taken from their houses or in the streets. Germans threw grenades into yards of farmhouses. M. Alexandre Palombe and M.

Maurice Parent were shot when they resisted going into the truck; M. Martin, 65, was shot when he turned his head while working in his garden; M. Archange Biard, 84, was shot when opening his door to enter his house. M. de Francmesnil and his comrades were captured when they returned to the chateau; he heard the Feldwebel say, "Die alte methode," knowing that it meant there would be no escape from the trucks going north.

The trucks stopped at an open field. "Get down and you are free," they heard and got down slowly. Francmesnil heard the noise as the Germans re-armed the machine guns; "Quick, quick, run!" he told others. The machine guns fired, and grenades came. He fell, wounded, and crawled to some bushes; his friend, Baron, was shot in the leg. Then the firing stopped; Allied planes that flew over may have stopped the assassins. It was then 9 a.m., and 16 persons had been killed and as many wounded.

Paulette, the sister of the two Andrieux brothers, gave this account of events on 22 Aug 1944, as reported by Renault:

We lived on the farm of the Chateau de la Feuge. After the action of the Francsmesnil men of Arthies in the afternoon of 21 Aug, a German motorcyclist arrived to tell inhabitants that reprisals were to occur. My father and two brothers went to hide in the woods for the night. But they came back too soon—at 5 a.m. Soon SS troops appeared in the yard of the chateau. They had been given schnaaps to make them drunk, furious, and terrifying. They came into the chateau, knocking things over; I tried to run and protect my brothers in the cellar. One SS caught me and put me in a chair. My father, Robert, and brothers, Lucien and Rene, were captured. Mummy and I screamed. But in the afternoon, the fatal news arrived. The schoolmaster said to Mummy, "You have no longer your sons."



Marianne Heloin-Vamura today lives in her family's centuries-old dwelling in Epone. Learning from her Aunt Elise Camus, who welcomed units of the 79th Recon Troop to Epone in August 1944, Marianne became keenly interested in history of the Seine Bridgehead and of the people who lived the event. She has provided many photos and accounts of the action.

After the slaughter, Daddy—severely wounded—hid in the woods with other survivors. They were saved by the mayor, M. Pelle, and a nurse in a horse-carriage with a Red Cross flag. A plane shot at them, without damage.

All around there was heavy fighting; we were just between the German and American artillery. On the way from the chateau to the farm, I heard a terrifying noise—from a big German tank. The tank commander, dressed in black at the turret, saw me in passing—he was probably surprised to see such a young girl there. The farm was on fire and, going back to the chateau, we found that a shell had hit it.

This account told of Jean Jacques, a doctor.

The doctor was told that there were two wounded persons. After 36 hours on a perilous mission, the young doctor and a young girl, Renee Lejeune, crossed 10 km of battlefield to pass

German lines at Vetheuil and reach a hospital at Mantes to get an ambulance. They returned under American artillery at St-Cyr-en-Arthies, stopping the ambulance when German bombing was too intense. The doctor continued on alone on foot but was caught by a German patrol. He was kept by a soldier and a sub-officer. At 8 p.m., when the sub-officer left, the doctor succeeded, during a moment of the sentinel's inattention, to escape into the fields. He was shot at when climbing walls, but he reached a small river and hid there among water herbs. He could see patrols looking for him, but he stayed in the water all night between German and American artillery. At dawn, he walked along the river, arriving at the tiny village of Vienne-en-Arthies. Before he could knock at the door of a house, Germans arrived, and he hid in bushes in a ditch. A German sentinel took his guard post just 10 meters from the doctor, and he stayed hidden one more time.

Another epic account told of Doctor Claude Dufourmentel (code name Tristan) of the French Resistance network, "Defense de la France."

On the evening of 24 Aug 1944, the doctor arrived at the farmhouse of the mayor, who had rescued some who had survived the open-field massacre. He operated on two wounded, using the kitchen table, amputating the arm of Robert Andrieux, who was hit by German fire.

Until 29 Aug, a male nurse, Michel, cared for the wounded. Americans arrived that day and liberated the village. Looking in all the houses for German troops, they found Andrieux and the second wounded man. A medic took over care and called for a Jeep to take them to a field hospital. The tiny village of Arthies had hardly been liberated when German shells again fell on it. Paulette Andrieux was in the street seeking word of her father. An American protected her, while down the street several civilians were lying dead.

A Long Search for Family Of A Fallen U.S. Soldier

Marcel Aubril, then 19, had been in his French Resistance group long before they had contact with U.S. troops. He tells this story related to the Seine River Bridgehead.

On 20 August 1944, American troops crossed the Seine at Guernes on a pontoon bridge, led by a French soldier, Pierre Fabre. Other regiments crossed on a pontoon bridge at Mantes the same day.

On 21 August the village of Limay, on the opposite river bank, was liberated. American patrols advanced to Issou, a village about 3 km from Limay.

The patrols that had been out during the day had settled into the castle of Issou, beside Route Nationale 13. In a wooden chalet there, just in front of the gates to the castle, was a command post of the Germans. Their maps were spread out on a table. Curfew was declared, and the road was mined at night. We had been told that the major attack would occur on 27 August. German advance guards were at Gargenville, 2 km from Issou.



Marcel Aubril in 1944

My Resistance group, all from Gargenville, had reconnoitered daily among the German lines and reported back to our patrol everything we had observed: anti-tank guns, machine guns, fox holes, munitions trucks, and more.

The American troops had great trust in us, and they asked us to go with them in the action to liberate Gargenville on 27 August. The attack took place at 1300 hours. Because we knew the place so well, we managed to save more than one soldier's life.

What I am asking is for help to find the name of an American Soldier.

My pal, Jean Bertault, and I were on patrol with two Jeeps and six U.S. soldiers. One of the Americans went up to a German outpost and was killed by a bullet to the head. The American did not return from the patrol. In spite of the counter order not to look for the soldier, Jean and I decided to try and find him. I found him dead in a ditch. We brought back his body as best we could on a wheelbarrow and handed him over to his mates. It was there that one of them, who spoke French, gave me the photo from the wallet of the dead man, which I have preserved as something precious: the wife holding a baby.

Bruno Renoult, historian working with us, has provided a list of 50 soldiers who were active in the area between Issou and Gargenville. Only one American was killed on that road, and that is the soldier whose family we are looking for.

Among the five soldiers who returned from the exercise, perhaps one would remember **a dead comrade brought back in a wheelbarrow by a French Resistant.**

Would you not be able to search among orphans who might have lost their father at that time? I have marked



a map showing the spot where he died— at the Chateau at Hanneucourt, a small village near Gargenville.

I feel a duty toward this young soldier who gave his life. I must absolutely find his family to give them the picture that the hero carried on his person the day of his death.

I am the last survivor of my group. I am 81, and I shall die soon. I owe this young man a duty. He left his life for us. Please help me. Thank you.



Marcel Aubril many years later

Memorial to Sgt. James A. McBride

Company K, 313 Regiment, 79th Infantry Division

Sgt. James A. McBride was born 12 Sep 1911 and died 15 Nov 1970.

He was drafted into the U.S. Army when he was approximately 31 years old. This made him substantially older than the average draftee. He worked for Railway Express before and after the war and thought he would be assigned to a desk during the war. Not so. His work on the loading docks had put him in superb shape to be an infantry soldier.

As the only surviving son of an Irish-Catholic family from Long Island City, his major goal throughout the months of arduous combat was to come home to take care of his aging mother.

This made him a good soldier for he learned the art of combat fast and took only reasonable risks on behalf of himself and his men.

As testimony to his combat acumen, he was one of only a few men from the company to survive whole and remain standing when the war ended.

For the rest of his life, he was the "Silent Man." He rarely spoke of the war except on Thanksgivings to his nephews and niece.



**This memorial is dedicated to his memory
and to all those who fought in WWII.**

From his loving nephews and niece

Thomas and James Brown and Kathy Anderson

The Capture of the 813th TD Battalion

William Thomson, Tanker, recounts the story of his and Tanker Buddy Raymond Burdge's last days in the 813th TD Battalion

The time was December 1944, and the battalion was in the area of Lauterburg, France, a short distance from the Rhine River. We had an outpost in a small village called Berg, in Germany. Our outfit



Thomson

was the 813th Tank Destroyer Battalion with the 314th Infantry Regiment. We were to fight any tanks that might attack the battalion. The battalion had been pushing the Germans back, but now we had run into the Siegfried Line, made up of bunkers, pillboxes, and dragon's teeth—the dragon's teeth were shaped like pyramids with the tops cut off. We moved into a dense forest with little visibility. We did not get far into the line until we had to stop. The Germans put on pressure all along the line, and on Christmas Eve we had to pull back into Lauterburg—we also had to give up the outpost in Berg.

Lauterburg was split by the border between France and Germany, and we were sent to the French side on Christmas Day. As usual, we had our Christmas dinner; we were seldom disappointed on holidays. That night we went into position on a hill overlooking the Rhine, which was about 300 yards away. We did not receive the shell fire as we had while we were in action up in the forest.

We took a room in a house nearby and were comfortable for a change. The family we stayed with was called Richettes—a mother, son, and daughter. The husband and father had been taken and put in a labor battalion. The Rickettes were nice people. On New



Burdge

Year's Day we pooled our army dinner with their dinner and had a feast. Madame Richettes cooked a goose, and again we had fowl with all the trimmings. The 79th Division was stretched out for miles, so our defenses were thin and, again, we were forced to move back; we moved to a town called Hatten. The French Maginot Line ran just outside this town, and we were able to stay in one of its pillboxes. The next morning another division relieved the 79th and was told to hold this position at all costs; they did, although they lost all but one street of Hatten.

We went about 15 miles to another town, stayed overnight, then attacked the Germans. It was foggy and hard to see. We took one small town early that morning, then fought on to another town about noon. Later in the day we got the town of Drusenheim. The Lauter River ran through this town; the river was the French-German border. Our infantry got across the river late in the day and dug in. We went over the next morning. The Germans counter-attacked, and we were thrown back across the Lauter. Infantry and tank fire prevented the Germans from coming across.

We got light to medium fire for a while as neither side could seem to move. After a few days we were sent to the north end of town and went into an exposed position. It had been snowing and we got sheets from a house to camouflage our tank. The Germans began to pick up their rate of fire. One of the boys on our tank had a 2 x 4 piece of lumber shot in two above his head by



an armor-piercing shell or a dud high explosive.

In taking Drusenheim, the Second Battalion was about five miles in front of the main line. On the mornings of 18 and 19 January, the Germans took a town to the north of us and began shelling us, much more by the morning of the 19th. About noon they began to fire for about 10 minutes and then quit for a while. At about four o'clock they began shelling with everything they had—artillery and mortars—until it seemed as though the bursts were one constant roar. This went on for what seemed like hours—but it wasn't. We began to fire star shells so we could see if anyone was coming in on us. It was pitch black by then. They picked us up by the flash of our gun and hit us with a mortar shell. None of us was hurt, though we could hardly hear for a while.

Orders came for us to move back into the edge of town. We pulled our tank destroyer out of position and began firing to hold back any tanks that might start coming in. Then we went into position next to a roadblock that the Germans had set up when they held the town.

By this time we were surrounded as the Germans had come from the north across the river. A German patrol came from the direction we had left; we called for them to halt. They began to fire as soon as we spoke. We returned fire and then all was quiet again—the shelling had stalled when the German infantry began moving in. The Germans then came in from our left, and we had to

fire on them to drive them off.

Although we did not know it at the time, one of our tank destroyers had used all of its ammunition, and the other two had been captured. We got word that the battalion commander and all of his staff had been taken prisoner. A short while later someone came by and said the Germans were just down the street and were putting captured infantry into the street so we could not fire in that direction. Everyone began to move to the Company H command post, the only CP left.

We had to decide what to do with our vehicle, as we would be left without infantry protection. We were not concerned whether the tank could be driven, but whether it could be fired later. We moved to disable its gun. We opened the breech, laid a thermite grenade in it to fuse the block open. Thermite will burn through the best of steel.

Then we went to the CP where we were told we would make our last stand there. Some fighting went on, but not much. Word came that we were the last organized group left. The captain in charge sent two German-speaking soldiers out to arrange our surrender. And at 7 a.m. on the morning of Jan. 20, 1945, our part of combat in World War II ended.

Linda Stanzel, Burdge's daughter, (of Rochester, NY), with help from William Thomson, Jr., provided this story of her father's and Sgt. Thomson's ordeal. After their capture on Jan. 20, 1945, both Thomson and Burdge were prisoners of war in Stalag 5A, Ludwigsburg; Thomson was later moved to Stalag XI-B, Fallingbostal. Both remained prisoners until the end of the war brought their freedom.

Burdge was in ill health and weighed only 90 pounds when he was freed. Back home, he married and fathered Linda and three siblings, living in Wellsville, NY. A farmer and factory worker, he died at age 59. Thomson, also deceased, lived in Belton, SC. His son, William, lives in South Carolina, as do Sgt. Thomson's many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Pete Swan Also Remembers Drusenheim

A recent article about the 314th Regiment in the magazine of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) jogged some memories for Pete Swan. He tells his, sometimes wry, recollection of those days.

In January 1945 I was executive officer of E Company, 314th Infantry of the "lost battalion" overrun by German armor at Drusenheim, France on 20 January.

Several weeks earlier we were relieved at Hatten, France, by the famous(?) 42nd Infantry Division, which had arrived with little or no equipment. When relieved, we were ordered to leave in place every single weapon, tank, wire, etc. for the 42nd.

We were trucked south through Haguenau and Bischwiller to Drusenheim with zilch in the way of weapons and equipment. This was a

definite factor in our being unable to defend against the Kraut armored force that took us to task. With the little we had, we probably couldn't have defended against a Girl Scout Troop.

All we had were small arms and radios. Until the last, the Battalion's continuing message to Regiment was "Keep artillery falling on the bridge in town." I did pick up two more PHs; then, naturally, the Krauts took us to the small field next to the bridge. This was the first time I couldn't complain about the long "overs" of the artillery; none hit anywhere near the bridge, which saved our lives.

We were the first Battalion in the entire army to cross the Rhine River. Of course, at the time we were guests of the Germans and escorted by them for the crossing.

Pete Swan,
Major, Army retired

Epstein Recalls a Visitor as He Relaxed In Forest of Parroy

In September 1944, the 314th Regiment was fighting in the Forest of Parroy in the Lorraine Province of France. During a lull in the advance, I was lying on my back in a ditch. Suddenly I felt that something was looking at me, but I couldn't figure out who or what. Then I noticed a little mouse near my feet, staring intently at me. I asked myself what I should do. I contemplated finishing him off, but eventually decided not to shoot—since it might have revealed our location to the enemy. I threw something at him instead, and he scurried away.

After all these years, I still remember that strange feeling when I didn't know what was looking for me.



Henry F. Epstein, E Company

Recalling My WWII Time With the 79th Division

Raymond T. Farrell

Like many others of the WWII generation, I enlisted in the army at the age of 18. We later became known as "The Teenage Soldiers." Eventually we were sent to Camp Gruber, Oklahoma, and assigned to the 42nd Division. From Camp Gruber, some of us were reassigned to Camp Phillips, Kansas, to the 79th Division, since it was urgently in need of overseas replacements. While there we received some limited training, I as a BAR man, and were quickly readied for shipment to a Port of Embarkation in Massachusetts.

We set sail from this port in a slow-moving convoy headed for Glasgow, Scotland. We were aboard an English ship commanded by English officers with an assisting crew from India. We troops slept on canvas hammocks hung above the dining tables. Occasionally a trooper would fall out of his hammock on top of one of these hard tables, but luckily no one was ever seriously hurt. The food (as I remember) consisted mainly of sausages made with more sawdust than meat, lots of Brussels sprouts and super sized slices of bread (with no butter). The main beverage was tea, my least favorite drink. I'm not certain how many days we were at sea, but I am certain it seemed like an eternity to all of us.

Our layover in Scotland consisted of disembarking from the "luxuries" of our troop ships to boarding the "luxuries" of our troop trains. These trains took us into England to an area called Golden Park. We were billeted in an array of army tents, where there was no room service, but at least our cots were on solid ground! Here we awaited D-Day. After two months, our turn came to board the ships that would take us to the LCIs (Landing Craft Infan-

try) and put us down on Utah Beach in support of the first wave. *We were D-Day plus eight!*

Our mission there was to continue on toward the capture of Cherbourg. Our 2d Battalion was ordered to advance on Fort du Roule. Unfortunately, we got pinned down. Several of us were detailed to return to the rear to obtain more beehive pole changers, Bangalore torpedoes, etc. Corporal John D. Kelly, at great risk, used some of these explosives to wipe out the pillbox that was causing this problem. This freed us up to keep advancing, and finally we were able to secure Fort du Roule. Corporal Kelly was later awarded the Medal of Honor for his heroic actions.

After leaving Fort du Roule, we were sent inland to what was called The Hedgerows. While we were in the process of taking La Haye du Puits, I was on patrol along these hedgerows and was hit by a sniper. Suffering a severe belly wound, I managed to crawl to lower ground in order to keep myself hidden. Unfortunately, this area was swampy thus making the surrounding conditions less than sanitary. I managed to dress my wound using the first aid kit I carried on me. Somehow I endured this situation for eight hours realizing this might very well be my demise. I was finally spotted by friendly troops and the lieutenant in command ordered two captured German POW's to construct a litter and carry me to the nearest first aid station for emergency treatment. Further complicating my situation was the fact that by this time my wounds had become gangrenous. I was evacuated back to England and ended up in an English Hospital.

Needless to say, the medics had removed all my clothes leaving me with-



T/Sgt Ray Farrell, Company E

out an American uniform. When I regained enough strength and became ambulatory, the English issued me an English uniform, including hobnail boots. My convalescence took over two months, after which I was returned to my unit in France. There I was reissued an American uniform, but sadly no more hobnail boots!

After my return, I was wounded three succeeding times with less severe consequences. I was treated and each time returned to my unit. Unfortunately, my company was subsequently captured. I was one of the few who escaped.

I was twenty years old and a Platoon Sergeant at the time. I had spent 13 months overseas and finally earned enough points to be sent home. To my knowledge, I was the only GI left from the original E Company.

I witnessed many acts of heroism during WW II. I thought about these outstanding deeds and sacrifices that were freely made by my battle buddies as we were docking in New York Harbor. The band was playing, the fireboats were spraying water and the Rockettes were dancing the can-can. We were not only being treated like heroes, but were being made to feel like heroes. What a welcome home we received!

~Ray & Bonnie Farrell~
September 3, 1946

In Honor of their 60th Wedding Anniversary

Lynn, Kirk, Scott
Ron, Kathy,
Tricia, Kellyn, Michael



My Parents Love

My parents love is not defined just as
a kiss in the sunlight,
a flicker in an eye,
a troth that without you is my decline,
or, moonlit walks, intertwined sighs
from pacified smiles
and soft twilight kisses...
it is also:
a sure foot on a rocky edge,
a porch light to safe the night,
a carpenter's hand against a falling sky,
a mug of coffee and cold, cold beer,
to always be, just there,
for no reason at all,
except for love.

Scott Alan Farrell
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Foley Writes of Heavy Action After Crossing the Rhine

I joined the 314th in northern France as an infantry replacement. It was guard duty and training until the Rhine River crossing on “ducks” boats.

The crossing was uneventful, but the next day Lt. Gamble, Missouri, was killed. Private Burkett, Texas, was killed. Pvt Torchia, New York, was badly injured, a private from Georgia was injured, and I was knocked unconscious and had two pieces of shrapnel—one piece was removed from my hand in 1952, and it’s in my socks drawer).

The third day Sgt. Sparkman, Oklahoma, was injured, Sgt. Hoyt, Minnesota, was injured, and a sergeant I didn’t know was killed. Ben Wells, a private from Kentucky had a hole in his canteen! Both Ben and I had holes in our clothes. I still don’t know if the explosions were mines or artillery shells. I saw a lot of black-and-blue colors! The din lasted only a short while, but how long does an infantryman last?

When the war in Europe ended, we younger guys were being trained to go to the Pacific. The atomic bomb was a terrible thing, but how many GIs would’ve died invading Japan?

Then I was sent to the First Division for occupation and ended up spending two and a half years as a guard at the Nurnberg Trials. My wife was a secretary for the French consulate at Nurnberg; on the next anniversary, we’ll have been married 59 years.

Henry Nixon was a platoon sergeant in Nurnberg—dedicated, neat, and well-built. The girls really eyeballed him! He spent 20+ years in the army, retiring as an officer around Columbia.

Bill Foley



Blowing Up the Big German Gun

John N. Wright, (above) now of Orlando, Florida, submitted this story of his role in destroying a German Big Gun in the push from Normandy.

Company B, 314th Regiment, was pushing inland as part of the Normandy invasion, advancing to take the city of Cherbourg. As platoon leader, I ordered my men to dig fox holes with orders to jump off at 0400.

Suddenly we heard a loud boom, the loudest I had ever heard, and saw a great flash. I knew it was something most unusual, something our army did not have. I grabbed my compass and shot an azimuth to the flash. After another boom, I took another sighting.

I then called back to the battery commander to fire all four of his guns quickly on that coordinate. We heard no more of those booms that night.

As we drove through the area the next morning, we discovered that our artillery had been most effective. The railroad cars were badly damaged, as was the big gun on one of them.

I often wonder how many American lives we saved by knocking out that monstrous weapon.

Dick Yates Recalls A Night in France

In the U.S. Army, and I guess in most military units, the enlisted men call each other by last names. I remember Private Jacinto Rodriquez Martinez Galvan on the second night after we landed in France. It was absolutely dark. We had moved into position to attack the city of Cherbourg.

Galvan had a strong Spanish accent, having come from the Arizona-New Mexico-Mexico border area. He was assigned sentry duty with me. I crawled over to his position to see how he was doing.

He said, “Shoosh!”

I said, “What’s up?”

He said, “Jates, I hear something out there.” (He always called me Jates.)

I said, “I don’t hear anything.”

He said, “There are Germans out there.”

Before I could say anything else: bam, bam, bam. He emptied a clip from his Garand rifle. We both listened carefully for any sounds.

We waited, very much on the alert, until dawn began to dissolve the darkness of night. When it was light enough to see, our eyes traversed the area to see if he had hit a German. There were no Germans—but a big stallion, not 10 feet away, stood there grazing. Fortunately, none of the shots had hit him.

We had a huge laugh about it.

After Cherbourg, I did not see my friend Galvan again. I got all shot up at La Haye du Puits, which ended my career as a soldier. I wondered if Galvan got his medal.

At one of the first reunions I heard that he had been killed in action.

Goodbye, my friend. Thanks for the memory.



Dick Yates—Then

Witmeyer Recounts Some History: NORDWIND—the Little-known Bulge

The mid-December 1944 Battle of the Bulge, focused on Belgium and the Ardennes, was widely reported at the time and considered generally as the last gasp of the Wehrmacht on the Western front. There was another, still little-known, Bulge created in the Alsace Lorraine by the last serious German offensive. J.J. Witmeyer, a prominent figure in reunions of the 314th Regiment, has told a story of that offensive, which the German's called Nordwind. It appeared in the magazine Purple Heart. Witmeyer suffered wounds and frostbite in action there and was hospitalized.

At 11 p.m. [on New Year's Eve] tracers from hundreds of German machine-gun rounds could be seen spraying Allied riflemen all along the line. Most of these American units were new divisions and others only recently reinforced by green replacements. They had yet to face the Germans, and their baptism of fire could hardly have been more ferocious or bloody.

What Germans called "Operation Nordwind (Northwind)," their final serious offensive, had begun. Immediately, its armored forces, employing state-of-the-art Tiger tanks—considered the best of all tanks used during WWII—were turning the tide toward the Germans. Elite ground forces, including the German 6th SS Mountain Division, 17th SS Grenadier, and IV Luftwaffe Field Corps, poured through the gaps created by their armored units. They made penetrations deep into American-held territory. American casualties were heavy, and it was necessary for the American units to withdraw, conceding to the Germans ground that had recently been taken from them.

The defensive battle by Gen. Alexander Patch's 7th Army, which took place through most of January 1945, was one of the least known cam-

paings—a secret kept until a few years ago, when information became available under the Freedom of Information Act. Most historians agree that there was a desperate need at the time to keep this military disaster from being better known, coming as it did on the heels of the better known and bitter "Battle of the Bulge" disaster.

Another Bulge? That's exactly what it was: another successful German offensive that resulted in a significant German breakthrough. Had this been commonly known among the American forces, its demoralizing and possibly devastating effect, would certainly have traveled up and down the American lines and those of our Allies. Hence, in hindsight, we can easily understand why it went under-reported, going only to those in the top level command and on a close-hold "need-to-know" basis.

The German strategy was attributed to Adolf Hitler personally. His plan was for an offensive effort that attacked through the Lower Vosges Mountains to force a breakthrough in order to relieve the pressure being exerted upon the German troops in the "Bulge" of the Ardennes. It is apparent that German intelligence had revealed that Gen. Patton's 3rd Army had been pulled off line in Alsace and that the 7th Army was being stretched thin to fill the gap left by the 3rd Army's departure.

Initially a part of France, the Alsace-Lorraine region was forcibly annexed by Germany, then returned to France as part of a 1918 treaty. By the time of the Battle of the Bulge, most of France had already been liberated, but the Germans were seriously threatening the Allied foothold in France. Both French and German languages were common among the indigenous Alsace populace, and serious interrogation of civilians left one with serious doubts as to which country their loyalty belonged. The largest city and capital of the re-



J. J. Witmeyer

gion was the city of Strasbourg.

America's 7th Army Commander Gen. Jacob Devers's VI Army Group at the time occupied a front that stretched from Switzerland to the Saar. The divisions of this group were covering 15 miles of front instead of the usual five miles. Some of the front was held by the least-trained troops—100th, 103rd, and 43rd Divisions. These divisions had only the slightest of combat experience. The 42nd, 63rd, and 70th Divisions had been stripped of riflemen needed for Patton's 3rd Army. The 45th and 79th Divisions were seasoned combat veterans. Divisions that comprised the reserves—12th, 30th, and 145th Armored Divisions—had been on the line less than a month and could not be considered as having had much experience.

Just before midnight on New Year's Eve, without usual artillery preparation, the German attack began in full. Surprise was total. Jagtiger (Tiger) tanks and armored vehicles, some with flamethrowers, attacked in the freezing dark of night. It was a terrifying nightmare. By midnight, the assault had broken through the 44th Division positions. In critical condition, the 44th withdrew,

Continued on page 22

In Remembrance of

Thais

Beloved Wife and Mother



Crescent City Chapter 1955

Ladies Auxiliary MOPH

J.J. Witmeyer Jr.
and Family
(National Historian)

exposing flanks of the 100th and 45th divisions. Despite valiant efforts and resistance by isolated units (most led by NCOs), their opposition was overwhelmed. Many of these troops were captured and joined POWs of the 44th Division in German POW compounds. This created what was to be known as the "Lauterbourg Bulge."

The temperature was near zero, the snow was waist high, and the clothing was inadequate to keep soldiers in condition for their best performance. It was my personal observation that only about 70% of the combat riflemen had "shoepacs" (overshoes). Frostbite and trench-foot accounted for casualties in the 30% range.

In addition to the new bulge, Gen. Dwight Eisenhower, Allied Commander, had a multitude of problems that New Year's Day. More than 1,000 German warplanes attacked at dawn and destroyed over 200 Allied planes. He was having political troubles with English Gen. Bernard Montgomery, who was demanding authority over all ground troops in Europe.

Eisenhower directed Devers to move his troops back, and when he did not do so, Eisenhower followed with a demand that he do as ordered or be relieved; then Devers did so. Eisenhower's thinking was that a shorter line would be easier to defend and would prevent another breakthrough. French military leaders were furious: France's senior military leader, Gen. Charles de Gaulle, with British prime minister, Winston Churchill, went to Eisenhower's headquarters. De Galle stated, "If this were a war game, I would say you were right, but I must consider this from another point of view. Retreat in Alsace would yield French territory to the enemy, and for France this would be a national disaster." De Gaulle further stated that his French units would not withdraw from Strasbourg, and the 2nd French Armored Division would defend it alone if necessary.

Eisenhower angrily persisted, sug-

Robinson Remembers Kindness, not Pain



Sam Robinson

gesting that SHAEF (Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces) might cut off supplying the French army; de Gaulle then threatened to deny use of French railroads to supply American armies. Eisenhower gave in and cancelled the withdrawal. American and French forces would continue to hold Strasbourg.

About this time another breakthrough occurred. The Germans fooled the Americans by using captured Sherman tanks in an attack. Nevertheless, this was the last of Germany's successes, although fighting continued all along the line until mid-January.

By use of overwhelming artillery and a series of counterattacks, Allied forces reduced the "Bulge" and stabilized defensive lines.

Nordwind was costly to both sides. American casualties from all causes in the battle were over 20,000. The 7th Army reports listed 11,609 casualties plus 2,836 cases of frostbite. The VI Corps losses for the same period listed 773 killed, 4,838 wounded, 3,657 missing, and 5,448 non-battle casualties.

Dinner with French Family left him and buddy almost AWOL

*Sam Robinson,
USA Retired*

It would be simple to recount the long months of pain and fear that my experience in World War II brought. I choose, however, to remember the many kindnesses shown by the people of France to those of us who were many miles from home.

Several families offered us so much hospitality that I can never express enough thanks.

One family in particular stays in my memory. They offered us dinner and, of course, we could not refuse. After living on army rations for months, the thought of a home-cooked meal was too good to turn down.

My buddy and I sat at the table and enjoyed their dinner with them. Following dinner, the simple conversation was a welcome relief from the rigors of our normal days.

We apparently enjoyed it too much; after all our expressions of thanks to the family, we realized that our battalion had moved out without us. We were desperate to rejoin our unit.

Once again, the French people came through for us. Local townspeople gave us a ride, and we were soon reunited with our unit.

The colonel chewed us out pretty well, but it was more than worth it to get a taste of real food.



Adventures of a Regimental Wireman: Avoiding Capture in Lauterburg Bulge

Joe Campbell was a wireman with Headquarters Company of the 314th Regiment. He has put his war memories into book form, War Memories are Forever. Here is an excerpt from that book to tell of his experiences during two weeks in the vicinity of Rohrwiller and Drusenheim, where many of the 2nd Battalion were captured.

On Jan. 5, 1945, the 314th Regiment moved to the vicinity of Bischwiller, Alsace, France. The next two weeks were spent in an area that included Rohrwiller and Drusenheim, as well as several other smaller towns and villages on or near the Rhine River. The Germans were relieved of Rohrwiller on Jan. 6. Rohrwiller was approximately two miles east of Bischwiller and two miles west of Drusenheim. The three towns were on a somewhat straight line. After Rohrwiller was taken, my crew was moved there from Bischwiller to maintain telephone service from Rohrwiller to Drusenheim, part of which was occupied by the 2nd Battalion in mid-afternoon of the same day. This joint occupancy with the Jerries was to continue for the next two weeks. When we got within a few hundred yards of Drusenheim, we drew artillery or mortar fire. We hit that spot with a speed that would get us to the first house as soon as possible. One of the other crews got two flat tires on their Jeep just as they reached the house. It was determined that it might be safer for us if we approached the town from the north instead of the west, so we moved from Rohrwiller to Schirrheim, two miles north of Drusenheim. This did not eliminate enemy fire, but it did reduce it somewhat.

Early afternoon of Jan. 19, it came my time to go repair the line which had

been laid between our new location and Drusenheim. John "Pop" Mravinac, the Jeep driver, and I headed out. A crew consisted of a Jeep and five wiremen when at full force. It did not take long to figure out that for most of the time two could do the job, so we could take turns in going out in pairs, which reduced the risk and danger chances by about half. The line had been laid on the ground alongside the road to the first house on the left at Drusenheim, in front of the house, across a small yard, and over railroad tracks that ran north-south parallel to the road. Then it went left at a 90-degree right-hand turn around the corner of the building and on to battalion headquarters.

The line had been laid by hand across the yard and railroad because the tracks were too high for the Jeep to drive across. I got out of the Jeep to trace the line by holding it in my cupped hand so I could feel the break or damage. I told Pop to go down to the end of the road, turn left, cross the railroad and turn left onto the road that came up alongside; I would meet him across from the house.

About the time I got across the tracks, I saw Pop going up the next street over. I could just see the upper part of him and the top of the Jeep through the wrought-iron fence that was on top of the cemetery wall. That was the last time I ever saw Pop. He had gone one street too far after crossing the railroad.

With the line in my hand, I started up the road toward the wooden building. I looked up and saw two wiremen from 2nd Battalion completing repair of the break in the line. I asked if they knew Pop Mravinac; they said they did, and I asked them to tell him to pick me up at the house where he left me off.

I turned and had not taken a dozen steps when enemy shells hit the far end



Joe Campbell

of the railroad station, which was almost directly across from the house. I made a fast beeline to the open door and then down stairs that were just inside the door. Needless to say, the railroad was out of operation and the station was not manned. It was dark in the basement, and I could hear people talking in a language I could not understand—most likely French civilians. Anyway, out of there I got about as fast as in I went, crossed the railroad and got in the basement of the house, which did not have any furniture, although I did not explore the place.

We probably got to the house on the way in about 1 or 2 p.m., and by this time it was probably about 3 p.m., it already seemed like I'd been there all day. We were not supposed to have anything on our person that would help the enemy in any way. The only thing I had was a picture of a girl friend in my cigarette case. I took it out and threw in on the floor and, after further thought, picked it up again. To this day I can see that picture lying on the floor. Minutes passed as hours, and that is all that passed—not one soldier or one vehicle for the next couple of hours. I had no

hope as to getting out of there. Darkness was setting in, and it was about 5:30 p.m. I was standing out in the yard at the gate, and all of a sudden in came a Jeep roaring down the road from Schirrhein. They saw me and stopped. It was one of the Intelligence and Reconnaissance (I & R) teams from my company that had come to see what the situation was. As the next few minutes revealed, it did not take them long to find out. I asked them if they were coming back, and they said they were.

“Will you pick me up,” I asked.

“Yes,” they replied.

It probably was not more than 300 yards to the intersection. All hell had broken loose, probably half a mile south of there, along the railroad tracks. Coming north up along the railroad was any kind of fire you can think of except bombs—tank, mortar, artillery, small arms, etc. Then that Jeep came back up the road in four-wheel drive, roaring like a tank. One of the guys was standing up with his hands on the handle of the machine gun, ready to fire at whatever moved. They had found out firsthand what was going on and what the situation was, and it was not good. They had shrapnel in the Jeep to prove it, and luckily no one was wounded. By this time it was dark, and I was fearful they would not stop, but they did. As we tore up the road, all kinds of fire was streaming parallel to the road and about fifty yards to the left. The open fields were flat and the road made lazy Ss across them with trees on both sides, with quite a display of tracers. I am sure those curves were not as curvy as they were before the driver took some curve out of them. We safely escaped!

By 5 a.m. Jan. 20, the Germans completed capture of the 2nd Battalion except for about 240 officers and enlisted men. I guess the Germans knew how many prisoners they had that morning, but certainly no one in the 314th knew. For one reason, the battalion was severely undermanned. No doubt they took more GIs than were

not taken. [A history report dated February 1945—seen in 2004—indicated that 464 enlisted men and officers were missing in action.]

I never saw Pop again. I learned that he survived, got back to Chicago, and married Mary, his girlfriend. We had learned that his Jeep was hit and received two flat tires, and he stayed in the basement of a house until he was captured. In 1992, John Q. Aven of Calhoun City, Missouri, who was in the same group of prisoners, told me he kidded Pop about the reason he let the Germans capture him was that he was afraid to let Capt. Fred Rogers, who was in charge of our communication group, know that he had four flat tires on the Jeep. Guess that is the reason he did not meet me back over at the house. He told me Pop had died a few years prior to 1993. Aven was in one of the other I & R teams and was captured in Drusenheim.

I went back in 1993, and the railroad still runs through Drusenheim, and the station is still there but out of use. That little brick house is gone, for what reason I do not know. I stood on the station platform and looked down the road and could see the Rohrwiller-Drusenheim road where Pop turned but failed to take a left on the gravel road.

Only God knows why Pop instead of me, and why not me in the place of one of those hundreds of thousands.

A Chicken Dinner

Campbell's book recounts an episode at Frambois, France that's worth repeating to stir similar memories.

In September we moved our company CP to a small, rural, dirt-road village. We found a house that was unoccupied that was just what we needed. Sam Barnett, crew chief, went into the yard next to the house and came back with two chickens; soon fried chicken was on its way.

Just about as the food was to be placed on the dining room table, in came a little old lady—the lady of the house. We didn't share a language so there was no “What are you doing here?” Instead, she pitched in and helped prepare the table and put the food on it. Together we enjoyed fellowship and food. Somebody among the eight of us at the table passed a couple of dollars to her; she accepted and passed them around the table to get all our autographs.

I often wonder what happened to those dollar bills and how many times she shared with her friends and relatives her experiences with those brazen, uninvited American GIs.



Campbell, left, with crewmates Thompson, Dobney, and Glasser

**IN MEMORY
OF
DR. LOWELL BILLIE “BILL” PARKER
January 10, 1921 - June 20, 2003**

HIGHLIGHTS OF BILL'S LIFE

Proudly served his country during World War II with the U.S. Army, Company H, 314th Infantry—landing with invasion forces on Normandy Beach on D-6. Among his military awards and medals were three Bronze Stars and the Purple Heart.

His marriage of 57 years to Joyce; their two daughters—Patricia Ann (Pattie) and Barbara Jo (Jo)—and two sons-in-law (Steve MacGregor) and (William Harold Moore); five grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Serving the Lord for 52 years. He was in the pastorate in Illinois, Missouri, and Arizona, and a staff member of the Arizona Southern Baptist Convention for 22 years.



*Bill and Joyce at their Silver
Wedding Anniversary*

**Let's hear it for
the Second Generation**
The Breath of Life for Our Association

Especially Let's Salute

Merle and Lucky Buck Caryn and Mike Neff
*They provided the heart, soul, and energy
that enables us to revel in this*

60th Annual Reunion

Two Remembrances from Lichtenstein —A Second Battalion Medic

Elliott Lichtenstein, a medic, tells two stories from his experience with the 314th Regiment. One, seeing the start of the D-Day invasion; one of a medic doing his duty.

I was near the south coast of England on the night of June 5, 1944. It was a fairly clear night, dark as I remember, with no moon at that time. At about 10 p.m. that night we heard a loud, continuous roar and left our tent to see what was happening. This was one of the greatest scenes I have ever seen to this day—the noise was planes.

C44s, in wings of five inside the wide part of the spread V, extended all the way from one horizon to the other; a blanket of planes, wing after wing, with all lights lit. It was like a Christmas tree from horizon to horizon. Some of the guys tried to count the planes but lost track at 600, and we didn't know how many went over.

This continued for over two hours, wing after wing—a beautiful sight. These were the paratroopers who jumped into Normandy. After about two hours of these flights, glider troops were being towed over, also by C44s. All together the run of planes went on until 2 a.m., a continuous run for more than four hours! After that, the noise was sporadic for the rest of the night with



bombers and returning planes.

We didn't have to listen to the radio to know that this was the invasion. A couple of weeks later, I landed on Omaha Beach myself, but by ship.

In another account, Lichtenstein describes an episode as a medic.

I had just brought in a litter casualty who had taken a 50-caliber machine-gun bullet in his thigh, which broke his thigh bone. In order to get to him, we had to go out in front of the line and roll him onto a litter. Machine-gun fire was coming in about three feet off the ground, so we couldn't stand up and carry him off. We stayed with him for over an hour. When firing ceased for a bit, we chanced it, stood up, and ran off with him on a litter. You can run with a litter and a casualty on it.

We got him to the Jeep and then to the aid station, where they immobilized the leg with a Thomas Leg Splint. This is a clumsy metal device that sticks out from the bottom of the foot for at least six inches, even on a tall man. The leg is strapped to it in several places so the leg is completely supported and immobilized: the patient can't move. He was then placed on a litter in a corner until an ambulance would get back to take him to the rear for further treatment.

While we were waiting, a large shell came through the upper story of the house, taking about a quarter of the second story floor with it. We dove down the cellar steps to get away from further shells. A couple of seconds later, in the cellar, I realized that the guy with the busted leg was still upstairs. I said out loud, "Heck, we have to get upstairs and get that guy with the leg down here," when a voice on the side called out, "Don't you guys worry about me, I'm right down here with you."

And he was. How he got off the litter and down the stairs with his leg in a big Thomas Leg Splint is one for the books—and with a busted leg, too.



Shook Remembers Our First Night in England

Does anyone remember our first night in Merry Old England?

As I recall, it was a typical night over there—dark and damp. We left the ship at Southampton and were transported to a staging area. From there we marched to our bivouac area.

It was so dark you couldn't see your hand in front of you. We tied our mess kits to our full field packs to be able to see the person in front of you.

Our guide missed a fork in the road, and I don't know how many miles we walked off course.

The bivouac area was a golf course. We were given mattress covers (canvas) filled with straw. They acted like sponges, and in the morning, we were all pretty wet.

Welcome to England.



Piekunka, Cook and Infantry Replacement, Saw Action in Alsace and Across the Rhine

Sigmund Piekunka's friends knew him as Ernie when he was growing up on a farm in Ontario, New York, and as a buddy during his military career.

Ernie didn't start his military service in the infantry. Having worked after school as a meat cutter, his start in the military was in the kitchen. He was trained as a cook and baker, doing so well that he was promoted to the officers kitchen.

As the war escalated after the invasion of Europe, military personnel were being transported for training and for shipping overseas. Ernie cooked for the troops on those trains, then stood guard at night—getting 4 or 5 hours of sleep and then back on duty. He was on trains traveling from Long Island to Florida, to Texas, and other routes.

Ernie's combat training came at Fort McLennan, Alabama, and in December 1944 his unit shipped out; they didn't know if they were going to Europe or the Pacific. He could have stayed behind: officers had become accustomed to his culinary skills and wanted him to stay—which they could have arranged. Ernie told them that the men in his unit had become brothers: they studied together, trained together, and wanted to go into battle together.

The soldiers were shipped out on Jan. 2, 1945. Two days out they were chased by German submarines that tried to torpedo the ships, but the good Navy escort protected them. The troops landed in LeHavre, France 10 days later. Then it was a quick train ride to Germany and the front.

Ernie joined the 79th Infantry Division that had been a spearhead division in the 3rd Army of Gen. Patton. Ernie's unit was a heavy-weapons company, and he was in a machine-gun squad. It was the worst place to be—machine gunners were getting killed real quick.

Training for Ernie had been as a rifleman, not as a machine gunner. In fact, that training as a rifleman was a quick 10 days on his ship as he was transported to Europe. In the machine-gun unit, he began at the lowest job—ammo carrier—on a six-man team. As they advanced, and as soldiers were wounded or killed, he moved up the ladder. Before it was over, Ernie was a machine gunner, and his first major action was in the Battle of the Lauterburg Bulge in the Alsace.

Ernie's next major battle was the crossing of the Rhine River (Mar. 24, 1945). The night before they went into battle, Ernie recalls, Gen. Eisenhower, commander-in-chief of Allied Forces in the Europe, came to the front, wished us luck, and shook hands with many of us. What an honor and morale builder! All of us became brothers.

When the crossing was over, Ernie discovered that he had been wounded. A buddy asked him about all the blood on his boot—Ernie hadn't noticed. There was a piece of shrapnel lodged in his foot. He sat down, pulled the metal fragment out, washed his foot off with water from his canteen, and applied the sulfa drug that all the soldiers carried. And he went back into the field.

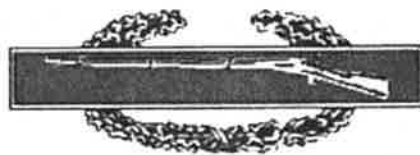


Ernie Piekunka

Three days later Ernie was walking down a hill when he heard a voice asking what his name was. It was 79th Division CO, Gen. Patch. He had noticed that Ernie was limping. He had heard that the soldier had gone three days without knowing he'd been hit, then took out the shrapnel, applied sulfa, and continued into battle. "That's the kind of soldier I want in my army," said Gen. Patch as he shook Ernie's hand.

Later Ernie's unit helped liberate a concentration camp near Dortmund. It was sad, but gratifying, to see those people set free. He went through France, Germany, Czechoslovakia, Holland, and Belgium and was in the occupation troops in Ansbach, Germany.

On his twenty-first birthday, Ernie was back in LeHavre waiting for a ship to take him to the Pacific. Two days before he was to board, word came through that Japan had surrendered. He was discharged on April 12, 1946 as a Staff Sergeant with the Combat Infantryman's Badge, American Campaign Medal, Good Conduct Medal, World War II Victory Medal, and the Bronze Star Medal.



Following Two Fox Company Buddies from Normandy Through the Rest of 314th Action

Jerry Mongeon and Keith Noren have a written record of many episodes in their service with Fox Company in the 314th Regiment. We have excerpted some of those adventures that follow them from joining the company as replacements in Normandy early in July 1944 until November when a severe case of trench foot took Jerry out of action, and battlefield wounds took Keith offline. Although Keith rejoined to go through to the German surrender in May 1945. Jerry's condition led to months in hospitals, and he did not go back into action. We have drawn a narrative from their text, often using their own description of selected events in their time as combat infantrymen in the 314th Regiment.

Jerry and Keith got their assignment to the 79th Division as replacements on 8 July 1944. It was two days later that they went to the front lines with Third Platoon, Second Squad in Fox Company. Both had failed to take Regimental headquarters posts (Jerry as an interpreter—he had spoken Canadian French in his home from childhood, and Keith as radioman—for which he was qualified). They wanted to stay together, and that happened when they went to Sgt. Thad Tucker's squad. They soon learned that Sgt. Tucker was the only living and unwounded member of the squad after its involvement the battle of La Haye du Puits. Within a few days, however, the squad was up to strength again. Jerry and Keith were given their choices of two roles: BAR man and First Scout. Jerry took the former, and Keith became the scout.

From their own account, here are reactions to the move into front-line positions: Along the way they passed dead and dismembered enemy soldiers,

dead bloated horses and cattle, disabled and burned equipment, and broken and burned real estate. Now any illusions that they may have had, if any, of war's glorious attributes, were surely waning. Tomorrow, and the days that followed would become mentally and physically exhausting slogs punctuated with the occasional horrific events of war etched in their memories forever.”

In the Hedgerows

Their first fortnight in combat would be in the hedgerow country along the southwestern flank of the Cotentin Peninsula. These hedgerows, being several feet high and across, were somewhat analogous to New England's stone walls, except they were an earthen obstacle along which a tangle of trees and shrubbery grew in a dense thicket. The men discovered what the life of a combat infantryman was all about: when he was on the move, it was usually on foot in the heat and dust of summer; when he was stationary, he usually spent time digging a fox hole or lying in one.

They recall one incident that was hair-raising but had a happy ending. As scout, Keith moved ahead of the squad with an objective to check out the land to a small creek beyond a couple of hedgerows. If not in contact with enemy forces, he was to stay there till the squad moved up to his position. Keith reached the creek unscathed, but once there, a German sniper opened up on him and pinned him down—and he lay motionless in the creek bed, hoping to convince the sniper that he was dead. The squad did not move up, and Jerry was concerned about Keith. He set out along Keith's route. As Jerry made his careful way forward, Keith heard the brush rustling nearby, and he was ready to shoot whoever was advancing. Jerry heard the sound of Keith taking off the



Gerard E. Mongeon

safety on his rifle. Suspense gave way to relief when Keith saw an American helmet. Jerry whispered, “Don't shoot, Noren, it's me.” That was the happy ending of that adventure.

Breakout, Dash Across France

Around the first of August, the 79th Division came under the command of Gen. Patton in his 3rd Army, taking part in the breakthrough and fast advance across France. On some days, they narrate, they marched up to 25 miles but could not keep up with the advance without getting a lift. Riding over rough terrain at top speeds on the outside of a tank is tricky business. Jerry recalls men falling off into the path of following vehicles. During these fast-moving days in August, there were brief skirmishes with the enemy, but for the most part their unit did not run into significant opposition. Their squad was on point when they were the “first Americans the French saw as we led the march into the town of Laval.” A few days later, they entered LeMans, where Keith remembers, “Jerry and I were standing in the middle of town next to a bar or restaurant. Two older, grinning Frenchmen came up to us, saying they had

fought with our papas in World War I and wanted to sing *Mademoiselle from Armetieres, Parley Vous*. A sniper began firing from the steeple of a church across the street. We finally got the Frenchmen into the bar.” They had a two-day rest in LeMans, and the troops got their first baths since Jerry and Keith joined the outfit.

After LeMans, the pace was again fast and furious with relatively little combat. In one instance, the troops were marching in columns when a low-flying plane made a pass with machine guns firing. Several men were wounded. (Company and regimental accounts disagree whether this was friendly fire.)

About the middle of August, Fox Company found itself encamped at a German airfield between LaMele and Mantes-Gassicourt. There was a well-stocked warehouse the Germans had left: cigars, cigarettes, sardines, jam, etc. Jerry’s platoon got the detail to guard the warehouse and refuse all access to the goods regardless of rank. He enjoyed performing that duty to the letter, refusing many who greatly outranked him. Of course, he recalls, “There is the old saying about the fox guarding the henhouse, with its implicit pleasures conferred upon the Fox.”

Somewhere between Normandy and Paris, a few words of Jerry’s Canadian French defused a tense situation and saved a French family. It happened when the troops came upon a deep, dark culvert; they couldn’t see in, but they had the feeling that it was not empty. Some shouted, in English, that whoever was there should come out with hands up; no response. They threatened to roll in hand grenades if any occupants didn’t come out. Just before the pins were pulled, Jerry shouted a last warning, in French. A feeble reply came back in French, followed by a Frenchman with his wife and small children. Another happy ending.

Bridgehead Across the Seine

For a time it appeared that the 79th Division would take part in the libera-

tion of Paris; the line of advance headed that way from about 60 miles west of the capital. But it was not to happen that way.

The 79th Division was ordered to move quickly to Mantes-Gassicourt, 40 km from Paris. On 19 August 1944, elements of the division were first to cross the Seine River. They established a secure bridgehead before German forces could react. Every time Jerry and Keith dug a fox hole, they moved forward, leaving their holes for the company and regimental headquarters units. The next day was different. During the lull, their platoon leader ordered that all weapons be field-stripped and cleaned. As their weapons were lying around disassembled, German artillery began preparation for a counter-attack. But by the time the attack really began, the division forces were well entrenched and had supporting artillery. The German thrust did not succeed.

After a few days in reserve, Fox Company again went on the attack, moving across a potato field toward an objective of a wooded area. Artillery had bombarded the area for 15 minutes before the jump-off, but plenty of enemy resistance was still in the woods. Rifle and machine-gun fire pinned down Jerry, Keith, and their companions. As bullets snapped over his head and plowed into dirt around him, Jerry began to think his time had come. One thing that came into his mind was the diary he had been keeping daily—written on paper that he rolled up and stored in the stock of his BAR. Of course, this was against regulations. Jerry removed the papers and ground them into the soil of the potato patch. A platoon of tanks came up and relieved Fox Company’s dire situation. By nightfall they had reached their objective—and Jerry ceased his daily efforts with a diary for the rest of his time in France.

Rapid Advances, a Big Surprise

Jerry and Keith were involved in two of the fastest advances of the war. One was an thrust of 180 miles in three

days, halted by shortage of gasoline within a few miles of the Belgian border. Once there, the troops got three days of rest with hot meals and even a chance to take in the countryside without being under fire. The other advance had them heading 158 miles south toward Rheims. In one day they covered 120 miles to Joinville and then on to Charmes. Most of this area had been cleared of German resistance, but that differed when they got to the Moselle River. There German forces were defending a corridor through which the German 19th Army was trying to escape from southern France. Five days later, a USO show, headlined by Bing Crosby, showed up to do a show in a large aircraft repair facility the Germans had been forced to vacate. An alert for 314th units came during the show, dropping the curtain early for those troops.

Eastward Toward Lorraine

Pushing eastward toward Lorraine, Jerry’s and Keith’s unit dug in on a “military crest” that overlooked a road on which a large column of vehicles and troops came into view. Air strikes were called in, and it fell to Jerry and Keith to lay down a visible marker that would let the pilots know where the U.S. was dug in. Four P-47s roared into view, took a run over the column to size up the situation, then came on with their machine guns firing. Empty cartridge cases fell from the sky over the fox holes. Shortly, confusion in the German ranks led to surrender of more than 100 troops along with trucks, ammunition, and equipment.

Facing a German Tank

From their reserve position, Jerry’s and Keith’s Fox Company was sent across the Meurthe River to help secure the beachhead established there by the 3rd Battalion—with considerable losses (60 killed, 160 wounded), earning two DSCs and a Presidential Citation. In action there, Jerry’s platoon was pinned down by fire from a wooded area. A German tank was roaming in search of targets for its superior fire-

power. Jerry and another from his squad, PFC Ellsworth, set out with Ellsworth's bazooka to see if they could do anything about the tank. They saw the tank coming out of the woods headed straight for them. With Jerry there as loader, Ellsworth could concentrate on range and sighting. He was on his knee with the bazooka over his right shoulder; Jerry checked that the weapon was ready to fire. Ellsworth delayed until the tank was closer and then squeezed the trigger. With a loud whomp, the little rocket sped toward the target. It was not quite on the money, but the round exploded somewhere beneath the tank, shaking it to a standstill. As the crew popped out of the hatches, Jerry's BAR relieved them of further obligations to der Fuehrer. Keith thought he had been hit in the foot in that fire fight, but inspection showed a bullet had blown the heel off his boot, not hitting any flesh.

In the Forest of Parroy

Some of the most difficult combat for Jerry and Keith came in the Forest of Parroy, where heavily reinforced German forces made a determined stand to stop the U.S. forces's advance. The late September-early October weather was cold with rain throughout the whole period. The troops lived with wet, sleepless nights, hair-raising patrols, threat of artillery and tank fire, difficulty of re-supply due to lack of roads and the mud. On 9 October the regiment went on attack; Fox Company went on a flanking movement to the right. By mid-afternoon the objective had been taken and the enemy would soon retreat. Jerry and Keith found themselves to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. They were digging a fox hole during a lull in action when an artillery shell came into their area. Jerry hit the dirt; Keith could see it was going beyond them. However, it hit overhead branches in a nearby tree and exploded to send its hot shrapnel down on them and others. Keith, standing, was not hit. One of the troops standing near a tank was wounded seriously; Jerry went to his aid. He then discov-

ered that he had been hit in the thigh by shrapnel. Jerry left the line, limping along—and supporting his wounded comrade—the mile back to the rear. After a few days of healing in a field hospital, Jerry returned to his outfit. After days of attack and counter-attack, Fox Company was engaged in the area near Luneville and Marainviller. On a final attack, to their surprise, they found that the German forces had withdrawn.

Few Days of Rest in Luneville

In late October, the 79th Division was relieved by the 44th Infantry Division, recently arrived from the States. The 79th was now to enjoy a break after 127 days of combat. The city of their rest would be Luneville, southeast of Nancy. A large factory building served as the temporary "hotel" for the troops. It was real luxury, Jerry recalls, "to sleep upon a straw bed or enjoy a hot meal with a real roof overhead. In the evenings, the troops got to see USO shows and movies or stroll around town to enjoy some French hospitality."

As the break in Luneville came to its final days, training became more intense. Many new replacements needed to be assimilated to bring the ranks up to strength. New orders arrived: the Division would soon attack eastward toward the Rhine River.

Leaving the Field of Battle

On 13 November the regiment moved to an area in Benamenil to prepare to attack German positions on higher ground to the east. There would be another enemy: the weather was turning wet and cold, with snow mixing in the interminable rain. Fox Company would be a key player in the push toward Blamont and Fremonville.

Jerry and Keith, and the rest of their squad, were maintaining a road block where enemy action was anticipated. Keith remembers being awakened with Jerry's hand over his mouth. They looked out, seeing two Germans on patrol gazing in their direction; the patrol moved silently away. The next morning, 100 German soldiers approached

with white flags and surrendered along with their weapons and equipment.

With the continuing rain, in the wet soil a fox hole or slit trench would have water in it soon after it was dug. Bedrolls brought up from the rear might have blankets that had not dried from the last uses, and troops could not find dry places to spread a bedroll. Many spread them on top of the ground; when artillery came in, however, they had to go into holes for protection. Often a hole would have cold water or icy mud in it. Men seldom had a chance to change to dry socks or massage their cold feet.

Near the town of Harbouey, Jerry had spent most of the night in a hole with his feet in cold mud and water. His legs would not function for him to stand up for another day of combat. Keith pulled him out of the hole. As Jerry sat on the ground, trying to loosen his stiffened legs and feet, it became apparent that his fighting days were over for a while. A Jeep took him back to an aid station. That was the last time Jerry and Keith would see each other until nearly five years later. Keith survived five more months of combat after Jerry left.

The day after Jerry was carried off the battlefield with trench foot, Keith was wounded. He was hospitalized, but returned to the front lines and saw additional combat in France, Holland, and Germany. Among all who had been together when Jerry and Keith joined on 10 July 1944. Keith was the only soldier still with his platoon at the end.

Jerry went from the aid station to a hospital in southern France, and for many months underwent treatment for a severe case of trench foot; rest, antibiotics, elevation of his feet, and general immobility. He did not go back to the 79th Division.

Although they lived at opposite ends of the U.S. after the war, Jerry and Keith would see each other as often as possible. They remain attached by a bond stronger in certain ways than that between loving brothers.

What I Remember About the War

*Ralph M. Gonzales
Company A*

I was inducted into the army at Fort Sam Houston, and three days later I was sent to Camp Gruber, Oklahoma. There I was assigned to the 42nd Rainbow Division and trained for seven months. After my training, I was transferred, along with several others, to the 79th Infantry Division, 314th Regiment, Company A, at Salina, Kansas. Two months later, we left Salina and traveled to England.

During the early-morning hours of D-Day, we boarded a troop-carrier ship bound for Normandy, France at Utah Beach. All I can remember was how scared I was and how much I was shak-



ing: I shook so hard my body was sore for three days! We were the second or third wave in, and I was wading through body parts and blood. I could see many soldiers lying dead on the beach. There were artillery shells falling all around us. We dug in and remained on the beachhead overnight. The shells stopped falling, and it was relatively quiet.

It took me about four days to calm down and adapt to the situation. As we moved towards Cherbourg, there were many battles in which many American soldiers were killed and wounded. Before we got there, Company C was surrounded by the enemy, and our commander, Col. Olin "Tiger" Teague, came running from the rear, yelling that C Company was being surrounded. We followed him, all of us running. It was not long before C Company men were coming through our ranks.

After taking Cherbourg, we were transported by trucks to St. Lo. We had not gone far when we were ambushed

by the Germans. Many of my buddies were killed and wounded. As I crawled along the ground, I touched a land mine with my rifle. This may have injured or killed others; I don't really know. This occurred on July 26, 1944; I was severely wounded. The only thing that saved my life was my helmet. I do not remember much after that, except that I was picked up by medics and taken to a makeshift aid station at a dairy farm.

After undergoing surgery to my left arm and hip, I was transferred to a hospital in England. After several months I was able to travel and was sent to Harmon General Hospital, Longview, Texas; I stayed for a year.

During my civilian career, I was employed at Kelly Air Force Base in San Antonio, TX for 40 years. I was also a real estate agent for 25 years. I have been married for 45 years and have 5 children and 14 grandchildren. I currently live in San Antonio.

In Memory of PFC M. Keith Noren First Scout, Company F



Sadly, Morris Keith Noren passed away on Aug. 5, 2004. He had been battling cancer for the past couple of years, always on the attack, always positive of mind and spirit, always optimistic about the outcome, never complaining, always thankful for each additional day of his life here on earth. The end came quickly, and we have lost another real hero.

Gerald and Edith Mongeon

To Joseph W. Campbell



Joe's willingness to share his war experiences led to the decision to include stories in our pictorial booklet.

Thank you, Joe, for helping to
Keep the Legacy Alive

Merle and Lucky Buck

In Memory of
PFC John Little, Jr. (Jack)

**A heavy machine gunner in the front line
of the World War II European invasion.**

**Later, PFC Little was escort guard to Hermann Goering at the
Nuremberg War Crimes Trial**



**PFC Little is shown in the photography with Goering
and Rudolf Hess at the moment the death sentence was
pronounced on Goering.**

**Ethelyn M. Little
(Mrs. John Little, Jr.)**

Otha C. Starkey

May 1926 - October 1977

I & R Platoon, HQ Co., 314th Regiment

**We Love You and
Miss Your Every Day!**

*Dedicated by the
Starkey and Neff Families*



We Salute Sgt. Willie L. Kemmerlin



**The Grandfather we
never had the
opportunity to know**

Your Grandchildren

**Maclean, John, and Katelyn Bracey
Melissa, Stephen, Brett, and
Anna Katherine Evatt**



These three captains served as chaplains to the 314th Regiment through its months in combat in Europe: From the left: Capt. Jerome Healy, Capt. Lawrence Cousins, Capt. Carl Heckmann

Chaplains of the 314th

Mark Heckmann, son of Carl Heckmann, provided this—his copyrighted—account of three chaplains who served the 314th Regiment.

Civilian clergymen expect to hold worship services every Sunday in a church sanctuary. Those who joined combat divisions in WWII quickly learned that the norm now became the exception. This included chaplains of the 314th. Once combat began, they knew services would not necessarily be on a Sunday and most likely would not be held in a church.

Chaplain Capt. Carl A. Heckmann, of Texas, recorded wartime memories in a letter and a journal. A Lutheran minister his entire career, Chaplain Heckmann joined the 79th Division at Camp Laguna, Arizona, in November 1943 and served in the 314th Regiment throughout combat and, after VE Day, until the 79th Division was disbanded on Dec. 10, 1945. His fellow chaplains in the 314th included Captain Jerome Healy and Capt. Lawrence Cousins. Soldiers of the Jewish faith remember Chaplain (Rabbi) David Max Eichhorn, who served with the U.S. Army's XV Corps.

"During combat, our worship ser-

vices were held whenever we were not in combat—different days, different hours of the day, and in just about any place where it was safe to gather a large number of men. It was much like a civilian parish, except that it was an inter-Christian setting: a lot of work, witnessing, conversions, baptisms, ministering to the needs of people in a very special situation," Chaplain Heckmann wrote.

As the 314th moved through France, services would be held in such unlikely "churches" as orchards, hillsides, pastures, barns, an abandoned Nazi machine shop—or gathered around the hood of the Chaplain's Jeep.

Chaplain Heckmann described Christmas Day 1944 with the 314th in France.

"Christmas Day! And so far from home. But I saw Christmas spirit anyhow—in how they turned out for my three services—singing Christmas carols, hoping to be home next year by this time. We had a wonderful dinner with I Company: turkey, dressing, potatoes, gravy (giblet), cranberry sauce, sweet pickles, peas, and mince meat pie. I stopped at L Company and spent a bit of time with them. A GI led each table

singing, "Silent Night" and in the Lord's Prayer. The weather was excellent all day. It's cold, but dry and clear. Beautiful moonlit nights."

Months later, after the 314th crossed the Rhine into Germany, Capt. Heckmann wrote about services held at Oberhausen, near Essen, on April 1:

"Had five services: 1st Battalion was in a beer hall; 3rd was in a bank; Companies A, L, and I were in living rooms of houses, and we had pianos for the services."

Twenty-seven years old when he went overseas with the 314th, Chaplain Heckmann was the youngest of the three chaplains who served the regiment. He joined the Army when he was pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church in Navasota, Texas. Chaplain Healy, of Canon City, Colorado, a Roman Catholic priest, was 33 years old when combat started in 1944. Chaplain Cousins, of Walla Walla, Washington, belonged to the Disciples of Christ denomination and was 40 when combat began for the 314th.

Like their fellow soldiers in the regiment, the chaplains risked their lives, were wounded in combat, and were honored by their country for heroism. Chaplain Heckmann was gunned down during the Meurthe River crossing (near Fraimbois, France) on Sept. 22, 1944 after he had volunteered to serve as a litter bearer. The citation of the Silver Star awarded to him stated, "Although the only route to the wounded led over open terrain subjected to enemy observation and intense fire, Chaplain Heckmann made repeated



Chaplain Heckmann in front-line battle gear

trips evacuating the casualties until he was caught in the enemy fire and severely wounded." He also was awarded the Purple Heart.

Chaplains Healy and Cousins were awarded the Silver Star, Bronze Star, and the Purple Heart. Their medals resulted from heroic action during the battle at La Haye du Puits in July 1944 and in subsequent combat.

After the war, Chaplain Heckmann returned to his congregation in Texas. In 1963, Lutherans in Texas elected him to be the first full-time President of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, a position he held for 15 years. He died in Austin in 1989.

Chaplain Healy returned to Holy Abbey in Colorado; he taught school and coached basketball. Later, he was hospital chaplain in Colorado Springs.

Chaplain Cousins returned to Walla Walla and served as chaplain at the Veterans Administration Hospital there until 1968. Chaplain Healy died in 1992; Chaplain Cousins died in 1980.

Newspaper Tells of Anthony Taschler's War Memories

Pvt. Anthony Taschler landed at Utah Beach on June 10, D-Day plus 4.

He was with the 314th Infantry Regiment of the 79th Division. They were to help take the port city of Cherbourg. First, they had to capture Fort du Roule, a fortress on a steep cliff that guarded the town and harbor.

Taschler, 19, was born in Garfield and grew up in Passaic and Clifton. His father had fought in the Austrian Army in World War I. Taschler was drafted after high school. His battalion sailed from Boston to England on an Indian troopship.

The regiment fought its way to Cherbourg and moved on the fort on June 25. They got pinned down by machine-gun fire from one of the fort's pillboxes, the concrete gun emplacements behind the fort. Finally, a heroic

corporal rushed in and destroyed the bunker's guns and rear entrance with 15 pounds of TNT. He tossed grenades inside.

Taschler, a forward scout, saw a white flag planted and waving in back of the fort. He walked over and picked it up. Out came dozens of Germans with their hands up.

"They all surrendered then and there," he said.

"Why did you do that?" Taschler's lieutenant asked. "Did you want to be a hero?" Had the flag been a trick, Taschler could have been gunned down.

"I just did it instinctively," said Taschler, a Little Falls resident. With the fort and Cherbourg secured, they moved on.

During a firefight in the notorious hedgerows a few days later, an artillery barrage killed half of Taschler's company. Shrapnel pierced his side, back, and lung, and he passed out from blood loss. Shards remain buried near his heart to this day.

In Loving Memory of our Beloved Husband, Father and Grandfather

H. Kenneth Hall

**His courage and ingenuity made our world a
better place**

**Lovingly missed by his wife, Mrs. Mabel Hall,
Mrs. Judy Hooten, Mrs. Errin Halfen and Madeline**

From Bragg to Berchtesgaden

With the Moving-est Battalion in World War II

The 813th Tank Destroyer Battalion was activated on 15 December 1941 at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, formed out of the 17th F.A., 36th F.A., and 178th F.A. into the 13th F.A. Provisional Anti-Tank Battalion with towed 75 mm guns, training thus for six months until the formation and activation of the 813th TD Battalion. This activation included members of the 17th F.A., the 36th F.A., the 178th F.A., the 47th F.A., the 72nd F.A., the 6th F.A., the 4th F.A., and the 112th F.A.

On 6 August 1942, the battalion sailed from New York for the United Kingdom where it undertook further training and remained until sailing for North Africa on 6 January 1943. It participated in the Tunisian campaign, working variously with British and French, and the U.S. 34th Division. A major part of the battalion went to Sicily with the 3rd Infantry Division and

the 13th Field Artillery Brigade. During this period the battalion was equipped with 75mm guns mounted on the M-3 halftrack.

The summer of 1943 saw the battalion equipped with the M-10 (3-inch gun) S-P tank destroyer, and a portion of the battalion took part in the invasion of Italy—attached to the 82nd Airborne Division. Early in November 1943, the battalion again set sail for the United Kingdom where it was completely re-equipped with M-10s and trained for the invasion of France.

The battalion was among the first waves of the invasion of Normandy, landing at Utah Beach on D-plus-21 days. It went on line with the 79th Infantry Division immediately and remained with that division for the greater portion of the European campaign.

Playing a major role in the taking of La Haye du Puits, spearheading the

drive of the U.S. 3rd Army to Fougères, Laval, LeMans, and north to Alençon to close the Falaise Gap, the battalion rolled along, rolling up an impressive record with every kilometer. The Falaise pocket closed, the battalion drove east towards Paris; suddenly the orders changed and it veered sharply north to Mantes-Gassicourte across the Seine River to become the first Allied armor east of the Seine.

Smashing out of the Seine bridgehead, the battalion accompanied the 1st Army drive to the Belgian border. Here it cut south to join the right flank of the 3rd Army battering east to Carnes, Luneville, and through the bloody Forêt de Parroy, through Sarrebourg, Saverne, Haguenau, and the bitter winter campaign in Alsace with the 7th Army.

Relieved from the line in February 1944, the battalion went to the 9th Army, where it was equipped with M-36 and M-36 B1 tank destroyers mounting the 90mm gun. It became the first armor across the Rhine in the 21st Army Group sector on March 24 and then supported infantry elements in cleaning out the Ruhr, later operating as military government until ordered to the 7th Army.

Another long road march through the bomb-wrecked cities of Cologne and Frankfurt, brought it down south into the Alps and Hitler's redoubt area, to and beyond Berchtesgaden and, finally, V-E Day.

From Bragg to Berchtesgaden, the 813th Tank Destroyer Battalion had come the long, rough road to victory in Europe, playing its role in every European campaign.



Eulogy for Don Carl Cites Heroic Service With 314th

Don Carl had been married to Dorothy just over a year before Pearl Harbor was bombed and the U.S. entered World War II. Don soon enlisted and he and Dorothy interrupted their wedded life until 1944. By 1951 they had completed the family with three children.

When Don died in 2005, his eulogy highlighted his response to his country's need:

"Don enlisted, as many young American men did," the eulogist said, "and he served in the 314th Infantry Regiment, 79th Division. He would be sent to the European theater, first to Normandy, France for D-Day-plus-10, then on through France, Belgium, and eventually to the Rhineland in Germany. He was a decorated war hero, receiving a Purple Heart with oak-leaf cluster and four Bronze Stars.

"There is a story within the family about Don's service during the war. He was a staff sergeant and was given the order to advance the men under his command forward over a series of hedgerows. They were under heavy artillery fire, and Don realized that it would be suicidal to make a direct advance as his superior officer probably intended. So he led his men forward but carefully wove in and out and around the hedgerows, instead of subjecting them to direct fire. He was proud that his efforts, and the efforts of the men who served under him, were successful with minimum loss of life.

"He would also have many successful experiences in reconnaissance while continuing to serve in the army. His family often thought that his small stature made him particularly well-suited to this task.

"Don was honorably discharged in 1944, but his Army experiences were a



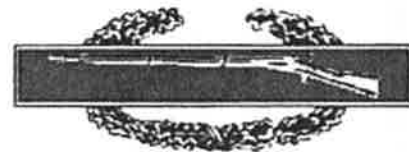
part of his life that left an indelible impression upon him. He never forgot the ties that were forged in the fields and valleys of Europe and that bound him to his fellow GIs. He would attend re-

unions of the 314th Regiment and would serve as chairman of the committee for the 55th reunion.

"He is remembered with honor by those with whom he served.

"Each of us owes Don, and countless others like him, a debt of gratitude for their service to our country.

"He is also remembered and honored by those on the continent of Europe. Raymond Gardie, a dear friend and member of the French Underground Resistance, sobbed when he learned of Don's passing. A monument has been erected in La Haye du Puits, France that commemorates liberation of the town by Don's regiment. Raymond has not forgotten that had a man named Don Carl and his Army buddies not come through that town, he himself might well not be alive today."



In Memory of Don Carl

My Daddy's Puptent Buddy

Don . . .

**the way we want
to remember
him, dancing his
little legs off
with my Mom.**

*Merle and
Lucky Buck*



*In loving memory of our
husband, father, and grandfather*

Fred W. Hnatov

1921-2005



On the first anniversary of Fred's passing, it seems fitting to review who he was. Fred served in the U.S. Army, WWII, in the 314th Infantry Regiment and 79th Recon Troop as a First Lieutenant and was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

As a teacher he taught English and later became a Guidance Counselor in the local high schools. He also ran for the office of Assemblyman in Huntington.

Fred was buried with military honors at Arlington National Cemetery.

*His wisdom, love of family, and country will always be remembered.
His military left an indellile impression on him.He is in our thoughts
and heart always.*

**Evelyn (wife) and Our Children: Mark, Maria and Tony, Elizabeth
and David and Our Grandchildren: Paul, Lauren, and Jacqueline,
Mark Jennifer, Cranley, Samantha, and Alexandra**

I & R Medic Recalls Highs, Lows, and More



Frank Ryals

One dark night we were on an outpost in a big forest. We had slipped in just before dark and found a German bunker. They had dug a hole about 6 x 6 feet and covered it with big logs. There were eight of us including me, the Medic. We took shifts standing guard with two on each shift; since there was an odd number without me, I volunteered to pull a shift. Being a Medic, I did not have a gun, but I borrowed one. I had qualified as expert with the M-1 rifle, I had hunted all my life, and I knew how to handle a gun. It was quiet and no other troops near us.

The plan was to sleep in the bunker, but John Aven and Horace Ryan decided it was too small. and they pitched their tent just outside. Another guy and I were on guard, and at about 3 a.m. in came two artillery rounds. They landed close; we tried to get in the bunker and literally ended up about falling in the small opening—it was so dark we couldn't see. After several minutes, I decided I'd better check on John and Horace. I crawled out and shook their feet trying to see if they were OK. I got no response, and I shook harder—I did not want to make any noise. After several attempts, I finally had to call

softly and then a little louder. I finally got a response, "**What do you want?**" I whispered, asking what happened, and they said they were OK and to leave them alone. It was quiet the rest of the night. I guess the Germans knew where the bunker was and decided to throw in a couple of rounds just in case someone tried to use it. The next morning we found two shrapnel holes through the tent about three inches above them. They were most thankful that I had been concerned about them.

Hagenau in December

We were going into Hagenau the afternoon of 11 Dec 44. The lead jeep hit a land mine, which blew it about 20 feet in the air and across the road. Platoon Sgt. Homer T. Merrill was killed instantly. We had a French lieutenant with us as a liaison, since we stayed in contact with French forces. He died several days later. Two other guys in the Jeep were seriously wounded. Four other jeeps managed to stop. I was in the fifth jeep. There were several other mines in the road.

"Friendly" Fire

The French lieutenant was with us one day as we were moving up parallel to the French forces. We made visual contact and decided we'd better tell them where we were going. The lieutenant talked to them, and we started around a hill about half a mile from them. They started firing at us point blank with tanks. We jumped in a small swell probably no more than 12 inches deep. The lieutenant was right in front of me, and he turned and said, "That's those **SOB-ing** [not abbreviated] **Frenchmen**," in perfect English. He spoke five languages. The Frenchmen fired about eight rounds before our boys could finally show the orange panel we carried. Not funny then, but funny later.

A New Year's Eve

On New Year's Eve 1944, we had been on an outpost on the Rhine River

for several days. We watched the Germans on the other side of the river. One day two German aircraft came over and were jumped by two U.S. P-51s. We watched the dog fight: fortunately the P-51s shot down both of the German planes. Several years ago, our ex-POW group had a speaker, a professor at a nearby college. He was German and had been in the Hitler Youth corps when he was 16. He told about a bad air raid that he survived on New Year's Eve 1944. I said, "What a coincidence that I can remember exactly where I was on that date," and I told him the story.

Unbelieving Women

We went into a small French town one day and came under a heavy artillery barrage. We dashed into a house, finding just as two old women (probably 60—but remember I was only 19) who were about to run out with their suitcases. We stopped them and tried to tell them through sign language that those were our shells going that way (to the Germans). Actually it was ours and the Germans going both ways, but we were trying to calm them down and keep them as safe as possible. About that time a shell landed in the next room of the house. The ladies grabbed their suitcases and left, even though the shelling was still going on. **So much for listening to those Americans.**

Sleep on a Feather Mattress

One night we stayed in a small town and two old ladies (they really were old) let us sleep in the house. They had a feather mattress and, if you never slept on one, it is thick and you just bury into it. We had not slept in a bed since we had been in France, and it was great.

And Then Drusenheim

In mid-January 1945, the I & R Platoon manned an observation post outside of Drusenheim. We would alternate, with one squad on the outpost and the rest staying in Drusenheim. The Germans launched a fierce attack on Drusenheim at 6 p.m., 19 January. The battle raged on until about 4 a.m., and most of what was left of the 2nd battal-

ion and the I & R Platoon members in Drusenheim were captured. I doctored a sergeant (by light of a cigarette lighter) in the basement of 2nd battalion HQ; he had a large piece of his skull missing over one eye. It was a bad wound. As prisoners, we were marched to the edge of town toward the Rhine River, and at about daylight our artillery started shelling us. Fortunately no one was hurt, but the Germans took great delight in letting us know it was our own artillery. We marched several days without food. This battle is described in the history of the 314th Regiment.

Sleep in Drafty Cow Barn

Several days after we were captured and were still marching into Germany, we slept in a cow barn with large cracks in the sides. The weather was near zero with snow everywhere. We had not been given any food, and we ate snow for water. I do not know how we kept from freezing or at least losing toes, etc. We got as close together as possible and when one wanted to turn, everyone had to turn. It is hard to be an optimist sleeping in a barn under those conditions, but at least **everything** was frozen.

Stalag at Hammelburg

While we were POWs at Hammelburg, guards walked about eight of us down the mountain about three miles to unload a train. We unloaded some and then came to a machine gun set up on a tripod, along with some other weapons. They told us to unload them, and we refused. We said it was against the Geneva Convention. They got angry and threatened to shoot us. We had a stand-off for about 10 minutes, but we finally won. That was a time when (as the song by Kenny Rogers says) "You have to know when to hold 'em and when to fold 'em." The song hadn't been written then, but many times I have thought that the theory applies: it was a fine line between holding and folding.

Task Force Tried to Free Us

While we were at Hammelburg, Gen. Patton sent a task force ahead of the front line to try and liberate us (The Hammelburg Raid). After a big battle at the gate, many of troops on the task force were captured. The next day we were put on a train, with doors locked, for two days and nights on the way to Nurnburg. They let us off for about 30 minutes the second afternoon. We had no food or water and most everybody had dysentery. After several days at Nurnburg, we marched to Moosburg. We were on the road for 17 days and nights. The Red Cross gave us packages (one to four people) two or three times. It was on this march that John Aven and I almost got shot. The guard threatened us when we did not move out and actually fired his rifle.

Ferry Fire at Homecoming

When we came home, we got on a ferry in New York and as we were going by the Statue of Liberty, the ferry caught on fire. They gave the distress signal, and several other ferries came to our assistance. One tied up to the back of our ferry, and we were ready to board it when they got the fire out.



Ryals wearing his Medic's arm band

Not Every Day Was Gloom and Doom



Sigfried Musho

Siegfried Musho, 79th Recon, recalls an episode that ended with a laugh.

It was in the Alsace, in the area of Berg. We were checking out roads ahead of the infantry, with a lead Jeep, armored car, and rear Jeep, looking for signs of the Krauts. We had to keep turning around because the bridges were blown. Finally, we came close to a stone wall at a crossroads.

"Tank coming," we heard from the lead Jeep. You could see the barrel of the tank's gun above the wall. I was in the armored car. I replaced the high-explosive shell in my gun with a 37 armor-piercing, figuring I could knock out the bogies on the tank—our only hope.

We sat waiting to get a shot at it. Suddenly, in a break in the wall, we could see it: out steps a man with a cow dragging a cart of furniture—with a leg sticking out on top!

The next day they sent in the 3rd Platoon, but that day did not have a humorous ending. This time the Germans were there and had the road zeroed in.

*DEDICATED TO THE MEN OF
THE INTELLIGENCE AND RECONNAISSANCE PLATOON
314TH INFANTRY REGIMENT
79TH DIVISION—WW II*

*Charles W. Farrior, 1 st Lt	** Homer T. Merrill, T/SGT	*John Q. Aven, Sgt
*Ellis Johnson, Sgt ***	*John F. Ryals, PFC, Medic	Horace M. Ryan, PFC
*Donald D. Derrow, T/5	***Earnest Sullivan, T/5	*J. Alex Lazenby, T/Sgt
*Charles R. Regan, Pvt	*Edward A. Morrison, PFC	*John J. Grasso, Pvt
*Donald Frey, Pvt	*John McNulty, PFC	*Sam Hacker, Pvt
*Gus Cocco, Pvt	*Leroy Spayd, PFC	Harry Ruderman, T/4
*Harry Stolzenberger, S/Sgt	Marvin Jenkins, Cpl	Robert M. Morgan, T/5
Marion Koslovich, Sgt	Manuel L. Rapoza, PFC	*Earnest D Repert, Cpl
Herbert Sandage, Sgt	***Raymond McGhee, T/5	*Lewis E. Hall, PFC

* Captured ** Killed *** Wounded **** OCS



MEMBERS OF THE 314TH I & R PLATOON
Somewhere in France

Back Row: Alex Lazenby, Lewis Hall, Marvin Jenkins, Marion Koslovich, John Aven, Donald Derrow
Front Row: Ellis Johnson, John McNulty, Horace (Red) Ryan, Earnest Rebert, Frank Ryals (Doc)

(Page Provided by John Frank "Doc" Ryals)



A Haunting Memory



Caryn Starkey Neff heard from her aunt this story of an experience that stayed with her Dad for the rest of his life: Otha Starkey's I & R unit had just captured a hill. Some of the unit, including him, entered a little building where they found a German soldier squatting at the back of the building. The soldier reached into his shirt. Her Dad and the men with him thought the soldier was reaching for a gun, and they shot him. When they examined the dead soldier they found that he was not drawing a gun but pulling out a picture of (what he assumed was) soldier's daughter. This incident haunted him for many years. When his first daughter was born, every time he looked into his daughter's eyes, for a long time, he thought of that soldier and his daughter.

Infantrymen as They Were: A Rare Image

A contributor (anonymous) provided this photo that he received from Norman Kellman, a BAR man in Company E—along with some explanation.

The contributor described the photo this way: "It is a rare image of the real infantryman as he actually was in combat: haggard, dirty, worn out and spent, and dinged up, but still willing to grin if given half a chance."

It was fall 1944 in Alsace, and Kellman's platoon had just emerged from a grueling stint in Hagenau Woods. Somebody found a Brownie-type camera with unexposed film in it.

On the spur of the moment, the men of the platoon decided that posterity ought to be rewarded with their picture. They deployed onto a nearby tank so everyone could be seen and done full justice.

Kellman was elected to find a way of getting the film developed if, indeed, it was any good. The only recourse he could figure was to send it through APO to Kodak in the States. In due time, however—like most front-line infantrymen—he was wounded and evacuated to England; after he had recuperated, he was deemed unfit for further combat duty and reassigned to some sup-

port outfit.

Eventually, the film, now developed and printed, came back through APO, which tracked Kellman down in England. He stowed the film and promptly forgot about it. It wasn't until after he retired many years later that he resurrected the film and decided to see if new technology could be used to enhance the negative and prints.

Above is the result.

Editor's note: Any two of them could have posed for Bill Mauldin—remember Willie and Joe?

In Memoriam
Col. Warren A. Robinson
Commanding Officer, 314th Infantry Regiment



*Your son,
B. Brick Robinson*

*Dedicated to the
Men of the 314th Infantry Regiment
and all who fought in WWII*

**Thank you for your
Service, Bravery, and Sacrifices for Our
Freedoms**



We will Never Forget

The Starkey and Neff Families

**In Memory of Your Buddy
Jim Flannery**



**Wishing you
many good
hours of
fellowship.
We know he
is with you in
spirit**

**Mrs. Herta Flannery
and Family**

**Lieutenant Colonel Leon G. James II
3rd Battalion, 314th Field Artillery,
2nd Brigade, 78th Division
December 11, 1958-October 10, 2005**



*Made the Ultimate Sacrifice
in Operation Iraqi Freedom*

Dedicated by Caryn and Mike Neff

79th Recon's Own Pistol- packin' Papa

The 79th Recon adopted its own lyrics for the *Billboard*-topping song recorded by Bing Crosby and the Andrews Sisters. Harry Farrell told the story in his book, *Recon Diary*.

When the 79th Recon Unit was back in Holland in March 1945, the men were billeted in a school building in Hoensbroek. During one noon-time chow period, a pearl-handled pistol, well-known trademark of CO Capt. Beaver, was stolen from the day room. When the captain discovered that upon return from chow, he immediately conducted a shake-down inspection, which failed to produce the weapon. Feeling that the theft might have been done by a troop member, he temporarily restricted all men to the area, confiscated pistols, and withheld cigarette rations. That didn't result in return of the pistol, and the eventual conclusion was that a Hoensbroek *burger* had performed the larceny.

The following lyrics enjoyed a brief but poignant popularity in the troop:

Eatin' chow in the ol' mess hall,
An' was they havin' fun?
But then some rat
Picked up the gat
An' took off on the run.

Chorus

Bring that pistol back, pal
Bring that pistol back.
We ain't got no passes
'Til you bring that pistol back.



Remember Training at Camp Laguna?

The White Goat, Nancy, was mascot for Company G at Camp Laguna

An unknown soldier—among tens of thousands who trained there—left a poem found by chance in the desert years later .

The Battle of Camp Laguna

**We are the boys from Camp Laguna, earning our meager pay
Guarding the people's millions for one-sixty-five a day.**

**Out in the windswept desert, Camp Laguna is the spot,
Fighting the terrible dust storms on the land that God forgot.**

**Out in the desert with rifles, eating and drinking the dust,
Doing work of a chain gang, hands blistered from washing duds.**

**And when our life is over, and we will work no more,
We'll do our final dress parade on the bright and golden shore.**

**Then Saint Peter will greet us, and suddenly will yell
Come in you boys from Camp Laguna, you've served your
time in Hell.**

The captain searched the barracks
Up an' down an' 'round.
He raised the dust
An' swore and cussed;
But the pistol wasn't found.

The captain called formation
The captain said, said he
"This is no joke
You get no smoke
Until my gun I see."

"Now turn in your pistols,
And lay 'em on the line.
I do declare,
No gun you'll wear,
Unless I carry mine."

Now the boys all work and drill
An' hike most every day
It's rough, you know
In the ETO
Since they took that gun away.

Les Fleurs de la Memoire: Thousands of French Citizens Remember

Nearly 2,500 men of the 79th Infantry Division were killed in action from June 1944 through April 1945. If those deaths occurred evenly among the three regiments, over 800 men of the 314th Infantry Regiment fell in action.

All were at least temporarily interred near their point of death. At the request of their families, many were returned for final burial in the United States; others were re-interred in one of the vast cemeteries in France, Belgium, and the Netherlands.

Host countries of those western-European cemeteries declared the land that holds them as part of the United States of America, where the soldiers, sailors, and airmen would lie in the soil of their own country. The hosts promised constant care of the grounds into perpetuity, and the quiet and tragic beauty of those fields today show that the promise has been kept.

Many 314th Regiment dead fell in the fight for Cherbourg, in the costly advances through the hedgerow country, in and after the Saint Lo break-out, and on through Normandy—objective after objective. The final resting place for an unknown number of those heroic men is in Normandy, near where they fell, at cemeteries at Colleville sur Mer and Saint James.

Throughout the six decades that have passed since the battles of 1944, millions of people have visited the cemeteries—liberated Europeans and their descendants, as well as North American families.

A significant event happened on Dec. 15, 2000 that added a sense of formality to the continuing gratitude expressed by those whom the Allies liberated from Nazi domination—in this case, French citizens in Normandy. On that mid-December day in Saint Lo, 56 years later, a group formed the association, *Les Fleurs de la Memoire* (Flowers of Remembrance). Members of the association, now more than



2,700, commit themselves—in writing—to lay flowers on the grave of a designated soldier at least once a year—preferably on the American Memorial Day. And the commitment becomes perpetual as the families are asked to pass their pledge on to their children.

As a member of *Les Fleurs de la Memoire*, each person adopts a grave to which he or she will take responsibility for at least an annual laying of flowers.

Marianne Heloin-Vanura, whose family has lived for centuries at Epone near the Seine Bridgehead, has become a close friend of veterans and families of men of the 314th Regiment. A photograph given her in 1997 by Aunt Elise Camus triggered this interest—Elise as a young woman had welcomed advance elements of the regiment when they reached Epone in securing the bridgehead in August 1944. Through Marianne, a third generation of her family later, we learned about *Les Fleurs de la Memoire* and pursued further information on rich sites of the World Wide Web (just type in the title and select among hundreds of citations).

Marianne's family illustrates the commitment association members agree

to. She and Husband Denis and Son Francois have adopted five graves at Colleville: Joseph K. Mattie, New York, 314th, KIA Aug. 29, 1944; Conrad M. Johnson, New York, 552nd Field Artillery, KIA Jul. 8, 1944; John Wittine, New York, 79th Recon, KIA Aug 9, 1944; William C. Johnson, Illinois, 106th Cavalry, KIA Aug. 29, 1944; and Alfred McPeters, Georgia, 315th, KIA Aug. 29, 1944.

Marianne's mother and father have adopted graves of two soldiers "known only to God." Denis's parents and his brother have adopted graves of two air soldiers and one from the 315th. Francois's school (for 11- to 15-year-olds) has since 2003 honored the graves of two: Stanley M. Szymark, Mississippi, 79th Recon, KIA Jul. 13, 1944 and Edward D. Brown, Ohio, 106th Cavalry, KIA Jul. 7, 1944.

At one of the Memorial Day events, the association president, Claude Lavielle, included these words in his address: "In June 1944, you came to give back to our proud country a new chance, a new hope. And yet you did know little about France, being so far from your own homeland, so far from familiar surroundings. . . . The American cemeteries of Colleville and Saint James are today hallowed ground where we come to express our gratitude. In silence, at the foot of each white marble cross and Star of David, the one who comes to meditate feels with "his" soldier. Close to him. . . . You were all so young, so full of expectations for the future, so without fear. In front of each sponsored grave, we are looking for a face. Was he white, black, or mulatto? Whatever his image, he was, undeniably, a man of honor."

The activity of *Les Fleurs de la Memoire* does not go completely unnoticed by media away from Europe. Marianne was contacted by Australian television and helped them produce a feature on the flower-laying ritual. In

November 2003, the magazine of the Veterans of Foreign Wars reported: “Despite the ongoing feud between France and America, there are still people in that country who remember American sacrifices in WWII on their behalf. The *Les Fleurs de la Memoire*, an association of [then] 1,500 French citizens based in Normandy, tends to U.S. gravesites in the cemeteries of Colleville sur Mer and Saint James.

“With our children and grandchildren, we’ll go on saluting our deserving guys,” association member Claude Lavielle wrote. ‘We’ll show them from the bottom of our hearts that we will never forget the courage and sacrifice they made for us in 1944.’”



This school class from Epone, France, (Benjamin Franklin College—for 11- to 15 year-olds) remembers the liberation of their town by 314th Regiment troops in August 1944—although they were born many decades later. Fourth from the left is Francois, son of Marianne and Denis Heloin-Vanura. Family members are active in Les Fleurs de la Memoire. Francois’s four grandparents have adopted grave sites at Colleville sur Mer and Saint James cemeteries..

Point of Interest:

Benjamin Franklin College, created by Epone residents, honors the then-American ambassador who came to their city to inaugurate the Temple of Amity. Under auspices of the King of France, the temple commemorated French support for the Colonies in the Revolutionary War



In Memory of
Sgt. Carl A. Hulsewede, Jr.
Camp Blanding, FL
December 1942
L Company
314th Infantry Regiment

Ed Sinton, top right, sent in this squad photo (1st Squad, 1st Platoon, Company I) taken on VE Day outside Witten. And he reported a little on his own experience:

“In mid-December 1944, the Battle of the Bulge cut my training short,” Sinton writes. “By Christmas 1944, I was on a troop train headed north from Camp Blanding, Florida.

“After going overseas on the luxury liner *Queen Mary* and then riding the 40-and-8 boxcars, I joined the 314th.

“I had been in combat only a few days when, going house-to-house in a village, we came upon a man in a very impressive uniform. Figuring we had a general or some other high-ranking officer, we took the man back for interrogation. He turned out to be the local postmaster.”

A Happy Squad: VE Day Outside Witten

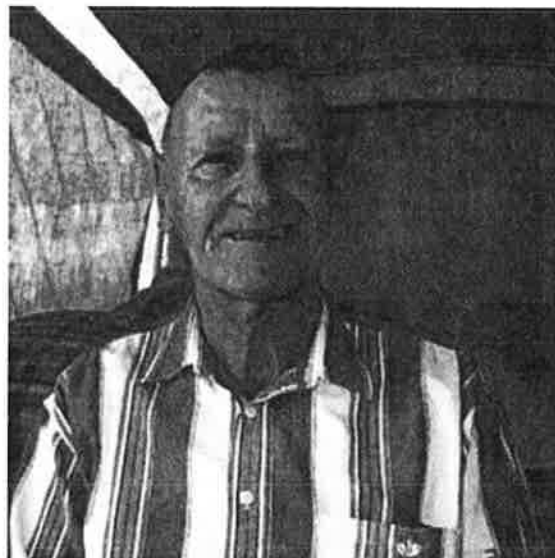


First row: A.G. (Tex) Grimmitt (squad leader), Don Fleming, George Harvey Roach, Dossie Langley; Second row: Wartrag, Roy E. Buchett, Chuck Misiaczek, Third row: William Davies (assistant squad leader), Edward Hall, Edward Sinton.

*We wish to express our love,
pride and gratitude to
Our Personal Hero*

**CSM Samuel K. Robinson, USA ret.
Husband, father, grandfather,
friend, hero**

*We love you for all you have done
and continue to do to make
our lives wonderful*



Audrey, Sandra, Karen, Ashley, Chad, Jimmy, Mike

Elsea's Story Helped Get Veterans Memorial

Edward Elsea, B Company, 314th Regiment, was featured in a newspaper story in a hometown campaign for a war memorial that has since been erected on the courthouse lawn. Here are excerpts from the reporter's article.

In 1943 Elsea worked in a factory making shoes for the government and was deferred from the draft. But he got into a row with his boss and told him he didn't want any more deferment.

The boss acted quickly. "I guess he passed the word to the draft board," Elsea says. "I was called up in January 1944." He took basic training at Camp Robinson, near Little Rock, Arkansas. After two weeks to visit home, he was on his way to fight the Germans.

The troopship took Elsea, and others, on a two-week trip to Liverpool, then a train took them across England to Portsmouth. The assault ship headed for LeHavre, dropping the troops about 100 yards off shore; from there they waded onto land. "We went into the woods and began fighting right off."

Elsea recalls that the company was loaded onto a train and rode all night. "They didn't tell us anything—only the officers. I guess they knew where we were going; I sure didn't."

The train trip took him to fight through the Siegfried Line with its rows of concrete blocks tall enough to keep tanks from plowing their way through. "We were a spearhead outfit," he said with pride. "We'd go in and drive the Germans back, be relieved, and go somewhere else to do it again. It was in the winter—cold, rain, and snow."

Elsea's battle experience ended on March 24, 1945. "We were just a mile and a half across the Rhine River. All the bridges were blown, so we had to go across on rubber rafts. Our artillery poured 3,000 rounds into the German lines before daybreak, but the Germans were dug into bunkers, and it was pretty hard to rout them out. They were still



firing in strength. We'd just crawl some, run, hide, and crawl some more."

His company was pinned down at a railroad track. "I was lying on my stomach with my hands holding my helmet, when I got hit in the hand and elbow. The Germans were using artillery, some that exploded in the air and some

on the ground. While you were trying to dodge that, you got hit by bullets."

After being wounded, Elsea spent time in a field hospital and another in England. He arrived in the States on May 30—three weeks after VJ Day.

An especially poignant part of Elsea's story involved his brother. About a month before Elsea was back in action and wounded, he was on guard duty when his lieutenant called him in. He was there when his brother walked in. The brother had been assigned to the same company but a different platoon. The sad part of the story was that the brother died in action—and Elsea didn't know that until weeks later when he got back to the States.

Summing up his story, as it was used in the paper, Elsea said: "I don't think people realize how bad war really is. People who didn't have family in a war don't realize the cost. I was lucky. At the railroad track, 13 men were killed and 17 were wounded, beside me."

We Salute Rafael (Ralph) M. Gonzales



**Soldier, Father, Grandfather
Your 5 Children, 14 Grandchildren**

*In Memory of My
Beloved Husband*

John Manza

Florence Manza, Wife

**Walter C.
Nault**



Born: May 8, 1915

At rest: May 24, 2003

Services

11:00 a.m. Thursday, May 29, 2003

Corpus Christi Church

Clergy

Rev. Anthony Birdsall

Interment

Nicolet Memorial Gardens

Louise Nault

Hagen's V-MAIL Letter Home to Sis

**Somewhere in England
Mon., Oct. 25 '44**

Have a little time this morning, so will drop a line.

Am at a different camp now and I like it much better than the others. Will be here for a while yet. Can't tell you my exact location, of course, but I'm sure you don't mind. Have visited London and found it very interesting. Took a sightseeing tour, but would like to have more time to go thru the old buildings and look them over more closely. Wrote Mother and Irene last nite before going to bed. I'll try to look up Lyle, but we don't have much time so I doubt if I'll be able to. Do you know him? He and his wife Irene are friends of Dora's.

We've been having a lot of rain lately altho the weather was grand when I arrived. Cannot tell you when or



where, of course. The rolling farmlands are very beautiful in England. Really surprising as they are actually more attractive than pictures could look.

How's Jeanne, Joyce, Johnny, and the others? Hope all are feeling fine.

Love

Your Brother Earl

PFC Earl T. Hagen, Company E, was captured at Drusenheim, January 1945, imprisoned at Stalag VIVA



**Walter C. Nault
1st Sgt. Company G**

About Awards and Decorations

Bob Kern **Company I**

Battlefield medals did at least two important things: They recognized forever valorous deeds of our fellow soldiers, and the five demobilization points each earned its receiver speeded by a few days or weeks the trip home to collect the ruptured-duck insignia.

They did something else for me; they got me off guard duty in Germany and Czechoslovakia and eventually let me trade the M1 rifle for a typewriter. Let me explain.

I joined I Company when the Division came back for replacements and rest in France after the action in the Alsace-Lorraine. I went with the outfit to Belgium, Netherlands, the Rhine crossing, across the Ruhr Valley, and into the army of occupation.

Shortly after we got to Witten—our occupation city, the platoon leader, Lt. Burggraf, called me in. He and the platoon sergeant had censored my letters for over four months, and they had tagged me as a writer. They sent me out to interview and write up award recommendations for several of the I Company troops.

Not long after that, the Company Commander's driver came for me at noon mess one day and took me to the CP Day Room—no reason given, and I was a bit shaken. The CO leaned back in his chair with award recommendations in his hands. He said, to my surprise and relief: "Boy, you're too good to be running around loose. I've read these and they are good." (I have the exact words because I quoted them in a letter to my parents.) So I did the same for the other platoons.

It wasn't exactly something new (I'd been a reporter and writer for my high school paper and also my college magazine) and, believe me, it beat walking guard posts. It finally led to an informal clerk's job in the Day Room—



The first sergeant, who had a master's degree in English, liked to talk literature; he found I could, while not many others in the company were interested.

Then my big break came in Czechoslovakia. The first sergeant answered the phone one day; it was a major from Division AG. "Who," he asked, "wrote the award recommendations for Company I?" Frank Tschnabold told him it was a PFC named Kern, and within a day I was on my way to Franzensbad on TDY: Division had a big backlog of approved recommendations that needed citations. That was July and August 1945. Three of us, all enlisted men, of course, put in 10- to 12-hour days writing the words that went into General Orders to confer each of the medals.

Any 314th Regiment guy who got his medal in July or August 1945 had about a one-in-three chance that his citation came from my typewriter.

Franzensbad was good duty. My room was in a resort hotel (with maid service), and we ate off tables with silverware, crystal stemware, and white table cloths; young women waitresses brought the best mess I had anywhere in the Army—pie almost every night and sometimes even ala mode! A string quartet played live dinner music. This was an enlisted-men's mess—almost unbelievable. I always wondered what the officers mess was like!

When they broke us up, shortly after we moved out of those tents in the wet and soggy fields near Hammelburg, I was then a T-5. I volunteered for a clerk's job in GI in Gen. Patton's 3rd Army headquarters. HQ was based at Bad Tolz, south of Munich, and before long I was again writing citations! It was nearly 11 months before I got out—maybe my own bronze star helped that come a little early. By that time, though, I'd gone to T-3 and given up the old rifleman MOS for a 502, administrative NCO—just in case I was ever pulled back into the army. The medal and the really valued award, Combat Infantryman's Badge, had left memories I had no wish to live again.

A Look on the Light Side **—Now that it's Just a Memory**

It wasn't funny that spring morning in 1945, but time lightens the memory. Somewhere in the Ruhr Valley, out in the open country, 3rd Squad, 3rd Platoon, Company I, encountered a forced-labor camp. The guards had fled the day before, leaving their prisoners who ranged from near-death to some with reasonable health.

We were greeted with great joy, and they pulled some bottles from the cache of schnaaps they had distilled from, apparently, inedible food refuse. They poured generous shots, two fingers in glass tumblers. Eleven of the 12 men in the squad joined in the toast and downed the libation. A tectotaler myself—at the time—I joined the toast in pretense with lips-closed. Instead of drinking it, I filled my Zippo lighter—it burned much better than the gas we took from Jeep tanks.

We started on along the road and were held up. Within minutes, 11 GIs were asleep in the ditches and snoring loudly. As the only one awake, all I could do was play with the radio; it picked up only German voices.

After a while, the guys woke up sober, and we got orders to move out!

—Bob Kern, Company I

Salute to our Generous Donors

The following persons and organizations made financial contributions to the 60th Reunion over and above their fees for registration and memorials.

Bahorski, Eugene
Balter, David
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Robinson, Brick
Robinson, Samuel
Ruth, L E
Ryals, Frank
Slack, Phil
SC Dept. of Agr. (Arthur Dukes)
Stanford, Bill
Starkey, Lois and Michael
Stella, Nicholas
Stinton, Edward
Taschler, Anthony
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Thank You

Our Photo Album

60th Reunion

314th Infantry Regiment
79th Reconnaissance Troop



***Photographs submitted by members
especially for this Reunion Booklet***

I & R Platoon of the 314th Infantry



Left to right: Shaver, Beauléo, Ryan, Sullivan, Martin, Cleaver, Maloney, Hill, Markarian, Jenkins, Beck



Barras, Morgan, Shaver, Maloney, Beauléo, Markarian, Beck, Colleran, Sullivan, Ryan, Hall, Jenkins, "Doc" Bolden

More I & R Platoon

East of the Rhine

Standing: Cleaver

Prone: Colleran



East of the Rhine

Jenkins, Colleran, Shaefer

Left to right:

Markarian, Bealeo,
Martin



Groups



Phil Slack (he didn't say where he stood) and some of his buddies

Somewhere In Germany on May 1945



From left:

**Forbes
Kremer
Slack**



More Groups

Fox Company

Left to right:

Back row: ?, Decken, ?, Meyer,
Glaze, Anderson, Lobb

Second row: McMinn, ?, Boes

First row: Tomesetti, ?, Justice,
?, Tucker, Dalby

(Photo submitted by W.J. Boes)

Regimental Personnel Section Eastern France, Fall 1944

(Photo submitted by Gilbert
Winkler, third from left)



Providence, Rhode Island
April 15, 1944

John Cassie, Neal Stoltz, Harry
Fallen, Harold W. Spooner, Jack
Brandenburg, Carlton Kelly



Some men of First Battalion HQ—at the Coal Baron's house in Czechoslovakia, 1945

From right, bottom step: Bn Exec Officer (name indecipherable), Halligan, S-1, Doc Moore, surgeon, and nameless "Me," who sent photo

From Days at Camp Phillips, KS



Front row, from left: Martin Windhorst, Stringer, and J. J. Witmeyer
Top row: Jesse Burns, Sandy Ferguson



A Foursome in France: August 1944
From left, Shelton, DeLong, Flannery, and Hambrouh



Left to right: Jos. B. Drake, Melvin N. Spiker, Dave W. Mallin, and Glendon W. Voorhees
(Spiker, KIA LaHaye; Drake KIA Fontenoy)



Tennessee Manuevers:
In front, Martin Windhorst and J. J. Witmeyer



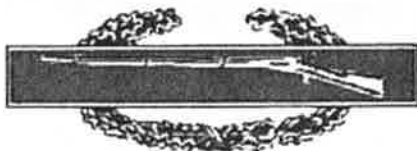
Wire crew at Dortmund, May 1945
From left, Raymond Beckman, Jeep driver, Sam Barnett, and Orville Goldsworth



Leon Tartes and McManner,
79th Recon Troop



Brown, unidentified, and Anderson





Montana Section—Camp Blanding, FL



Barker, Caudill, Oatman



Above, Kilcullen, Penkovich, Mike HQ G5

Left, Camp Blanding, September 1942

PHOTOGRAPH BY [unreadable]

Individual Shots of Some Buddies



Leonard Paul Baublitz, F Co.



Alfred Lewandowski, E Co.



Herbert Hall, Bty B, 310th FA



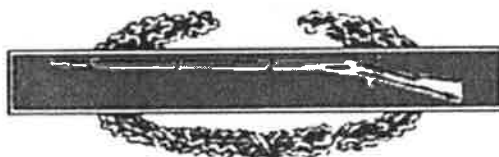
Phil Slack, Anti-tank Co.



George Bredesen, Jr., K Co.



Col Robinson, Regimental CO





Edward Pennington



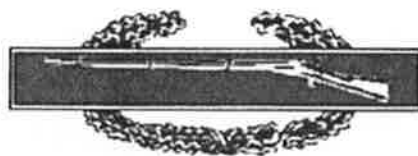
Bill Colleran, I & R Platoon



Glendon Voorhees, B Co.



T/Sgt Bob Deese





Top row, from left:
Caudill, Sgt. Williams, and
Norman Kellman, Co. E

Below: Thurman Larson



Right:
Pvt. Gastyle

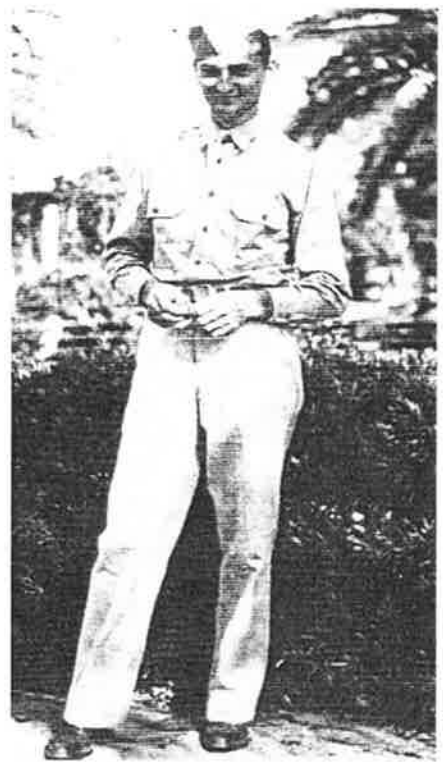




Charles L. Clark



Penkovich



S/Sgt. Gay W. Tomay, Service Co. at Camp Blanding

Below: Walter George, L Co.



At left: James Mach



Some Other Memories

**The Meuffels Family
Luth, Limburg, Netherlands**

**The family Edward Sinton's
unit was billeted with when we
trained to cross the Rhine**

(Submitted by Sinton)



**Displaced Persons freed when
we occupied Witten-Ruhr
The GI in the middle is
William Davies; Sinton is
under the helmet far right**

**(Photo submitted by
Edward Sinton)**

Some Closing Thoughts

Caryn Starkey Neff—daughter of Otha Starkey, now deceased, a veteran of combat with the 314th Infantry Regiment—gathered the stories and photos that comprise this 60th Reunion Book. She penned these closing thoughts:

My thanks to all who contributed to this book. Most of all, thank you to all the men and women who were part of the World War II effort.

What would things be like now if the men from the “Greatest Generation” had turned their backs when mankind needed them most? None of us knows what the answer would be, but we can be sure that the outcome would not be a positive one for freedom-loving people, our United States of America.

After the war, the greatest generation came home, asking for no recognition; they submersed themselves in growing and nurturing their families, building their lives, and contributing to a stronger America—keeping to themselves what they had experienced, not wanting their families to know the horrors of war.

In asking for no recognition for the sacrifices they made, we know those same sacrifices are slowly being forgotten. Our freedom is taken for granted. Thus, the reason for this book.

If this book makes an impression on half of the youth who read it, those who gave their young years, and those who gave their lives, to conquer Nazism will never be forgotten. One of the greatest events in history will not be forgotten.

We know that history repeats itself. If we do not understand our past and learn from it, we will never enjoy a future of freedom, a future void of Nazism, fascism, socialism or tyranny.

Someone said once, “Freedom is Not Free.” If we have learned nothing else from history, it is that. We must always stand vigilant to protect those who cannot stand and fight for themselves and to protect our own freedoms, just as did the men who fought in World War II.

In order for this United States of America to have a free and bright future, we must never forget our past nor the men who believe our freedoms were, and are, worth fighting for!

God bless America, and God bless the “Greatest Generation!”

Caryn Starkey Neff

Table of Contents

Recalling Action, Willie Leroy Kemmerlin	1	Memorial to Kenneth Hall	35
Memorial to Men of Company I	2	From Bragg to Berchtesgaden (813 th TD Bn)	36
Memorial to Willie Kemmerlin	3	Eulogy for Don Carl Cites Heroic Service	37
Memorial to Sam Barnett	4	Memorial to Don Carl	37
My Time With the 79 th . Jan Joosten	5	Memorial to Fred Hnatov	38
Memorial to Robert Deese	6	I & R Medic Recalls. Frank Ryals	39
The Seine River Bridgehead	7		
Also at the Seine. Robert Dove, et al.	11	Not Every Day Was Gloom and Doom.	
Search for Family. M. Aubril	13	Sigfried Musho	40
Memorial to James McBride	14	Memorial to 314 th I & R Platoon	41
		Infantrymen as They Were: A Rare Image	42
Capture of the 813 th TD Battalion, Thomson	15	Memorial to Col. Robinson	43
Pete Swan Also Remembers Drusenheim	16	Memorial to Men of the 314 th	44
Epstein Recalls a Visitor	16	Memorial to Jim Flannery	44
Recalling Time With the 79 th Division. Ray Farrell	17	Memorial to Leon James, II (KIA Iraq 2005)	44
Memorial to the Farrells	18	79 th Recon's Own Pistol-packing Papa	45
Foley Writes of Heavy Action	19	Remember Training at Camp Laguna?	45
Blowing Up Big German Gun. John Wright	19	<i>Les Fleurs de la Memoire</i> –French	
Dick Yates Recalls a Night in France	19	Citizens Remember	46
Witmeyer Recounts Some History: NORDWIND	20	Memorial to Carl Hulsewede, Jr.	47
Memorial to Thais Witmeyer	21	VE Day Outside Witten. Ed Sinton	48
		Memorial to Sam Robinson	48
Robinson Remembers Kindness. Sam Robinson	22	Elsea's Story Helped Get Veterans Memorial	49
Stories of a Regimental Wireman. Joe Campbell	23	Memorial to Ralph Gonzales	49
Memorial to Bill Parker	25	Memorial to John Manza	50
Let's Hear it for the Second Generation	25	Memorial to Walter Nault	50
Remembrances of a Medic. Elliott Lichtenstein	26	Hagen's V-MAIL Letter Home to Sis.	
Snook Remembers First Night in England	26	Earl Hagen	50
Alsace and Across the Rhine. Ernie Piekunka	27	About Awards and Decorations. Bob Kern	51
Two Fox Company Buddies. Jerry Mongeon	28	A Look on the Light Side. Bob Kern	51
What I Remember. Ralph Gonzales	31	Salute to Our Generous Donors	52
Memorial to Keith Noren	31		
Memorial to Joe Campbell	31	Our Photo Album: 60 th Reunion	53
Memorial to Jack Little	32	I & R Platoon	54
Memorial to Otha Starkey	33	Groups	56
Memorial to Willie Kemmerlin	33	From Days at Camp Phillips, KS	58
Chaplains of the 314 th	34	Individual Shots	61
Newspaper Tells Taschler's War Memories	35	Some Other Memories	65
		Some Closing Thoughts. Caryn Starkey Neff	66

Acknowledgments

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Merle Kemmerlin Buck, who with Lucky Buck, played the vast and sometimes frantic role as hosts for this gathering. Her announcements to the association mailing list carried the invitations to submit stories, pictures, and memorials for the booklet. **Caryn Starkey Neff** took the responsibility for preparation of the booklet, accepting stories and pictures that came to her, as well as those received by Merle and forwarded to Caryn. Both Merle and Caryn are second-generation members, daughters of deceased veterans of the 314th Infantry Regiment.

Bob Kern, a replacement rifleman in Company I, took on the editorial and production functions, formatting the stories and memorials into the pages of this booklet. A career journalist, writer, and communication consultant, he ignored the philosophy engrained in most GIs of WW II: "Never hurry, never worry, *never volunteer*." Still, it was a marvelous experience to relate again to those long, long ago days of our military service.

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