



A GAP-TASTIC TIME - At The Battle of the Bulge, 2013



The recreated 30th Division that became the Old Hickory Association began to organize some time after founding member Mike Fox moved back to North Carolina in 1993. One of their first events was the 50th Anniversary D-Day event in 1994 where they gathered a group of about 15 to attend. It was the following year, in January 1995 when the unit first traveled to Fort Indiantown Gap to attend the Battle of the Bulge reenactment. Member attending included Mike, Ray, Brett, Don, Howard and others. This photo of the 2nd Platoon Co K after the Saturday Battle is courtesy of Clint Yarbrough

Seen in this image at right is Brett Bondurant and Ray Oakes...note Ray's prominent 30th ID shoulder patch! Photo courtesy of Ray Oakes

Since that time, there has not been a year that the OHA has not participated. Listening to some "old timers", you will learn that early on, Co K WAS the 30th Division. We consistently put a large number of men in the field, held high ranking leadership positions, and formed the bulk of the Allied forces for the public battle. The event has changed over the years, in some way gotten better and in others way not so much. But the OHA and our officers and NCOs are still well regarded.



The event in 2013 was no exception. With Clint as the Co K Exec and Sparky again as Top Sergeant and Charlie as Platoon Guide, the men of the OHA joined 2nd Platoon under some "interesting" leadership from our friends in the Keystone Division. Members attending were Clint, Mark, Charlie, Matt, Mike, Chuck, Robbie, Tyler, Ashley, Ron and Aaron. Two from the 117th handled MP duties and did not take the field this year, but were visible around the cantonment and Ann Parker was with the Paper Dolls.



Upon arrival, we faced very brisk weather, about 18°F during the day and God-only-knows-what at night. Much of the day Thursday was spent on the usual way: meetings for leaders, flea market for us underlings, Ann & Ron once again hosted the Old Hickory Hour on KFIG, and we ended by "party-hopping" with the Morton Salt Girl. On Friday, Co K opted out of the tactical and spent a portion of the day in training sessions with one very cold outdoor session that ended with a snowfall. Later that night, more party going (except for those ranking members who were inadvertently abandoned ... so much for "leave no one behind." (Sorry again, Clint). Shown left is Ann Parker and Rex Carson in the KFIG studio during the

broadcast of The Old Hickory Hour radio show. Picture submitted by Ashley Parker



The Drunk Monkeys and the Drunken Monkey (L to R: KT, Mike, Matt, Ashley, Chuck, Clint, Ron, Aaron) - picture by Ann Hunter

Preparation for the Battle on Saturday was uneventful. The temperature eventually rose to 26°F. The bus ride was darned near enjoyable, with Miss Martha commanding. Ammo pickup was easy (done after unloading the bus this time) and but for confusion

regarding loading weapons and some nut who popped off a round in close ranks (OK, everyone in unison: "What the f*, what the f*, WHAT THE F*?"), it was same ole same ole. Going into position on a ridge top with an observation post forward, 2nd platoon was not disappointed to see the bulk of the German command, led by half-track, coming across a small stream and up the hill in a hoard. Murderous fire took many a casualty until the Germans were forced to regroup. We set up a new line in a field and for some reason on a high bank, only to get beaten back a second time, but not before the Yankee Division and the 45th Division foolishly lost their machine guns. Ammo was running low as our third position was set up directly in front of the bus carrying WWII Veteran observers. The Germans foolishly came across the open ground and were finally stopped. With the Allies now on the offensive, we gave chase to our retreating foe and eventually halted after pushing back past our initial lines. I cannot think of any member of the OHA who did not take at least two hits that day. But our organization held as we were aptly led by Sgt Koonts! For a brief story, ask Charlie why he didn't provide any suggestions to the Platoon Leader.

To summarize the battle, I think we all got a lot more "trigger time" than at any point in the last several years. Satisfaction ranked high in this reporters view, thanks mostly to the great group of guys we had in the squad, comfortable weather, and lots of targets. The party on Saturday was also enjoyable, in no small part due to the presence of Frank Deegan & Son, as well as the excellent table that Ann managed to procure for us. Thanks to Clint and Sparky, Sgt. Dee, The Great Ratsby, all the Paper Doll babes, the Drunken Monkey crew, the Devil's Den staff, the NAAFI folks, and the registration/ammo check volunteers! **Article contributed by Pvt. Linus Crawley**



This is a reprint from a 2004 Old Hickory Chronicle done by then newsletter editor Don Shupe. It featured an "in the field" encounter with a resident FIG bear who was awakened during a fire fight . Cartoon is by Walt Sowinski



2nd Lt. Noble's Recent Army Adventures



Editor's Note: The following is part two (2) of a two part series. It is an unedited account written by Charlie Noble. This section deals with Charlie's experiences and impressions of his OCS adventure.

Part 2: OCS: We classed up in Alpha Company on August 27th. The morning brought a 0330 wakeup followed by a PT test, quick breakfast chow and carrying your stuff over to the Alpha Company footprint for a complete layout and inspection. During this inspection a cadre member would come by and ask for a certain item and then count and check to make sure you had the prescribed item and amount. This took about 2 hours and after it was all said and done we were already minus 4 people, one of them being a buddy from Basic. Our Ft. Sill 6 was now a team of 5 and it was only day 1! After moving our stuff into the barracks I was relieved to see my roommate was one of my buddies from Sill and I had another next door. I was lucky to have two people I knew in my platoon which was more than most could say. Third Platoon consisted for 33 people hailing from all parts of the US and outlying islands, prior service, active duty and college option, and ages from 22 to 33.



Week 1: The first week brought the Rock Run, a short 4 miler that ran us to the Chattahoochee River where we threw in a rock that we had written things that we wanted to get rid of from our "old self". The run has been completed by every class since the very first class in 1941. Surprisingly, we lost about 4 people on this run...OCS was proving tougher than I had imagined! On Wednesday we hit the Bolton Obstacle Course, a very large course where everything seemed to tower above the ground. Again, we lost 4 or so people during this, mainly due to injury. It was during this course that my squad really grew together and started to form a bond that would prove unbreakable (our 1SG even mentioned this later in the course). That weekend happened to be a holiday weekend and we got a 4 day pass. I spent most of it sleeping in a real bed, eating real food and returning/buying needed stuff to stores outside of base.

Weeks 2-4: are all blur of Power Points, classes and lectures on this and that. Map making and reading, terrain analysis, defensive planning, supply and logistics and lots of other nap worthy subjects. We headed to the Leadership Reaction Course on week 4 with me as Platoon Leader. It was basically just a glorified puzzle/obstacle course. You had obstacles to go over and the cadre gave you the pieces to do it with, and they wanted to see how you led and worked as a squad sized element. My squad excelled at this and really got a lot of attention from our platoon trainers and 1st Sergeant. He commented that we were one of, if not *the* tightest knit squad he had ever seen at OCS. My squad coined the nickname "Squad of Excellence" and it stuck with us throughout the whole course, even being used, at times sarcastically, by the cadre chain of command. We lost a couple more people at LRC due to injury as well, and a couple due to having SOP violations (usually more than one).



Week 5: Almost at the halfway point, Week 5 was the big history test covering basically all wars the US has fought. We had 4 days to learn it all with a test on Friday morning, retest that afternoon. You had to score 80% or better to pass, and we had 7 recycles from Charlie Company to show for it. It was no joke...the professor was crazy as a shithouse rat and covered multiple wars a day. It was a lot for even me to handle, I will admit. I was also Platoon Leader during this week which meant less time for me to study and more time to worry about the platoon. Of course I aced the test, missing two questions. We only had 4 failures but they all passed the retest. We also classed up that week to Intermediate Officer Candidates and got the pleasure of wearing a light blue ascot instead of the black one we had been sporting since day 1. We also got another long weekend pass and enjoyed staying off base with friends and family (if they came) and had basically free-range to do what we wanted. In the back of my mind I knew next week would suck, because the big killer of OCS was coming up...Land Nav.

We packed for Land Nav on Monday and headed out there mid-morning Tuesday. We spent some of the day just doing a terrain walk, getting



our pace count, trying our hand at dead reckoning, and familiarizing ourselves with the compass. That night we slept in the dirt in just our sleeping bags. I had no trouble with this but some people absolutely LOST IT. 0330 came quick and we were sitting in the bleachers getting our brief from the Land Nav range cadre. Our load out for this consisted of a map case, protractor (I carried 3 just in case), Chem Light, headlamp, a whistle, map markers, cell phone (battery out, duct taped and zip tied in a Ziploc bag), and CamelBak. Funny thing is we weren't allowed to use half of that stuff. We were given a map laminated to a clipboard and a scorecard with eight 8-digit grid coordinates on it and places to write beside them. Each point across the course was indicated with a unique number and a stamper with a unique pattern of hole punches on it. The cadre would grade your card based on if you had the right number/stamp combo beside the grid coordinate. The point itself was on a 4-8 foot green signpost and the top was a 1'x1' orange and white wedge with a black number.

They cut the lights off and told us to begin plotting, our time started now. We had 5 hours to find 6 of 8 points. Caveats include: no talking, no white light, no light while moving, no looking for a point with your light (light housing as we called), no using your GPS enabled phone and no writing grid coordinates on points. Unfortunately for us there was no moon and it was cool out, so at 0500 it was pitch black and cold. As the sun came up the fog broke out, so visibility was no better. I was on a roll though, and by 0725 I had 3 points...and that is what I ended with. The fog killed me and so did hinging on one point. I later learned this point didn't exist as 5 other people couldn't find it, and the cadre verified it had been removed when they logged the area it was in. I returned to the land nav headquarters wet, bloody, tired and beaten. From my estimates I had covered around 12 miles and knew that the retest tomorrow was going to be no easier.

It turned out that 60 of us had failed the first day, so two platoons worth of us loaded up and went out the next day. We got to sleep in the barracks the night we failed, so I rested somewhat better but still knew I couldn't rest till I passed the second one. Lucky for us the cadre let us start 30 minutes later, giving us less dark and more light to work with. I also mentally prepared myself better by acknowledging what I did wrong and trusting myself more. I headed out at 0545 after plotting and replotting my points, making attack points, getting good distances and making an attack plan for hitting the points. Running was much harder that day...my legs were burning from trudging through the calf deep sand, up and down ravines, and through swamps the day before. I found my first point after 25 minutes of searching for it. A good rule of thumb, given the time we had, was to spend no more than 15 minutes on a point or you were wasting time for your other points. Great, I was already behind and I had just started! But points 2, 3, and 4 came much easier due to the fact that it wasn't foggy, my attack plan worked wonderfully and that I had spent the previous day roaming all over the part of the course that the majority of my 2nd day would be spent in, so I knew the area well to say the least.

Point 5 was a haul from point 4 so I decided to dead reckon for about 600 meters. All was going good till I got turned around and got somewhat lost. I started heading the way I thought was right and scared up a wild hog...both he and I took off the same direction, which oddly enough was the right way. We ended up on a trail and I think I loudly thanked him for steering me in the right direction...it's the little things in life! After I consulted my map and compass I righted bearings and plodded towards point 5. I kept passing fellow platoon members and squad members not knowing how they were doing or where they were headed, but the look on many of their faces told me "not good". It was the last time I would see many of them in Alpha Company again.

Point 5 turned out to be right off the trail, and point 6 was as elusive as point 1, but after gaining and vantage point on a partially fallen oak tree, I saw it just opposite of where I had it plotted, and ran to tag it. I made it back to the HQ with just over an hour and a half to spare, finishing just behind my best friend from reception and basic. This proved to be the worst day for most of us as we saw 30 of our friends fail out of Alpha Company. Among those lost was my roommate, my other real good friend from Sill, and half of my squad. The 2nd squad in my platoon lost all but 2 people. 1st platoon was so beaten up they were dissolved into 2nd and 3rd platoon. After Land Nav we numbered 66...Land Nav really showed us who really was boss.

Week 6: was basically all recovery and learning larger unit tactics. **Weeks 7 and 8** took us into the field for squad and platoon lanes. This was a rather fun event where we got to burn tens of thousands



of rounds. I had the pleasure of being one of the SAW gunners for my squad and loved every second of it. We lost no one during this and many of us started to see the light at the end of the tunnel. After coming back and cleaning weapons for over a week straight, sun up to sun down, we were provided more personal time, more privileges, and more on and off base passes. In the coming weeks we had just a few small tests left, 7 and 10 mile ruck marches, and the Senior Officer Candidate Review left before graduation. The tests came and went, as did the 7 mile ruck. The 10 miler really hurt a lot of people. M240s and SAWs start weighing a lot during a ruck...Luckily we lost no one during this as well.



After the 10 miler and the Crucible, 5 mile run combined with basically everything we had done at OCS up to that point including obstacle courses, required knowledge, stretcher carries, basic first aid, weapons assembly, etc., we were basically done except for our Senior Review. All of our gear and our entire room had to be inspection ready and to a certain SOP for the Battalion Commander and Command Sergeant Major to check. That also came and went without a hitch and the next day we were given a congratulatory pass and our white ascot signifying Senior Phase. Bravo Company had just started, around the time we started Land Nav, and they had to salute us when passing or call the room to attention when we walked in a common area they happened to be. To be honest, it took some getting used to. After the pass all we had was gear turn in, plane ticket and order issuing and starting to get ready for the formal. Formal was pretty fun as we were allowed to drink and the cadre finally started rendering respect to us as well.

Graduation came with a bang on November 15. My parents along with Mike and Holly Owens, and 1Lt Danny Fitzpatrick came down for my graduation. Graduation didn't last too long, even though we rehearsed it for 2 days straight. We were sworn in, given all of our paperwork and a new ID card and told to leave basically. Most of us had moved out earlier in the week to stay with family in hotels or cabins in the area so after graduation all we had to do was get the paperwork and sign-out.



I walked out of my room for the last time around 2:30 that afternoon and couldn't believe I had actually done it. There were so many opportunities I could have failed. I had gotten hurt twice and worked through them, even though I could have been

dropped for either injury or concealing them, running, sometimes up to 12+ miles and every step hurting knowing that if I fell out, I would be dropped, stumbling around in the dark woods looking for a street sign using only a map and compass...twice, and just making it day to day without fighting with one of the other people there, there was rarely an easy day.

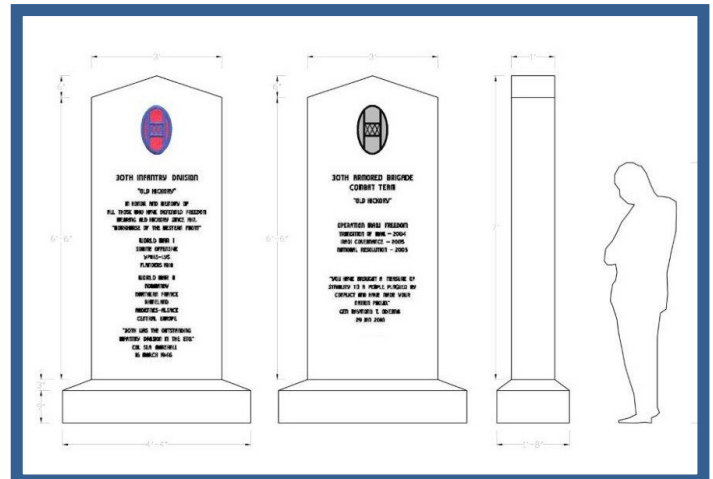
All said and done Alpha Company started with 98 people and graduated 63. Most were active duty, with National Guard very close behind (maybe a 4 person difference), and Army Reserve with 8 (they graduated 100%...started 8 and left with 8!). Leaving was bittersweet as a lot of us had grown close over the last 3 months. We all got together one more time and the Squad of Excellence went their separate ways. Of the original group from Ft. Sill that I arrived with, only 4 of us graduated with Alpha (all of us are National Guard too). A few of us got together on the night of the 15th and had a meal and a few drinks and went our separate ways.

I didn't sleep any that night as I was busy repacking and getting ready to fly out at 0500. I was on the plane with a few others from OCS and we all enjoyed McDonalds and Starbucks for breakfast, one last time, at the Atlanta Airport. A few boarded planes for their branch-specific training but the majority of us were headed home. I stepped on the plane bound for Fayetteville at 0800 after saying goodbye to the last two guys left from our small airport group. It was tough saying goodbye to them, knowing I may not see any of them again and knowing we had all weathered the OCS storm together (they were all in my platoon).

I was awakened by the DING from the *Fasten Seatbelt* indicator light above me and the pilot announcing we'd be landing in Fayetteville in 5 minutes. We touched down and I stepped onto the jetway...in my mind I was finally in North Carolina. It was the same gate I had left from back in June. I wandered quietly into the USO for some water and snack, and headed downstairs to gather my stuff. I pulled in the driveway a little after 1000 and began settling back into my home life. I was finally done.



30th Infantry Division & 30th Brigade Monuments To Be Installed At Fort Benning



Gentlemen: LTC Morrison sent me these architectural drawings which show the proposed monument which will be erected at Ft. Benning in the very near future. We allowed that he will keep us in the loop as to when the dedication will take place. I'm sure some of you will want to attend this event and we'll do our best to provide you with plenty of advance warning so you can make the proper arrangements. That is all, carry on!



HURTGEN FOREST EVENT



This was a new event created by "some WWII reenactors" who don't do the FIG anymore such as Carter Bertone and Mark Ragan. I believe the Hurtgen event it was previously held in the Fairfax Virginia area in past years but now got located in the "geographical center" of our membership area. Unfortunately, it is also just two weeks before FIG event so OHA attendance this time was spotty. I'm very optimistic that our attendance will improve next year because this turned out to be a really enjoyable event. It has always been planned to be a total immersion, living in the field event, no barracks, no hot showers or barracks type toilet facilities and limited to foxholes and makeshift shelters. GI's were responsible to supply their own field rations...no "Death From Within" field kitchen to provide hot chow this time. The event has always been designed to recreate the offensive operations of the 8th Infantry, 4th Infantry Division against the well fortified German positions in the Hurtgen Forest during November, 1944. The US forces were directed to run day and nighttime patrols and to conduct offensive pushes to dislodge the entrenched Germans out of their sector. The event took place on about one hundred acres of a privately owned site located at 1489 Burnetts Chapel Road in the Greensboro, NC area. The Allied Commander was Thomas Salemi and Ron Crawley was the POC for the OHA. The OHA guys who attended were Ron, Ashley, Aaron, Ray, Walt, Shiloh and Pat. Registration for the event was \$20.00 per man and was well worth the fee. I think all of us who attended this event look forward to next year so mark your calendars now. For a more personal description of the event, read Ashley's AAR shown below.



After Action Report: Hurtgen Forest "Schlacht im Hurtgenwald" 11-12 January 2013

It was to be a sunny warm weekend in the Hurtgen Forest, but that was not to be the case. The 30th ID arrived Friday night in the form of Ron Crawley, Aaron Clark, Shiloh Brooks, and Ashley Parker. After quite a bit of deliberation the 30th was folded into the 4th ID, 3rd squad with an attachment of two soldiers from the 82nd 504th, with Crawley squad leader. We were assigned to cover a tree line that covered the right flank and rear area of 1st and 2nd squads which included the main road intersection for event. We quickly started digging in with Clark and the 504th covering the far right of the line and Crawley, Shiloh, and Parker covering the intersection and the far left of the line. As night fell, the fog rolled in and the temperature dropped. Crawley was pulled off the line to help set up the communications lines for the entire regiment. While he was gone the 3rd squad received a new commanding officer in Sgt. Mike Evans.

For most of the night the lines were quiet. 3rd squad continued to set up LPOP (Listening Post Outposts) throughout the night and into the early morning. Around 2am with Crawley and Parker covering the intersection and enjoying a fine meal of Crawley made K rations, the division CO showed up to check up on the lines. He determined that since Crawley and Parker couldn't sleep that it was a perfect time to send a patrol out for a prisoner grab. After a briefing in the CQ, Crawley, Parker, and Sgt. Evans set out. The fog was thick and you couldn't really pick up anything within ten yards in front of you. The three moved slowly and deliberately through the woods advancing on what was to be the German left flank. Sneaking up on the Germans was tough as every step was met by the cracking of a branch or twig under your feet. But after

dodging a potential German Patrol and a flock of restless birds, we ascended the ridge to where HQ thought the German lines were. We advanced half way up the ridge, we came to a clearing and thick brush and with still no contact with the enemy it was determined that it was time to head back and call of the prisoner grab. At least that was the plan. Shortly after this determination, German sentries challenged our patrol and both sides opened up. The only casualty of the night was Parker's M1, whose trigger guard jumped ship during the fire fight. The rest of the night was fairly quite. On Saturday, the 30th (3rd Squad) was the only squad that received reinforcements. Walt Sowinski, Ray Oakes, and Pat Grogan arrived giving Old Hickory the largest contingent of one unit at the battle. All three earned a baptism of fire in an early morning LPOP.

Late morning the HQ decided to assault the German lines and it was to be 3rd Squad that was to be the lead element of the attack. The attack was to go in at the same point on the ridge that the prisoner grab patrol's did the night before. The attack started off great with rapid gains up the ridge in quick and ferocious fire fights. Unfortunately half way up the ridge the division ran into multiple crew weapons from atop the ridge. Casualties started to mount and the attack was halted. As the division medic raced around taking care of the wounded the division pulled back off the ridge and retreated back to our original lines.

After a short break the division again assembled another frontal attack of the German lines with 3rd squad attacking on the left of the line. Quickly after entering the woods 3rd squad ran into a very vocal German sniper or two and was quickly pinned down. The squad split in two with Parker, Clark and Shiloh pulling back and re-attacking further up the line, but it was to no avail. Again the division had modest gains, but then pulled back for some R&R.



It was during the R&R that somehow a lone German infantryman snuck through 1st and 2nd squad's lines, entered HQ area unopposed and had his eyes set on 3rd Squad. After scouting and observing the area for some twenty minutes, he finally partially exposed himself and took Clark, Parker, Crawley, Shiloh, Grogan and Evans prisoner.

This all happened under the somewhat confused and watchful eyes of Sowinski and Oakes who later said they could hear the Kraut but they couldn't see where he was. The German led the group into the woods where he disarmed the group of some rations and Pvt. Shiloh. The rest of the group returned to the lines with a few choice words for HQ and 1st and 2nd Squads. Shiloh returned later in the day unharmed from his capture.

Near the end of the day 4th ID assaulted German lines one more time before the battle was called and the event ended. It was a fun and exciting event and a good time was had by all. Matt Koonts made a guest appearance at the end of the day. Old Hickory performed well and had the largest contingent there. It looks like the area will have more future events with a possible Normandy event sometime this spring as well as looking like the Hurtgen event being an annual one. *Article by Ashley Parker - Photos by Aaron Clark & Pat Grogan*



Ashley and Ron take steps to make sure they don't get captured again!

Old Hickory Pin Up

MARCH

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31						

APRIL

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HEY GOMER...

**THERE IS STILL TIME
FOR YOU TO SIGN UP
FOR THE APRIL, 2013
30TH INFANTRY DIVISION
VETERANS OF WWII
REUNION TO BE HELD IN
LOUISVILLE, KY.**

**YOU ARE MISSING AN
INCREDIBLE
OPPORTUNITY TO BE
WITH AND TALK WITH
SOME OF THE 30TH
DIVISIONS FINEST. SO,
START PLANNING TO
ATTEND THE APRIL
REUNION NOW.**

Upcoming Events

March 8 - 10, 2013

Sons of Valor VI

Camden, SC

www.ablecompany.org

April 6 - 7, 2013

Armies Through Time

All Eras - All Nations

Camden, SC

Contact: Jay Callaham

April 11-14, 2013

30th Infantry Division Veterans of

WWII National Reunion

Louisville, KY

Contact: TBD

April 19 - 21, 2013

Great War Spring Offensive

Newville, PA.

Contact: Jay Callaham

May 3 - 4, 2013

Armies Through Time

www.armiesthroughtime.com

Camden, SC.

Contact: TBD

May 25, 2013

Thomasville Memorial Day

Parade

Thomasville, NC.

Contact: TBD

May 25-26, 2013

Kings Mtn. Military Timeline

Kings Mtn. National Park

Kings Mountain, SC.

Contact: Ron Crawley