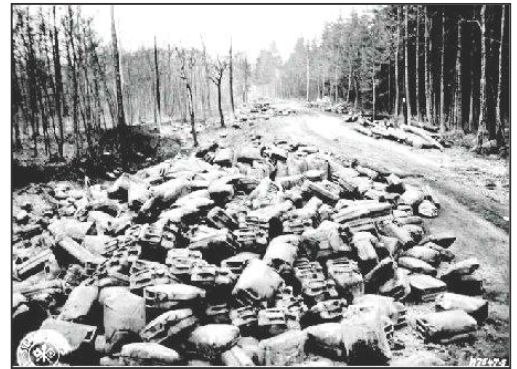




Stavelot, Belgium ... 17 to 22 December, 1944 As Told By Capt. John E. Kent ...117th Inf. Reg.

17 December 1944 1st Battalion, 117th Infantry Regiment, 30th Infantry Division, is at Warden, Germany. We are alerted at noon for possible move. At 1500hrs we received orders to move to Eupen, Belgium. We thought it was probably due to a rumor of a counterattack, it was all very vague. We thought that some new Division Commander needed to have his nerves soothed, or appeased. At 1900hrs a motorized move was started. During the trip, word of a large scale breakthrough was heard over civilian radio by "Axis Sallie" – an English speaking German Radio Broadcaster. She always tried to cause trouble but U.S. troops thought she was funny and a joke. This was the time when she stated "The Fanatical 30th Division, Roosevelt's SS Troops" are enroute to the rescue, but this time it will be completely annihilated," Sally said soothingly. The Column stopped at Hauset, Belgium and then we moved on through Eupen near Malmedy, Belgium.

18 December 1944. The 1st Battalion detrucked at dawn, on 18 December. The orders were: Company "A" to protect bridge approaches to Malmedy from the South-East direction. Company "C" to occupy the hill on left flank (South of Company "A"). Orders quickly changed, 1st Battalion's mission changed...we were now to go to Stavelot to relieve Company "A" 526th Armored Infantry Battalion which had not seen much action prior to this time. They told us that the road from Malmedy to Stavelot had been cut by the Germans. The 1st Battalion moved by convoy to Francorchamps, then south toward Stavelot. We detrucked at about 2 miles out of town. We found the 526th Armored Infantry personnel eating K-rations and when asked why they were there, the men said simply: "the Germans ran us out of town." Our mission abruptly changed from relief to assault. Units jockeyed into tactical formation and advanced. Company "A" at right of the road and Company "B" at left of road leading into Stavelot. Along the road on the right side was a large number of gasoline drums, some of which had been set on fire to prevent the Germans from using it as a resupply. I met some civilians who were very helpful and knowledgeable about the whereabouts of the German troops. These men may have given their names, but I have since forgotten them, but they did mention "Belgique Resistance" and that's how I've remembered them. Also I felt that they were the ones that set the drums afire rather than the men of Company "A" 526th Armored infantry Battalion. That act took tactical foresight, which did not come through to me in my contact with the 526th soldiers.



machineguns, Tank support and Tank Destroyers. The Jerries tried to breakthrough our lines again and again but the A and B Company GI's were not to be fooled and they killed or captured most of them.

19 December 1944 Midnight to dawn: Now the orders were: shoot anything and everything that moved. It was quiet, not much action. At morning, our orders were to push forward to the river... specific objectives were to push forward to the Ambleve River and set up defenses along the river and to blow the bridge. The river bank objective was reached by 1000 hrs. The Germans had withdrawn during the night over the single bridge across the Ambleve River. Seems like the Germans wre trying to trick us again. "B" Company was to the north of the bridge; "A" Company was to the south of the bridge and very stretched out all the way to Parfondruy. Company "C" was in reserve. The 1st Battalion H.Q., Company "D" H.Q. and its 81mm Mortar Platoon were all back on the hill overlooking Stavelot from the east (Erlinchamps). Mid afternoon: Captain Kent was going to the chateau at the southeast of Stavelot on the bluff above the river when he saw 7 German Tanks approaching the

bridge from the east. German infantry, armored vehicles, all congregated near a small square on the east side of the river. A call was made for artillery and mortar fire to be trained on the area. This strong action caused the German tank commander to weaken, not wanting to channel the tanks into such a poor position. They only tried to run the gauntlet one tank at a time. One of our tank destroyer units was in position to fire each time a German tank attempted to charge to the bridge. That tank destroyer unit finally, after several hits, managed to cause one of the German tanks to be knocked out which then blocked the bridge. The other tanks then withdrew late in the afternoon.

Meanwhile during some of that action, my Company's left flank was attacked by a Company of Germans. They attempted to cut off the forward elements of the 1st Battalion, namely Company "A", by this maneuver. They were on the hill to the west by north direction from Parfondruy and were in a perfect battle attack formation. This action was seen both by Captain Kent and Lieutenant Colonel Frankland who ordered artillery and mortar fire which proceeded to slaughter the German formation. This effective artillery barrage along with the mortar fire controlled and ended the German attempt. During this activity, Division engineers sneaked across the bridge over the Ambleve River and planted a 1000 pound bomb and blew the bridge. Thus the threat of the enemy crossing with their vehicles was eliminated.

20 December 1944, the was morning really a rough one. German infantry made repeated counterattacks in a desperate effort to recapture Stavelot. The men of the 1st Battalion were again pitting themselves against the First SS Panzer Division. Stavelot was the key objective to the First SS. The following details the days first attack early in the morning from river in the vicinity of the bridge. Doves of brave but foolish SS infantry attempted to assault the first platoons of "A" and "B" Companies by swimming the Ambleve River. As expected, the exposed Germans proved ideal targets for the GI's and were literally slaughtered. While the attempts at the river were active, a German Company of SS infantrymen, accompanied by tanks, attacked and advanced against "A" Company, 3rd Platoon on the right flank again. The single American tank supporting this platoon withdrew at the first sign of trouble. With the loss of its only tank support, the 3rd Platoon withdrew 50 meters and set up a new defense line. A lull in the conflict occurred. When the river attack renewed, Companies "A" and "B", 1st Platoons, slaughtered the German troops again. Then, "A" Company's right flank was attacked again. Once more, the artillery again came to our rescue, firing over our own positions and this stopped that German attack. Again they attempted for the bridge, with infantry, several tanks coming from the southeast side of the river, they made a swift and aggressive drive toward the bridge and the west side of Stavelot. Intense barrages of American artillery and our own 81mm mortars helped tremendously and most importantly to stem this effort. Heavy machine gun fire from the Chateau area also helped to control this effort. All together, five (5) counter attacks had been thrown back on this day. The artillery fire was so intense, they had to cool their barrels with water so they could keep firing for our support. At dark on 20 December 1944, the Germans renewed an attack on the 3rd Platoon, Company "A"'s right flank, which caused the unit to pull back about 100 meters. "A" Company's Headquarters was now exposed; Captain Kent hid all the overlays, maps and other papers on the smoke ledge of a large fireplace, so if captured no written information would be available to the Germans. Fortunately, the combat lines readjusted and held. Lieutenant O'Neal and 3 men from the A & P Platoon placed antitank mines in front of the 3rd Platoon line and across the north – south highway (the Trois-Ponts's road).

21 December 1944. Things were quiet this morning. "A" Company's 3rd Platoon pushed forward and after several lively scraps, they recaptured their original position at Parfondruy. Lieutenant Frank Warnock's, heavy machine gun Platoon aided the 3rd Platoon throughout the operation to make the effort successful. A dozen SS men were captured and it was difficult to get our soldiers to send them back, for they had found a horrible atrocity of civilians. Our GI's had found 123 dead civilians – old men, babies, children and women. The captured SS soldiers confessed openly that these people had bothered them and that's why they shot them. During this period, Task Force Harrison (our Brigadier-General of our Division) 30th Division, troops, infantry, attached tanks, anti-tanks mobile, armored infantry, heavy machine guns, 81mm mortars were all mobilized. This Task Force pushed on to Stoumont, La Gleize, Trois-Ponts, to engage Peiper and his command. Units of 119th Infantry Regiment, 120th Infantry Regiment, 117th Infantry Regiment, attached Armor, CCB 3rd Armored Division, joined later by the 82nd Airborne Division fought at these areas and caused Peiper and his units to withdraw, leaving their equipment behind because of lack of fuel .Except for occasional small arms fire exchange across the Ambleve River, no further significant engagements occurred in or around Stavelot.



22 December 1944. A holding period for the next 3 weeks. Christmas hot turkey dinner with all the fixings was served. We still had to sneak past an open forward area along the street close to the river because of small arms fire from the west. It was a nuisance when moving about. The three weeks holding pattern developed essentially into a rest period. The Belgian people were very friendly and hospitable, making our stay more pleasant. Many people returned to their homes even though many were still used by our soldiers for military positions. We were very saddened along with the townspeople because of the loss of their friends and relatives who had been killed by the SS soldiers. For a long time I felt that somehow I had failed by this happening. Many of my men disagreed with me, but a heaviness has always stayed with me. When we departed, it was to retake the Saint - Vith area which we did. Once this was accomplished we then went back to Warden, Germany to begin Rhineland Part II.



I want to impress upon any and all who read this memory. Remember and apply this truth to all war stories. Each person, regardless of rank, Private, Corporal, Sergeant, Staff Sergeant, 2nd or 1st Lieutenants, Captain, Major, Colonel, or General or on up the chain of command see an entirely different war and each one is his true story of His War. *Written by Capt John E. Kent, 117th Inf. Reg. 30th Inf. Div.*





Triad Flight of Honor



OHA Honors WWII Veterans at the "Triad Flight of Honor"

The Triad Flight of Honor is a service project of Rotary District 7690, which includes the 11 county region of Piedmont North Carolina. Rotarians and other community organizations and businesses are united to honor World War II veterans for their courage, valor and sacrifice. The veterans who are still with us are in their 80's and 90's. The program will fly 100 veterans, **free of charge**, to Washington, DC from the Piedmont Triad Airport to allow them to visit the WW II Memorial, the Vietnam, Korean and FDR Memorials. Future flights are scheduled for: Wednesday, October 28, 2009 (CLOSED), April 17, 2010 and May 22, 2010. If you are or know of a WWII veteran and want to go on one of our flights, please print the veteran application and return it to the address at the bottom of the form. If you would like for us to mail you an application, please call (336) 285-8847. The event staff will contact interested veterans by March 1, 2010 regarding your status on a future flight.



Jay Callaham was our primary contact with the Triad Flight of Honor event organizers and offered the services of the OHA as willing participants. So, on October 3rd, Jay Callaham, Walt Sowinski, Neil Trivette, Ken Hyatt, Oliver Hyatt and Pat Grogan assembled at the PTI airport at 0630 to welcome the Vets who were to arrive at 0700 for their 0830 flight to Washington, DC to see the WWII monument. Our job for the morning was to greet, assist veterans from their vehicles, steer them to the registration area and cheer them on as they arrived to check in for their DC flight. The uniform of the day was M37 wools, pants & shirt with tie, overseas cap, '41 jacket, leggings, pistol belt with baton, MP brassard, shinned shoes, trimmed hair and a clean shave. The event organizers thought that since we all were dressed out as MP's, we could have some fun with the Vets by asking to see their "travel orders or liberty passes" as we guided them to the registration site. One feisty vet said, "The last MP that asked me that question got a busted nose..." however, he did say it with a twinkle in his eye and a smile!

The big finale was in the evening at 2030 when the Vets returned back to PTI. That's when the organizers thought they'd have the biggest crowds to line up along the exit area to welcome the Vets back home. The OHA was tasked to provide a Color Guard to honor these Vets for this very well attended and emotional welcoming home effort. Local television station **WXII** was there in full force to film the whole thing...they were also a sponsor. On Thursday night at 7PM, October 8th, they ran a special program of the vets arriving at PTI, showed them in Washington DC and then returning to PTI. Of particular note, a Mr. Cecil Cardwell of Mayodan, NC was in this returning group and his black cap sported a 30th Infantry Division patch. Unfortunately, none of got to speak with him but I'm thinking we should get in contact with him.



The WXII evening special highlighted Pat Grogan who was interviewed by a WXII reporterette and he did a fine job of explaining who we are and what we do. As the camera's scanned the proceedings, Ken Hyatt was caught on tape a number of times, Neil Trivette, Pat Grogan, Jay Callaham, Walt Sowinski a few times but there was a fabulous photograph of Oliver Hyatt at the end of the program. In my opinion, the OHA did it's part to make this a truly grand and memorable occasion for these magnificent WWII Veterans. Event organizer, Jeff Sims commented: "Everyone had a great time and the veterans were blown away by their warm reception at the airport both in the morning and when they returned in the evening. The Old Hickory Association organized the honor guard with period uniforms. It was very cool."

Do Ya' Remember The Ole' Camp Butner Training Weekends?



The Ole Camp Butner Training Weekends remember those guys? Those were the weekends that we typically held in the Spring that included numerous attempts to train members in the WW II style of changing a 1940's civilian into 1940's GI. Some of the past attempts were worthy of Abbott & Costello scenarios although that was never the intent of the training cadre. Some of us can remember from past years, that our Butner events were blessed with high number participation by the membership but in the last couple of years, it seems member interest has fallen off dramatically down to only 4 or 6 guys per event. This has led the Board of Directors to cancel what once was a greatly attended event.

Later on in the year, we held the Annual Fall Live Fire event which was designed to provide the membership with an opportunity to fire their WWII era infantry weapons that most of us tote to various display or tactical events. We always held this live fire event on a Saturday and it was usually administered in a strictly



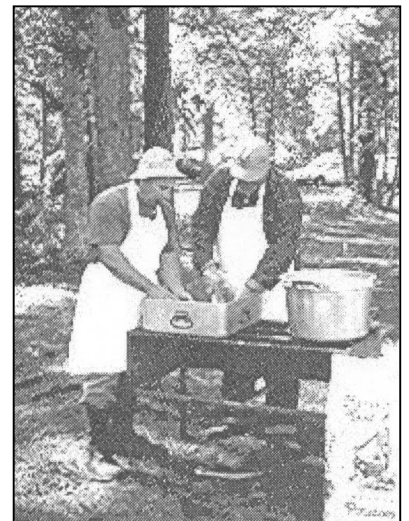
professional and well organized manner. The "qualification" used live ball ammunition and the Range Officer worked hard to direct the event (to the best of his ability) per WWII U.S. Army range regulations. Over the years when we had exceptional participation by our members as well as other invited living history groups, an unofficial competition based on high score was put into play, with the only award being unit braggin' rights going to the winners. On Sunday, the short range was opened up so the membership could try out and live fire some of their other military weapons. Usually, these weapons consisted of WWII rifles, carbines, pistols and shotguns. That live fire event was always somewhat informal compared to the long range event although it was still subject to and under the firm control of a Range Officer. All in all, I'm sure some of you remember it as a most enjoyable and fun filled weekend.



Of additional note, do you remember when over the entire weekend, the OHA mess crew tried to produce edible, period foodstuffs (at a reasonable cost to the membership) so we didn't have to go off base more than necessary. In the past, this function was handled as a catered affair which we all enjoyed but when the OHA made operable their own field kitchens, we decided to use them and give it a go! The mess crew's motto of "**Death From Within**" is a

well known motto and is highly feared by other living history units both Allied as well as Axis! Ah yes, those were the days, when canteen cups were filled with superb java, mess kits were heaped with steaming hot GI slop, friendship flourished, cigars were lit and we all sat around and bragged about our high scores and our fine Garands! It was great fun, right?

So I ask you, Gomer, what the hell happened...how come we don't do these anymore? What has happened to this group that has resulted in such miserable event participation? Yah, the Board of Directors understand that the economy has been lousy, we all worry about keeping our jobs, our kids are getting bigger and they require more of our attention, the wives are a little less enthusiastic about us going off to play war, the weather sometimes does not cooperate and the scheduling may be in conflict with other more important events. We have 30+ paid up members so we should be able to field at least a dozen guys for any particular event. If any of you have an opinion as to why we can't get people to sign up for events, we'd sure appreciate your input and your suggestions to correct the problem. This lack of participation thing needs some serious consideration, discussion and subsequent correction.



Old Hickory Pin - Ups

HOPE YA'LL WILL BE LOOKING FOR ME UNDER YOUR CHRISTMAS TREE.....

NOVEMBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

DECEMBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		



OHA UNIT NEWS

Some Guys Still Owe Their 2010 OHA Dues

Jim Higgins is still waiting for some of you guys to mail in your dues. At last count, we've had 30 guys pony up the cash to be counted as full paid up members. So let's get with it because if you don't pay your dues you don't get the newsletter, you don't have any OHA participation rights and you'll be branded a loser for life! So pay up Homer...here's the current rates: A **Renewal** of a Regular Membership is \$20.00 per year...A **New Regular Membership** is \$30.00 for the first year only and an **Associate Membership** is always \$30.00 per year, is a non-voting membership but members will also receive the OHA newsletter and unit updates. The names listed below are currently paid up members. If you don't see your name below, you may want to write a check and mail it to Jim Higgins at: **The Old Hickory Association P.O. Box 1079 Wake Forest, NC 27588-1079.**



Mike Owens
Don Shupe
John Hedgepeth
Ken Hyatt
Mark Burfete
Paul Gill
Ronald Crawley
Neil Trivette

Jaime Layman
Bob Guerrin
Jim Higgins
Galen Dilworth
F.J. Hale
Walt Sowinski
Kent Triplett
Norman Klein

Robbie Lamb
Pat Grogan
Brian Illner
Jay Callahan
Matt Koonts
Mike Nelson
Rick Sneed
Brett Bondurant

Jeff Howard
Ray Oakes
Ashley Parker
Tom Bowers
Chuck Fraley
Will Vanderburg

Guilford Courthouse National Military Park 2009 Timeline Event

Members of the OHA are needed to attend the **Guilford Courthouse National Military Park's "History of the American Soldier"** timeline display event this November 14th in honor of Veterans Day. This event usually features a timeline encampment and demonstrations of the US military from the French and Indian War up through to the present day military... although with our modern military otherwise occupied in Ira or Afganistan, this years timeline may not have the current military representation that it's enjoyed in the past. None the less, we need OHA representation at this event so contact Walt Sowinski at wsowinski@triad.rr.com with what you plan to bring. The display set up time is 0830 at the program area which is located at Stop 8 on the park's one way tour road. You can drive to your specified site to unload your display materials ... participant parking is available on the tour road in the bicycle lane (on the left). Do NOT park in the Old Battleground parking lot as this is for visitors only. Hope to see you there.

Price of Freedom Museum Display Event



Members of the OHA are also needed to attend the **"Price of Freedom"** museum display event which will also be held on November 14th. This event was originally

scheduled for November 7th but due to an unforeseen conflict, the event organizers changed their date to November 14th. This date change is unfortunate because it now conflicts with the **Guilford Courthouse National Military Park's "History of the American Soldier"** timeline display event being held in Greensboro. This means that OHA members will be split up between those choosing to attend the Salisbury event versus the Greensboro event. If you are going to attend the Salisbury event, contact Don Shupe at shupda@carolina.rr.com so he can answer any questions you may have about the event or to get any information on event times or directions to the staging area. The OHA participated in this event last year, which was its first year and it well worth our time. The people are really great and welcomed us warmly...plus, they had some really good eats for us at NO charge...how can you turn that down Gomer? Hope you can make it to the **"Price of Freedom"** museum display event on the 14th of November.





Board of Directors

President

Neil Trivette

336-367-3670

ntrivette@triad.rr.com

Vice-President

Walt Sowinski

336-379-8007

wsowinski@triad.rr.com

Treasurer

Jim Higgins

919-556-1014

higginsboats@yahoo.com

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919-380-1771

Garand7449@aol.com

Sgt. At Arms

Jay Callaham

336-854-2008

callaham@bellsouth.net

Reenactments / Recruiting

Clint Yarbrough / Charlie Noble

Marksmanship:

Jim Higgins

Drill & Ceremony:

Mark Burfete

828-863-2253

mrburfete@alltel.net

Displays, 30th ID History –TBD

Mailing Address:

The Old Hickory Association

P.O. Box 1079

Wake Forest, NC 27588-1079

OHA Website:

www.30thinfantrydivision.com

Newsletter Editor:

Walt Sowinski

Email: wsowinski@triad.rr.com

Items For Sale

OHA Items:

Grey T-shirt w/OHA logo, S-XL \$10., XXL \$12.50

Golf Shirt, White or Grey, w/ OHA logo, S-XL \$22.50 XXL \$25.00

Grey Sweatshirt w/ OHA logo, S-XL \$18.00, XXL \$20.00

Ball Cap, Grey body w/ blue bill w/ OHA logo \$11.00

Prices do NOT include shipping. Brett says to "Order directly" from: Custom Embroidery Company
123 Wooding Ave. Danville, VA 24541 ph. 434-799-3153 ...Tell them you are an OHA Member.

Reproduction Items:

WWII Reproduction Rations - Complete reproduction of WW2 K ration, C ration and D bars, as well as other such accessories as Foot Powder, Charms, PK Gum, fuel tablets, batteries and much more. Catalog available. . www.angelfire.com/nc/stug or mail to:

Todd Hogan, 225 S. Melville Street, Graham, NC 27253 or e-mail me at -thogan@triad.rr.com

World War II Impressions – U.S. Army uniforms and accessories. Catalog available.

7165 Adwen Street, Downey, CA 90241 Fax and Phone – (562) 927-6922

Email at – WWIIImpressions@msm.com

What Price Glory – Reproduction uniforms and accessories. No Catalog available.

238-A Commission Street, Salinas, CA 93901 Toll Free Order Line) – (888) 431-2351

Inquiry Line (831) 754-2351 <http://www.whatpriceglory.com/usunif.htm>



SGM Jones Hard at Work at His Desk in Iraq.

Hello all: I have attached a small word document and some pictures. All is going well here in the land where nothing grows!! No trees, no grass, etc. Overall, it's 10 times better than the last time I was here back in early 04. Thanks for you support and emails. Old Hickory!

SGM Rick Jones, OPS SGM 1-252nd Combined Arms Battalion-Thunderbolts! 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team FOB FALCON APO AE 09361

Upcoming Events

Nov. 7- 9

Newville, PA

WWI Fall Tactical

Contact: Jay Callaham

Nov. 14

Freedom Event

Salisbury, NC

Contact: Don Shupe

Nov. 11

Veterans Day

Raleigh, NC

No Plans Yet

Contact: TBD

Nov. 14

Guilford Courthouse Military

Park Timeline Event

Contact: Clint Yarbrough

Dec. 2009

No Events Scheduled

Contact: TBD

Jan. 26 – 31 2010

Ft. Indiantown Gap, PA

Battle of the Bulge

Contact: TBD