

To: Veterans of Battle of the Bulge (VBOB) – The Ardense
P.O. Box 11129
Arlington, VA 22210-2129

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From: John P. Lentz, 2010 Trail 5, Burlington, NC 27215

Formerly 1st Lt. John P. Lentz, 308th Field Artillery, 78th Infantry Division, The Lightning Division, attached to Service Btry, without transportation, as Forward Observer for Artillery, Orders to come from Commander of 308th, Lt. Col. Gregory L. Higgins, of Carbondale, PA, transportation and PO Crew to come from Btry C, 308th PA Bn.

I originally entered combat in the Battle of the Bulge to continue our attack, but next day was assigned to a captured pill box on high commanding ground in no-mans-land with orders to hold all high ground at all cost. Very expendable. Here is why.

Two American Armies were approaching the Roer River northeast of our Division, the 78th Infantry Division, The Lightning Division, when we received orders to move into the front lines and the German town of Lemmersdorf just outside of the row of “Dragons Teeth” and the Siegfried Line, Germany’s “Western Wall”, and attack toward the town of Kesternich at daybreak on the morning of December 13, 1944. We were about 8,000 yards (over a mile) NORTH of the German town of Monschau, the dividing line between the Germans and the 9th Division on our right. South of Monschau, the 2nd Division was ordered to attack toward the Dam Area at the same time in order to put a “pinchers” movement on the Schwammenauel Dam as it was needed to protect the two armies approaching the river to our north. Charles B. MacDonald says that the 2nd Division made no gains but the 78th Division had some success.

We were never briefed on the situation up front. In Officers’ School, we were always briefed on the situation and the days work and believed this would continue in combat, but it never did. If you were curious, you had to find out later if you survived.

The day before, all Service Btry trucks were busy hauling Infantry to the front. As our Captain stated to leave in the last vehicle, he turned and ordered me, “You stay with the kitchen,” whose equipment was piled on the ground nearby. Finally a lone driver and truck arrived, was loaded and we departed the woods near Tongres, Belgium, headed east. The right side of the road was occupied by a long line of Infantry who discarded their gas mask, got pockets full of ammunition, a condom to roll down over their rifle barrel hanging on their left shoulder, with a bandoleer of machine gun cartridges on every fourth man. Our truck and all these men were traveling to the front in silent meditation with their own thoughts and expectations.

Finally my driver, who had made the run several times before, stopped, tailgating tight behind a long line of trucks. I walked up front to see what was holding up the line, expecting a wreck or breakdown, only to see the road running on straight to the German town of Konzen, with a road branching off to the left toward Lammersdorf and a sign reading “You are now under Enemy observation.”

The MPs were letting one truck at a time go through the woods to the left to Lammersdorf, our destination. I looked at about 12 trucks jammed so close none could move and started wondering why the Germans don’t shoot – making me nervous with such a beautiful target. My nerves were settled when I heard my hometown “Nickname” being hollered. A boy from home in Anti-Aircraft gun crew across the road had spotted me.

We now know that they were not shooting because Hitler was playing “dead” in that area – a sure sign of buildup for a surprise attack. No shooting, radio, noise or lights. But Eisenhower and his Intelligence group did nothing. Field Marshal Foch of France in WW1 said that if you do not know what is in front of you always attack, attack until you find out. The Ardens “Bulge” should be known as Eisenhower’s biggest mistake.

We know now that Hitler had a culvert under the rivers near this area that Eisenhower’s Intelligence Group called the “Ghost Front” and sent English speaking German in American uniforms under the river every night to pick up what we were doing. They knew all about this extremely weak area called a rest area filled with new poorly trained Divisions, and shot up Divisions short of personnel and equipment that needed replacements. The art of war is to attack the weakest place where you can do the most damage, which Hitler did, hoping to build up the moral on the home front. Amassing three great armies would take two or more months. Hitler had planned the attack for December 14, 1944, but, when his weather man told him to wait until December 16 and he would have no trouble with the Air Force.

The 78th Divisions’ plan of battle was that no Americans would wear an overcoat, just shoot everybody wearing an overcoat, ask no questions and keep moving toward the objective without stopping. Others would be assigned to do the mopping up behind the attackers.

The 308th FA Headquarters and Firedirection were in Lammersdorf with the Firing Batteries in the woods back of the town with Service Btry, and I set up the Kitchen in a farm house in the edge of Rotgen further back. Animals were in the basement, the farmer with adjacent neighbors, and fresh milk available for the asking. We furnished 3 hot meals daily. The Battalion was in Direct Support of the 309 Infantry Regiment.

The 309th Infantry was assigned the main attack and made it through Paustenbach, Bickerath and Simmerath before the fog and weather cleared enough to use tanks. Lt. Tom Yochim of Oil City, PA, said that Company E was organized with tanks in the afternoon of Dec. 13 and went through the first wave to Witzerath where the fog rolled back in and the tanks abandoned them. They dug-in for the night in a big drainage area which was the low land between Kesternich and Strauch, a town on their left. Next morning they found a few more of their men and the Commander of the Company and the Artillery Observer were lying close together. Did not say dead or alive. He was the only officer and took control until replacements could be sent forward.

Several Companies of the 310 Infantry, supported by 903rd Artillery Bn were attached to the 309th Infantry for the attack. Capt. Millard G. “BULL” Durham, of Fayetteville, AR, Commander of Co. A, said that Companies K and L climbed out of the steep, rocky walls of the Kall River and attacked toward the middle of Rollsbroich, drawing heavy fire from Strauch on high ground to the east and a tremendous pill box about half way to Witzerath. They captured Rollsbroich sometime on Dec. 14. His Company A captured the pill box the same day.

On Dec. 14, as reported by 1st Lt Henry S. Yeargan, of Alta, TX, Forward Observer and crew from Sv. Btry. 308th FA Bn, said they drove on through half of the town of Kesternich before dark and he reported back to Infantry Command Post for instructions, something to eat and a little rest. Later he returned to find the “Front Line,” was not challenged, did not see any soldiers, and suddenly realized that he had gone all the way through Kesternich when we owned only half of it. Making a hasty retreat, a guard stopped him and asked, “What did you see?” He replied, “What do you mean, what did you see?” The guard asked, “You have been out on patrol haven’t you?”

Others report that two different Companies of Infantry took shelter in two different house cellars. The Germans found one of them, eliminated the guard or guards if they had any, then ordered them to come out with hands up or Grenades would wipe them out. All were taken prisoners. They never discovered the other cellar which also had some wounded. On the 3rd night two men volunteered to find their way back to their lines, arrived in good order, but could not guide others in due to all that time without food. A Recon. Group was organized the following night that brought out all the others, wounded and all. Lt. Yeorgan believes he went through the town when the Germans were all busy marching the others back to prison.

Capt. Durham said he always found that the attached units got the most difficult assignments and this was one of them. They held the left flank from Witzerath through Rollsbroich to the headwaters of Kall River.

On December 15, the Germans hit us with a lot of tanks and forced us back to the houses on the edge of Kesternich where the 8th Div. held during the remainder of the battle.

On Dec. 16, the Division believed that the Germans had organized a counter attack against them and fought hard to hold on to what we had gained. Some of the people involved in this attack on the 16th said they had been notified of a possible attack but it would not amount to much. Our high command and Intelligence group did not believe Hitler had the manpower to make a major attack, as Gen. Bradley continued to ask, "Where in the Hell is he getting his manpower," as the Bulge continued to penetrate deeper and deeper.

In "A Time for Trumpets," page 165, C. B. McDonald said the German 326 Volkgrenadier Division was depleted, and another one failed to arrive on time, and others were siphoned off the day before (Dec. 15) to repel the 78th Division. (When we were driven out of Kesternich.) At least the 78th Div. made a spoiling attack on the beginning of the Battle of the Bulge as our artillery could cover the only road left on our side of the Roer River, keeping German Divisions from moving freely into the attack.

I had followed orders, "Stay with the Kitchen," where we noticed the heavy traffic every day and night by the "Meat Wagons" (Ambulances) taking wounded to a Field Hospital some place further to the rear than Rotgen, and realized the casualties must be very heavy all during the four days. Days to be remembered, when Gen. Eisenhower had received his Fifth Star and was in an elaborate hotel in Paris drinking Champagne and celebrating with his woman Jeep Driver, while his Intelligence Officers were in Belgium getting measured up for custom made shot guns for hunting at a cost of over \$3,000.00 each, probably spending their "Black market" money – easy comes, easy goes. AND the day the Battle of the Bulge started, Dec. 16, 1944. A day that showed the poor work of the Intelligence Department and Eisenhower's lack of knowledge about the "Ghost Front." Where Eisenhower should have ordered "Attack and Attack" until you find the "Ghost." A day the men who had reported hearing tanks on the other side of the river proved to be good fighting men and not "Scardy Cats" that the "loafing and playing" Intelligence Officers had called them. Eisenhower's greatest mistake.

Well after dark I was called to Bn Hq, delivered by the kitchen truck and sent to Btry C to get a Jeep and my FO crew. The Btry CO, Capt. Andrew W. Sullivan, of Tallahassee, Fla., said that all he had left were "fuck-up," men busted down to buck Pvt. for some reason. We were sent to Witzerath to relieve the FO crew from Sv. Btry. Lt. Yeorgan, radio man J. I Bornstein, Brooklyn, NY, who had an 88 shell land flat on his back, bounce off and explode some distance behind him – he was hurting and shaking from the cold. Also T. T. Williams, of Smithfield, VA, and one more Yeorgan said they had held off a counter attack all day just hugging the ground, no gain. I learned later that they told him that he could take my radio man and go back out that night or wait and ride the tank on the attack next

morning. His choice was to go back out that night – did not think the tank could make it to the top of the ridge.

The Infantry Command was in a row of houses, the last one before going up grade to “T” into the main road at the top of the ridge going to Strauch. This “T” became our first “88 junction.” We were told to use the road because the field between us and the houses along the high road may be mined.

Soon after midnight the guard at the front door, not dug-in as if at the barracks back home, came running in to tell us that German paratroopers were falling all around us. In the rush outside to see, I stopped to talk to the guard. He pointed to a tree beside a house across the street which had a parachute hanging in it and said, “If I’d had a hand grenade, I could have gotten that one.” I asked, “Why did you not shoot him?” He replied, “He was too close to shoot.” One officer rushed a crew together to round up the Germans before they could get organized – found more Germans than parachutes and the comment was that some were tough bastards, jumping without a chute. My boys wanted to join the round-up, but I held them together thinking that they may send us out at any time. I did not know about Yergans’ decision until next day. I never saw a paratrooper. I guess they were sent to Hq.

Capt. “BULL” Durham said that his men dug in around Rollesbroich did not see the drop, but one man later looked out and saw something waving in a bush and found the parachute. They were killed, all 7.

So much for the PRELUDE or BRIEFING essential to understand how the 78th Division was held in their “Bulge” made into the German lines just before the Ardennes Bulge the Germans made into the lines on their right flank starting the morning of Dec. 16. The 78th’s left flank was held by the 310th Infantry from Kall River to Witzerath, Witzerath and the low land to the east was held by 309th Infantry, the front line turned south through the houses on the edge of Kesternich. I do not know who occupied these houses, but when the Ardennes Bulge started to shrink, I substituted in one of the houses for Forward Observer Lt. Eugene A. Gordon, of Greensboro, NC, with the Hq Btry 903 FA Bn, while he helped the Btry move to new positions. Perhaps they were held by elements of the 310 Infantry, No-Mans-Land curved south to a captured troop shelter we occupied and on to a captured command post pill box with steel dome and excellent view of Lammersdorf to our rear and 100 yards from the woods that hid all of Huppenbroich but the chimneys, where I was Forward Observer for 308th Bn from the night of Dec. 17 to the night of Dec. 24, when all units in the front line were relieved – so I was told – except those in the pill box with the steel dome who asked to stay there for their Christmas Dinner since all their Christmas boxes were there held for that purpose. We could go in and out only after dark and received one canteen of water and 2 K-rations each day. I do not know the name of this Company or unit. Would like to know.

My FO crew of “fuck-ups” were John J. Mahoney, Jr, Chelsia, MA, radio man who had been called out the night before, Lloyd G. Hitt, LaPorte, IA, Jeep driver, and Sal G. Orlando, Elmhurst, NY, wire man, Italian ancestry and would not get in a fox hold, took all the chances with an appearance of “delight.” We loafed and talked on the 17th while waiting and learned nothing of the situation. I learned that the three men knew their job and that I had never seen a Forward Observers’ two piece radio and knew not how it worked. They were doing the same job as other FO crews with less pay because they did not call “Attention” when the Btry CO put his head in a dug-out too low to stand in. I decided to “go to bat” for my Privates. They were the best.

I was an OCS, “90 day wonder”, taught that an officers first job was to take care of his men. (OCS – Officers Candidate School)

As I waited on the steps to the concrete walled and ceiling of the basement under the kitchen, part of all the houses along the Siegfried line, I heard a front line officer say as he pointed to a map on the table, that he could not hold here where he was but could hold if he fell back to here, pointing to a new location. I never did get to look at the map as the room was always full and busy, but learned we were to held all high ground at all cost.

Late in the afternoon of Dec. 17, I was told to go tell the tank to return to his unit that no attack will be made today. I went out in the street to see two GIs dressed in 82nd Airborn patches on their shoulder, as neat as a pin, looking and pointing toward the front as they talked. I had spent about 4 months with the 82nd and tried to talk with them, but they turned their backs and hurried off toward the rear. I knew that we had big losses during the 4 days and concluded that they were on reconnaissance for the 82nd Division before they would arrive to help us take the Dam. I believe now that they were Germans in American uniforms with 82nd patches on their shoulder.

The tank was to my left with defilade against a bank on his left, only about 8 inches showing above the bank which ran parallel with our left flank. I mounted the back, his motor running to keep warm, and knocked on his lid or turret, hollering open up. The lid opened parallel with the front line and as he struggled to get up, something shook my helmet. I turned to see what was back of me only to hear the sound of a shell. The tanker said, wait till they stop shooting, closing the lid, as I hit the ground two more shells passed over, landing flat in the meadow without exploding. I realize now that they were from an automatic '88, designed to bring down our highest flying airplanes, that travel twice the speed of sound. If you hear it, it has already passed you.

I felt relieved since I had helped with cleaning out rooms the night before for men returned from the front lines, fed and put to rest for the attack the next day. The house had filled up and men were bedded down in a metal shed behind the house. An explosion had wounded three men in the feet, apparently from a “potato masher”, German hand grenade. They must have missed one of the paratroopers or an infiltrator. I never saw a guard back of the house.

Just before dark I was sent back to the 308th. The Commander met us in the street at Lammersdorf. I told him my men were all Privates and the table of organization calls for Forward Observers to have a rating. I wanted my crew to have a rating before we went back out. His face turned red, the crew was in the Jeep racing the motor to get to something to eat. I got in and was set out at Sv. Btry., got something to eat, and was called back to Bn Hq immediately. We were met in the street again. The Col. Sid he was taking care of the ratings, gave me a hard look and said, “You go back to Btry and shave.” I got the message, I was not telling him what to do. I shaved, powdered up and added a fragrant lotion to be sure to please him. Returning to Hq, the Col. Had returned to the basement, the crew knew where to go and we left.

We stopped at a farm house on the back side of Simmerath. The runner to guide us looked younger than 18, helped me orient my map, put in a map case I had just received from a Forward Observer we had lost, and warned me to keep the map case under cover when flares were exploded over us. He briefed me on what we would pass and where we were going, the only and best briefing I received during combat. The Infantry had just received their small 105s at Cannon Company and we had to wait for their FO crew to get organized to travel with us. They were to string a new telephone wire for their use. We passed a B17, the one with the very high tail piece that looked like a new farm silo at a distance, a fighter pilot and the motor from his plane side by side, before clearing the hedge rows with about 100 yard to woods full of Germans, where he had said they will shoot the flares.

We traveled only on narrow, dirt farm roads, with the roll of small wire squeaking as it turned to attack the Germans. The 1st Flare went up, I hit the ditch on the left of the road, all other took the right ditch. I was peeping over the bank to see what was toward the Germans when the runner hollered back, "Hide that map case, Lieutenant", and repeated it. The map case was hanging around my neck, under my field jacket under my belly flat on the ground. When the 2nd flare went up, the same thing happened. I decided that the runner was seeing my white face and searched the frozen ground for dirt to smear on it. I found a handful of half frozen dirt, smeared my face and was surprised at the aroma of battlefield dirt. When the third flare went up, the guide was telling his side of the road something that I did not hear as I hit the ditch on the left side. The flare lit and I saw myself alone with a roll of wire. I waited quite some time for a man to return for the wire. He explained that they had dived into a trench leading to a captured troop shelter held by their men, only to find a guard at the other end of the trench with the BAR pointed straight at them and sound asleep, with his finger on the trigger. They were afraid to move, knowing that they could all be wiped out. They started calling names and, when he heard his, he woke up. They had not yet learned to put two men on guard, usually back to back.

When I reached the troop shelter, the Sgt. Saw me as an older officer and explained that he had just called the pill box that I was to go to and they were removing their booby-traps to let us in. They had C-ration cans on the steps filled with a hand grenade with the pin pulled. A stranger would knock them over so they would fall out and explode. He assured us that we could not get lost as there was a dead German about $\frac{1}{4}$ of the way pointing straight at the metal dome, another one about half way and a third about two-thirds of the way, and a dead German frozen stiff leaning against the wall as you start down the steps to enter. The Infantry believed every dead German was a booby-trap. He handed me a wire and said to let it slip through my hand and it would take us there. I led the group, passed the 1st German, the 2nd German and there was the end of the wire. There was a cross path half way with gaps in the unrolled circles of wire on both sides as protection from the mine fields. Some German patrol apparently had passed through and cut the wire.

As you entered the door, you realized that the floor was their toilet area. I found a shovel and a few tools and put my men to shoveling it out the door, any Infantry men that wandered by were asked to help, several did. Getting adjusted to the dim light of a sock in a bottle of gasoline was difficult, but I soon noticed the eyes and faces of the Infantry men that clung around their Lieutenant. Their eyes showed extra white, a stair of uncertainty and fatigue that I had never seen before or since. They had been fighting ever since the morning of Dec. 13 and this was the night of the 17th. Battle field fatigue and shock had taken its toll apparently. Their Lieutenant was continuously assuring all his men that "everything is going to be all right." It seems that when a recruit believes that "everything is going to be all right" regardless of what happens and quits worrying about what might happen, he becomes a good soldier.

Cannon Company took over the Dome, finally got their new 105's laid and fired on the top of a concrete troop shelter south of us, said to house two Germans that showed in the stair well early every morning and not seen until the next morning. Cannon Co. departed at dark.

The captors story was that they left Lammersdorf early in a heavy fog, crossed the low land and climbed the hill, jammed a port hole with a rifle bullet, called on the flame thrower to shoot the flame and gasoline in the cracked port hold and his flame thrower would not work. He dumped it, picked up a German shovel, knocked on the steel door, capturing 19 Germans in long green overcoats. Two BAR men started them down the hill toward Lammersdorf with shooting coming in and going out. The Germans started running, out running the BAR men, did not understand the orders to halt, stop or slow down. One BAR man let go immediately followed by the second BAR man. The captors never called them 19 dead Germans. It was the "19 Green Overcoats" piled at the bottom of the hill. The flame

thrower was still in place where it was dropped. All in plain view of Lammersdorf. The jammed bullet was not removed.

They also reported capturing another troop shelter, the Sgt. left two men to hold it, but was killed and now nobody knows where it was.

Early the morning of the 19th, I took over the Dome with a Sargent I had asked to adjust his rifle sights to 200 yards and we would pick off the two Germans "next door." I was studying the 2 men with my small telescope as the Sgt. said he had a dead bead on one of the Germans and would get him as soon as his chest showed above the rim of the stairwell. I hollered "Hold it! Those men are wearing wool knit caps." We had found the men lost in a captured troop shelter. I assumed the Infantry notified their contacts to the rear, but nothing was done.

About three days later, we noticed a column of GI's leaving Lammersdorf, headed straight to us. It was 18 men with boxes of TNT, 1 with a detonator, and a Sgt. in charge – may have been Engineers, with the two GI's from the troop shelter. They had run out of halizone tablets issued to sterilize water to drink and could no longer use the water from puddles near their door. They had returned to Lammersdorf at day break resulting in the effort to "blow" the troop shelter. Arranging with us to give them some protection, they made the 'blow", returning straight to Lammersdorf without incident. We could see big cracks on the side of the shelter, but it may have still been livable.

About Dec. 20, I saw what looked like "fire flies" – Lightning bugs – down toward Monschau, could hear nothing. The Sgt. took a look and said somebody is having one hell of a fire fight down there. The Germans often attacked at night to get behind our troops.

About Dec. 22, the fog had lifted above tree top level and I could see a long column of tanks and mechanized army moving along a road probably north of Konzen. It was so far away I could not tell who they were. As I tried to get Fire Direction, Airplanes dived on the column repeatedly, sending everything flying into the air. Learning later that it was a German Column sent to cut us off or surround us, and that we were almost surrounded with only two roads left for a retreat.

One day about noon, I started hearing fire crackers exploding. The Sgt. said it was out-going mortar shells. I could see them exploding in Lammersdorf. We determined where the sound was coming from, called Fire Direction, Major Johnnie H. Carter, Savannah, GA. answered, saying, "Hang up and don't bother us. We are getting the HELL shot out of us." I could see a truck exploding; sending white phosphorus burning into the air like holiday fireworks. The Germans had followed a hedge row out to the road we came in on, fired their mortars and retreated to the woods without being bothered. We could have helped, maybe. I had never heard a mortar fired before.

On the morning of Dec. 23, the skies were clear and I received a call to mark the front line. I reported a captured troop shelter to my right, another one occupied on my left, 100 yards to woods full of Germans with Huppenbroich behind the woods with all chimneys smoking, "can adjust." They replied, "We can fire on that from the map." I soon saw red smoke in the town, followed by repeated dive bombings, leaving no smoking chimneys. I was in no-mans-land closest to the front. Later learned that 3 of the first four attacks that morning were on our or allied troops. They needed information. The allies called them the American "luftwafe" – (German fighters).

Looking through the port holes of the Dome toward Lammersdorf we could see a row of shu mines on the surface, on the other side were three GI's, all on their back with heads pointing to the left and well spaced. The center one was a Medic Sgt. with his head on his red cross helmet and his pants pulled on the right side near us as if trying to doctor himself. I had reported that the "Jack Frost" had pushed the mines out of the ground. I learned later that the British and Canadians were taught that these were placed on the surface by the Germans so anyone walking around them would be sure to step on a mine hidden under the dirt. Apparently these GI's did not know that. The British and Canadians made the German prisoner go in the mine fields and bring out the dead and wounded. They lost a few prisoners that way. The first night out there, Infantry men would come up to look at their beloved Medic and wanted to go cover him with a blanket, but their Lt. said no. The next night we had a light snow covering the medic with a blanket of snow which seemed to make his live buddies feel much better. Some have reported their first attack make in "deep snow." This had to be after Dec. 17.

My first trip to the Dome on Dec. 18, I saw a dead beef cow at the top of our stair well, with three more spread out toward the road we come in on. All looked like fancy Belgium beef. I realized then why the "Battle field dirt" half frozen had the peculiar smell when I smeared it on my shining face the night before. I was reared on a farm but never handled any frozen cow manure.

I was always told that the Germans on the front line always got the best rations while the Americans up there always got the worst rations. They apparently had moved their best beef to the front to feed the Germans coming through on Dec. 16, and they did not make it. We had spoiled their plans.

On the night of Dec. 24, we all knew that the Infantry had stored all their boxes received from home in a closet with anything else they could get hold of to add to their Christmas Dinner. "Artillery" could think of nothing to add. When the "ration detail" was sent back after dark to get the one canteen of water and two boxes of K-Rations per man for next days' meals, I sent my two men back to find my sleeping roll and bring the fifth of Segrams 7 that I had been issued for frozen feet and never took to the front line. They had to go all the way to Sv. Btry. I planned to offer a "shot" of whiskey to anyone that wanted it.

The "detail" returned early. I got my allotment and prepared to man the "Dome" for a while, when two men that appeared to be under age 18, who helped clean the "toilet area" the first night, and establish the "Thunder Bucket" and later said that it made them mad, but now thought it was the best thing that happened in the Pill Box, approached me with, "Give us your water." I asked why? They said you have been called to the rear." I donated all my rations. They were the only two Infantry men that I talked with beside the Sargent that helped me in the Dome.

The trip back to the farm house near Simmerath was no problem. Someone had been to the rear and brought up a lot of Red Cross doughnuts, and had hot coffee on the stove. I helped myself but it did not stop my thirst and I could find no water in the room. For a long time I could not eat doughnuts or drink coffee. I was alone. No guard was seen.

My three men arrived with the whiskey. We all had a drink or two mixed with coffee and doughnuts. Passing through a wooded section about half way back to Lammersdorf, no lights, an explosion about a minute in front of us blew up a jeep going our way, apparently by a land mine placed in the rut by a German patrol. A jeep going in the opposite direction, said they were from the same outfit and would take care of the wounded, for us to keep going. I have often wondered if the extra drinks may have saved our lives.

I bedded down in the C Q's tent (Charge of Quarters), everybody else was "dug-in" somewhere. I was awakened next morning and told to go to breakfast and get the first fried fresh eggs since leaving the U.S., then return and they would show me the only two roads left to get out on, that we were almost surrounded. This was at Sv. Btry. I never was shown the two roads. Two big meals Christmas day.

On the morning of Dec. 26, Col. Higgins, with a look of disgust on his face and a worse tone in his voice said, "You go to Witzerath and find us an OP" – Forward Observers station.

Apparently no one had found a good OP from Dec. 13-26. I intended to find where they had been and make another choice. Checked in at the Command post below the ride, got a runner to take us to the front where other FO's had been. We went through "88 Junction" turned left to an old barn on the left of the road and a house on the right, went to the rear of the house through a hedge row, turned left down hill to the lowest part of a broad drainage area that Lt. Yochim had dug-in with Company E on the night of Dec. 13, through a hedge row, turned right down hill passing Infantry Dugouts and was told that the FO's OP was at the end where the line turned right passing through Kesternich. You could only look up.

I reversed back along the hedge row where we were sprayed again with bullets from an automatic weapon, probably a "burp gun", in a trench on the hill toward Strauch, stopped and studied the map. The house we passed last was on the highest ground. I entered the front door where some company had a command post, spoke to no one, stopped on the top floor, but no windows opened toward either Strauch or Kesternich. The attached barn "T" 'd off to the rear with no access. (Infantry officers would not want FO to draw fire.)

While at Fort Bragg, everybody seemed to be hunting for a suitable knife to take into combat – nothing available. I went to main post salvage, got an old WW1 bolo knife, repaired the handle, ground a "hook" on the back of the point so I could cut swinging either way. It was heavy, held an edge, and was hung on my left harnace. Some Infantry referred to me as the Lt. with the big knife. One whack would slice off a pine limb the size of your wrist. I cut a hole in the wall to the barn loft, knocked off red tile, chopped out the slats, covered my helmet with a white petticoat, had a wonderful view of Strauch over the "ridge" and Kesternich behind me. ("Ridge" of the barn.)

Infantry came up to locate the gunner that sprayed them every time they left or returned to the front line. I showed them the trench with blanket hung behind them to dry, and a hand with a bucket that was throwing water out of the trench. I told them to go out to that downed B17 (or 16) with the high tail, bring in a 50 Cal Mg and we would have some fun. The next thing I noticed, they were putting the Mg on top of the toilet over the septic tank in the back yard. It would have been a big mistake to put it on the roof as I had planned. They later captured some Germans that said they were told to vacate at dark when they reported 50 Cal. Mg. fire.

We were on the northern flank of the BULGE and put under British Gen. Montgomery. His order was to "Tidey Up." A young Lt. Col. of Infantry came up to watch an attack toward Kesternich to straighten out our line. He looked at my white helmet and the snow on the roof, "ordered" swap helmets with me. I had been told to report immediately the back-azimuth of any artillery that landed near us so they could trace it to return fire on the German guns. Two projectiles came in, missing our roof by 4 to 6 feet, intended for us. I left to get the compass reading, as one laded flat not exploding the other exploded both leaving a good impression in the ground. I reported to artillery. The "battle" lasted only a few minutes, and the Lt. Col. Had left.

I noticed several soldiers giving me a stiff salute but just thought some over zealous officer had lectured them on military courtesy. After dark an Infantry runner approached me, saying the Col. wants his helmet back. It showed his rank. I was a Lt. Col. for a while and did not know it.

Much of the 78th Division was in the ROTGEN FOREST, where Capt. "Bull" Durham moved the 310th from to make his attack on Rollsbroich on Dec. 13 and the 311th Inf. Was to make a "faint attack" on Vossenack to the north to draw Germans away from our main attack on Dec. 13. The "faint" attack was over 6,000 yards to the north east of Rollsbroich. This extension of the HERTGEN forest along the Kall River with all its pill boxes and troop shelters was an extension of the Siegfried line from in front of Lammersdorf where our attack started. These two forests left no observation except to the next bushes in any direction you looked.

The Artillery Liaison Officer, Capt. R. K. Stoufer, talked the infantry into making an attack to the Kall River to get observation. Under Montgomery they could get permission only for a "raid" on 3 pill boxes and started the attack on Jan. 9 (some say 10) and reached the river at dark on Jan. 11. The Germans with open sights attacked at dusk, mixing with our infantry. The artillery FO, Lt. R. M. Gardiner, Thurmont, MD, called down artillery on this mixture of Infantry. We had just received our proximity shells and they must have been mixed with the others. Germans used mostly mortars. Many of everything exploding in the tree tops. Gardiner was wounded by mortar in his left shoulder blade, small wound, not evacuated, one of his men wounded and another T/5 W. C. Cook, Ballsville, VA killed. A replacement was sent up that night. Apparently he had enough by daybreak. Our rifles with "peep" sights were a handicap with night firing.

I was sent up on the morning of Jan. 12, orders "Find an OP". Going down stream, the three places attacked were known to Artillery as "The Blown Sister," "The Rock", and "Raffelsbrand" that shows on the map. I was sent to "The Rock." We parked the jeep among large saw timber, walked down a slope to a dug road leading down to the door of the concrete troop shelter, with high banks on both sides and dug-outs at intervals for extra men to take shelter. The concrete roof was just below the forest we had left, and covered with small trees and bushes - "lost" in the forest. The CQ said their only officer was up front showing the men where to dig-in their front line at the edge of the steep rocky banks going down to the Kall River. A runner was assigned to take us out. My crew from Btry C had found their buddy Cpl. Cook and were content to follow us in spread out fashion - all good men. The dead had been thrown to the top of the bank to clear the path down to the shelter.

The runner was in the lead, passing two dead Germans, stopped in front of a pine tree shot down by artillery and lodged across the path, saying, "Don't get excited when you duck under this tree. The German pointing his rifle straight at you is dead." I was the first under and as I raised my head this rifle barrel, held by the German in perfect seated position with elbows on his knees, barrel perfectly level, cheek on the stock and finger on the trigger, caused me to get in a hurry scratching gravel and pine needles. I was mad, thinking that his finger could swell and kill a soldier. When the last man went under, I kicked the German on the left shoulder sending him sprawling into the bushes.

Straight ahead was a rock standing like a big hand with fingers pointing across the River about twice the height of a man. Thirty feet back and to the right of the path, a Sgt. stood in a hole he was digging waist deep, as the Lt. rounded the corner to the right and stopped on the other side of the Sgt. To the left of the "Rock" was a big level rock with the Forward Observer on his belly, elbows supporting his field glasses looking for Germans across the river about 150 yards away in the woods, nothing in front of him. The Lt. hollered to two men along the bank to the left to stand so I could see them and not fire artillery on them. The exposed Forward Observer saw me and headed for the rear as mortar shells started exploding around us and in the few pine limbs left in the tree tops.

Nobody hit the ground or ducked in their hole. Shrapnel from mortars is about the size of the end of your little finger and one hit the Sgt. in his left shoulder collarbone area, and he went into shock after three days of battle. Asked me to help him out of the fox hole so he could get to the rear, stating

that he was not supposed to be that close to the front but did not have enough men left to man the front line. These men did not get that "one hot meal" for three days. Apparently kitchen and everybody went in battle. The Infantry men seemed to be on a "strike" and trying to dictate what they wanted. We had given the Germans a good target and they made the best of it. Many mortars landed in the pine brush limbs on the ground and only sent up puffs of black smoke. It protected us.

The only view across the river was over this big flat rock about as large and flat as a large room. I dug some large pine limbs out on the rock in front of me that I could see through and breakup my image as a target. The path to the left ran against the edge of the flat rock which was about 14 inches above the path. I took my shovel and started digging a hole in the path, instructed my wireman and driver to find four sound powered telephones and connect the two dugouts on my flanks with my hole and with the large troop shelter in the back where we planned to sleep. They also ran a wire back to fire direction in Lammersdorf. The two dugouts with two men each could contact me at any time day or night. The digging was tough, through small pieces of shale like rock that seemed to be decaying.

When I could get my head below ground level, I decided to cut a path around my hole so the men to my left would not fall in it. I was about 3 feet from my hole, chopping out a path with my big knife, when my right foot slid off of a limb and I realized I was going down in a hole. I managed to fall face down, thinking of booby traps, waiting for the explosion. Nothing happened so I rolled over on my back with the right foot over the hole I had slid in. It had a small leather strap across my boot. I got my left foot in place to give myself a hard push away from the hole, hoping to not lose more than one foot. As I slid back, the strap hung to my boot and slid off the arm and hand of a dead German buried under pine limbs. I got a fine set of Field Glasses, binoculars, clearer than the ones issued to me.

The top of the ridge had all trees along the edge with a block of TNT held to the side near the river with an explosive cord, primer cord, so the explosion would "kick" the base of the tree away from the river and the tree would fall down on the road below. Shooting into TNT will not explode it, but will explode dynamite. The flat rock had a vertical front down to a road on our side of the river that I could not see, but to the right it showed with big mines dug in on alternate sides of the road and a rock bridge that had been blown crossing the river with a "U" turn back down the other side as it climbed to another "U" turn up hill to our right out of sight.

A path with "MINNEN" signs on both sides came straight up the hill to the rock pointing toward the sky and other side of the river, made a half circle around the rock and continued back to the captured troop shelter. Three dead Germans, face down about 4 ft apart, had been ready to start the circle around the rock when killed. The center man was wearing a sheep skin coat, ankle length with the wool on the inside, camouflage for the snow, and seen worn by the sheep herders after the war.

I returned at dark to the troop shelter, all the dead had been hauled away and the tree was no longer across the path. I had a K-ration and thought of only 4 tired men dug in between me and the Germans, and no telling how many dead Germans and Americans were under all those pine limbs. I had a 45 with one clip of ammo, my radio man had his carbine and I hoped he had plenty of ammo, but this "inventory" of the situation did not keep me from having a good nights sleep. We had wire and radio to the rear.

Next morning I was surprised that we had a hard wind storm and snow which cut my telephone to the rear. The kitchen did not deliver, I never knew if they added us to their number of rations to draw. K-rations filled in.

I manned the OP early. The smallest man to my left complained about no hot breakfast as he passed, and my wire crew soon arrived with wire repaired and a "Christmas Box" from an Aunt whose brother, my uncle, was in France for WW1, and she was concerned and thoughtful. My crew refused to take any part in opening and sampling the contents and headed back to put the entire wire high above ground and tight against the wind. I made three equal piles of cookies, cake, candy and popcorn, called both flanks on the sound-power asking each to send one man to the OP. My pile did not last long and I'm sure theirs did not either.

The small young man to my left had a story he was anxious to tell. He said that Artillery Liaison officer had talked them into making the attack to Kall River to get observation and it cost a lot of their men and did not get any observation. They were getting rid of him, and the FO that brought fire down on them would never work with them again. "We could out shoot those Germans if they had let us," was his comment. He was set on rebellion.

At this same time, Sv. Btry. 308th FA Bn had lost 3 or 5 of the secret proximity fuzes that they had just received (depending who tells it), and orders came down to our Commander to relieve S. Btry Captain immediately. He already knew about the Captain in Bry "C" busting men to Pvt. over nothing. He solved the problem by sending the Liaison Captain to Sv. Btry, Sv. Btry to Btry "C", and Captain of Btry "C" to Liaison with the Infantry.

Every time anyone from the flanks came to the tall rock pointing to the sky then headed straight back to the captured troop shelter, the Germans tried to drop a mortar shell in his path. I could hear the "pop" of the mortar being fired and see where it landed, but could not determine the location of the mortar or their observation point. I could see a yellowish communications wire crossing the river directly in front of me and assumed the Germans had abandoned it in their retreat. I studied the opposite woods day after day with no success.

One night just at dark I had reached the shelter when two young infantry men came running in asking for artillery fire to stop the mortars so they could get three of their buddies back to the "medicks." They knelt beside me and the telephone as I called Fire Direction. Their hands piled on each other as athletes do before a game. The answer was that ammunition could not be spared due to the strike called by John L. Lewis back in the states. I asked for just one shell, as it was fired the two men swore they would shoot John L. Lewis if they ever saw him, and I laid my hand on theirs. The mortars stopped and officers rushed the men to the rear. When they returned, the question all asked, "Did you get them back all right." The men had stopped in a group at the top of the slope leading down to the shelter under ground and were caught with the mortar fire.

After listening to their mortars being fired one day as a man from the right flank returned to the rear, I decided that it may be bouncing off the vertical wall under me so it sounded like it was across the river. When the man came back up, I asked him to "sneak" down the bank in front of his hole and see what was in front of my position. He returned shortly and said he went down, saw the corner of a troop shelter with a window in it and a wall back of the window, took one shot through the window and rushed back to his "diggings." This would be at the base of the path going down from "the rock."

The rear was notified and they called for 20 volunteers to blow this shelter that night with a reward of 3 days to Paris. A young Infantry man that was made a 2nd Lt. Battlefield Commission for his work in taking this position was to be in command. Everybody was given a number, 1 to 20. The Lt. was to stop at the bottom of the path and call "one" when the first man placed his box of TNT on the target and passed him on his way up the hill. The box exploded but they could not find Number 20. No 19 said that he had to be here as he slapped him and said 19. Someone went down and found the Lt. with his head buried in the ground by a huge chunk of concrete. Lt. Pete Lamana went down next night and brought out the body. Lt. Lamana was with E Company, 309th Inf.

Prisoners captured later said they were told to vacate at dark when they reported rifle fire in their window. I was at this point about eight days. The last day my wire-crew reported as usual and said they were to tell me that I would be relieved the next morning.

The next morning I was up early with “going away fever”, manned my “hole” and waited anxiously. I guess. I had the urge to relieve myself, and looked at the safe place back of the tall rock where men not wanting to go all the way back, or could not wait, would shovel snow in the path, relieve themselves then shovel the snow back on the pine limbs. I was suddenly hit by “premonition” telling me “do not leave your hole”, but I could not wait. I shoveled snow in my hole, relieved myself and shoveled it out over the German under the pine limbs near my hole. I realized that I had the “GI WILLIES”, dysentery. A mortar shell had landed at the spot where I would have been back of the “rock”, leaving a big black spot on the path and in the snow. Many thanks to “premonition”.

One of those last days at the “ROCK”, probably after “blowing” their troop-shelter used to launch mortars on us, I was out of my hole messing around, when a young Infantry Officer, “dressed for Sunday,” a Major or Lt. Col. came to the front. I pointed out the two “dug-in” flank positions which now had about 6 men in each. He looked around the high rock, saw the German in the white, long sheep-skin coat, turned and ordered, “Get that white coat for me.” I returned only a silent cold stare, thinking how to make a quick job of it. He noticed my artillery and got the message, stating, “When the infantry return back here, have them get that coat for me.”

In a few minutes 4 or 5 men rushed by me and stopped with the three dead Germans, undressing, searching, getting their rings, and all the loot available including the coat and rushed to the back the same way. I recognized only the front man as being from Sv. Btry. 308th FA Bn, one Pvt. Audie Smith from DiBall, Texas, (listed in zip code as DiBoll, TX 75941), a wiry looking farm boy or rancher, never without a big “CHAW” showing in one cheek. He seemed to spend all his time looking for excitement, or challenge. After the war, he would bluff farmers and housewives into telling him where they buried their weapons, etc.

When I reached Bn Hq, the Col. met us in the street and asked, “How was it up front.” I answered, “Not bad, Sir, You should go up and look around sometime.” His face flushed as he said, “The Captain told him what a good job I did wiring the holes with “sound power.” After that, I never gave the Colonel a fancy answer about anything and he visited all my stationary holding places for my OP.

I never saw a Captain during all the time I was at the “ROCK”. Co E of 309 Inf had gotten a new Captain after the “RAID”, and he must have been Captain Smallman who deserted the company during their covering of the left flank of the attack on Schmidt and was returned to the rear as not qualified. Attack of Feb. 5, 1945.

While I was recovering from dysentery, Lt. Henry S. Yeargan, Alta, TX, briefed me on things that I missed while up front. He said that major Thomas F. Fulbright, Los Angeles, CA, would pick out a patch of woods on the map and fire all the guns of the Battalion on it for a while. No one seemed to understand it. We know now that all the artillery surrounding the Germans that had made a “bulge” into our lines was organized to fire “Time-on-Target” concentrations on places reported to be full of Germans. The 78th did the same thing. After the snows thawed, many dead Germans were found in these ravines and hills covered with forest where the Germans often tried to move to get behind their enemies.

The 78th Div. should take credit for this as well as for the one battle they fought in the Hertgen Forest on Jan. 10-11, 1945. Bulge ended Jan. 28, 1945

P.S. Additional recollections of the time of the Battle of the Bulge – the Ardens

On my first day back to Witzerath, Dec. 26, after my OP was set up on top of the high pile of hay in the barn loft, I walked across the road to the old barn on the other side which is shown on page 84 in the history book, "LIGHTNING: The History of the 78th Infantry Division" to take a break, and was approached by an Infantry Sgt. who said they were to get some replacements and did not want them to see the dead GI's along the way up to the front. He suggested that I give him permission to stack these dead GI's behind the barn so it would not frighten the new recruits. I OK'ed the idea and he stacked about 16 or more men behind the barn before dark. This made a clear path through "88 Junction" to their fox holes on low ground between Strauch and Kesternich. "88 Junction" was really "Mortar Junction" for pedestrians. Two knocked-out jeeps were in the road near the barn and house with the OP.

Artillery already had wire strung through "88 Junction" back to Bn Hq. All my wire men did was to get it patched up, only to find it knocked out at "88 Junction" the next morning. My wire man, T/5 S. G. Orlando, had been told to follow the road because of possible mines in the field where a short cut to the front would be handy. He decided that "88 Junction" was more dangerous than the open field and brought our wire straight up the hill from the back Command Post to the Barn and across the road to our OP. After this, everybody used the hill following the wire instead of the road. This brought all the new recruits by the pile of dead American soldiers, but snow had covered them and they may not have known it. The Captains' jeep driver came up at night and hauled all the dead to the rear where the black burial detail would pick them up.

Only one sewing machine shows in the picture of the barn, but there were several that had been collected there to make camouflage suits out of sheets for use in making patrols. We were issued a few reversible rain coats, white inside, green outside, about the time the snow disappeared.

A SUMMARY OF THE POSITION AT THE FORWARD OBSERVERS' PLACE AT "THE ROCK"

The German field wire that crossed the headwaters of Kall River that I assumed had been abandoned in retreat had not been abandoned but ran straight into a German troop shelter dug back in the rock under my op. I had an Artillery Forward Observers post on top of a German troop shelter. The wire from an observer up on the wooded hill in front of me would tell the men in the troop shelter when to fire a mortar shell at the path leading from the "Rock" to the big shelter back of us. The Germans had a mortar tube set up outside the window with a wall back of it, and would drop a shell into the tube without leaving the shelter. From the explosions, I assume they were their smallest mortars. After we fired through the window and blew the shelter that night, they fired much larger mortar shells, leaving big black spots around the explosion. Going through there on Feb. 5, 1945, I saw places leveled off for the mortar tube to be placed and 6 to 8 larger mortar shells left to be used as they retreated. About 40 to 40 feet up the hill this was repeated so they could fire on the attackers and fall back and continue firing from new positions until reaching the end of the woods.

Both the men dug-in to my left and I could have dropped handgrenades on their entrance to this troop shelter. They were literally dug-in on top of a German troop shelter same as I was.

The Infantry apparently never sent out any "patrols" to see what was in front of us or they would have noticed this troop shelter before they wounded three (3) of our Infantry.

Write MILITARY ORDER OF THE ARDENNES, P. O. Box One, Eden, NY 14057, and Veterans of the Bulge, P. O. Box 11129, Arlington, VA 22210-2129 for information on their medals, Medallions, etc.

A Synopsis of the BATTLE OF THE BULGE, THE ARDENNE, (B.O.B.) from Lt. Gen. H. W. O. Kinnard (Ret) and others.

The BOB took place when the Germans attacked on the early morning of Dec. 16, 1944 along an 85 mile front in the Ardennes sector of Belgium and Luxembourg, from Monchau on the North down through the Losheim Gap and Schnell Eifel Mountains through the forested and mountainous Ardennes to Echternack. The battle was essentially over by 25 Jan. 1945, but listed officially as 28 Jan. 1945.

The U. S. forces were over 5 Divisions very thinly holding this large sector which was known as the "GHOST FRONT" because we were so thin on the ground and because the houses, pill boxes and everything on the other side of the river were completely empty when our patrols waded waist deep to cross the rivers. Also because our Intelligence Officers and others did not believe the Germans would attack through the forest in winter and thought they would attack only in "Tank Country," more open country. They were also over optimistic in believing that Hitler did not have the manpower to wage a massive attack.

This sector had for some time been used as a rest area for war-weary veteran divisions and for newly arrived divisions to cut their combat teeth and become accustomed to the climate and life in the field and woods. The total strength of U. S. forces on 16 Dec. was about 75,000. The Germans had concealed their build-up by playing dead, no noise, no return fire of any kind, no lights, no noticeable activity, no radio, covered by camouflage, and had built up about 250,000 men, 1,000 tanks, and 1,900 artillery pieces. This force made three (3) complete armies and a total of thirty (30) divisions.

The Germans code named "Christrose", was the brainchild of Hitler himself. He desperately needed a win to boost the morale of the people back home, but listed its objective to be capture the port city of Antwerp and destroy the Allied forces north of a line Antwerp-Brussels-Bastogne. Hitler directed that the extensive planning for this should begin in September of 1944 with very thorough and highly secret preparations. Equipment was moved in on trains at night, unloaded on roads covered with straw and hay. In spite of all this, a few American Intelligence people deduced that the Germans were planning an attack through the Ardennes. They were unable to convince Gen. Eisenhower and others in the top command. (Playing "dead" in an area is enough to assure that they planned a surprise attack.) A few of our divisions in the area say that they were told to expect a surprise attack but it would not amount to much.

Their initial attack was a complete surprise with such overwhelming strength that they quickly broke through the thin shell of U. S. forces and plunged westward creating a very large salient (or Bulge) in US lines. Their deepest advance took them east of Rochefort, almost a hundred miles from their starting point.

The Germans were handicapped with the narrow roads, heavy snows and severe cold and delays in deliveries of gasoline. The Allies were swift in moving massive forces to strike the bulge from several directions, such as the 101st Airborne and the 82nd Airborne Division into key positions. The fighting and gallantry, and staying power of the forces initially attacked by the Germans.

German casualties were about 250,000 men, 600 tanks and 1600 airplanes. US casualties have been listed from 75,000 to 84,000 men. The battle saved us many casualties in our final attack, if the German losses had been used to defend the home land from our final attacks. (Some show our loss 100,000.)

The largest battle in which any Americans ever took part.

The British had about 1,500 casualties. Both Churchill and Montgomery apologized for their first claim to have turned the tide of battle and claim victory for the British.

Several have mentioned the BIG or SPECIAL pill boxes captured by the 78th Division during our attack of Dec. 13-14, 1944 but no one seems to know where they were located. Some have suggested that the pill box with the steel dome must have been one of them. They refer to them as –

PILL BOX A or PBA and Pill Box B or PBB

The 309th Inf. Captured the one I was in with the steel dome south of Witzerath and Simmerath and near Huppenbroich. The other one may be the one between Witzerath and Rollesbroich to the north of Witzerath captured by Capt. Millard G. “Bull” Durham and the 310th Inf. Regiment. Captured by different Regiments would account for only higher Headquarters knowing about both of them. CAN ANYONE TELL US MORE ABOUT THE BIG PILL BOX CAPTURED BY THE 310TH Infantry and its Co A?

A copy is being sent to Capt. “Bull” Durham as follows:

Millard G. Durham, 608 N. Walnut St., Fayetteville, ARK 72701

However, I did not find him at Louiseville, KY, Reunion. He is listed in the 1992-93 Directory of the 78th at this address.

The pill box with the steel dome had two stacks of metal bunks fastened to one wall and down filled comforters, mostly red ones. For commanders?

This steel-domed box had a good view of Lammersdorf and Monschau.

After the war, the men that did not have quite enough points to make the first trip back across the “big pond” (Atlantic) loafed around on light duty with no close comradeship showing like that found in the up-front Infantry men. There was a close pleasantness, but more of a feeling to get separated and begin forgetting about the war and war friends.

CWO (Chief Warrant Officer) William “Bill” G. Lipe from Durham, NC, had remarked to me that we will have to get together some time back home since we were both from NC, and both tied back to a Rowan county settlement of Germans started about 1745. No known connections.

“Bill” Lipe had joined the army at the first of the Great Depression in 1930 with pay \$21 per month, the same they paid me when first drafted in May 1941. One of his daughters wrote me that “Bill” had devoted his entire life to “God and His Country.” He was dedicated to the job and knew the army from beginning to end.

“Bill” told me that he had trained with our Commanding Officer, Lt. Col. Gregory L. Higgins in early days when they could not afford artillery shells and had attached a 45 cal. Pistol to a cannon, created a firing range to observe the shots and call back direction to the firing crew. Also they had trained with 30 cal. Machine guns converted to 22 caliber.

Higgins was promoted one grade and assigned commander of 308 FA. Bn. At the beginning of maneuvers in Tennessee. He must have realized the importance of supply and contacted “Bill” Lipe, from their earlier friendship, and asked him to transfer to the 308th. This led to the Presidential Situation ribbon for Sv. Btry and a Bronze Star for ‘Bill’.

“Bill” moved to Georgia soon after getting home, where I visited him twice, and where he died.

Before the First 78th reunion in Philadelphia, Bill wrote me to meet him and Sadie there, which we did. When I mentioned it to the wife she said “Who would you want to see anyway?” – a dash of cold water, but making a list it was a good one. My FO crew, 2 boys in the steel domed box, 2 boys that captured 2 infiltrators at Hasenfeld while I kept their rifles, infantrymen at the “ROCK” OP, but I did not know their names or unit. I remembered Lt. Pete Lamana with the Inf. Who played football, and started with him, still do not know the others. Two of my FO crew met us in “Philly.”

Peter Lamana’s wife wrote me that he does not talk of the war because it makes him nervous. It did me also until I talked with others at the reunions and recovered, but still have not seen lamina. Maybe sometime!

John P. Lentz – Index to Battle of the Bulge (Nov. 1992)

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