

BLUE RIDGE

The Service Magazine
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Summer - 2004
Issue 2



Official Publication of the
80th Division Veterans Association, Inc.

A. E. F.
Artois-Picardy
St. Mihiel
Meuse-Argonne

E. T. O.
Northern France
Ardennes
Rhineland
Central Europe

God Bless America

**The World War II Memorial
Washington, DC**



Deadline for the next issue is September 1, 2004



Eightieth Division
Veterans Association

BLUE RIDGE
The Service Magazine

The official quarterly publication by the 80th Division Veterans Association.
 (Incorporated as a not-for-profit organization in the State of Pennsylvania).

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All communications, including articles, photos, news items for publication, changes of address, dues remittances and death notices should be addressed to the Secretary/Editor.

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2 Years

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Robert J. McDonald (C-319)

3 Years

Gerald V. Myers (G-317)

Laverne J. Schock (F-317)

Tom Pappas (F-318)

Commander's REPORT



*T*ime is moving rapidly along, so this is just a reminder to all who have not already made their plans to send in your reservations for our 85th Annual Reunion in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Senior Vice Commander Marvin Spencer with able assistance from Clarence and Naomi Brockman are making great plans for our reunion at the Pittsburgh Airport Wyndham Hotel from August 10-15. Sign up now and we will all look forward to visiting with comrades and enjoying another wonderful reunion in August.

It's been a busy winter and spring. I returned to Georgia in early March. A few weeks later, Sybil and I attended the Florida Post 47 meeting in Melbourne. I took the opportunity to make a side visit with Dr. Dick Bobb and his wife Elma at their home in Ormond Beach. It was a great opportunity to visit with old friends and relax in the Florida sun. We returned to California in late April and I had a partial knee replacement on May 3rd. The recovery takes time, but we are still planning on visiting Luxembourg in June for the many activities planned as part of the 60th anniversary celebration of the Battle of the Bulge. All who have attended this annual event are most impressed by the dedication and friendship of the Luxembourg people. The U S Veterans Friends Committee sponsors these activities. This will probably be the last celebration for most WWII Veterans and we are especially happy to have the participation of the 80th Division (IT) Color Guards, Major General Dollar, and other members of the 80th Division (IT).

As discussed in my last Commander's Report, I am still trying to obtain permission to import a dogwood tree, which is the State Tree of West Virginia to France. I received this request from French Army Captain Michel Mathieu who would like to plant this tree as a memorial to Pvt. Robert Horner of the 317th Regiment. The dogwood tree would be planted at the location of the foxhole where Pvt. Horner's body was found 57 years after the end of WW II. I have received some help from Senator Byrd office in West Virginia, but still have some bureaucratic paperwork to accomplish. Hope to be able to accomplish this before I leave for Luxembourg on June 16th.

Sybil and I are looking forward to seeing everyone at the Pittsburgh reunion in August.

Good Luck and God Bless All of You.

Archer H. Futch

National Commander

Life Plus Club 2003-2004

If you sent in money and I omitted your name let me know so I may give you credit. Last date of entry 6/1/2004

Annon	I-318
Barthold, Walter	80th Signal
Bowman, Mrs. Betty in memory of her Husband Henry	80th QM
Costley, Bill	C-319

Frey, Earl. B.	E-317
Kibbe, Cecilia Mrs.	?-317
Merritt, Kerry G.	F-319
Nicoll, William O.	780th Ord
Pflederer, Robert H.	Cn 319
Reilinger, Eric	Hqs 3d Bn 317
Stuart, Dr. D.D.	B-305 Med Bn
Tagmeyer, Nathan L.	B-319
Wohlert, Marshall	K-317

McBRIDE SCHOLARSHIP FUND

If you paid into the McBride Fund since the last issue and I have omitted your name, send me your name so I can give you credit. Last date I entered a name was 6/1/2004

Buscarini, Fred,
Sect., Dv Hq & Dv Hqs Co.
Post # 39 Closing down
Nicoll, William O. 780th Ord
Watson, Charles H. 319th Med Det

The Lincoln Community Foundation has selected Jon Oswald as the second recipient of the 80th Division Association-General Horace McBride Scholarship for 2004-2005.

Jon will receive a scholarship of Five Hundred Dollars (\$500) which will be made payable to University of Nebraska-Lincoln in support of his education during the upcoming academic year.

Jon is the class valediction at Madison High School and is actively involved in many extracurricular ac-

tives including one-act plays, cross-country and golf. He is a member of the Skills-USA VICA program, a national organization serving high school and college students and professional members enrolled in training programs in technical, skilled and service occupations. Jon has been involved in video productions through his membership in VICA and has received national recognition for his projects. Jon has also qualified at the local, District, state and national levels in the National History Day competition.

Jon is a worthy recipient of this award and we are sure that he will be very successful in his college endeavors.

Thank you for making this scholarship possible for deserving high school students. Jon will be very appreciative of this award.

*Signed, Debra Shoemaker,
Director of Program
and Distribution*

Secretary's REPORT

FAX: (412) 828-7651

NEW "E" MAIL ADDRESS: divinf801@verizon.net

*I wish to thank all of you who **didn't** heed my "change of address" request when you move. Thanks again, for the money you have cost the Association when I received your change of address from the Post Office. When you don't receive your *Blue Ridge*, blame yourself! **This is the last time I am asking for you to send in your new address.** If you don't care, why should I. I am thinking seriously of removing the line "Address Service Requested". Then I will save all the money you have cost the Association, then you won't get the Newsletter.*

Also, once again all correspondence should be addressed to the *Secretary*, it only delays your answer when you send it someone else.

Over Memorial Day several of the men, both officers and others from the 80th, attended the dedication of the WW II Memorial. If you will write me, telling you were there, with your impression, I will publish it in the next issue of the Newsletter. I know some of you like myself, were unable to attend for whatever reason and I'm sorry we had to miss it.

*Good judgement comes from experience,
and a lot of that comes from bad judgement.*

~ WILL ROGERS

Welcome New Members

Bifani, Victor ?-319
2 Aldersgate Apt 1020
Riverhead, NY 11901
347-204-8349

Cossmann, Harry 80th Signal
3121 W. Coast Hwy Apt 6B
Newport Beach, CA 92663

Furguele, Guy A-317
3154 E. Lake Crescent Dr.
Kingwood, TX 77339

Linhart, Robert W.
15781 Broadway Ave
Maple Heights, OH 44137-2516

Reifsnyder, Norman W. ?-319
5729 Mount Pleasant Road
Bernville, PA 19506-8208

Rittiger, Dick Cn-319
224 Alivies Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15210

Schaefer, Carole A. E-318
Friend
8621 Creekside Lane
Darie, IL 60561

Slifer, Joseph P. AT-317
1009 Cherrytree Crossing
Breinigsville, PA 18031-1609

MAIL BAG

I have received word that Rodolphe Fabre has lost his wife on 3 February 2004. Our Sympathy is with the family... Received a letter from Ray Dumraufs daughter that Ray had surgery on his knee but infection had set in and it he had to have a Puck in and he was sent to a nursing home to recuperate. He is to see the surgeon and find if they can install the new replacement. She said he had sent in his money for the reunion... Bill Krehbiel, L-319 writes that he now has the *History of the 80th Division in WW I* originally written by Russell L. Stultz finished and in print. I have the book and it is well written and those of you who are interested in the 80th in WW I should have a copy. Contact Bill Krehbiel 921 Ridge Drive Halstead, KS 67056-2138... John T. Wetting of 436 Swan Circle, Elsmere, KY 41018-1940, is requesting the help of anyone who knew S/Sgt. Elmer F. Muller, Cleveland, OH, the city where he was inducted in 1942. We both shipped out of Tullahoma to HQ Co. 2nd Bn. 422nd Inf, 106th Infantry Division at Fort Jackson, SC. I have often wondered what happened to him and thought someone in the 80th might know what happened to him... Drue C. Wilson Company A 319th would like to contact anyone who was transferred from the 70th Division on 27 Dec. 1944. He took basic in Camp Adair, Orand Ft Leonard Wood Mo. Also would like to contact any member of A-319, that remembered an incident that happened when we crossed the Sauer River and was cut off for three days, I believe at Wallendorf. Also who remembers The Platoon Leader from SC, who was shot in the groin, I was the man who evacuated him along with four German POWs... Gary Matthews, 699 Covered Bridge Drive, Madison, WI, now finds that his father Sgt. Frank W. Matthews was in K-319, anyone who remembers him please write... From Douglas Rice, 630 Great Country Estates Road, Hawesville, KY 42348, Tel-270-927-6085-E-mail m.douglas.rice@txgt.com, I am trying to collect personal stories of men who served with my father's cousin Sgt. George William Edge, 319th Inf. KIA on 11/26/1944. I would appreciate any stories you are willing to share.... Mrs. Eleanor Schonely (80th Rcn) fell on April 11 and broke her hip. He is now in a rehab. Too bad she is going to miss the reunion. She had looked forward to coming. Send her a card at Comprehensive Health, 2055 Palmetto Street, Clearwater, FL 33765.

More help wanted

I am writing on behalf of my father Eugene Killian, Sr. whose brother, Edward P. Killian served in the 80th signal Corps of the 80th Division during WW II.

Eddie was killed in an Auto accident in October 1948. I am writing to ask if anyone of the Signal Corps has any remembrance of him. I would like to know of what duties he had and where he was.

Anyone with information may write Eugene Killian, Jr. 77 Brant Avenue, Suite 115, Clark, NJ 07066

Reunion News for 2005

While it may be a bit ahead of schedule, the Reunion Chairman wishes for you to have this information for next years Reunion.

It's not too early for you to be thinking and planning for our reunion in Columbus, OH in 2005. The Columbus Merriott North will be the location of the 2005 Reunion, August 24-27, 2005 is the dates to remember and plan for. The Hotel will honor the \$78.00 Room rate, 3 days prior and 3 days after.

We plan for your stay in Columbus, OH to be one to remember so-o-o-o, circle your calendar in RED on the dates of 24, 25, 26, 27 August 2005. We will be looking for you.

Walt Spandler, 2nd Vice Chairman

P.S. You people who live West and Northwest will be closer to the Reunion in 2006. Greenbay, WI. Will be the place.

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

WE ARE AGGRESSIVELY SEEKING ARTIFACTS & MEMORABILIA for display purposes during the up-coming 80th Division Reunion in Pittsburgh. WWII era and later objects from the 80th Division are especially welcomed. If you have an item you are willing to loan, donate, or sell to the Descendants, please contact us: bcsmith@80thdescendants.com



Lee S. Anthony, Sr., Commander
Visit us at our website: www.80thdescendants.com

Looking forward to the 85th Reunion of the 80th Division Veterans Association in Pittsburgh. Please stop by to see our displays.

TAPS

Best, Sandford 1987 Centurion Dr Apt 404 Pittsburgh, PA 15221-4600 Rptd by Bob Murrell	M-318	Gular Lawrence 526 Broadway Avenue Sellersville, PA 18960-2560 Rptd by wife Emma	80th RCN 5/12/2004
Borders, K.M. 5951 Davidsburg Road Dover, PA 17315-4036	80th Rcn 12/18/2003	Heinemann, Harry N. Jr. 1319 McIndoe Street Wausau, WI 54403 Rptd by wife Virginia	Hq Co 319 8/9/2003
Brassil, Patrick 2509 Kensington Westchester, IL 60154 Rptd by Hank Einolf	L-319 3/19/2004	Klinar, Henry J. 2769 Richland Street Johnsontown, PA 15904-1823 10/26/2003	633 AAA AW Bn
Clark, Ralph 9305 Casade Road SE Ada, MI 49301-9337 Rptd by Kay S. Huyser	G-319 4/10/2004	Kuzuoka, Frank Jr. 652 Ettick Court Folsom, CA 95630-3706 Postal return marked Deceased	K-319 Unknown
Coulter, Warren L 118 Woods Road New Port News, VA 23601-2222 2/3/2004 Rptd by Daughter	?-319	Lenwell, Max F. 2749 S. 600 E. Pierceton, IN 46562 Rptd By Byron Dovenbarger	C-305 Eng 4/15/2004
Craviotto, Charles C. 999 Winther Way Santa Barbara, CA 93110 Rptd by wife Georgetta	K-319 2/25/2004	Neri, Carman 3804 Brookview Road Philadelphia, PA 19154-4215 Rptd by Son Michael	C-633rd AAA AW 12/29/2003
Davis James A. P.O. Box 1094 Tappahannock, VA 22560-1094 Rptd by Wife Margaret	H-318 5/4/2004	Leslie, A. T. 103 Sunshine Way Westminster, MD 21157-4618 Rptd by wife	SV-318 11/3/2003
Engelke, Louis B. 307 W. Hathaway Drive San Antonio, TX 78209-6424 Rptd by Max Schmidt	80th MP 6/1/2004	Schaeffer, Richard No Address given Rptd by J. Givens Young	L-319 12/31/2003
Fussell, Robert L. 4994 County Road 141 Ider, AL 35981-3318 Rptd by M. Brockman	F-319 12/22/03	Schleslinger, Forest Unit unknown PO Box 291 Woolrich, PA 17779 Rtpd by Daughter Dora	2/8/2004
Gomez, Nicholas L. 99 Clifton Terrace Apt 1A Weehawen, NJ 07086-7088 Rptd by Bob McDonald	C/1st Bn Hq 319 1/17/2003	Slowinski, Joseph A. 5853 W. 64th Place Chicago, IL 60638-5417 Rptd by Daughter Dawn	B-318 1/19/2004

Smith, James O. Huntington, PA 1/19/200 No Survivors Rptd by Estate	D-319
Swain, William Grant (Lt.) Unit Unknown 413 Harper Dr Monroeville, PA 15146-1235 3/23/2004 Newspaper Obit Rptd by Victor DiCarlo	
Torrence, Bert V. 3519 Delmar Drive Erie, PA 16506 Rptd by his wife Betty.	A-319 3/3/2004
Whitfield, Charles 7275 N 700 W Carthage, IN 46115-9463 7/25/03 Rptd by Wife Shirley	C-317
Whitlow, Delbert T. 247 Johnson Road Pelzer, SC 29669 Rptd by his daughter Patricia	B-318 5/15/2004
Wilson, Delmar 5739 N. State Route 78 NW Mc Connesville ,OH 43756-9752 Rptd by Bryon Dovenbarger	C-305 Eng 4/11/2004
Young, Richard H. 22251 Covello Street Canoga Park, CA 91303-1036 Rptd by Wife Faye	E-317 2/21/2004
Young, Russell J. 3424 Cameron Lane Toledo, OH 43623-1864 Postal return marked Deceased	C-315 FA Bn ?/2004
Yonchek, Joseph A. 2062 Brill Street Philadelphia, PA 19124 Rptd by son Paul	780th Ord 3/20/2004
Zellner, George D. 23 The Hideout Lake Ariel, PA 18436-9765 Rptd by Heather Field	A-314 FA Bn 11/8/2002

Purple Hearts

The Purple Heart is an American decoration, the oldest military decoration in the world in present use and the first American award available to the common soldier.

Fact: It was initially created as the Badge of Military Merit by one of the world's most famed and best, loved heroes, Gen. George Washington.

Fact: The Purple Heart is awarded to members of the armed forces of the United States wounded by an instrument of war in the hands of the enemy, and posthumously to the next of kin, in the name of those who are killed in action or die of wounds received in action.

Fact: It is specifically a combat decoration. To qualify for the Purple Heart, one of the following conditions must be met.

1. Injury caused by enemy bullet, shrapnel or other projectile created by enemy action.
2. Injury caused by enemy placed mine or trap.
3. Injury caused by enemy released chemical, biological or nuclear agent.
4. Injury caused by vehicle or aircraft accident resulting from enemy fire.
5. Concussion injuries caused as a result of enemy, generate explosions.

The above information can be found at www.purpleheart.org. Nowhere does it say you must be admitted to a hospital for your having been wounded.

Tomb of the Unknown Soldier

SENT IN BY GERALD V. MYERS G-317

On Monday, May 3rd, 2004, I escorted by my son, LTC Philip Keenan Abbott to place a Wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery. The attached Banner reads; "80th Division, 317th Infantry Regiment, Company H." We were escorted by a Sgt. of the Old Guard, and members of the Old Guard, honor guard. At the conclusion of the ceremony there were taps played.

On the same day we went to the WW 11 Memorial in the Mall between the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial, a truly beautiful and meaningful tribute to our comrades.

I have pictures of these events, and will bring them to Pittsburgh, PA in August for our reunion.

Sincerely, Francis W. Abbott, 317th, Co. H

Interesting facts about the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and the Sentinels of the Third United States Infantry Regiment "Old Guard"

1. **How many steps does the guard take during his walk across the tomb of the Unknowns and why?** 21 steps. It alludes to the twenty-one gun salute, which is the highest honor given any military or foreign dignitary.
2. **How long does he hesitate after his about face to begin his return walk and why?** 21 seconds for the same reason as answer number 1.
3. **Why are his gloves wet?** His gloves are moistened to prevent his losing his grip on the rifle.
4. **Does he carry his rifle on the same shoulder all the time, and if not, why not?** No, he carries the rifle on the shoulder away from the tomb. After his march across the path, he executes an about face, and moves the rifle to the outside shoulder.
5. **How often are the guards changed?** Guards are changed every thirty minutes, twenty-four hours a day, 365 days a year.
6. **What are the physical traits of the guard limited to?** For a person to apply for guard duty at the tomb he must be between 5' 10" and 6' 2" tall and his waist size cannot exceed 30".

Other requirements of the Guard:

They must commit 2 years of life to guard the tomb, live in a barracks under the tomb, and cannot drink any alcohol on or off duty FOR THE REST OF THEIR LIVES. They cannot swear in public FOR THE REST OF THEIR LIVES and cannot disgrace the uniform {fighting} or the tomb in any way.

After TWO YEARS, the guard is given a wreath pin that is worn on their lapel signifying they served as guard of the tomb. There are only 400 presently worn. The guard must obey these rules for the rest of their lives or give up the wreath pin.

The shoes are specially made with very thick soles to keep the heat and cold from their feet. There are metal heel plates that extend to the top of the shoe in order to make the loud click as they come to a halt. There are no wrinkles, folds or lint on the uniform. Guards dress for duty in front of a full-length mirror.

The first SIX MONTHS of duty a guard cannot talk to anyone, nor watch TV. All off duty time is spent studying the 175 notable people laid to rest in Arlington National Cemetery. A guard must memorize who they are and where they are interred. Among the notables are: President Taft, Joe E. Lewis {the boxer} and Medal of Honor winner Audie Murphy, {the most decorated soldier of WWII} of Hollywood fame. Every guard spends FIVE HOURS A DAY getting his uniforms ready for guard duty.

The Sentinels Creed: My dedication to this sacred duty is total and wholehearted. In the responsibility bestowed on me never will I falter. And with dignity and perseverance my standard will remain perfection. Through the years of diligence and praise and the discomfort of the elements, I will walk my tour in humble reverence to the best of my ability. It is he who commands the respect I protect. His bravery that made us so proud. Surrounded by well meaning crowds by day alone in the thoughtful peace of night, this soldier will in honored glory rest under my eternal vigilance.

The Third Infantry Regiment at Fort Myer has the responsibility for providing ceremonial units and honor guards for state occasions, White House social functions, public celebrations and interments at Arlington National Cemetery and standing a very formal sentry watch at the Tomb of the Unknowns.

The public is familiar with the precision of what is called “walking post” at the Tombs. There are roped off galleries where visitors can form to observe the troopers and their measured step and almost mechanically silent rifle shoulder changes. They are relieved every hour in a very formal drill that has to be seen to be believed.

Some people think that when the Cemetery is closed to the public in the evening that this show stops. First, to the men who are dedicated to this work, it is no show. It is a “charge of honor.” The formality and precision continues uninterrupted all night. During the nighttime, the drill of relief and the measured step of the on duty sentry remain unchanged from the daylight hours. To these men, these special men, the continuity of this post is the key to the honor and respect shown to these honored dead, symbolic of all American unaccounted for American combat dead. The steady rhythmic step in rain, sleet, snow, hail, heat, cold, must be uninterrupted. Uninterrupted is the important part of the honor shown.

Recently, while you were sleeping, the teeth of hurricane Isabel came through this area and tore hell out of everything. We had thousands of trees down, power outages, traffic signals out, roads filled with downed limbs and “gear adrift” debris. We had flooding and the place looked like it had been the impact area of an off shore bombardment.

The Regimental Commander of the U.S. Third Infantry sent word to the nighttime Sentry Detail to secure the post and seek shelter from the high winds, to ensure their personal safety. THEY DISOBEYED THE ORDER!

During winds that turned over vehicles and turned debris into projectiles, the measured step continued. One fellow said “I’ve got buddies getting shot at in Iraq who would kick my butt if word got to them that we let them down. I sure as

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

FARÉBERSVILLER

BY JEFF WIGNALL

Farébersviller. That's the French spelling—with a little thing over the first “é” that we don't have on our typewriters. The German spelling is *Pfarrebersweiler*, and it was a German town until the end of WWI when the provinces of Alsace and Lorraine became French again, sounds the same, but can make it confusing to look up in an atlas or encyclopedia. The bigger problem is that it's not likely to be found in either.

Farbersville—as we Americanize it—is not a large town, even today at easily twice the size it was at the end of 1944 when the 80th Division arrived there; too small to appear on any but very large scale local maps. The town lies in a shallow valley about five miles east of St. Avold, straddling a key railway line and road running southeast to northwest, roughly paralleling the constantly shifting French-German border in that region. The old section of the town remains much as it was then, with most of the growth since to the northwest of the road, toward Theding.

Many of the men of the 80th's 317th and 318th regiments who were at Farebersviller probably never knew the name of the town, or quickly forgot it in the blur of names of similar crossroad towns they passed through, sometimes three or four in a single day. Some may have picked it up from scuttlebutt; a few might have caught sight of a signpost along the way. To most it was probably just another town over another hill.

'TOMB OF THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER' CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

hell have no intention of spending my Army career being known as the damned idiot who couldn't stand a little light breeze and shirked his duty.” Then he said something in response to a female reporter's question regarding silly purposeless personal risk.... “I wouldn't expect you to understand. It's an enlisted man's thing.” God bless the rascal... In a time in our nation's history when spin and total b.s. seem to have become the accepted coin-of-the-realm, there beat hearts—the enlisted hearts we all knew and were so damn proud to be a part of—that fully understand that devotion to duty is not a part time occupation. While we slept, we were represented by some damn fine men who fully understood their post orders and proudly went about their assigned responsibilities unseen, unrecognized and in the finest tradition of the American Enlisted Man. Folks, there's hope. The spirit that George S. Patton, Arliegh Burke and Jimmy Doolittle left us... survives.

On the ABC evening news, it was reported recently that, because of the dangers from Hurricane Isabel approaching Washington DC, the military members assigned the duty of guarding the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier were given permission to suspend the assignment. They refused. “No way, Sir!” Soaked to the skin, marching in the pelting rain of a tropical storm, they said that guarding the Tomb was not just an assignment; it was the highest honor that can be afforded to a service person. The tomb has been patrolled continuously, 24/7, since 1930. Very, very proud of our soldiers in uniform!

Charlie Pillinger, 3rd Bn. HQ, never forgot Farebersviller (or Mount St. Jean, but he has left us that story elsewhere). Harry Nutting, I Company, was wounded there, and remembers it still, as I'm sure do a good many others who certainly remember the place if not the name.

Both of them were with the 3rd Bn., 317th, when it advanced into the town on the cold, rainy 28th of November 1944, and were cut off when the German counterattack forced the regiment to pull back.

Elements of the 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Div., and 38th SS Regt. entrenched in Farebersviller were driven out by the 3rd Bn., by late afternoon. However, the Germans struck back, and had re-taken the eastern side of the town by 2000. The 3rd Bn. had been fighting from house-to-house since nightfall. The 2nd had moved on to the high ground north of the town.

Counterattacks against the 317th positions continued through the night.

By the next morning the 3rd Bn. was still engaged, and under tank and artillery fire. The 2nd Bn. fought off two counterattacks to the north, on hill 316, while the 1st Bn. continued to hold the high ground south of the town against small arms fire.

Due to the intensity of the German resistance the 317th was pulled back to a reserve position later in the day (2330), and the 318th ordered to resume the attack on the following day, but early the next morning Division HQ called for a delay until the situation could be better understood. Artillery fire continued in both directions throughout the day, and the cold and wet weather continued.

The weather finally cleared, and on 2 Dec. Field Order No.19 was issued at 1300 to "attack the high ground NE of Farebersviller on 4 Dec with 1 regiment (318) reinforced." This was to be a limited objective attack in conjunction with an overall XII Corps move eastward to position itself for an advance through the legendary Seigfreid Line and on into Germany itself. The 80th was in the Farebersviller area not for any strategic purpose other than that was its position in the allied front line stretching from the North Sea to Switzerland poised to sweep into Germany and end the war "by Christmas." The German forces in the immediate 318th front were estimated to be about 600 men. The XII Corps offensive was to include the 26th, 35th and 80th Infantry Divisions and the 4th and 6th Armored Divisions. Intelligence estimated the enemy strength in the Corps front consisted of elements of seven divisions with a combined effective strength of 35,000 men—slightly more than two full strength divisions. Allowing for the additional numerical strength of the two armored divisions, XII Corps strength was—on paper—equal to about six infantry divisions, which provided the three to one advantage considered necessary for an attacking force. On paper. Third Army (XII and XX Corps at this time) had been continually shorthanded following the three months of attrition warfare since crossing the Moselle in early September.

By 2 December the 318th had established a line from the wooded heights of the Knebusch, NW of Farebersviller, south across the St. Avoild-Farebersviller road, through Henrville and eastward toward Farschviller. The 319th relieved the elements of the 318th north of the road, and the 6th Armored Division those east of Henrville on the following day, allowing the 318th to concentrate in the area

between the St. Avold road and Henriville. Eighty rounds of enemy artillery were fired on the Henriville assembly area around mid-day on the 3rd.

Units of the 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Div. established their line from the north to the south of Farebersviller, with a battery of four 88's anchoring the right of their line north of Cocheren.

The attack plan was for 1st Bn. Companies B and C to advance through Farebersviller and to occupy the high ground north of the town, with Company A in reserve. The 2nd Bn. was to swing south the town, taking out a German strong-point at Bruskir Farm, then swing north through the town of Theding and on to the high ground north of it and ending on the 1st Bn. right. The term high ground in this context is very relative as the highest points were only about 100 feet above the elevations of the towns, but because of the open nature of the territory, they provided visibility for tremendous distances to anyone holding them.

On Monday, 4 December, it began raining again. The 1st Bn., 318th, with B Co. of the 702nd Tank Bn. in support, jumped off on schedule at 0730 preceded by a heavy artillery preparation lasting over an hour. The high ground northeast of the town was the initial objective. Companies B and C attacked through the town against medium resistance, struggling against the obstacles of muddy ground, the raised railroad bed running along its northeastern edge, and the flooded creek at its base. Company B of the 305th Engineering Bn. quickly constructed a treadway bridge to permit passage of the motorized elements that reported being across at 1038. By 0900 the two rifle companies had gained the elevations north of the town known as the Schallberg (Hill 317) and Winterberg (Hill 316), while A Co., in reserve, occupied a position on the Cocheren Road at the base of the Winterberg.

On the right of the 1st Bn, the 2nd Bn., with A Co., 702nd Tank Bn., and A and C Cos. of the 610th Tank Destroyer Bn., moved south of Farebersviller to the Bruskir farm, then north toward Theding, east of the Schallberg, which was secured by 0930. They entered the woods north of it by 1100, and occupied their objective, Hill 373 (Mt. de Theding), by 1145.

By 1100, B and C Co.'s were crossing the road running east from Cocheren to Theding through the valley southeast of Cocheren and about two miles north of Farebersviller. By 1325 they had occupied their final objective, Hill 342, a steep bluff northeast of Cocheren called the "Herapel," overlooking the village below, and were digging in.

The 3rd Bn moved up to Theding from its reserve position near Seingbouse at 1815.

80th Infantry Division commanding general, Major General H.L. McBride, commended the 318th Regiment, stating that, "The operation was one of the most successful this regiment had undertaken, and was executed completely according to plan." Sixty casualties were initially reported [later revised to 100].... The enemy suffered at least 100 casualties, and 197 taken prisoner.

Toward mid-afternoon A Company was ordered to clear the village of Cocheren, just north of their reserve position on the road from Farebersviller, in order to straighten the line from Bening-St. Avold to the high ground above Theding, with Company B, 702nd tank Bn. reassigned to support them.

A Company was in the vicinity of a mill (the Moulin Haute, or the Moulin

Breidt for the family that owned it) alongside the railroad just west of Farebersviller track that was being used as the company CP and aid station. Just beyond the mill several village families huddled in the cold, damp safety of a tunnel that passed under the elevated railroad bed, its western end blocked off to guard against grenades being thrown in by advancing troops.

The company advanced about a half mile north on the road, to within sight of the town of Cocheren and halted, from what can be determined, near a stone quarry on the northern side of the Winterberg, that appears to have contained a worker's shelter constructed of stone slabs cut from the quarry.

The 4th platoon was to establish a roadblock at that location, dispositioning their weapons to cover a retreat of the rifle platoons should it become necessary.

It should be remembered that this was the absolute front line; beyond it was the sacred soil of the Fatherland, defended by enemy soldiers instructed to hold at all costs. It had been learned shortly before that a standing "no retreat across the Rhine" order in the German Army had been upgraded to include officers, "--- any officer authorizing the retreat of his unit would be summarily court martialled, his commission cancelled, and he would be placed on the line as a rifleman." It had been common practice for anyone retreating without authorization to simply be summarily shot.

Given the experience of the 317th a few days before, no one had reason to think those orders would not be followed to the letter.

Whether the rifle platoons had already begun their advance, and one held in reserve, or none of the men had yet begun to move forward is unclear, but two explosions, seconds apart, suddenly occurred in the immediate vicinity of the stone shelter. The fire was described by men with whom I have been in contact as "heavy caliber, direct fire, probably from a tank," but for various reasons none were aware of its source, and some felt that it may have been "friendly."

Recently, information from two sources has shed more light on what took place. The records of the 702nd Tank Bn state that "... The companies took up defensive positions 'B'at Kochern (alt. Cocheren). During the action, 135 prisoners were taken and three AT guns* were destroyed. One Mark V tank was driven off. None of our tanks were damaged or knocked out." *(These, from 80th Division reports, are known to have been destroyed at Cocheren). Additionally, the son of Stanley Kenetski, an A Company man (2nd platoon) who had passed away in 1994, and, sadly, before I was able to locate him, contacted me not long ago. Stan, as he had told his son, was among the group near the shelter when he heard the sound of small arms fire followed by the appearance of a German Mark V tank moving towards them on the road from Cocheren, and almost immediately fired two—he thought possibly three—88 rounds in quick succession that struck their position. The tank immediately came under what he thought was artillery fire (actually 702nd tank fire), and quickly reversed into Cocheren—and apparently beyond, as it was not seen again.

Sgt. Jim Jameison, 4th platoon, dove into the shelter when the first round exploded, and remembered the second hitting just outside and filling the whole place with smoke and debris. Moments later he realized he had been badly injured in the

leg. Stan was injured in both legs and Roscoe Combs also wounded, possibly in the face as Jameison remembered another man being brought into the aid station with such wounds. Sgt. Siegel Mercer was killed, as was Pfc. William Wignall, the .30 cal. machine gunner. (There was only one mg. team operational in the platoon at the time where normally there would have been two. General Patton later noted that the replacement situation at that time had become “extremely bad.” The 3rd Army was short eleven thousand men, which translated to rifle companies operating at about 55% of their normal strength. For the second time in as many days he had ordered a 5% levy on non-essential Corps and Army personnel.)

Sgt. Jameison would be several months recovering from his wound, and returned to the unit only a few days before the war in Europe ended. Stan Kenetski also underwent a lengthy recovery, was eventually reassigned to limited duty elsewhere, and did not rejoin the unit.

Russ Mitchell, Burt Kellerstedt, and Royden Post, 4th pltn., were all in the vicinity occupied at varying distances from the shelter. All remembered hearing the two rounds explode, and Burt recalled the opening small arms fire, but remain uncertain about the source.

The company commander, Capt. Otto Schultz, was awarded the BSM for meritorious service at Cocheren.

Bill Kuhl recalled that “... We went through a wooded area to move up to some high ground overlooking a valley, and on the other side of that valley was Germany.” The high ground was the Herapel; the view was of Germany’s industrial Saar valley.

On Thursday, 7 December, the 80th Division was ordered to a rest area by XII Corps. CCB of the 6th Armored Division relieved the 1st and 2nd Bns., which were withdrawn to a rest area at Freyming, NE of St. Avold, where preparations were begun for the next major effort: the assault on the Seigfried Line, which, as things developed would be several weeks in the future.

The 80th Division had been in action for 122 days to that point; ten of them at Farebersviller.



*Jack E. Edwards,
K-317*

*...did he join the
army of the old
west?*

POST NEWS

Greater Reading Post # 32

Not much news flows through this office, so here goes.

Due to the low attendance at our Post meetings we decided to disband our Post. To keep in touch with each other, we hope to share Brunch with each other at 11 A. M. at the Queen Restaurant the 3rd Saturday of March, June, and September. All 80th members may join us at Rts 10 and 222 in Reading.

Warren March's wife, Eva is home from the hospital and feeling much better. Now of course, Warren is having back problems.

More sad news, our member and National Historian, Ed Bredbenner is fighting cancer of the bone and our prayers and good wishes go out to him.

I'm planning on coming going to Pittsburgh come August and hope to see many of you there. I had another fall but my brain seems to be intact, but otherwise I'm good.

After searching around the reading area, I found that Boone Library in Birdsboro, is allotting some space in their building for housing our 80th Memorabilia from about fifteen local fellows who served with the 80th. Most of them have passed away. I donated PNC Henry Moyer's History Book to his memory, and also with Reeser, I have many things to donate. Contact me if you have something to donate in our Special Corner. See all of you in Pittsburgh, Lou Shirey

Company H 319th Post # 33

Time is getting short so I'll have to get in gear and manufacture some news. Have some unfortunate news: Jean Poppen passed away 28 February in her hometown of Sheldon, Iowa. Don preceded her in death some years ago. Condolences to the Poppen family.

The 80th Division annual Reunion will be held in Pittsburgh, PA. The date is 12-15 August. Let's all make it the greatest ever for Co. H members. I know father time has crept into many points and body parts, so just get the muscle and joint-rub out and pack a tube for the reunion.

From the grave vine it appears that Company H will be well represented. My family of Jerry, Penny, John, and a first timer, Kris, will all be there to take care of Dad.

Irv and Hilda will also have support; a son and daughter-in-law will attend with them. Orin Ledbetter hopes to be accompanied by his daughter. Lou Kudrna is planning on Karol and perhaps Sussie to attend with her.

News Flash! John Beebe has started planting his tomato Garden.

I received a letter from Douglas Rice; he is attempting to gain information about Sgt. George Edge of Kentucky and a member of the 319th Infantry. He was killed in action and buried in Loraine Cemetery in St. Avold, France. If anyone has

any knowledge of George please send it in. His Address: Douglas rice, 630 Great County Estate Road, Hawesville, KY 42348.

For some reason the Division Magazine omitted the actives to be held during the evenings. I am working to find out the activities and will let you know as soon as I have the information.

Yes Bill and Wilma McKinzie will be there, also Seattle's Grossi representatives.

God Bless, Ohly

Cincinnati Post # 34

We few that are left from Cincinnati Post #34 still meet for "Brunch" at various Restaurants in the Greater Cincinnati and Northern KY area.

Vicki has this month's reservation list and I called the membership today. Those saying they will come to Florence this Sunday are: Melda Schmidt, Grace and Art Rehling, likely the Opelts, Russell Sick PNC, Commander and Vicky and I. Our small crowd gets together to break bread and hash up old times, yes, we are in our 70's and 80's, yes, some of us can say we are truly 80th people now we have reached the age of 80 but, I rejoice with God's help (sometime only six) we are able to get these few together and swap stories of days gone by, and keep Post #34 alive.

Vickie and I hope this letter find you and other members of our Association well and enjoying the retirement years.

John T. Wetting, Sr.

DV and DV HQs Co. Post # 39

It is with much regret I report that Post # 39 is retiring. Fred Buscarini Sect and Treasure has informed me that he is sending what money the post had in its treasury and donating it to the McBride Fund.

He sites too little interest and old age the cause, and then you remember Fred lost his wife a while back. He took care of her in all her illness and now she is gone, he now has developed problems himself and is making arrangements to enter a Nursing Home. Fred the best of luck to you.

Lane Hall Post # 42

A note from Jim Phillips for the Blue Ridger:

First I would like to thank all that checked on me after receiving the last "Blue Ridger" listing Fran Poletti's name on the Post # 42 article. (Whoa, thought I had slipped up and had to go back and check. Editor) am happy to report Ruth and I are doing very well and enjoying retirement living.

The main reason for the change of writers was that I thought it was becoming repetitive with stale news. Fran Keeps in touch with most of our members (phone, E-mail and letters) and receives current news. I think it is

a good idea. You can help by keeping in touch with Fran or me.

It was good news to hear that Ann Hatcher completed their dreams of having a carillon placed at the Lorraine Cemetery in St. Avold, France. Congratulations. Sorry I cannot be at the dedication.

We are planning on seeing you all at the Reunion. Keep in touch. I have reserved Room # 306 for our group meetings in Pittsburgh. It is a Suite with two bedrooms. Two double Beds in each room. Has a Parlor adjoining. Cost of each room is \$72.00 plus Tax. If anyone has a problem moving around, and would like to be close to our Hospitality Room, call me at 717-361-5025, so I can arrange for you to use the rooms. Jim Phillips

Hi everyone, hope the winter that we had did not get you down. I think most of us are very happy to look forward to spring and summer after the winter we have had. I am, honestly, I haven't seen this much snow since I was a teenager, (and for the most part that was some time ago).

Talked with Jeanette and Dom Abbruzese in March, and Jeanette sounded a great deal better, is still undergoing treatment, but seems to feel a lot better. Our prayers are with her.

Mary Brinker hurt her leg in March, and was having a problem getting the right care. Her daughter finally was able to get a Dr. to help her. She had to have an air cast put on it. Waiting to see the results of more tests. Mary is hoping to get to the reunion, and if she does probably one of her daughters will be coming along also.

The week of January 12th, Hilda Latusek was in the hospital for 3 days, she had a cauterization. Spoke to her since that time several times, and she is doing well. Hilda and I go way back; she and Al stood up for Ed and I when we were married at Camp Phillips.

Heard from Sue and Jerry Tristano, they will be attending the reunion in Pittsburgh, and she hopes that her sister will also be coming. Many of the members will have children attending, wouldn't it be great if we each had representatives from our families there.

Talked with Walter Stec 5/6/04, he was also in the hospital. Is feeling pretty well, but has a problem with one foot. Hard to wear shoes. (Walt, go to Kentucky, you can get by with going bare foot. Editor) He plans to attend reunion, lets hope he does.

Received an E-mail from Felix Cistolo in January, he and Rose were in Arizona for 10-days, had a great time there, hated to come back to cold weather.

Please keep in touch with Jim or I if you have any news to contribute, you can either call me on 203-855-1928, or E-mail me at Ffrangram@aol.com or write me at 28 Arnold Lane, Rowayton, CT 06853. Would love hearing from you.

See all of you at the reunion. Let's make it a good one!

Francis Poletti, Acting Sect

New York Post # 43

Not much good news on me. I have a broken bone in my spine and also have bone cancer, so I am going to miss my first Post Meeting in Albany. Abe Barone and Don Wilkerson will take over for me.

By the time this is received our Albany Meeting will be history. Our fall meeting will again be held in Geneva, NY at the end of the Lake in a beautiful Hotel. Plenty of shopping for food, clothing and good fruits as well, in the Wine Trails. Actually around Cayuga and Seneca Lakes there are over fifty Wineries to visit.

Dates are Monday through Thursday October 4-7, 2004. I need to know the numbers in advance.

Ed Bredbenner, Sect.

Post #44 Company M 318th

Fellows, it again is my sad duty to report a death of a very good friend and comrade Sandy Best. Sandy some of you will remember was a Staff Sergeant in the Mortar Platoon. Sandy left the Company 3 August 1944 in Givrau, France. Sandy and I go back to Camp Forrest, TN, where we first became friends and comrades. He first went home with me when I lived in Louisville, KY for a weekend and met my family. We again met for a visit when he came to my home here in Oakmont, PA and I visited him when he lived in Homestead, FL. We corresponded over the years; my most recent contact was last December when we exchanged Christmas Cards. I will miss him, as I'm sure Rita, his wife will. My Sympathy goes out to the family.

Florida Post # 47

Our March meeting was well attended and of course the Florida Chamber of Commerce contributed their effort by providing a week of fine weather. Those interested had ample time to enjoy the sun and other bathing attractions.

We sympathize with those who could not make the meeting for one reason or another. Our best 50/50-ticket seller Gisele Dunn's knee gave out just before she was to come down with Pete and Bonna Mayer.

Among the attendees were over ten National Officers and more than a half dozen Auxiliary Officers.

We had a pleasant surprise by Clarence and Naomi Brockman. After the meeting they stopped at our place. We had dinner and spent the day visiting before they headed south and then north to home.

Our November meeting will be November 4th to November 7th in Ocala at the Hampton Inn, 3434 SW College Road, 352-854-3200, Room rate is \$61.00. When making reservations our code is P47. Looking forward to seeing all of you Floridians there.

Francis Rajnicek, Sect

Company L 319th Infantry

In just a few weeks we will again have the opportunity to revisit with our WWII comrades. How lucky we are to have not only survived the war but have lived long enough to see a Memorial dedicated to our efforts 60 years ago. Maria and I will be attending the dedication and I will proudly wear my blue cap with the 80th Infantry patch on it for all to see.

News is rather scarce for this report. My fellow Company Lers choose not to keep me posted on their activities. Modesty perhaps?

A few inquiries have been received from sons and grandson looking for information about their relatives that was 80th Division members. John Balas helped Walter Miles Jr, whose Dad was KIA at Dahl. His father was in M Company and was one of Bob Grady's best friends. John read him portions of the Company L book which told about his Father. Bob Murrell referred Gregory Mosteller to me and I put him in touch with Bill Krehbiel regarding the Company L book. His grandfather was wounded in Metz. Bill supplied him with all of the information regarding the book and expects to get an order from him.

John Balas has just received a new set of "ears" from the VA and also celebrated his 80th birthday on May 7th when he became an octogenarian. Welcome to the club John.

The Krehbiels are on the move again. On May 29th they attended a wedding in Delta Ohio and then are spending a couple of weeks in Manistique, Michigan with son Philip and family. Then back home for a few weeks and scheduled to attend four reunions in July and our in August. Bill will have copies of the 80th Division World War I history with him at the Reunion.

Sorrowfully I must report the passing of Patrick Brassil who went to that eternal resting-place on March 19th, St. Joseph's Day. Incidentally, Pat's middle name was Joseph. I know that you join me in expressing our deepest sympathy to Pat's family on their loss. Pat's daughter Mary said Pat was real pleased to have had the chance to get reacquainted with his old buddies from Company L. Pat was the father of 7 children and 8 grandchildren.

The Flynn's came east recently and spent some time in Tennessee visiting friends.

I had a brief telephone conversation with Fred Ecklemann's son and he said Fred is looking forward to being with us in Pittsburgh. We will sorely miss Bill Siebert and Jim Young who both had made other plans that will keep them away from the Pittsburgh Reunion.

Haven't heard from the Blatz brothers but like "Old Faithful", they'll show up in Pittsburgh.

Our Hospitality Room has been reserved and our Restaurant selected for our Friday night dinner, all we need now is YOU.

Hank Einolf.

All of the past National & Honorary Commanders are
looking forward to seeing you at the 85st Annual Reunion
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