

# The Old Hickory Chronicle

Newsletter of the Old Hickory Association

November/December 1999

## CROSSROADS OF DEATH THE MALMEDY MASSACRE

BY  
BRETT BONDURANT

December 17, 1944. The Battle of the Bulge was just one day old. Tech 5 Vester H. Wiles blew into his hands gently as he stood in a large field at a crossroads at Baugnez, Belgium with a little over 100 other American G.I.'s. A soldier in Battery B, 285 Field Artillery Observation Battalion, the 22 year old Wiles was a Danville, Virginia native and had entered the army on January 20, 1942. Wiles was driving a truck in a convoy of the battery as it moved from Schevenhutte, Germany to Luxembourg.

As the convoy moved down Highway N23, shots rang out from a German battlegroup moving along a nearby road. This battlegroup, known as Kampfgruppe Peiper, after its commander Oberstrumbannführer (Lt. Colonel) Joachim Peiper, was part of the 1st SS Panzer Division. The Kampfgruppe was made up of a mixture of tanks and half tracks.

As the firing began, the Americans jumped from their vehicles to take cover in ditches that ran beside Highway N23. Realizing that their rifles were no match against the tanks, the men began to surrender. After being searched the men were led to a large barb wire enclosed field 60-80 yards from the Baugnez Crossroads, along N23. This field was under the cover of the machine guns of the tanks and half tracks.

There were several units represented among the POWs, including the 200th Field Artillery Battalion, the Recon Co. 32nd Armored Regt, the 546th Ambulance Co., the 86th Engineer Battalion, the 575th Ambulance Co., the 518th M.P. Co., the 23rd Inf. Regt, 2nd Inf. Division, with the majority of the men belonging to the 285th Field Artillery Observation Battalion. A few members of the 285th were taken from the field and were forced to drive the captured American trucks to Germany, where the men spent the remainder of the war in POW camps. At the time these men didn't know how lucky they were.

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## I WANT



## YOUR DUES

If there is a red X in the box below then it is time to re-up. Please mail \$15 to Don Shupe, 414 Cary Pines Drive, Cary, NC 27513. **Please remit by February 26, 2000** to continue your membership with the OHA. If anyone has money left after the flea market at FIG, they can pay their dues to Mike Fox, and he will get it to me. Please fill out form attached to this newsletter and return with your dues.



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At 2:20 PM, as the G.I.'s stood in loose ranks, a German, standing in a nearby vehicle, took aim at the group with his pistol, and started firing. When machine gun fire from the German vehicles began to tear into the ranks, the men dropped to the ground. The firing swept up and down the field for two or three minutes. After the firing stopped, several men from the 3rd SS Panzer Pioneer Company and the Penal (Disciplinary) Platoon of the 9th SS Panzer Pioneer Company went into the field to see if any of the men were still alive. As the wounded groaned and moaned "mom," and "oh God", the Germans moved among them and shot the men, administering "mercy shots". The soldiers would often kick the bodies to see if any were alive. Approximately 40 American soldiers were shot point blank through the head as they lay wounded in the field. A medic lying in the field, Cpl. Ralph Indelicato, unable to bear the moans of a wounded man lying beside him, raised up on one knee and began to administer first aid to the soldier, thinking that the Red Cross on his helmet would be honored. A German soldier walked over to the two and watched the medic work. When Indelicato was finished, the German shot both of the men to death. The men lying in the field heard "Da kriegt noch einer Luft", (there's one still breathing), and "Tot", (dead) as the pioniers spent about 15 minutes looking for survivors. After the Germans returned to their vehicles, and left, tanks and other vehicles would rake the bodies with machine gun fire as they passed the field.

Around 4:00 PM, after Kampfgruppe Peiper had passed the field, one of the American said "let's make a break for it" or words to that effect. German soldiers in the area saw the running men and after firing at them, reentered the field and again began to check for survivors, kicking at the bodies. One enterprising German Sergeant commanding a temporarily disabled tank nearby, dismounted the machine gun and fired 70-80 rounds into the men in the field.

Some 44 soldiers were able to rise from the field and make their way to American lines to report the massacre. Word of the shooting spread fast among the American soldiers, and the G.I.'s took the news to heart, using the incident as a moral booster, giving them a renewed sense of strength in fighting the German advances. A number of G.I.'s took a "take no prisoners" attitude and even one unit issued orders that "No SS troops or paratroopers will be taken prisoner, but will be shot on sight."

Due to the Baugnez crossroads being under artillery fire and under German control, it wasn't until January 13, 1945, that the area was captured by the 120th Inf. Regt, 30th Inf. Division. The bodies were cleared of snow, photographed, and tagged. Between January 13-16, the bodies were taken to Malmedy and autopsies were performed. Most of the men were buried at the Henri Chapelle American Military Cemetery, Belgium on January 17, 1945.

Shortly after the war, members of Kampfgruppe Peiper were located and brought to Dachau for trial as war criminals. Forty three were sentenced to death and 22 received life imprisonment. Joachim Peiper was sentenced to death. Due to the changing political situation in the 1950's, none of the death sentences was carried out and all the men were paroled. Peiper was released in 1956 and took up residence in France. On July 14, 1976, a group called "The Avengers" set fire to Peiper's house and he was consumed in the flames.

Tech 5, Vester Wiles is buried in Mt. View Cemetery, Danville, Virginia.

Thanks to Kenneth Wiles for information on his uncle, and on the battle.

*Editor's Note: There is an excellent book called "The Malmedy Massacre" by John M. Bauserman, published by White Mane Publishing Company, 1995. This is a very detailed account. Mr. Wiles is mentioned in the book.*

# The Battle of The Bulge - January 2000

by Mike Fox

I am proud to say that this event will set the record for attendance for the OHA for any event. Thanks largely to the huge "get out the troops" effort and nagging from Clint Yarbrough, the OHA will be fielding 32 members this year. Thanks also go the Dave Stieghan who is bringing several new members from "over the mountains" for their first event with OHA. If those two guys were not such good fighting men, they would be invaluable on the home front as "recruiters."

As usual, we will be participating again as part of a larger organization, Co. K. This is the full strength Rifle Company that OHA helped start more than four years ago at the Battle of the Bulge. We originally formed this company with many of the other better quality, more authentic GIG. units to ensure that our groups were always put together. This allowed for a much more authentic experience, that of being part of a full strength rifle company where each unit could depend on the others to do their parts. This meant that if another platoon was supposed to guard your flank, they would be where they were supposed to be, instead of running off to the sound of gunfire like so many of the "cowboy & indian" reenactor units do. Co. K has developed into the premier unit on the allied side from both a "tactical" and "authenticity" point of view. This year we will again comprise the heart of the 3rd Platoon of Co. K. We will provide the platoon leadership as well as the 1st & 2nd squads. The 3rd squad will be made up of some familiar faces, the good guys of the 1st Infantry Division from the northeast who have been in our platoon for the past three years.

Once again, this will be a 4 day event. You may arrive at the barracks anytime after noon on Wednesday and can stay through Sunday morning. Other than shopping at the great flea market there will be three main activities to plan for this year. As last year, there will be a tactical battle on both Friday and Saturday. Plans for these tactical battles and maps are available on the Federation's (the event host) Internet web site at <http://www.alltel.net/~shawkids/wwii/>

In addition, Co. K has been asked by the Federation to provide the public and local National Guard a demonstration of a W.W.II tactical exercise. The premiere German unit at the event will be our opposing force for this demonstration, The Gross Deutschland (this is the group that hosted the recent Oakridge battle). This demonstration is really a great opportunity to show off for the public, the veterans (more than 50 are registered to attend) and the National Guard. The benefits of putting on a good show are significant to the future of that event since the base just recently changed hands from the Army to the National Guard. We envision a two part demonstration. The first part will consist of both the US and German Companies

forming up in close view of the public where a narrator will explain, compare & contrast the structure and weapons of both companies. Both sides will then take up positions for a carefully scripted demonstration of small unit W.W.II tactics. We are working on getting some real "pyrotechnics" from the Guard for this demonstration such as military smoke and artillery simulators to simulate a mortar barrage. I anticipate because of the quality of the units doing the demonstration, that this could be one of the most fun parts of the event. It should last about an hour from start to finish.

This public demonstration will take place on Saturday morning before the main tactical. We will get the benefit of participating in both. As soon as we finish the Public demonstration, the Federation will bus Co.K and the GD to the main tactical area where we will become the "ready reserve" for each side. This should result in plenty of action for us as the battle plan for Saturday calls for the allies to assault the Germans on some high ground very near the start point. This is exactly the situation where the reserve gets called in quickly to help the stalled attack.

A quick word about food. Another advantage of Co. K is that we are the only unit with our own mess hall and cooks. This year because we are doing the public demonstration, the Federation is not charging us for the cost of the mess hall. As those of you who attended last year know, the food is excellent and reasonably priced at \$5 per meal. Your squad leaders will be contacting you soon to determine your estimated arrival time and the number of meals you plan to eat in the Co. K mess hall. This count is important so that the cooks can purchase the correct amount of food.

Some quick other topics. Authenticity in the barracks: The OHA rule is that the barracks should appear as if it is 1944 at all times. Any modern items you bring should be kept out of site in the provided wall locker or a footlocker if you choose to bring one. You will need a set of plain white twin sheets for the bunk and a pillow and white pillow case. In addition you will need a W.W.II army blanket to cover your bunk. Also, bring a white towel as there are showers provided. Finally, you should also be in W.W.II uniform and clothing the entire time. Nothing ruins the karma more than someone in a "grateful dead" t-shirt, sitting in their folding lawn chair eating a bag of cheetos! Squad leaders will be enforcing these authenticity standards. If you have a question about an item's authenticity, check it out with your squad leader before bringing it!

Ammo: Bring plenty, enough for three battles. I would recommend at least two bandoleers (96 rounds) for each engagement. For purposes of ammo inspection, you may bring your Garand ammo in clips in a sealed ziploc bag. If you have a non-Garand weapon (BAR, sub gun) do not preload your magazines as all the rounds must be inspected. Upon arrival, do not go to the main federation registration. Co. K does its own

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registration and ammo checks so you do not have to hassle with the main registration lines. Check in first in our barracks (#1269, 1st Floor) with the NCO on duty for our platoon. He will square you away and give you a bunk assignment. Ignore the barracks assignment on the registration card you get back from the Federation. Our deal with them is that they give Co. K three entire barracks then we assign platoons within these three barracks. You are in 3rd platoon which is in Barracks #1269.

Here are the platoon assignments for OHA men. There will be a few changes such as the assignment of a BAR assistant in the 1st Squad and the potential for an additional BAR team in the 2nd Squad. Your squad leaders will contact you regarding any changes.

Co. K, 3rd Platoon (120th IR, 30th Division)

Platoon Leader - 2nd Lt. Mike Fox (336-282-6301)  
Platoon Sgt. - Staff Sgt. David Stieghan (931-987-0965)  
Platoon Guide - Staff Sgt. Mark Burfete (919-562-1639)  
Platoon RTO- Pfc. Howard Hendricks (336-449-7699)  
Platoon Supply Clerk - Ted Hogan

Co. K Radioman - Chuck Fraley

1st Squad (120th IR, 30th Division) - 14 men

Squad Leader - Staff Sgt. Clint Yarborough (336-299-1981)  
Assistant - Sgt. Paul Gill (704-948-2884)  
Scout - Pfc. Raymond Bunch  
Scout - Pvt. Scott Burnett  
BAR - Pvt. F.J. Hale  
Rifleman - Pvt. Andy Tripp  
Rifleman - Pvt. Pat Lancaster  
Rifleman - Pvt. Robbie Gouge  
Rifleman -Pvt. Mike Owens  
Rifleman - Pvt. John Runyon  
Rifleman - Pvt. John Borland  
Rifleman - Pvt. Mark Trimpe  
Rifleman -Pvt. Jim Higgins

2nd Squad (120th IR, 30th Division) - 13 Men

Squad Leader -Sgt. Courtney Johnston (919-833-0426)  
Assistant - Cpl. Brett Bondurant (804-791-2155)  
Scout -Pfc. Thomas Amato  
Scout -Pvt. David Curtin  
Rifleman -Pvt. Will Vanderberg  
Rifleman -Pvt. Don Lewis  
Rifleman -Pvt. Ken Johns  
Rifleman -Pvt. Les Monroe  
Rifleman -Pvt. Kent Triplett  
Rifleman -Pvt. Jule Morrow  
Rifleman - Pvt. Todd Hogan  
Rifleman - Pvt. Greg Bondurant  
Rifleman - Pfc. Ray Oakes





## From the Foxhole

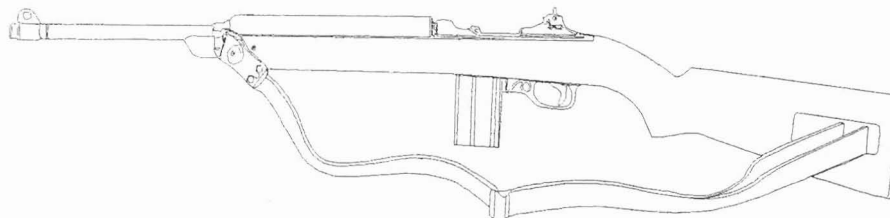
by Mike Fox

It was with many mixed emotions that I made the decision to not stand for nomination or reelection to the OHA Board of Directors. My main reason is time, or rather the lack of it. Due to a growing family and greatly increased responsibility at work, the available time I have for this hobby has shrunk dramatically in the past two years. While I still have as much interest as ever, the opportunities have become fewer. Stepping back from the Board of the group that I helped start was a difficult decision, however, I believe it was the right one. The Board did not meet as regularly in 1999 as it had in the past, partly because of my limited availability. I felt that the Board and the group deserved someone who could make the necessary time commitment.

On the positive side, I am very proud of the quality of people that we have in our organization and the number of qualified candidates to replace me on the Board. We certainly have a depth of good leadership and I think the new Board will provide the same high level of leadership as the past Boards. It makes me proud to see an organization that I helped start progress to the point where I can take a "step back" and know that the organization will not miss a beat!

Now, to the important part, I have not "retired" from the hobby. I just no longer will be as active in the administrative part of running the group. In fact, I plan to still do all the things that I was doing before: writing for the newsletter, providing leadership at tactical events, chairing the "tactical" committee, coordinating with other units, and all the behind the scenes planning that it takes to make sure our guys have a good time at events. If anything, I can now use the time freed up from the administration to do some other things in the group such as participate in the "Historical" Committee and focus more on the upcoming National Reunion of the 30th Division Veterans in September 2000, in Winston-Salem.

Thanks for all the good times in the past and I look forward to many more in the future!



## Tactical Committee Report

by Mike Fox

The Tactical Committee has been very active in the past few months on many fronts. First, we grew by adding three new members. Joining the original group of Mike Fox, Paul Gill and Courtney Johnston were Mark Burfete, David Stieghan, and Clint Yarbrough. Since we have grown recently we needed to determine how we could best function and make decisions. When there were three of us we had occasional conference calls. With a larger committee that became impractical. We decided to try e-mail as our standard of communication and see how it works. We also needed to decide on a decision making process. We decided to try and work by "consensus" if possible. If we can all agree on most issues we will be much more productive as a committee. Failing consensus, majority vote will prevail. In addition, someone has to push the process. Since Mike Fox had been the "point man" on this committee in the past he volunteered to serve as Chairman, and "officiate" over the process and make the reports to the Board and the membership.

Once organized, we began the task of deciding the tactical structure for the Battle of the Bulge. This structure was accomplished by consensus and is reported elsewhere in this newsletter. The committee will be working on a training plan for the Battle of the Bulge in the time leading up to the event. The next item on the plate for the committee is the proposed tactical event to be held at Butner and hosted by the OHA. If anyone has any questions, concerns, or suggestions, please contact Mike Fox or any other member of the committee. If anyone wishes to join the committee please contact Mike Fox.

# Sergeant's Business

By David Scott Stieghan, Captain,  
Field Artillery, United States Regular Army, Retired

The role of the noncommissioned officer (NCO) and officer are often misunderstood by living historians. In order for our unit to function more efficiently in the field and in garrison, the following will present a comparison and contrast between the functions of each. Though this is written for our recreated unit and not an actual troop unit, the functions of leadership necessary to efficiently and accurately portray World War GI's are the same as our original counterparts.

There is a mistaken impression that the differences between Officers and NCOs are related to length of service, skill, or quality of leadership. This is not exactly correct. Both are leaders, may issue lawful orders, and are responsible for tasks and personnel committed to their care. While officers and NCOs share leadership responsibilities, they have different functions. To begin this discussion, let us make some broad generalizations.

Both officers and NCOs are responsible for mission accomplishment and taking care of personnel and equipment ("mission first, men always."), but differ in specific responsibilities. While officers formulate or translate the mission (what), NCOs are expected to know techniques to accomplish the mission (how). Officers are selected and trained to take responsibility and make sure the overall unit mission is accomplished. In the combat arms, they start out as platoon leaders and work their way up as commanders or staff officers through a chain of command. They are trained as generalists in their branch, able to grasp the capabilities of what their arm of service should accomplish. Officers, theoretically, are tactical experts.

NCOs, on the other hand, are technical experts. They are trained at schools or within their units in a narrow spectrum of specialty within their branch. Through specialization and experience, NCOs know how to get certain things done. In practice, an officer at a team, platoon, or command level is paired with an NCO with several more years of experience in accomplishing the same specific tasks. The less experienced officer brings general knowledge of a branch from schooling. He has been taught the "bigger picture" of how the unit fits within the overall mission. In addition, he learns techniques from the expert NCO, who also has experience in what works.

Another way of distilling the relation is to say that officers are ultimately responsible for equipment and NCOs are responsible for men. Through hand receipts, commanding officers sign for all the equipment issued to their units. If they're smart, they sub-hand receipt all equipment down to platoon sergeants, section leaders, squad leaders, etc., to make the NCOs and their men responsible for maintenance and accountability of equipment. While NCOs make sure equipment is serviceable, officers make sure it doesn't get lost.

A soldier's first line supervisor is a corporal or sergeant. These NCOs make sure soldiers take care of themselves and their equipment. They must know everything they can about the men in their charge. In addition, they are responsible for ensuring each individual in their team is trained, equipped, well fed, rested, in good physical shape, and motivated to do their job. Individual and team training is the responsibility of NCOs, while officers usually conduct unit training.

A brief note on the term, "commander." In the United States Army chain of command structure, the smallest size command is usually a company, troop, or battery. Commanders are normally captains, though first lieutenants may be placed on orders as acting commanders. These commanders are the lowest ranking officers: with powers to assess non-judicial punishment, who have the ability to place a soldier on leave or pass, who approve a school or special training, that may recommend an NCO for promotion, who gather and forward award narratives, and much more. In combat arms units, they also

are assigned forward observer teams from mortar and/or direct support field artillery units. They are also the lowest level commanders to control elements of other units assigned or attached to their companies or troops. For example, an infantry company may become an infantry team if a tank platoon is attached or exchanged for one of his rifle platoons. All other officers may be platoon leaders, team leaders or chiefs, or staff officers.

To sum up the comparison and contrast of the roles of the officer and NCO, consult this matrix taken from an old training document:

The Officer

- Commands, plans, establishes policy, and manages the unit.
- Focuses on collective training which leads to mission accomplishment.
- Primarily involved in units and unit operations.
- Focuses on unit readiness and unit effectiveness.
- Focuses on standards, care and professionalism of all unit members, with particular attention to unit officers.

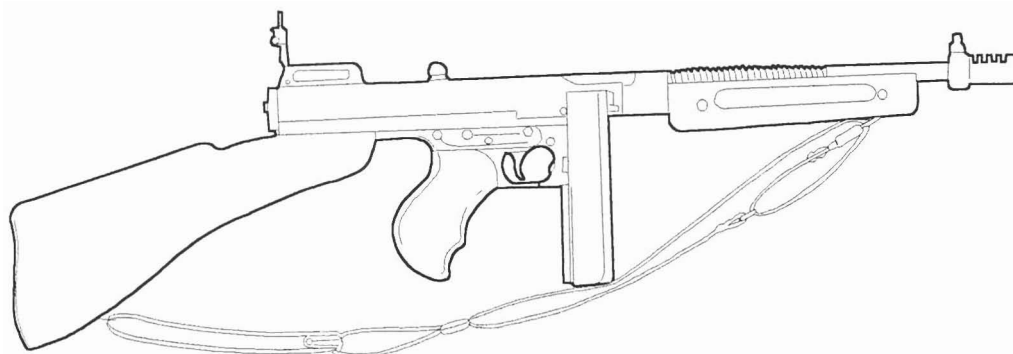
The NCO

- Conducts the daily business of the unit within established policy.
- Focuses on individual training that leads to mission capability.
- Places major emphasis on individual soldiers and team leaders.
- Stresses readiness of individual soldiers and equipment to function as part of a team.
- Focuses on standards, care and professionalism of NCOs and individual soldiers.

In living history outfits, as in the United States Army in World War II, officers and NCOs have different duties to perform. Both are vitally important to a successful unit. Too many reenactment leaders burn out, or are overwhelmed with detail, because they do not properly delegate tasks or try to accomplish tasks which are best done by a trained and experienced subordinate. If you are willing to wear bars or stripes, it is critical that you are willing to learn the original job of the soldier you portray. If you cannot, or will not, do your duty you should expect to be replaced. You owe it to your peers.

Too often in living history military portrayals, those who reenact officers try to do too much and often step out of their realm of responsibility or experience. When that happens, a good NCO should remark, "With all due respect, sir, that's 'Sergeant's Business.'"

I'll see you in formation.



# Board of Directors Meeting

The final meeting of the current Board of Directors of the OHA was held on December 5, 1999. All members of the Board, Mark Burfete, Anthony Dawkins, Mike Fox, Howard Hendricks, and Don Shupe were present. Topics discussed were the nominations for the new Board of Directors (see article), events for the year 2000, establishment of an OHA "Historical Committee", the purchase of a guidon, the annual members meeting, leadership at events, and veteran's funerals.

It had been suggested that we identify the events that should be considered maximum effort. In other words, events that we would like to see the greatest amount of participation by our membership. Last year was a very busy year for the OHA and we had 21 events on our schedule. These included everything from reenactments to displays, air shows, parades, reunions, training, and live fire shoots. Some members felt that because of the busy schedule that attendance at some events suffered. The Board identified four events for the coming year as maximum effort: Battle of the Bulge (FIG) in January, the Butner Tactical Training Weekend in March, the 30th Infantry Division Association Reunion in September, and the GD tactical at Oakridge, VA in October. We will still maintain our usual schedule, but if we have a number of events scheduled around a maximum effort event and you can only make one or the other, try to make it the max effort.

As mentioned in the last newsletter, Mark Burfete had suggested the establishment of a Historical Display concerning the history of the 30th Infantry Division. This setup could be used in conjunction with our typical displays or as a display on its own. Because of the complexity of obtaining this goal, it was decided to form a "30th ID Historical Committee". (see article in unit news)

The Board reviewed the suggestion to purchase of a unit guidon (120 Inf., Co. K). Clint Yarbrough had submitted three quotes that ranged from \$125 - \$250. There was discussion about the correct guidon for World War II era, and how often the guidon would be used. The issue is to be reviewed at a future meeting after Mark Burfete investigates the correct format.

At the last annual members meeting held at the October Butner Shoot the question was raised as whether or not the members present could vote on subjects that were being discussed. Don Shupe responded at that time that since there wasn't a quorum of the members present, that we could not hold a vote. It was decided by the Board that at future annual meetings, subjects that are brought up at the meeting will be written up in the next newsletter and put to a vote by the full membership. So if there is something important you want to discuss, you best make it to the meeting.

Also discussed at the Board meeting was the operation of the committees in general and we specifically talked about one issue. Recently, a couple of members have inquired about how the decisions are made as to who is in charge at the various events attended by the OHA including tacticals, displays and live fire events. While there were no specific complaints about anyone in those leadership roles, concern was raised over the process. The Board discussed the topic and decided that while it was a legitimate question to ask, we really felt that the past process had yielded good results, i.e.... competent leadership with various individuals having an opportunity to contribute. Basically, we decided that the system was fine but agreed that the Board needed to formally recognize it and explain it to the membership.

Obviously, the Board of Directors of the OHA is the guiding body of the organization. It sets general policy and direction but does not involve itself in every decision required to be made to run the organization. Two years ago, the Board established several committees to be the backbone of the group's activities in different areas such as displays, marksmanship, and tactical events. It was anticipated that members of the group who had a special interest in those areas and wanted to provide input, leadership, and hard work into those areas would volunteer to be members of the committees.

The Board determined that in the past the various committees had determined what the leadership roles were to be for the different events. Different committees had different processes to do that. The Board endorsed that concept going forward. If members wish to have specific input on these matters, they should join one of the various committees or make their wishes known to a committee member. The chairman and members of the various committees are listed in the credits portion of this newsletter.

The last issue discussed by the Board was a request that had been made to provide an Honor Guard and Firing Party at the funeral for a W.W. II veteran that was dying of cancer. This general subject has been brought up a number of times in the past and although everyone agrees that it would be a great service to offer to veterans, the logistics could be overwhelming.

The course the Board suggested is setting up a database of members that are willing to participate. Attached to this newsletter is a form to be filled out and returned with your dues with general information about current address, phone, and e-mail. There will also be questions concerning availability to participate with an Honor Guard. If we get a strong enough response we can begin to offer this service.

Not all the members of the current Board will be moving on to the new Board in January, so I would like to say thanks to Anthony Dawkins, Mike Fox, and Howard Hendricks for their years of service. They have helped make this the great group that it is today.

## THE DRIVE TO ST. LO, FT. STORY, VIRGINIA BEACH, VA

by  
*Brett Bondurant*

On November 20, 1999, 5 members of the 30th Inf. Div., Old Hickory Association, participated in the Fall HRHR event held at Ft. Story in Virginia Beach, VA. Attending were myself, Greg Bondurant, Chuck Fraley, Ray Oakes, and Desmon Touchstone, all members of the 30th's "Virginia Squad". With all the "bitching" about low attendance at battles, I thought we would have had a larger attendance, but.....

After arriving at the Allied camp, we were placed in the infantry platoon under the command of Charlie Jones of the 29th Inf., Div. Company K made up the majority of the infantry with the 1st Inf. Div. under Dave Urbanski, the 29th under Jones, the newly formed I&R platoon (from the recently split up 29th Inf. Div.) under Jack Reimer and our unit. Rounding out the rest of the infantry was 3 members of the Washington, DC based 43rd Inf. Div. The rest of the Allied forces consisted of Commonwealth Forces under Jeff Bockert and Airborne units under Jim Russell, who also was overall Allied commander. Numbers were approximately 60 Allied and a rumored 150 Germans. Formed into a squad under Sgt. Reimer, we and the 43rd set out to scout the enemy positions while the other U.S. Infantry fortified the camp. After scouting down several sandy trails looking for the krauts and not finding any, we, along with a group of Brits decided to take advantage of a group of friendly Frenchmen, led by Marc Misner. We rested and ate at a French cafe in the middle of "No Mans Land" while the higher ups decided our next plan of attack. Acting a little too friendly, Monsieur Misner offered to take 4 members of the squad to a drop off point in his American Jeep. We were dropped off to our deaths, for as we were dismounting the jeep, we were caught in a German ambush and died to a man. One a Vichy, always a Vichy! Following the event rules of returning to camp once dead, we, with helmets in hand proceeded on a 30-45 minute walk back to the safety (we thought) of the Allied camp.

With the words of our commander saying "the Germans will never find our camp" ringing in our ears, we sat back and relaxed and ate a very late lunch. This killing and dying business makes one very hungry! We were kicked back talking when a reproduction German Somethingwagen, 6 wheels, turret, small gun, (don't know my German vehicles like I should) guns ablaze, came barreling into camp on the only undefended approach to camp. A quick but vicious skirmish dispatched the German vehicle.

With darkness quickly approaching, the members of the 30th decided we had had enough of dying for one day and retreated to the safety of Fortress Bondo for the night. This proved to be a wise tactical decision, for we later learned that the Germans made a massive assault later that night and overran the Allied camp!

This HRHR event was pretty much like the past events they sponsor, small, interesting, and a good way to kill a weekend. When are we going to put on a battle?

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## BOARD OF DIRECTORS NOMINATIONS/*ELECTION?*

What if they had an election and no one cared? We just completed nominations for the Board of Directors of the OHA. Fifty-nine members had the opportunity to submit nominations for the people that will be making the decisions for the Association for the next two years.

The procedure was stated in a full page article in the November/December newsletter. Nominations for up to five people could be sent by mail or email. Only those nominees that received a second for that nomination would be eligible for the election to be held in January.

Well, all you concerned members, there won't be an election in January. Four members submitted a total of seven names but only five of those nominations received seconds. The results of the election were decided by those four people since we were electing five members to the board and only five members were nominated and seconded.

The seven members nominated were: Brett Bondurant, Mark Burfete, David Curtin, Paul Gill, Courtney Johnston, and Don Shupe. Curtin and Johnston did not receive seconds to their nominations. So your new Board of Directors has been elected without a vote. Why?

# Quartermaster's Corner

**MAIL FOR SOLDIERS OVERSEAS** must have:

- a. The soldier's full name and rank.
- b. His Army serial number.
- c. His service organization or unit.
- d. His Army post office number.

The Army now permits V-mail transmission of photographs of children under one year of age to their fathers serving in the Army overseas. The picture may include the mother or other person holding the baby, and should be placed on the upper left portion of the regular V-mail letter, which is written on a form obtainable at any post office or at most drug stores and stationers. *QMC Training Service Bulletin, 17 JUL 43.*

**WHAT IT TAKES FOR THE COMPOSITE SOLDIER.**-- The average young man starting service in the U.S. Army is 5 feet 8 inches tall, weighs 144 pounds, has a chest measurement of 33½ inches, a 31-inch waistline, wears a 9½-D shoe and a size 7 hat, according to figures compiled by the War Department. This is based on official records of the Army QMC.

After a few months in the Army, however the recruit has gained weight on Army food, wears shoes one-half size larger and has an expanded chest measurement. This is indicated by sample test, although complete examination comparable to that given upon induction is not routine.

To keep the average soldier in fighting trim for the first year (in continental U.S.) the QMC spends \$204.40 for his food; \$164.09 for his clothing; \$51.67 for his individual equipment; and \$22.20 for his barracks equipment, or a total of \$442.36.

Weapons, ammunition, laundry, salvage, transportation, shelter, special equipment for various forces, instruction, pay and other expenses are not included in these estimates. Costs of distribution, storage, etc. also are omitted.

The approximate cost of food per soldier averages 56 cents per day; clothing needed amounts to \$100.05 at the outset, plus \$64.04 for maintenance during the first year; individual equipment costs \$40.07 initially and \$11.60 for a year's maintenance, and barrack equipment totals \$18.94 plus \$3.26 for maintenance for a year.

Regular issue clothing for the average enlisted man includes the following items: 1 wool serge coat, \$10.56; 2 pairs of wool OD trousers at \$5.75 per pair, \$11.50; 3 pairs of cotton khaki trousers at \$2.37, \$7.11; 1 wool, roll collar overcoat, \$14.82; 2 pairs of service shoes at \$3.85, \$7.70; 2 flannel OD shirts at \$4.18, \$8.36; 3 cotton khaki shirts at \$2.22, \$6.66; 1 wool OD garrison cap, \$.82; 2 cotton khaki garrison caps at \$.43, \$.86; 2 pairs of wool drawers at \$1.29, \$2.58; 4 pairs of cotton short drawers at \$.36, \$1.44; 2 wool undershirts at \$1.36, \$2.72; 4 sleeveless cotton undershirts at \$.21, \$.84; 3 pairs of tan cotton socks at \$.15, \$.45; 3 pairs of wool socks (light or heavy) at \$.26, 4.78; 1 field jacket, \$6.33; one herringbone twill work jacket, \$2.16; a pair of herringbone twill trousers, \$1.87; 1 one-piece herringbone twill work suit, \$3.20; 1 herringbone twill cap, \$.48; 2 cotton mohair neckties at \$.29, \$.58; 1 web waist belt, \$.23; 1 pair of wool OD gloves, \$1.69, 1 raincoat, \$5.35; 4 whit handkerchiefs at \$.06, \$.24; 2 pairs of canvas leggings at \$.90, \$1.80; 1 wool knit cap, \$.46; 1 steel helmet, \$.99; 1 plastic helmet liner \$2.19; 1 headband, \$.39; and 1 neckband \$.03.

Miscellaneous items such as collar and shoulder sleeve insignia, braid, cord, chevrons, laces, overshoes and other material furnished to some but not all soldiers from time to time, depending on promotions, transfers, and assignment to special forces, all are included in the average costs per man.

The following items of individual equipment are furnished to each soldier; 2 barracks bags at \$.76, \$1.52; 3 wool OD blankets at \$7.13, 21.39; 1 meat can, \$.47; 1 canteen, \$.54; 1 canteen cover, \$.52; 2 mattress covers at \$1.70, \$3.40; 1 cup, \$.42, 1 fork, \$.06;

1 knife, \$.13; 1 spoon, \$.06; 5 wooden shelter tent pins at \$.01, \$.05; 1 shelter tent pole, \$.29; 1 shelter tent half (each soldier carriers half a tent), \$2.99; 1 first aid pouch, \$.17; 2 identification tags at \$.02, \$.04; 1 bath towel, \$.43; 2 huck towels at \$.15, \$.30; 1 shaving brush, \$.35; 1 toothbrush, \$.09; 1 plastic comb, \$.02, and 1 safety razor with 5 blades, \$.30.

Miscellaneous items issued to some but not all soldiers and, therefore, not listed above include cartridge bets for carbines, pistols and rifles depending on the arm issued; pack carriers, field bags, cotton-filled comforters, goggles, sun glasses, tape, bedding rolls, etc.

Barracks equipment includes 1 mosquito bar, \$3.74; 1 clamp for mosquito bar, \$.04; 1 iron mosquito bar rod, \$.23; 1 steel folding cot or single wooden bedstead, \$6.25; 1 bedstead or cot card holder, \$.04; 1 cotton mattress, \$6.10; 2 pillowcases at \$.30, \$.60; 1 feather pillow, \$.70; and 1 cotton bed sheet, \$1.20.

In addition to the above, chairs costing \$2.25 are issued on the basis of one for each two enlisted men, and folding canvas cots and sandfly bars are issued to certain soldiers, depending on where they are stationed. *QMC Training Service Bulletin, 31 JUL 43*

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## A Time to Remember

by Dave Stieghan

Fellow Dogfaces:

On this date, fifty-five years ago, began the largest battle in American history. The United States Army lost more men in the campaign in the Ardennes Forest in four weeks than were initially stationed in the sector when it began (80,000 vs. 81,000). Over 500,000 GIs were involved by the time the Germans were forced back to their initial release points, many of whom on both sides were seeing combat for the first time. Infantry replacement training centers in the United States were cramming partially-trained recruits and cadre onto aircraft to fly them almost directly into battle in Belgium and Germany. Eisenhower handed over half of the sector and the American forces on the North Shoulder to Montgomery. That was a true emergency!

While the anniversaries of the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor and the dropping of atomic bombs on Japan are media darlings as far as commemorations are concerned, more veterans are alive today who participated in the crucial campaign in Belgium. That includes the Germans.

One Wehrmacht Colonel I interviewed in Germany pointed out that he raised his third regiment of the war (62th Volksgrenadier) in Fall 1944 from men from the Class of 1928. That means that most of his men were either 16 or 17 years old. His shock battalion rode bicycles. His artillery was horse-drawn, except his battery of Russian 76.2mm guns drawn by tractors. After capturing a US supply depot near St. Vith, his regiment was combat ineffective for several hours with stomach disorders after consuming rich American rations and PX items. Oberst d. Division Arthur Jeuttner is

shown in the Time-Life W.W.II book, The Bulge, wearing a helmet and wearing an overcoat in a newly-captured jeep. Look at the officer in the rear of the jeep. He has no hands. The regimental adjutant lost his hands in a mortar explosion on the East Front, went to university, and volunteered to return to combat as Col. Jeuttner's adjutant when he learned he was raising a new unit.

For his successful last-ditch defense of the Salm River line when the German line collapsed, Jeuttner was awarded the Knight's Cross with Oak Leaves and Swords in the Feuhrer Bunker by Himmler, and returned to the Ruhr Pocket to fight to the last as commander of the 164th Division. Though he escaped from a prisoner of war cage and worked incognito as a clerk in a feed store for three years, Arthur loves America and Americans. His birthplace is now part of Poland and most of his relations disappeared in 1945. After over forty-five years in the Wehrmacht and Bundeswehr an an officer, he still supported NATO and opened his town and shooting range festivals to host GIs and their families. He and other German vets made us feel welcome, especially before the downfall of the Evil Empire. While once our nation's enemies, the Germans have been our comrades since the beginning of the Cold War. The same GIs that liberated the concentration camps prevented much of Europe suffering the horrid fate of East Prussia. Most Germans have not forgotten that we defeated both the Nazis and the Soviets. For them, World War II did not end until the Berlin Wall came down.

This is the campaign which we portray in the field at Fort Indiantown Gap each year. Let us strive to portray that enormous event accurately, and humbly.

## The Old Vet Said: *by Courtney Johnston*

In conversation with veterans at their reunions, I have never met anyone willing to provide a complete biography like the one presented by Dave Stieghan, but they will give short anecdotes to someone who ask a few specific questions, then listens quietly and attentively to their stories. Knowing not to press for more when the vet has talked long enough seems important. I have never published any of these short stories, because I was always waiting for a full biography like David submitted, but I recently decided to share what I had learned.

This first story was provided by a man named "George" who I met at the Tar Heel Chapter reunion in Raleigh in 1997. He shared the following stories about his experience as a BAR man. I did not write down the stories, but knew I could remember them. By the time I got home, I realized that I had already forgotten George's last name and home town, but was not concerned, because I knew I would see him next year. I have looked for him at the last two reunions, but he was not there. I fear he has gone the way of so many of his comrades. I have not told many people about this, because I have always been embarrassed that I did not write down the information when I could, but trusted my memory. The following stories are dedicated to "George" and to all the thousands of other W.W. II veterans who are going to their graves each year, and taking their stories, their history, with them.

"We landed in Normandy and went straight into the fighting in the hedgerows. These hedgerows were taller than a man and so thick that a tank could not break through them until later when they were fitted with 'teeth'. Hedgerow fighting was tough, for each field was a battlefield, and when you finally captured one, there was another one right behind it. The Germans would put a machine gun in each corner of the hedgerow, so they could cross the field with fire. Their guns were registered on the fields, so we attacked through artillery and machine gun fire to take each one. Once we learned how the Germans would set their defense, we would call in artillery on the hedgerows before attacking, then rush straight across before their artillery could get us.

We had been fighting about two weeks when we got into a particularly heavy firefight one afternoon. I came across our BAR man, a mouthy young punk who always bragged about what he was going to do once got into action. He was curled up in a foxhole and refused to move up or shoot so I told him, 'Well then give me the damn thing. I'll shoot it'. I gave him my M1, grabbed his BAR and belt and moved up into the fight. I went to load a magazine in the bottom of the BAR and found that it completely clogged with dirt, leaves, and mud. He had obviously never loaded or cleaned the weapon the entire two weeks we had been fighting. Here I was in the middle of a firefight, with a weapon that would not shoot! How I wished I had kept my M1. I had to just lay there until the fight moved on. That night I cleaned the BAR and carried it from then on.

My ammo bearer was an Italian kid from New York named Tony. He carried two GP ammo bags across his chest, one with ammo for the BAR, the other full of K-rations. While still fighting in the hedgerows, I needed a magazine from him. 'Hey Tony, toss me a mag, I'm out', I said. Tony told me he didn't have any ammo for me either. 'What's in that ammo bag?', I asked him. 'These are K-rations. Hell we've gotta eat. I tossed the ammo bag this morning, The damn thing was too heavy.' So here I was, for the second time in two weeks, in a firefight with a weapon that wouldn't shoot. I kicked Tony in the ass afterward and told him he had better never pull a stunt like that again. After that he did real good."

When asked whether he had ever been wounded, George replied, "Yeah, I was wounded by shrapnel. There was so much stuff flying around, bullets and shrapnel, that it was practically impossible not to get hit."

### **Display Committee Seeking Additional Members !**

The display committee, which currently consists of Mark Burfete, David Curtin, Anthony Dawkins, and Don Shupe, is seeking additional members to join in the planning of displays presented by the OHA. We had a busy year in 1999 and some of our displays were great, and some not so great. We made our first attempt at a true living history on Memorial Day and though it started out strong, as the crowd thinned, so did our portrayals.

To be perfectly honest, displays tend to be a lot of work for the few guys that bring out a lot of stuff. So we would like to get some more people involved, not only in the work but also the planning. The OHA has built a strong reputation on it's attention to details and authenticity of everything it presents and we want to see this pride spread throughout our membership.

So call Don Shupe and join us, or just give us your input on how we can stay the best.