THE SKIRMISH LINE by Chester Garstki

FALL, 1998

MINNEAPOLIS REUNION REPORT   Pages 26-32
70th ready for next century

I want to thank all you Trailblazers for electing me President of this great 70th Infantry Division Association. Along with the new Executive Committee, I will do my best to lead the organization into the year 2000.

We will keep in mind the purpose of our organization:
To extend the fellowship and patriotism of living members;
To perpetuate the memory of all men who served in the 70th Infantry Division;
To promote and perpetuate the memory of the achievements of the Division, and
To hold regular Reunions.

This Reunion, as reported on page 26, endured many possibilities for disaster. But the true Trailblazer spirit prevailed despite the problems caused by the Northwest Airline strike that forced many of our members to cancel and were unable to attend.

Past President George Marshall and his wife, Barbara, had planned a great Reunion for us. It was a deep disappointment that they were unable to attend. We missed them. The good news is George has returned home after 19 days in the hospital and is progressing well. We will keep George and Barbara in our thoughts and prayers.

As immediate Past President, George continues to serve in the Executive Committee, giving valuable advice in our discussions. We hope he will continue to give us advice as we move into the 21st century.

At our Executive Committee meeting Sunday we all agreed that our committee should have more timely meetings where we could sit down and discuss the needs and opportunities of the Association. Accordingly, we will have an Executive Committee meeting at the Western States mini-reunion May 6, 1999.

An up-to-date Membership Roster should be completed after the first of the year. It will include our Constitution and By-laws as amended in the Minneapolis business meeting.

Andy

MANY THANKS!

Ema Dell and I are grateful for the many words of sympathy expressed to us on the loss of her brother Henry Pinkney Hobbs, Jr., of Birmingham, Alabama, who passed away while we were in Minneapolis. “Pinkey” was a warrior of the first order, one of our “band of brothers”. He served in the Navy in WW2 and earned battle stars for every major naval engagement in the Pacific. He served on the aircraft carrier USS Cabot. He was active in the annual reunions of Division C of the Cabot. He served his family and his community well. We miss him.

Andy and Ema Dell McMahon

"Go 'way! I'm busy!" sez Sherwood

Even a German barrage didn’t slow down T/5 Bob Sherwood’s repair job. The 70th QM driver was coming through.

Oh, for mercy’s sake . . .

The POW was trembling, sweating and just about to collapse of fear as he stood in front of a 275th POW interrogator.

He sobbed, “Please, Captain. I have a cousin in Chicago named Levy.”

a German town when he was halted by the wreckage left by a Nazi rocket. One tire started hissing, apparently victim of shrapnel. Just as he had jacked up his truck and removed the felled tire, a real barrage settled in. Grabbing the deflated tire and his patching kit, he dove into a nearby basement. There he calmly proceeded to fix the flat. He finished the job just as the barrage ended.
Hundreds of Trailblazers came into the Division — or left the Division — as replacements. No sooner had Task Force Herren landed at Marseilles, than the Companies were combed for riflemen to plug those horrendous holes inflicted by the German offensive of The Bulge. And when the 'Blazers suffered severe casualties in Operation Nordwind's continuation of The Bulge, it was replacements who stepped into those holes in the ranks.

No one who has been in battle becomes a "veteran" in 10 seconds. And veterans have always bemoaned that "rookies" weren't up to the "old-timers" standards. It took those same 10 seconds for the new men to show their admirable mettle — and to be accepted as a true Trailblazer. Here is the story of one of them as told by the staff artist of "Trailblazer" and whose work illustrates this story.

"Git two bandoleers an' grenades... and leave them cotter pins alone."

Only partly trained, they filled holes
Nordwind wreaked

By PETER "TEX" BENNET
HQ 2nd Bn/276

We were replacements sent to the front to fill the holes in the 70th's ranks caused by Nordwind's fury. We were mostly country boys from Virginia, North and South Carolina and Pennsylvania. Most of us were 18 or 19, but a few appeared to be in the 35-year draft bracket.

We trained at Camp Croft, South Carolina, uphill and downhill — day and night — since they had cut two weeks off the normal 17 week cycle. During our final days of field training Gen. George Marshall visited our area — easily distinguished by his trenchcoat, combat boots, and absolute attention to what was going on. I do not think I have ever seen a man who looked more like a general officer than he did — ramrod-straight bearing, behavior, and unmistakable purpose and determination. I am glad he was on our side.

(Ed note: On completion of their abbreviated Basic, the group went to the Port of New York and boarded the great Isle de France.)

As we sailed up the west coast of England, a line of British destroyers formed an escort screen. We sailed into the Firth of Clyde, Scotland, past my ancestors' home of Isle of Bute. We disembarked and dragged our duffel bags into a waiting train, non-stop to Southampton. There in the moonlight, hundreds of men hurried aboard a British destroyer which took us to France. Mercifully the trip was short.
REPLACEMENTS

(continued)

but the great adventure was going over the side of the ship and down a heavy rope ladder to the landing craft below which was heaving up and down with the waves. Here we learned that they didn’t cover everything in Basic.

FROM LE HAVRE we went on to Nancy and the Seventh Army Re-placement Depot where we were herded into what appeared to be a factory with a moat of water over which the latrines were built.

At Nancy we were issued the magnificent Rifle Cal .30 M-1. Our factory-new rifles came to us in a plastic bag packed solid with cosmoline. Cleaning that puppy onto 2-1/2 ton trucks, and headed North with a moat of water over which the latrines was a big part of one day. We were loaded where they were making men out of boys.

Nearer the front, we saw greasy black smoke of burning tanks, dead horses from German wagon columns and nameless burning small towns. The trucks pulled to a stop at Oeting; we could hear artillery and other fire raging over the hill for Forbach.

An NCO got our attention and instructed us to change into the clothes we had in our duffel bags, and turn in the leftovers along with the gas masks. Next he directed us to take a couple of grenades and two hando-leers of M-1 ammunition and “Leave them grenade cotter pins alone!!! Take your M-1 up that draw and fire it to be sure it’s working OK.”

Somewhere on a nearby ridge, Col. Albert Morgan, CO of the 276th, addressed our “packet” with the admonishment against throwing away equipment or clothing. Because, he said, when “the snow is ass-deep to tall giraffe, you’ll need it . . . .” He also told the story of a scout who lost his grenade launching attachment, and when his unit came under fire from an MG 42, he couldn’t launch a grenade to kill the gunner.

We were loaded into the trucks again and were shown how fast a truck can accelerate before hitting the crest of an artillery-fire hill — those Quartermaster truckers knew what happened to slow or careless drivers.

Our truck roared up to the Battalion Aid Station and let us off — double-time. We were told that we would be assigned to carrying parties at first, assisting the Ammunition and Pioneer platoon carrying ammunition, water and rations up into the lines. After we would get used to incoming rockets, artillery, mortar and small-arms fire, we would be assigned to a permanent unit.

A NOther replacement named Olney and I were on a carrying party at night, hauling ammo and water up to a rifle company — our first trip up that hill. The Sad Sack who was leading us in pitch darkness — hand on the belt of the man in front — got lost, missed a turn and led us up the hill the way the Germans would have. Our own people fired on us and Sad Sack screamed “Kamerad” thinking he had hit German lines. He and the rest of our fearless leaders came back down the hill like a herd of rampart alligators. Two flares were fired, and I thought they would never go out. But I saw Olney beside me, I told him I had a grenade ready and if they opened up again, I would throw it and we would take off down the hill toward the searchlights that shone behind our lines.

We finally backed down the trail like snakes and headed back toward Forbach. God must have had something else for us to do because He led us past “sche mines”, snipers, perimeter riflemen, random mortar fire and Lord knows what else. We came down the hill to a small house where we were — fortunately — challenged and welcomed. The following day we were routed back to HQ for further assignment. This is an example of how a couple of replacements came close to being killed — not through their lack of training, but through the derelict duty of an NCO of the Ammunition and Pioneer Platoon. Fortunately I do not know his name.

I had a number of very close calls from rockets, artillery and deadly mortar fire, but as each day passed I got more “street smarts” about the battlefield. There was a considerable improvement in NCOs and fellow riflemen. I have always felt that the German soldier is the hardest disciplined toughest bunch of killers the U.S. Army has ever fought; he damn near won that war. Our victory was the finest American victory — any century, any war.

No Divarty news?

The inadvertent omission of the 725th Field Artillery from the 70th Division Order of Battle, (as it appeared on the cover of the Spring, 1997 issue) prompts the following account.

By EDWARD THOMAS
SV725
Since S/Sgt Keith Schreckengost, Sgt. Herbert Watson and I are the only members of our battery who are Association members, we are a minority. But we shouldn’t overlook the contribution the 725th made in the Saarland campaign.

We were the guys who hammered away with 155 mm howitzers that were heard throughout the area, covering the ground for the Infantry companies. We indeed softened the load for the foot soldiers as evidenced by the many truckloads of ordnance we trucked in to feed those monster of the cannon.

The 725th disembarked the US Mari­posa, landing at Le Havre. We shared the mud of the heated earth by day and the freezing nights.

I was a forward observer and had many close calls driving a jeep close to the front lines to see where our shells were landing. More than once I rode in a Piper Cub; (Yes, it was a Piper Cub!) At altitudes so low we could clearly see the advance part of the Infantry. Many times it was “Bed-check Charlie” who buzzed your area. It was W/O Lloyd Wehner of McMinnville, Oregon and me, reconnositering to see where the Germans had planted their artillery. The 725th wiped out many of them with our hundred-pound payload.

We were the people who covered the area for the advance of the foot-sore soldiers. We did not make many mistakes while placing shells in the target area.

(Editor’s note: The omission of the 725th has been noted and apologize for. The only reason there isn’t more material about the Artillery is simple: its members don’t send anything in. Criticism should be directed to those lazy ol’ gunners, not to this magazine.)
For weeks while the 70th besieged Saarbrücken, its citizens had to be on constant alert. Especially in the last few days before the city fell, air and artillery onslaughts forced most civilians into cellars and bunkers.

But the day after the Trailblazers took the city, people were out and about. The battered buildings in the background attest to the intensity of the bombing. Photo courtesy of Tom Higley, C/274.

Think it was bad then? You ought to see it now!

By TED HECK
K/275

If you thought CP-2 was the pits in that wet week of December, 1944, before we went into action, you were a half century early in your judgment. On top of Plateau de L’arbois today is a massive garbage dump where the wind carries unpleasant odors and rain is welcomed to keep loose papers from flying around.

A little below the landfill earth-movers scoop out a bed for the TGV high speed railway that will link Lyon with Marseille. Another sign of civilization is a television transmitter.

Otherwise, Command Post Two is pretty much the way I remembered it, when six or seven thousand of us camped out in leaky tents. The barren plateau is full of rills and rolls and stunted vegetation. The canal is still there, where the farmer with his donkey cart filled canteens with wine. Terrible stuff, but the price was right.

Monte Sainte Victoire is still off to the northeast, on the other side of the city of Aix-en-Provence. The huge rock dominates the horizon. It was a mountain I had come to know before joining the Army, having studied the art of impressionist Paul Cezanne. He had painted it many times.

Some of the landscapes were recently exhibited in Philadelphia. My special friend Connie and I were in Aix to learn more about Cezanne, when I decided to try to find CP-2. The tourist office was not helpful, except in finding a hotel room. But a chance encounter with a Town Hall clerk led us to her grandfather’s village of Calas, southwest of Aix. She remembered that Grandpere had talked of the many American soldiers on the plateau. We did not get to meet him, but another Anciens Combat­ tant confirmed it. He could not tell us how long the hill was occupied or how many other divisions had used it. It is tough to quantify “beaucoup”.

I later heard from Andre and Madame Brusson in Calas, who are historians of our war. They put me in touch with George Davis, of Rhinebeck, New York, who was with the 103d “Cactus” Division. George was at CP-2 two months ahead of us, in October, 1944, and by the time we arrived, he was already a prisoner-of-war. George reported that CP-2 was to be seen again by soldiers shipped to the Pacific to fight the Japanese.

Our Division and other U.S. forces were not the first to camp there. In the Town Hall of Aix-en-Provence the clerk had shown us a painting of the French army nearly a century earlier. Plateau de L’arbois was a staging area for them, too, before they went off to fight in the Crimean War.

Standing on the plateau, I recalled how miserable we felt in the rain and how eager we were to get off that sodden ground.

Two weeks later some of us were dying in the snow.

(Editors Note: A platoon leader with Company K and later S-2 and S-1 of the 3rd Bn/275, Ted is now a travel writer who often leaves the beaten path.)

Golden Oldies

Coming up to 54 in December is the wedding anniversary for Warren, 70 HQ, and Helen Wilson. She was a college student in Westchester, Pennsylvania where the Army had established a Postal Service school, which Warren attended for six weeks.

“We met at a church service one Sunday,” Helen recalls. “Most of our courtship was through letters after he went back to Camp Adair. We were married before he went overseas.

“After his discharge, we went back to his hometown in Iowa. He has lived in the same house since he was in the fourth grade — 72 years, except for one year in Wichita, Kansas, where Warren worked for Cessna airplanes. And his four years in the Army, of course.”

Gerald Adamietz, B/274, will celebrate his 53rd wedding anniversary with his war bride, his Wilma, a German girl. Gerry went to the 3rd Division when the 70th went home and stayed in Germany til January, 1947, working with the Polish Army unit in Regensburg. He retired from a defense department. His last trip was to Italy, Hungary, Germany and Prague, Czechoslovakia.
By ROGER FARRIS
G/275

The year was 1944. I was 18 years old, a callow youth and a recent graduate of Albion, Nebraska high school, about to set the music world afire. In my morning mail a letter from the War Department. The exact wording escapes me but it seems they needed my assistance in ending WW II as it had gone on for some time. I graciously accepted.

After a grueling and prolonged training period of 13 weeks, we were adjudged capable, competent and able to stop the indomitable Hun. I hadn't got it straight in my own mind yet, but not to worry. In time another train came by and eventually we arrived at Fort Meade, Maryland. The country club of the Army, real class. Nice place to stay for the duration. Unfortunately things were worse than I thought and we were all needed in a different location...as yet undisclosed.

A brief interlude, then on to Camp Miles Standish north of Boston. It was an odd collection of shacks scattered randomly through a swamp, spouting black coal smoke and named after some general who was playing footsie with Pocahontas. (Camps are named after generals or cigarettes.) God! It was cold and smoky! Not to worry.

Special arrangements had been made and we were dumped on a dock in Boston. Our ship, the magnificent “Sea Tiger Victory” appeared to have gone aground on what looked very much like a garbage dump. A closer examination revealed that it was only Boston Harbor.

Late in the afternoon the tugs came in and pushed us off the pier, put jumper cables on and got the engines started. Our destination, of course, was top secret. But I did think that 60 huge transports painted battleship gray, accompanied by destroyers, three small carriers and a variety of naval vessels heading east from Boston in the middle of a war might cause interest in some quarters.

The Atlantic Ocean is a very large hunk of very black, ugly, churning water lying in an easterly direction between us and them. It was the first of January and I've been told there are better times to cross. The destroyers and corvetts would slide off the crests of those tremendous waves into the trough and disappear. When I think of a beautiful ocean, the Atlantic never crosses my mind.

We got through the storms, gun drills, subs and short rations. I was told we passed Ireland, then some white cliffs which had to be Dover. I'd heard the song.

**WE SAILED INTO** the beautiful harbor of Le Havre. Well, they dumped us on the dock again. **This time in the middle of the night** we dined on a slice of bread and two eggs with black yolks. We trudged across to a railway siding, still on our sea legs. We crowded up to a coach with large round windows each with a single rose in a bud vase, white jacketed waiters and warmth radiating from the windows. For us? It seemed too good to be true. Well of course it was! The train was the famed Orient Express...but we were not to ride it. Not to worry!

Across the siding we came upon our very own 40-and-8 in which we steamed fitfully across the frozen French countryside. Awed by its beauty and numbed by its cold. Paris, Chateau Thierry, Barleduc, Neufchateau, etc.

My newfound friend suggested our feet were frozen. (I hadn't felt my feet in a couple of days now.) He seemed to know everything—he was from New York. We relieved—over protest—a French railroad worker of his stove and kicked down a hundred feet of fence for fuel. This did nothing to improve U.S./French relations.

We eventually arrived at a hell hole called the Epinal Repple Depot. Now was the time to worry! An old linen factory, it was colder inside than out. I can't remember eating. The latrine was planks laid across a canal that always had a gale force wind blowing.

My friend and I walked through the big hole in the fence that night and watched the MPs raid the “bagnio” (that’s a whorehouse). GI's were actually sliding down drain pipes carrying their pants and hauled away in 6 x 6’s by MPs with Thompsons. My, my!

Then they dumped us at an old cavalry barracks somewhere, and then it was Task Force Herren. Then I got sick and when I woke up I was 19 years old.

Well, I got that over with but only with the help of all the guys that put me and my gear on a truck going somewhere. God bless them! I was considering worrying as

“Sgt. Higley said they all were addressed to his company. So he took 'em all.”

(Roy Veary, who drew the cartoon, says: “We guys in C/275 think a lot of Tom Higley, our old first sergeant. The cartoon illustrates just one of the methods he might use in caring for his troops.”)
a vocation. This damned dump-and-run was getting old.

It was an M.G.M. set of an enormous snowfield, and endless gray sky, a bombed out chateau and a light colonel standing on the hood of a jeep. (Now that makes your men look up to you!) He admonished us to “kill or capture Krauts.” Under these circumstances it seemed a reasonable request.

Winter had definitely set in — snow was everywhere and it was bitterly cold. We were taken to a cook shack and told to eat outside where they had parked three 6 x 6 loads of our dead. Soon we were quartered with a French family in another small village. The house and barn were under one roof and supported an Olympic class manure pile that was the envy of all. Each morning as more material was added, Pierre troweled it on with the back of a shovel. It was like CBS TV. (Every morning more BS.)

Things were kind of slow, but a rumor was circulating that G Company had been selected to go to Grossbliederstroff. It was no spa; it was a small town that was full of Germany’s finest and needed about a day’s worth of raiding.

February 6 was to be our day out-of-town. We saddled up, dropped our sleeping bags and got on the trucks. We wended our way through the trees and the night and arrived near a tree line overlooking the snow field above the town. The trucks dropped us off — and like the Red Ball Express — burned rubber in the snow getting out of there. There was no mention of returning. Not to worry.

We worked our way down to the stream bed and crossed chest deep in ice water. It was indescribable! We scrambled out near what appeared to be a greenhouse and into what can only be called a hail of hostile fire. We got chewed up real good and I immediately discounted the Infantry as a lifetime profession. We fought back and forth all day and finally started to pull back in late afternoon. We backed out with the Krauts following closely.

Our six wounded and four prisoners had been taken across the stream. We used doors off houses for stretchers. We broke it off with the Krauts and caught up with the company. Grisen had been killed and left with the French padre. We left 20 German dead and 16 wounded. It took hours to get back up the hill, load the wounded and get back to that lovely manure pile. It seemed like home. We slept for 12 hours.

The schoolboy bravado disappeared, the superfluous BS leveled off, a sense of camaraderie seemed to develop and everyone got more serious. The raid had a sobering effect on everyone. To see someone with a gun shooting directly at you is bound to make you review your lifestyle. It’s such a personal thing. But not to worry ... we patrolled and dug in frozen ground with dumb shovels and froze and got sick and hungry.

We worked our way up to the Spicheren Heights getting shelled all the way. We were looking down on Saarbrucken, St. Arnault, the river and the tiger’s teeth of Siegfried Line. It was postcard country — it needed an oomp-pah band with tambourine girls. The only oomp-pahs around were 88s. We watched P-47s and ME-109s in a dog fight one day and learned that Newton was right. Whatever goes up must come down.

(continued on next page)
All That JAZZ

(continued)

Mud, mud, mud. The Germans were doing a lot of patrolling and they were good. One big patrol passed within 20 feet of our 2-man outpost. When they passed I sent Pop back and around and bingo, we got them. We found a Kraut radio operator in one of our shot-out tanks and I guess he got the same as the tank. Fini!

Our squad was down to about nine men but all had automatic weapons. I got the flash-hider blown off my BAR which was sobering. Some time later a second looie wanted me to pay for it. That BAR had more years on it than he did and that is really bad P.R.

I coughed so bad at night that no one would stay around me. I was becoming paranoid. Baker took me down to see the Doc at the aid station. He gave me a pint of holy water. When the water touched his lips he came out of the coma and began a near miraculous recovery. He is today hearty; he fully participated in the festivities held for him and has 13 years of service on the Spicheren town council. And Bob for his troubles was made an honorary citizen of the town.

For a while, Pfc Henry Norton, HQ 1st Bn/274, had serious doubts as to whether he’d ever have anything to show his grandchildren in back-up to his stories of service in World War II.

He was awarded the Good Conduct Medal in the Fall of 1944. He lost the decoration the next day.

Back from the hospital, he was awarded the Combat Infantryman’s Badge. He pinned it onto his field jacket. The jacket — and, of course, the badge — disappeared overnight. Long after his “bravery in action” at Philippebourg, he was given the Bronze Star, which Col. Sam Conley pinned onto his new field jacket. Next day — Missing: One jacket, one medal.

By a revered soldier’s tradition — “moonlight requisitioning” — he got a new CIB in Lorraine. At that point he had no definite plans about replacing the other decorations.

Poor old
Henry Norton

The Case of the
Missing Medals

Seingbouse, he and the two ladies enjoyed an emotional reunion, and Bob for his troubles was made an honorary citizen of the town.

There is another remarkable story to recount, and it begs for an ending if anyone can provide it. On the night of Feb. 20, 1945, Vincent Bousch, 13 years old, was severely injured in the fighting for Spicheren. There was evidently a triage of the civilian casualties of the village. He was placed among those who were not expected to live. But his sister fought to save him and managed to persuade a military doctor, perhaps a Medic, to come and help him.

After emergency treatment Vincent was placed on the hood of a truck and carried to Bousbach, and later to a hospital in Saint-Avoid. During all this time he remained unconscious, for three weeks he said, though this seems unlikely. In any case, he remained in a coma at the hospital until the nun who cared for the most critically injured patients blessed him with drops of holy water. When the water touched his lips he came out of the coma and began a near miraculous recovery. He is today hale and hearty; he fully participated in the festivities held for him, and he has 13 years of service on the Spicheren town council. And he will proudly show you the crease in his skull, his souvenir of the war.

Vincent Bousch, as well as those of our group who heard his story, would like to know who it was who treated him. If that doctor or medic reads this, or if anyone reading this knows anything about the incident, he is urged to contact John Nothnagle, 1016 Marcy St., Iowa City, IA 52240, who will see that Vincent’s story gets a proper ending.

Fantastic stories of war episodes stirred in France

By JOHN NOTHNAGLE

570 Signal

During the many ceremonies of French monument dedications, Bob Hays has to take the honors for WW2 memories. He has a snapshot taken of him and three comrades in March, 1945 in the village of Seingbouse. With the GIs are two little girls, one wiping chocolate off her lips. Bob in his later existence as a physician in Syracuse, New York, wondered if he could learn the identity of those girls, now middle-aged women. Incredibly, he did.

On May 10, ’97, in the setting of a warm reception by the mayor and council of
**What's up Doc?**

Volume 1  Number 9  July 20, 1945

COMPANY B GETS COMBAT MEDICS BADGES

131 Men Go to Third Division

BRAUNFELS COLLEGE BEGINS AUGUST 1

**MEDIC'S MEMO . . .**

This 4-page weekly newspaper was published by the 270 Medical Battalion. This is the ninth issue and was produced while the Medics HQ was in Braunfels, Germany. (The imposing Braunfels Castle is shown in the vignette at the right of the nameplate). Tex Cunningham was editor.

On the point — then POW!

four are hit

It was that cold, snowy, damp and dark morning of Jan. 4, 1945. Company G, 274 made an attack on Wingen-sur-Moder. The next day it mounted another attack. This time **Woodford Hatfield** was on the point.

After a fierce morning, about 1:30 that afternoon, Woody was hit. Three others of the company were hit about the same time. One of them died as Hatfield watched helplessly.

Woody wonders who the surviving two are. Also, who was on the point in the first assault. "There is nothing about it in any of the books that I have read about Trailblazer history," he says. His address is 9008 Terry Lane, Louisville, KY 40258. His phone is (502) 937-6808.

**The 100th**

**Century Division’s history parallels that of 'Blazers**

**Jack Herman**, C/276, and the ’Trailblazer’ have extended their audience and the history of the 70th has been presented to many more people.

Excerpts of Jack's story that ran in the Spring '96 issue of the magazine have been reprinted in the “Newsletter” of the 100th (Century) Division.

The 100th and the 70th have much in common. The Century left from Fort Kilmer, New Jersey, the POE from which Headquarters elements of Task Force Herren left. The 100th people were in the first convoy that went directly to the liberated port of Marseilles, where TFH landed. In the same convoy were the 103rd (Cactus) Division and elements of the 14 Armored Division.

They went up the Rhone Valley, the same route Herren took six weeks later. There they relieved elements of the 45th (Thunderbird) Division to which Trailblazer regiments would soon be attached.

After moving around the Vosges during November, the 100th, on Dec. 2, moved to Lohr and on to Zittersheim. Cal Norman, editor of the “Newsletter” reports:

"Co. A of the 398th Infantry Regiment was part of the push toward Bitche via Wingen-sur-Moder. We advanced along the ridge from Zittersheim to Wingen and arrived at an overlook on the southeast of the village late in the afternoon. Our efforts to enter the town were met with heavy fire from mortars, 20 mm cannon and machine guns. Long after dark (and it was DARK!) we entered Wingen along Rue de E’Cole and occupied some houses.

"We lost several men to enemy fire and the wounded were sheltered in the home of a forest ranger at the edge of the village.

"Some time after midnight we were surrounded by Germans and 104 enlisted men and four officers were captured and led off into captivity. (It was once believed that there were some 100th men among the American captives who were rescued by Trailblazers from the basement of the church in Wingen. There certainly were some 70th men but most were from the 45th.) The town was occupied within the next few days by other elements of the 1st battalion and the battalion pushed on in November."

In March, '45, the 100th captured Bitche, crossed the Rhine at Ludwigshaffen, reduced Heilbronn and wound up around Stuttgart.

"So the Division spent its whole combat life with the 7th Army at times either in the V1 or XV Corps.

"The 100th was soon one of the few Divisions that held the Germans during Nordwind, an episode the 70th remembers well."  

(Editor's note: It is the policy of the 70th Association that any material in the "Trailblazer" may be reprinted if proper recognition is given to the writer and the magazine. The object, of course, is to widen the audience and spread Trailblazer history on the widest possible basis.)
The Editor's
Barracks Bag

You are reading the last issue of the "Trailblazer" that I have edited. Sixty-four of them — and everyone a true labor of love. That isn’t a cliche; it is a labor. Each issue demands the processing of about 30,000 words and the handling of uncounted photographs and drawings. But I loved it and I shall miss it . . . and all the letters and phone calls from you-all.

I figure I have written more than 2,000 letters on 70th business and received just as many. (My neighbors at this retirement community are amazed at my bulging mailbox every day.)

A major labor was finding a successor to this editorship. There are several ex-journalists in the Association. But they were too old, too tired — or too smart — to take on the job. I finally decided that a lay person just couldn’t handle this with comfort. The editor needs a military vocabulary, and needs to know a lot of the 70th’s history. (How many times have I caught an old-timer getting Philippsbourg mixed up with Wingen or Forbach.)

Age: 90

Patriarchs’ Patriarch
is Anderson’s Claim

The man who may be the oldest living Trailblazer has just reported in . . . again.

William Anderson, K/276, will have an early 90th birthday party at the Minneapolis Reunion, the first he’s attended . . . since the very first. He is a charter member of the Association, one of the “Blazers who met in Salem, Oregon in 1964.

His birthday is Sept. 20.

As he moved about he lost track of the Association until he got a letter from then-President Dale Bowlin in 1996.

“At the end of combat,” he says, “word came down to send all over-age men home. So I came back with the 270 Engineers. I am listed with that outfit in the Association Roster but I wish you’d have that changed to K/276, that I served with since the 70th was organized. And I’d like to have my name correct to William W. Anderson. My roster address is correct: 3251 S.E. Dunes, Lincoln City, Oregon. My phone is (541) 996-3680.”

Let’s all salute our ol’ Pop!

We are damn lucky that Ed Lane was persuaded to take the job. His credentials are given elsewhere in this issue and I won’t be redundant there.

The Association is lucky that Peter “Tex” Bennet continues as staff artist. His powerful drawings have added great impact to these pages and it has been a true pleasure working with him. And, of course, the superb photographs of Chester Garstki — God rest his soul! — made this magazine a real trailblazer in military journalism.

And finally, I shudder to think what the magazine would have been like without the gargantuan work of my wife Viola. The Association was appropriate with its bestowal of Honorary Membership on her at Minneapolis. (That’s the observation of a keen-eyed journalist, not a proud spouse.)

As a final supplication, I ask you to fill out the Axe-head Archives form that ran in the Spring ’98 issue. The number of returns has been disappointing. I do, though, sincerely thank the men who have responded.

This is actually an obligation, not to this editor, or this Association, but to history and to your family. Please make sure that your page of history is not left blank.

Lee Miller, D/275, has probably tracked down more missing Trailblazers than any other individual. He tells me that last year he located 28 of our missing comrades. He hasn’t given me an estimate of the ’98 search but I know he’s still looking — most diligently.

Gladys, the wife of Robert Cole, B/274, died May 7, 1996.

Tex Metaxis — Call him Professor now instead of General — tells us that in Stephen Ambrose’s super book “Citizen Soldiers”, there is a photo of a 70th man, Pvt. Vincent Winge, unit unknown, during the Saarlnd campaign.

Ted is planning a nostalgic trip next year, to Korea to mark the 50th anniversary of that war and, a year later, to Vietnam for its anniversary. He served in both those wars in addition to The Big War.

Edmund C. Arnold

The Army is getting smart. It has introduced a program that would draw upon patriotism to motivate the soldier to the highest level of performance. For me, it comes 55 years too late.

World War II certainly was a high point in patriotic motivation. Yet the Army ignored it. I always found Retreat a highly moving ceremony. What an opportunity to remind the soldier he was there because he loved his country. Yet — in my company at least — what should have been the emotional highlight of the day became a dreaded ordeal. Standing in almost-ankle-deep Oregon dust, the snarling order made us drop our rifles to the ground. The baseplate of our rifles, which we had so painstakingly cleaned with tooth brushes, naturally became caked with sand. And we were mercilessly handed out demerits that bled our sparse off-duty time. Patriotism was eroded by hatred for sadistic military discipline.

That was but one of hundreds of occasions of the abuse of authority — sometimes by officers but usually by non-coms. Elsewhere in this issue is the story of Joe Kielar, G/274. It tells of a mess sergeant — of all people — assuming the right to discipline soldiers for what he considered misdeeds of table etiquette. Such abuse is as bad as the sexual harassment that the Army is now ostensibly clamping down on.

It has been suggested that the Associa-
tion make a gift to the World War II Memorial Fund that will build the monument on the Washington Mall. That would do three good things. (a) It would, of course, help reach the $100 million needed to build the memorial. (b) It would demonstrate — especially to Congress — the deep concern of veterans’ groups in this project and (c) encourage our individual members to make personal contributions.

If you want to share in this monumental (no pun intended) project, you may send your check to WW2 Memorial Fund, PO Box 96766, Washington, DC 20090-6766. At the same time you might write your Congressional members and urge that Congress appropriate funds for the monument. Surely they can squeeze out a hundred mils from the astronomical aid we give Israel, Egypt and all those rag-tag Latin Americana dictatorships.

We sure would like to see it before we finally check in, wouldn’t we?

But no matter how tall the stack of mail is any day, two letters will always stand out. One is from Tom Axelrod, K/274; the other from Robert Cole, B/274. Both ornament their envelopes with colorful rubber stamps. They must have quite a collection because the designs keep changing. Tom edits his company’s newsletter, has just had a hip replacement. But he ought to be rarin’ to go by Reunion time.

When Jim Hanson, L/274, sent in his checklist for his favorite “Trailblazer” features, his wife Beverly added a P.S. She thinks it would be interesting to hear of the wartime experiences of 70th wives. We agree! In fact, over the years we have repeatedly invited our better halves to send in their reminiscences. Alas! Response has been almost zero. We hope our ladies will agree with Beverly and will send in their stories to the new editor.

(continued on page 34)

AT: bridge builders

Often, in combat, the Anti-Tank men of the 2nd Bn/275 might have wished that they were Engineers. They almost made it, too. They liberated a huge quantity of Erector sets and spent all their spare time building a b-i-g bridge that a real Engineer might well be proud of.

Recon missions sound like script for Hollywood

Reconnaissance missions as the 70th broke through Saarbrucken into Germany might have been a Hollywood scenario. They had all the ingredients.

In two days, March 20 and 21, the 70th Recon Troop, commanded by Capt. John Beaver, had swept over a road network of 70 miles and 10 miles wide northeast of Saarbrucken. Traveling at night — and without maps — the troop captured 250 prisoners-of-war and an arsenal with arms and ammunition for three companies.

The troop first contacted the 65th Battle Sxe Division at Hulz and the 26th Yankee Division at Ottweiler and elements of the Twentieth Corps at St. Wendel, making the Division the link between the Third and Seventh Armies.

The Troop left Marienau, just outside Forbach, shortly after dawn and met its first obstacle at the Saar River. The only available crossing was on a pontoon bridge with a ton-and-a-half weight limit. But all the vehicles made the hairy crossing and up the slippery banks on the German side.

Then came the problem of what to do with the prisoners it captured.

The first 20 came, hands up, out of the bushes near the river. They were ordered to go to Saarbrucken and until they met American troops. No guards; can’t spare the men.

Although resistance was sparse, when it did occur it was intense. At one point the M-8 carrying Lt. William Minahan drew fire from prepared positions in the woods. Unable to locate the enemy, the lieutenant jumped out for a better view. T/5 Virgil Heck stood upright in the turret to direct the driver. He and Minahan were excellent targets for the enemy but they maintained their high profile until the foe was located and eliminated.

The troop gathered at Hulz and struck off to the north. But at Steinweiler they ran off their maps. So they “became tourists” and read road signs to gain information. Lt. Paul Koefod guided on the North Star and eventually reached St. Wendel.

All this was summed up in a laconic message back to Division: “Reconnoitered area by zones, roads freed of mines. Demolition charges removed from four bridges. Encountered some small arms fire. Captured 250 prisoners.

*
THE GHOST COMPANY

“No Co. J,” says Army manuals; “Oh, Yeah?” says the 274th

According to all the Army charts, there is no Co. J in an infantry regiment. Don’t tell that to the 274th Infantry Regiment, though. Among its many distinctions, it claims a Co. J, formed in critical days of the battle on Spicheren Heights.

One of its veterans tells of that legendary outfit.

By EDWARD GUSTELY
I, J, M/274

Questions:
1. What are the dates for the formation and dissolution of “J” Co., 274th Infantry?
2. Who, besides myself, were assigned as platoon leaders of J Co.?
3. What are the names of the two men killed in action while assigned to J Co., 274th Infantry?

Memories remain vivid of the day 50 years ago. When two of my men died tragically on Spicheren Heights. It’s a long story.

IT BEGINS on New Year’s Eve, 1944. Then, I was a second lieutenant mortar section leader in M Co., 274th. I and (I believe) Lt. Murray Lanman, were quartered in a home in Herrlisheim, three miles from the Rhine River. At about 8 p.m., a messenger from Capt. McFarland’s C.P. delivered a message: I was to pack and report at 8 a.m. Jan. 1 for transportation to Thaon, near Epinal, France.

The next day I learned that I and seven other second lieutenants were given temporary duty at the 2nd Infantry Replacement Depot by command of Gen. Herren (Task Force Herren Special Order Number 1). Casualties resulting from the Battle of the Bulge had decimated American infantry units. Gen. Eisenhower had announced that 10 percent of all rear echelon troops would be reassigned to infantry units after completing two weeks of basic infantry training. That was our job — to give these GIs basic Infantry training prior to their assignment as replacements to divisions online.

I don’t remember how many men we trained. What I do remember is the rank, time-in-service and qualifications of the men. Most had stripes; they were non-coms or technical grades. They had been in ordnance, quartermaster, transportation, anti-aircraft and other rear echelon, but necessary, units. Some had been in England since most frequently they were in their mid-to-late 20’s.

We trained three classes. The program ended in mid-to-late February. I was given orders to return to my outfit, M/274, but no transportation. I was told the 70th Division headquarters was near Saarlouis. I hitchhiked on vehicles headed my way, found Division headquarters, spent a night there and then was taken to 274 HQ infantry and reported in. It was the week of Feb. 19th.

Also arriving at the same time were many replacement infantrymen who had just completed their two weeks of Infantry basic training. Thus it was that I was assigned to J Co. Capt. Underwood, Regimental S-1, was made company commander. I was told that the 274th, with heavy casualties, had taken Spicheren

TRIUMPHAL TROPHY...
An ornate Nazi banner was a prized spoils-of-war for HQ/274. Here are (from left): George Northrop, Ken Hagg, Warner “Ken” Kaufman and Lloyd Kennedy. The photo was taken at Gonsenheim, Germany in April of 1945. Ken Kaufman sent in this picture.
I do have a vivid recollection of the following events. Every man had been given a blanket. It was very cold. Men were assigned in “buddy teams” of two at periodic locations along the trench. Each team had dug a cavity into the trench wall at the bottom of the trench, where one could escape the cold, and sleep. The men had been trained in the “buddy system”; and it was re-emphasized by me and my platoon sergeant. Two hours sleep, two hours on alert for each man. The sergeant and I followed the same pattern and each of us would check on all of the men as we went “on alert”. We never found any indication of infraction of these orders during our inspections.

One morning before dawn (perhaps 5 or 6 a.m.), I remember the impacts of heavy artillery rounds. These were not 88s or 105s; these were large caliber, heavy artillery rounds — equivalent to 8-inch rounds. The ground shook hard, even though the rounds were not impacting in close proximity to our trench system. The sergeant and I were awake. We considered a non-routine inspection, but decided it was unnecessary. I made the next routine inspection and found, at one location, no one on alert or a blanket covering two men; the hand of one protruded from the dirt. The ground over the sleeping cavity had collapsed and covered both men under their blankets.

I got help and we dug out the two soldiers. They had suffocated, trapped by the blankets and the collapsed earth. They had failed to follow orders and they paid the ultimate price.

I couldn’t recall how many days and nights we were there. [Do regimental records show the time frame for J Co.? Col. Cheves, in “Snow Ridges and Pillboxes” (pages 203 and 204) says the company was organized on Feb. 25 with Capt. Underwood as commanding officer. That’s all. He also says that repeated German counterattacks were repulsed beginning on 26 Feb. and that by “late on the day of February 28, the regimental front had quieted down at last... The next day, March 1, all was quiet” (pages 205-207).] J Co. never engaged the enemy, but it did receive heavy artillery bombardments while on Spicheren Heights.

75,000

There is some folk lore to suggest that the Navy drinks coffee and drinks coffee and drinks coffee.

But so does the Infantry. The 70th Division, for instance, consumed 75,000 cupsful in two months in Germany.

The java was dispensed by 11 Red Cross girls who manned — oops! womaned — three “clubmobiles”. Along with the cuppa were 230,000 crisp, freshly cooked doughnuts. These were served to the estimated 25,000 Trailblazers and attached troops in the 70th sector.

The menu required 12,000 pounds of flour, 2-1/2 tons of coffee and unestimated cream and sugar. (No “creamers” and “sweeteners” in those days!)

Barbara Lewis of Syracuse, New York, was the “captain” of the Red Cross contingent. She said that the opening of a “Doughnut Dugout” in Limberg in August marked the end of the clubmobile. “The clubmobile was a combat expedient,” she said. “The mere sight of doughnuts and coffee served by genuine American girls, was a terrific morale-builder for the dirty, tired and war-weary troops. Clubmobiles were a magnificient job.” They came surprisingly close to the lines and were available to almost every soldier.

The vehicles continued in service at events such as track meets and athletic events, at embarkation points for trains going off to the West and redeployment ports for shipment and similar places. But the “dugout” was designed for Occupation days.

“What the boys want and need now,” said Capt. Lewis, “is a cozy, comfortable place where they can drop in, get a good cup of coffee, read, write a letter or just sit and shoot the breeze.” Although the dugouts would resemble the Red Cross Club in Weilbert, it would be a project of a separate branch of the Red Cross.

Miss Lewis had been an architect before she signed up for wartime service with the Red Cross. In her contingent were girls from New York, Massachusetts, Virginia, North Dakota and Texas.
The New Officers

Three new Vice-Presidents were elected to the Executive Board. One was — and is — a Medic, two were riflemen as

Andrew McMahon, President

Andy earned Purple Heart on Stirling-Wendel ridge

At Charles Brush High School, in South Euclid, Ohio, where Andy graduated in 1942, he was recently honored by election to its Sports Hall of Fame, especially for his golfing prowess.

He went right into a defense plant and until May '43 when he was drafted into the Army at Fort Hayes in Columbus, Ohio. Then on to the Infantry Replacement Training Center at Camp Roberts, California where he completed Basic. Then he was shipped to the ASTP program at Montana State College in Bozeman.

When pressing manpower needs forced discontinuance of the program, he came to the 70th at Camp Adair and was assigned to E/276. He stayed with that outfit until the end of the war.

He became a sergeant at Fort Leonard Wood and served as squad leader and platoon sergeant.

While deploying troops on the Kreutzberg Ridge over-looking the town of Stiring-Wendel, in March, '45, he was wounded by mortar shrapnel. After 45 days in hospitals at Epinal and Paris, he rejoined his outfit at Wurtzburg, Germany.

After VE-Day, he was assigned to the 463rd Anti-Aircraft Battalion at Soissons, France, convoying soldiers on leave to Paris from various Army camps.

Discharged at Camp Atterbury, Indiana in March '46, he enrolled under the GI Bill at John Carroll University in Ohio.

In '48 he joined Associates Discount Corporation in Cleveland and embarked on a 41-year career in finance. His job took him to 10 cities in the eastern and southern states. He joined Chrysler Credit Corporation in Orlando, Florida in '67 and two years later was appointed branch manager of that company in Columbus, South Carolina. Twenty years after that he retired.

In March, 1954, Andy and Ema Dell were married in Mobile, Alabama.

He first heard of the Association in '88 and attended his first Reunion at Nashville. He has been active in the Association ever since and has made five Back-to-Europe trips, including one to the dedication of the Spicheren Heights monument. At the moment he is involved in producing a history of Easy Company, 276.

He moved into his present office from first Vice-President/South after the Board was realigned geographically.

Paul Sumner,

Vice-President/North

Sumner was air-minded even before service

When Paul Sumner was drafted and sent to the Air Corps, he brought an excellent resume with him. After graduating from Central High in Guthrie Center, Iowa, he had attended an airplane mechanics trade school and had worked in maintenance at a glider pilot school in Aberdeen, South Dakota and at a primary pilot training base in Phoenix, Arizona.

In uniform, he was assigned to ASTP at Brigham Young University. Then he was one of the many soldier-students who came to the 70th at Camp Adair when the program was washed out.

Assigned to E/276, he won the Combat Infantryman Badge as a 60mm mortar gunner.

After four years of Army service, Paul earned an engineer's degree at the University of Iowa. He had a minor in journalism and went to work as an advertising copywriter for Ingersoll-Rand. He transferred to New Jersey headquarters and had a variety of assignments including an international newsletter for the company. He retired in 1989 as Manager of Communications Services after 37 years of service. He
continued as a consultant and trained people in computer design and managed two large trade exhibitions in Moscow. He had several international assignments and was a pioneer in the computer world. Recently he's been involved in producing the corporation's history book.

He is an active amateur photographer and videographer. He works part time for the Bergen County Workforce Investment Board on a program to find work for people on welfare and those affected by downsizing.

Stanley Lambert,
Vice-President/Central

Combat was short — but hazards were long

Although Stan's combat time was very short, the dangers of warfare hung over him for the four and a half months that he was a prisoner of war. Indeed, one of his friends was killed by a bomb attack on a long column of American prisoners being transferred to a new stalag near Dresden.

A native of Ewing, Nebraska — where he still lives — Stan was among the many ASTP men who joined the 70th at Adair in 1944 and was assigned to 1/275. He was an early casualty, captured on that infamous ambush on the road from Philippsbourg to Bitche on Jan. 2. During a long and harried trek through Germany by train and on foot, he lost 50 pounds.

Frank Ellis, Vice-President/West

CCC duties spurred him to Army medical career

A real Depression kid, Frank did find a job after his graduation from high school in 1934 in Detroit. He worked for an auto body parts plant. But he was laid off and so enrolled in the CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps). He was a fire tower lookout and a first aid man.

That exposure to the healing arts prompted him to become a hospital orderly. Then on to pre-med and his M.D. from the University of Michigan.

He had completed ROTC at Michigan and was commissioned in January, ’43. But when he went into ASTP, he became a Pfc. He took basic Medic training at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania and went to Baxter General Hospital in Texas. In a short time he was sent to Fort Leonard Wood and the 70th.

Frank has a well equipped metal- and wood-working shop and he has restored many antique autos including a '33 Buick touring car and a 1943 Willys Jeep. The Jeep has all its original military markings from its service in France. It also has a ribald name that is "inappropriate for civilian display," he says. So it is on a removable panel so it can be sent to the closet when necessary. Frank shows his cars frequently all across the northeast.

After the war he took his degree from the University of Nebraska, magna cum laude. He was an instructor for Veteran Farm Training and, from ’52 to ’98, he was a self-employed farmer and rancher.

He has been most active in civic affairs and in his Presbyterian congregation and synod. He’s held several jobs in the American Legion and for 30 years was a 4-H leader.

He has served on the Holt Soil and Waste Conservation Board, on his local school board and, for 16 years, on the board of Education Service Unit. He was on the Judicial Commission, was county Democratic chairman and was a delegate to the National Democratic Convention.

He was president of the Farm House fraternity, writer and producer of Ewing’s Centennial pageant for which he won the Chamber of Commerce Service Award. He was presented the national Block and Bridle Award.

He joined the Association in 1988 after learning about it in the Legion magazine and correspondence with then Secretary, Al Thomas. He and his wife Dorothy have two sons and a daughter and eight grandchildren.

Assigned as 1st Battalion Surgeon, he stayed with the 'Blazers until Stirling-Wendel when he was evacuated to the Evac Hospital in St. Avold with pneumonia. Not fully recovered he came back to the 'Blazers but got hit by the same disease again. He was in hospitals in France and the States until his discharge at Camp Roberts, California in May, ’45.

He remained in the Reserves and served with Washington, Utah and Wyoming National Guards until returning to Detroit in 1954, where he was chief pathologist in GH 298. He retired as a colonel.

He was in private practice in several Western states. He was director of the Blood Program of the Detroit Red Cross and was assistant director of the national program.

He married Gertrude Ann Klaver in 1941 and they have three sons and a daughter, all professionals. They have seven grandchildren.

Frank shows his cars frequently all across the northeast.
John Nothnagel, President-elect

John wore uniforms of two nations in WW2

Our President-elect, John Nothnagel, 570 Signal, brings an international military and academic flavor to the Association’s Executive Board.

When he was graduated from high school in 1943 he was awarded a full scholarship at Assumption College in Windsor, Ontario. He immediately enrolled in the Canadian equivalent of ROTC. He learned to use the old Lee-Enfield rifle and the British manual of arms. But he quickly learned a new version of both.

At the end of his first semester he enlisted in the U.S. Army Reserve and, on his 1944 birthday, was promptly called to active service. He took Infantry basic at Camp Blanding, Florida and then to learn radio at Fort Benning. “Perfectly conditioned for service in the Pacific” — he was sent to the 70th at Leonard Wood. He did have two years of high school French and a semester of German. Both came in useful.

Assigned to 570 Signal, he was a member of a 3-man radio team consisting of him, Richard Hathaway (who brought Jack into the Association), and Sgt. Victor Ketten, deceased. They provided radio links for forward observers at the battalion level with an occasional job of repairing and hanging phone wires.

After the breakthrough at Saarbrucken, as American forces flowed into the German heartland, he recalls, “our team fell in with the Third Army and drove on, to judge by the road signs, all the way to Czechoslovakia. But then we were called back and were in Erlangan, just north of Nuremberg, when the war ended.

“Once we were ordered to rig an antenna so we could send a message to Frankfurt, then Army headquarters. By some fluke I sure can’t explain, we found ourselves linked to the Pentagon!”

When the 70th went home, he was assigned to 3 Signal of the 3rd Division and went into Occupation at Bad Wildung. He remembers well a wild weekend in Berlin and two months detached duty in Paris!

Discharged in 1946, he took advantage of the GI Bill to enroll in the University of Rochester. “I chose a major in French just for the hell of it. But it was a good choice; I applied for a Fulbright grant and one for a French Government Assistantship as a part-time instructor of English in French schools. In Toulouse, France I met a young woman fellow teacher, Gail Outland of Green Bay, Wisconsin, who became my bride in 1954.”

Meantime he took his Master’s and doctorate in French at the University of Wisconsin. He taught at the University of Montana, at Cornell College in Iowa and as a visiting professor at the University of Poitiers, France. He wrote several books and travelled extensively to France and Africa, Polynesia and the French Caribbean islands.

He and Gail have three sons and a daughter, all professionals. He served as Vice-President/Central during the past biennium.

First day of combat — he “captures” 6 POWs

By WILLIAM HOMASSA
C/275

It was my first day on attack about Feb. 15, 1945. We took a village without a shot being fired and then, later in the day, we marched out to encounter the enemy in a woods. We followed along the slope of a hill. The village was below on our left. The Germans were bombing the village all day and when they spotted us they threw a few 88s in on us.

I had stuffed myself with K rations and had tremendous gas pains. I was the last one off the hill and into the “shelter” of the woods. Here we encountered gunfire ahead of us and artillery behind. I found a dug-out full of water and jumped in. The next thing I hear is our machine gunner yelling: “Holland, you yellow so and so. Where are you?”

I was fuming and I crawled out and told him off. His name was Price and he had been overseas 33 months. He said, “C’mon, we’re going to get that nest!”

We crawled through a ditch and stopped. He suggested we set the gun up on a little knoll ahead. I suggested a place between two big trees. He agreed and we started up. The little knoll opened up with a machine gun and missed. Price fired back and they all came out to me, six of them! Like a dope, I stood up — and looking as fierce as an 18-year-old could look — I motioned them down to the riflemen. Even though it was Winter, I thought there were mosquitoes buzzing my ears. I guess the Good Lord was with me that day.

70th Division Assn. TRAILBLAZER
Kenneth Holloway, B/725, died June 10 after a lengthy illness and was buried, with full honors at the Military Cemetery at Camp Nelson, just east of Lexington, Kentucky. He joined the 70th in its earliest days. He stayed in the Army Reserves and returned to Western Kentucky College. He was there commissioned a colonel in the ROTC and then as a lieutenant in the Regular Army. He retired from the Army in 1967 as a major.

Ken was a great admirer of Roberts Rules of Order and constantly chided Association officers for not abiding to even their minutia. His persistence resulted in a Constitutional amendment that made The Orders the guidelines for 70th meetings.

One of the few Trailblazers from North Dakota, Roy Zittelman, HQ/884, died Nov. 2, 1997.

A member of the North Dakota National Guard, he served with the 70th then was recalled for Korean duty. He stayed in the Army 29 years and retired as a lieutenant colonel.

He worked in Oregon, then moved back to Dakota where he worked in insurance, banking and financial planning. He was secretary of the Chamber of Commerce and founded the Weather Modification Program in North Dakota.

His wife Charlotte may be addressed at 104 Fourth St., Fingal, ND 58031.

Richard Schoeneman, HQ/276, was a pillar of his Zion Lutheran Church in Matteson, Illinois: on the board of elders and board of education, and as financial secretary and president of the congregation. He was with the 70th since its organization and received the Bronze Star for action in the Saarbrucken attack. He served four years with the Reserves.

He died March 11, 1998 and is survived by his wife Kathleen, two children and three grandchildren. Kathleen can be reached at 27401 Jean Ave., Matteson, IL 60443.

Do it today lest you forget: Send a sympathy note to an old buddy's family.

With the 70th Division from its birth (and he was newly inducted) to its last days, Bernard Zaleta, was with a machine gun section of the heavy-weapons company, D/276. He earned a battlefield commission for his action at Morhange, France. He then served for a year with the 3rd Division in Occupation. He died Nov. 17, 1997 at the age of 81 after a short bout with cancer. His wife Mary of 55 years can be reached at 122 No. Line Road, Newtown Square, PA 19073.

(The "Trailblazer" lists all deaths whether the deceased was an Association member or not. Full obituaries are requested and any further information about the deceased's 70th service will be appreciated.)

Missed the deer — but got the sleepers

A quartet of Weapons Platoon men of I/274 went on a deer hunting expedition. The trophies they brought back were not the horned kind, though.

Billeted in an abandoned school building, the four set off in a misty morning in quest of venison for the company mess. Going up a hill, they took a long shot at a buck — and missed.

But shortly after, they came across a couple of Nazis who apparently had been aroused from sleep by the missed shot. They immediately became prisoners of the four nimrods. All PFCs: Robert Bailey, O.L. Greenman, Ray West and Jay Shelley.

Old neighbors meet... but on opposite sides on POW quiz

When men from the same hometown ran into each other in Europe, it was always a good story for the "Trailblazer". And when those men wore the uniforms of two opposing Armies, it was a real "small-world saga".

T/4 William Smith of the HQ/276, was an interrogator of POWS. He carried out this conversation:

"What's your home town?"
"Chemnitz, Saxony."
"Is that right? Where did you work?"

"At the Herscht factory."
"And you rode the No. 15 streetcar to and from work?"
"Jah. But how did you know that?"
"Easy. I was born in Chemnitz and spent my first 20 years there."

The two men on the opposite sides of the table had lived only two blocks from each other and had hoisted a stein or two at the same neighborhood bierstube.

All that, of course, was before Smith came to America to work in Meriden, Connecticut.

Full military honors were paid to Kenneth Brady, F/725, at the Riverside (California) Military Cemetery. He died on June 4, '98. In 1980, he and his wife Evelyn dropped in to visit Tom, C/275, and Lutie Higley in Albuquerque. It was their first contact since the war. But not the last.

A favorite story of Ken's: "It happened on those long approaches to Saarbrucken. We were dug in on a long ridge, snow-covered, cold and miserable. Our foxholes were covered with mosquito nets covered with brush.

"Suddenly an officer arrived and, for some damn reason, went directly in from our very advanced position to see something. That would be all the enemy needed. For if even a rat scuttled along there they threw artillery fire on us."

"I had lifted my net a little bit to watch and when I recognized high brass, without thinking, I yelled, 'Get the hell out of here, you SOB!' and I yelled something about drawing artillery and he departed in a big hurry. I expected any minute to be pulled out of there and court-martialed for my very unkind remarks. But nothing happened."

When George Barten, HQ 2nd Bn/275, heard the story he recalled the incident happening.

And when I recognized high brass, without thinking, I yelled, 'Get the hell out of here, you SOB!' and I yelled something about drawing artillery and he departed in a big hurry. I expected any minute to be pulled out of there and court-martialed for my very unkind remarks. But nothing happened."

When George Barten, HQ 2nd Bn/275, heard the story he recalled the incident clearly. That "high brass" was Gen. Thomas Herren himself. Those conditions were not rare, for he liked to visit forward positions and see the situation for himself.

* * *

TAPS

FALL 1998
Axe-head Archives

Those blue denims and blue long johns and blue skin, too
By CHARLES MUNIE
1/274

When I saw that GI washing his socks in his helmet (on the cover of the Spring, 1998 cover), I knew it must HAVE been taken in the earliest days of the 70th. I remember seeing those blue denims on the Civilian Conservation Corps (the CCC). My first introduction to those denims and the big floppy hat was when we spent the first 10 days of training out in the rain. Everyone wore long johns, raincoats, shoes and leggings. Helmets had not yet been issued and when we did get them they were World War I vintage. We carried Springfield rifles.

We practiced active and passive anti-aircraft defense. When our lieutenant blew his whistle we all ran 50 to a hundred feet off the road and flapped, face down, into about 4 inches of water. If we were passive, we'd just lie there. If we were active we'd simulate firing our weapons at the imaginary strafing plane.

Soon our long johns were all blue — and so was our skin. We called ourselves the "Blue Hornets". With only two sets of denims, we couldn't keep them dry. Each night we'd hang them up as close as possible to a heat vent but they never did dry out until the sun finally came out. We thought it was quite hilarious and wondered where the real Army was.

Versatile Band adds to its specialties

Sgt. Matty Carnevale's Rhumba Band was famous throughout the 70th. It was constantly touring the Trailblazer area, entertaining the troops. And it was versatile; it played everything from rhumba to swing to oldies to classics.

Its versatility had to expand, though, when it was given the job of running the 70th EM's Club. Now they had to be laundrymen, food managers, barroom logisticians, electrical engineers and whatever a snafu demanded.

In the evening they reverted back to being just musicians. Headliners were Matty, on the piano, George Hosfeld played a hot trumpet and Bob Hegeman was tenor soloist. All the rest of the band was also hugely popular among the troops.

100 Division tells of 'Blazer rescue

We have rescued three of your men from a German POW camp. They are Rudolph Garcia, A/275; Theodore Anderson, K/275; and Robert Bremer, A/276.

100th Century Infantry Division

The wording was a little more military on March 29, 1945, but the meaning was there — and so was the happiness of everyone concerned, the returned prisoners and their buddies in their companies.

"Millionaire" Glis and disillusions

Many Trailblazers became "millionaires" as they drove into Germany after the Saarland break-through. That is, if you count that fortune in German Reichsbank notes.

Soldiers kept coming upon bulging rolls of bills as they searched buildings for contraband. The numbers were always high; some bills were as great as 100,000,000 marks. At the exchange rate of 1945, that bill would be worth $80 million.

There had to be a catch — and there was. The bills had been repudiated by the German government during the disastrous inflation period of the 1920s.

Hoist on petard or Caught by gun

"Hoist on his own petard" was the way Shakespeare put it. Robert L. Skutt, E/274, phrased it "I captured him with his own rifle."

Bob was a member of a combat team that was clearing out the school house in Stirling-Wendel. Down in the cellar he spotted a German rifle. As he was holding it, the sound of approaching footsteps was heard. His companions covering him, Bob pointed the weapon at the doorway.

An SS 6th Mountaineer popped into sight.

He had left his rifle behind and came to retrieve it. When he saw who was holding it, he surrendered — immediately and at once.

(Bob is the only Association member in Canada.)

Star-a-day is 274th record

The 274th Regiment averaged more than a Star a day since it went into combat. By April 1 its men and officers had been awarded 115 decorations.

In one ceremony, Col. Samuel "Shoot­ing Sam" Conley awarded a Silver Star and oak leaf cluster to Capt. Roy Vaughn and a Silver Star to Lt. Jacob Meyer who already had a Bronze Star.

Anderson deserved "cowboy" nickname

His buddies of the 1/274 called him "The Cowboy Machine Gunner". His company commander, Capt. Edwin Keith called him "One-Man Army".

Both nicknames are valid. S/Sgt. Clarence Anderson, a cowboy in civilian life in Wisconsin, was a T/5 in the 70th; he was the next to the last man to be awarded a Bronze Star.

In Wingen his squad was moving along one of the streets of the village. A hail of rifle fire was zeroing in on them. Bullets came within two feet of Anderson as he sat only partially concealed by a boulder.

Five Germans came down the street. Anderson jumped up, loosed a burst of machine gun fire and five enemy corpses littered the street. Shortly after, he and his men captured 38 Germans from a strongly-fortified pillbox.

That was the time when he had his closest brush with death. As he started up the hill toward the emplacement, a German mortar shell landed close by. Shrapnel cut a hole in the sleeve of his field jacket but left him unscratched.

Anderson was the first 274th man across the Saar.

70th Division Assn. TRAILBLAZER
Crawford saw horrors long after combat ended in Europe

For most Trailblazers, one whack at national history — Operation Nordwind — was a lifetime quota. Not for Ralph Crawford, C/275, though. He has another big one to recall.

Twenty years ago Ralph sat in the control tower of an obscure airport in an obscure town in an obscure country and watched a high drama of terrorism unfold.

On Oct. 13, 1977, two men and two women connected with Palestinian terror groups and the radical Red Army Faction hijacked a Lufthansa plane. Some hundred hours later, after landing five times in European and African airports, Flight 184 sat alongside the dusty runway at the scruffy airport of Mogadishu, Somalia, (a name that decades after would conjure up American troops on a mercy mission being beaten to death at the hands of a warlord’s thugs.)

The screaming hijackers — high on drugs, adrenaline and fear — had executed the German pilot, threatened three Jewish girls, tied the hands of 82 passengers and seemed ready to blow up the plane. “Over and over it was, ‘Nazi! Dirty Nazis! All you Germans are against us!!’”, Ralph recalls.

At that time Ralph was attached to the U.S. embassy in Somalia as Counselor of the Embassy for Public Affairs, and represented the U.S. Information Agency.

With maniacal screams the pirates were preparing to blow up the plane.

In that control tower, only 100 yards away, Crawford sat with the German charge d’affaires, Dr. Michael Libal, who was trying to negotiate with the bandits.

The terrorists were demanding that the West German government release 11 German prisoners, all members of the notorious Baade-Meinhof Gang — the so-called Red Army Faction.

Actually, Libal was stalling. For he knew that a plane carrying German commandos was in the air, heading down to the scene. He had invited Ralph to join him. Ralph did — and kept busy. He arranged for juice and other relief supplies to be brought to the besieged plane. And it was needed. For almost five days the passengers had been trapped in a stifling hot cabin, with little food or water and no functioning toilets.

While Ralph was grabbing a little rest, his phone rang. The German commandos had landed, had taken the plane and rescued the hostages, killing three of the terrorists and wounding the fourth. By the time Ralph hurried back, the rescued people were in the heights of euphoria, dancing in the spray of a hose that a Somali fire department had laid and eating and drinking gifts that members of foreign embassies had brought.

Ralph’s contribution was a bottle of Scotch with which he drank toasts with the German co-pilot who had taken over when his buddy was shot.

He then hurried back to the embassy to file his story with Voice of America — and scooping the world!

It was almost inevitable that Ralph should cover a story like this. After his service with the 70th he stayed in foreign service. He served in Europe, the Far East and Africa. He and his wife Leonie edited English-language newspapers in Europe. He was Voice of America correspondent and was a professional book reader for the Library of Congress. He directed stage plays — and acted in them, including the title role of “Harvey”.

The reason he places the Mogadishu rescue so high among his recollections: “It was a defining moment in the war on international terrorism,” he says. During that period skyjacking gripped the whole world — especially airlines and their passengers — in cruel tension. A year earlier, Israeli commandos had staged the famous Entebbe Raid in Uganda but that was considered by many to be an aberration. The Mogadishu rescue showed that there were well defined and successful tactics to be used by the hostages’ countries.

Retired, the Crawfords live in Point Brittany, Florida, near St. Petersburg ... and enjoy the peace and quiet.

COWS and EFFECT

HQ 276 possesses their own dairy

As 276th’s 1st Battalion set up is CP in a German village just North of the Saar, the enemy laid down an artillery barrage of 3. on the Richter Scale.

At the crescendo of the turmoil, came the noise of many marching feet moving in. Could they be surrounded by a German counter-attack? Cautiously the men peered out the window. Then they looked again. It was hard to comprehend what they saw.

A GI was leading a cow by a rope and 15 other bovines dutifully followed. The soldier was Pfc Arthur Strickland, a cowboy from Long Island, and a jeep driver in HQ Company. “I thought we might be able to use the milk,” he explained.

And use it they did. A bunch of farmers, real and would-be, fed and milked the herd. Everyone drank the product as fresh milk hadn’t been on the menu since last fall.

Eventually the herd was turned over to Civil Affairs for transfer to France as part payment for all the livestock the Nazis had taken out of that country.
The best load

Flack brings kids back “from war”

By TED FLACK
G/276

I was stationed in Czechoslovakia in July, 1945. My captain told me to go to the 16th Division Headquarters and report to the Commanding General. The General asked me "Can you speak German?" “Yes, sir.” He told me that I would be leaving in the morning for Munich, Germany. I would be taking one to three 2-1/2 ton trucks and three Germans. I would be picking up 35 children, three nurses and two attendants.

He introduced me to two elderly ladies dressed in old work clothes, bonnets and high top shoes. I also met an elderly man in his seventies who turned out to be a minister. These three people would be traveling with me.

The General asked me if I had any children. I said no and that I was single. He replied that he had a 7-year-old son and that this mission was of great importance to him. He told me that two years ago the Germans came through a small Czechoslovakia town where they took men and women to work in the German factories. The Germans then took these people's children to Germany and placed them in camps. This was done about two dozen kids there.

The day was coming to an end and it was getting dusk when we finally came upon the farm. As we turned in, an elderly farmer watched us. We asked him if he had any children; he said he had about 34 Czechoslovakia children who would be home soon from working in the fields.

We unloaded the ladies and the minister, and waited for the children. The ladies recognized some of the older children and helped the younger ones wash up at the sink near the water pumps. I told the farmer to let the children eat their supper before telling them they would be going home. Then the older children could hardly sleep because they were so excited about going home and seeing their parents again.

After breakfast was served, we loaded everyone into the trucks and counted heads. The farmer said we would be short one older boy because a couple of days before he had left for home by hitchhiking. The three nurses and two attendants that were supposed to be with the children were no longer around and had not been for a few months.

The farmer’s wife and two daughters were in tears. The children couldn’t stop hugging and kissing these wonderful people who took such good care of them all of these years.

The minister suggested another route for home that was supposed to be shorter and have more scenery. By noon we had made our way through the beautiful Bavarian mountains. We stopped for lunch along the way. But first the ladies took turns going to the bushes with the little ones. The children ate the GI rations and they liked the candy the most.

When we were about 10 miles from their home town, our lead truck ran out of gasoline. We had to siphon gas out of an army jeep which was driven by a lieutenant and a noncom who came to escort us into town. They told us that the street was lined up with parents and relatives waiting for us. Once we were in town, I told the driver to stop the truck and put down the tail gate so we could hand the children out as fast as we could to the eager parents and relatives. There was not a dry eye to be seen from this emotional crowd.

The truck drivers were told where to leave the trucks. The jeep driver said he would leave me off at my commanding officers headquarters. As we said good-bye to each other the lead truck driver came up to me and said, "You know, I've hauled many loads of just about everything, but this was the best load yet.” And that it was.

Ball teams set
1st in Reich

The first organized game played by Trailblazers on German soil was a softball contest between the Medical Detachment and the Headquarters of the 276th. The Medics won in 12 innings, 10-8, Baker Company defeated Able, 1-0, and Charlie beat Dog, 6-2.

The Medics were tied 5-5 at the end of the standard seven innings but went ahead 8-5 in the 10th inning. Then Capt. Darwin Hobbs, of HQ, knotted the score with a 2-on homer.

Pfc Dick Thiesen pitched 11 innings for HQ and Charles Schultman took the mound. He walked in Pfc Joseph Pauly and T/3 Carl Johnson in the 12th. Pfc Norman Innerfield went the route for the Medics.

*
Expensive real estate

Two Vosge hills cost over 100 casualties

By JOHN NAUMCZIK
K/276

Two hills outside Wingen were expensive real estate. Their price was American lives and American bodies. In two days of bitter fighting, the numbers of K Company, 276, were wiped from 170 men to only 75.

Late on the night of Jan. 7, 1945, K Company, 276th, was ordered to outpost the town of Wingen. Two squads of the 1st Platoon led by S/Sgt Fred Houser and me passed through the railroad underpass and entered the town. Stepping between bodies and breathing the stench of burning flesh and homes was a sad experience.

There was occasional artillery, firing phosphorous shells. I had sent a messenger back to see if they were ours. Whosoever — we were too well illuminated. So we decided on digging in closer to the road and avoid tree bursts. It was 4 a.m. of the 8th before we had holes dug in the frozen ground.

The next morning we were greeted with a heavy barrage of 88s. Well dug in, we suffered no casualties.

The same day we were moved to Zinzwiller, France and given the mission of attacking the hills and woods of Lichtenburg Forest. On the morning of the 9th we crossed the line and combed several hills but made no enemy contact except for a lot of artillery fire. Fox holes, again, saved us.

On the late afternoon of the 11th, my 2nd squad leading, we spotted the enemy on a forward slope of the next hill. There was also a German gun position ahead. I notified T/Sgt Sunny Kim, our 1st Platoon Sergeant. We let S/Sgt Houser’s squad pass me while we covered them from the enemy on the next hill. Soon small arms fire broke out and we immediately attacked.

At one point a German machine gunner had us pinned down, but he was soon killed by a BAR-man. A German had me pinned down but missed me three times. I had to work my M-1 lever by hand. In the cold it didn’t eject and reload.

Continuing forward, I realized that we had taken the hill. So I took over one of their forward positions. Lt. Roger Conarty, our exec officer, joined me to size up the situation. I quickly put my men in defensive positions.

The 3rd Platoon soon set up their defenses while the 2nd Platoon remained in support. The Weapons Platoon received their assignments. Meanwhile we were soon in intense artillery fire. Lt. Peebles of Co. I joined me for a few minutes. The attack continued on to the next day. We routed them from their positions and several prisoners were taken. There were many wounded on both sides.

After taking two hills we stopped to dig in. Our initial mission was completed with tragic loss, more than a hundred casualties.

Bang-less Bomb keeps fire friendly

Generally speaking, when an artilleryman sent off a round, he wanted it to go boom and knock out a passel of enemy. Shooting ballistic that carried propaganda material just wasn’t their dish of tea.

But Isaac “Ike” Gustin, A/882, was happy when one of such paper-laden shells fired from his 105 mm exploded about 200 yards from the firing line. Had it borne the usual explosives it would have been doggoned unfriendly friendly fire.

The gun crew of Sgt. Maller, Cpl. Schnaiver and T/5s Wayne Branson, Rose, Himes and Renner had fired several such shells and sort of wondered what was in them. When the mis-fire occurred, Ike scooted over and picked up one of the charred papers. It was a safe-conduct pass signed by another Ike — Gen. Eisenhower. It invited and encouraged German soldiers to chuck it all in and give themselves up to the Americans.

Over the years, the pass grew very fragile. But Ike had a color-copy made of the original and sent it in to the “Trailblazer”.

HARDSHIP DUTY...

There was pleasant time for relaxation during Occupation. This trio of C/275 men weren’t suffering at Schmitten, Germany when this shot was made in the Spring ’45. From left, they are Roy Nieman, Arthur Garrity and Tony Catalano, who sent in the photo. (Can anyone tell what those canisters at the right might be?)
Co. K’s story
Doesn’t depend
on aging memory

The Army forbade a soldier keeping a diary in a war theater. If such a dairy fell into the hands of the enemy, when a POW was taken, for instance, information in it would help track American troop movements and point to future strategy.

The prohibition was never stressed and some men — usually because they didn’t know they were breaking regulations — did keep a daily journal. Those on-the-spot and on-the-dot observations give a far more accurate picture of the soldier’s life than 50-year-old recollections.

One of those diaries lets us follow Company K of the 274th all through its combat experience. Frank Portney began his diary when the regiment left Boston. He describes the ocean voyage, the landing at Marseilles on Dec. 10 and the 40-and-8 trip to Brumath on the Rhine.

The battle of Wingen-sur-Moder is now over but the Germans keep threatening and constant skirmishing and firefight are going on. When K Company is in danger of a German flanking movement on the left, Capt. Thomas Thompson takes a squad to outflank the flankers. He is shot through the shoulder and back and evacuated. The company seethes with rage to the enemy. We pick up this excerpt of the diary on Jan. 13, 1945.

**Jan. 13, 1945**

When I got up this morning I couldn’t put my shoes on. I had left my shoes out in the snow and they were frozen solid. I had to thaw them out by a fire before I could put them on. From then on I always put them under my blanket so that they wouldn’t get frozen again. Besides the wounded-in-action, we lost many men to trench foot and frostbite. So you could imagine how cold it was.

That afternoon I was back at Battalion when they brought in some Kraut prisoners. We were on an open field with no foxholes in sight. I helped guard the prisoners while some of the other boys were searching them for weapons. All of a sudden an artillery barrage came in on us. I hit the ground still guarding the prisoners and prayed that I wouldn’t get hit. Thank God I didn’t! We shipped the prisoners out.

That night the Krauts sneaked up to our positions and took three men prisoners. Two of them tried to escape and the Krauts shot one in the head; the other one got away safely. As far as we knew, the third remained a POW. From then on we had to keep on the alert because we knew that they might come back.

**Jan. 14**

The weather was still freezing and artillery was coming in all day. We had only a few men left in Headquarters Platoon so we had to pull guard for 3-1/2 hours every night. I had to jump up and down to keep the blood circulating in my feet so that they wouldn’t freeze. It was dark that night and I saw something that looked like a man behind a tree. Believe me I was really scared! I had my rifle with my finger on the trigger and walked closer to the tree. When I was pretty close I called out, “Who’s there?” There was no answer but I still could see something. I wanted to go back and forget

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By FRANK PORTNER
K/274
Jan. 13, 1945

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Wounded captain — hated Krauts

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Another cold мар
what was there. I finally walked up to the tree and to my surprise I found it was a pack hanging where one of the boys had put it to keep it out of the snow.

Jan. 15-16
Still cold as ever, artillery still coming in on our positions.

Jan. 17
We had been told that we would be relieved tonight by another outfit. We thanked God because now we could get off that cold mountain. But that night we were told that our relief was cancelled. This meant we would have to stay on this miserable mountain a little longer.

Jan. 18-19
Cold as ever, artillery still coming in.

Jan. 20
That night orders, our troops started to withdraw about 11 p.m. and our company had to hold the Krauts back. About 2 a.m. we withdrew, too. Now for the long march down the mountain. There was snow and plenty of ice on this narrow mountain path. To our left was a steep cliff and to our right was a sheer drop. We had to stay on the path. The ice was really slippery and every step we took we fell on our bottoms. The Krauts threw up flares and that made us march still faster. At the foot of the mountain there were trucks waiting to take us to a town named Weiterswiller.

Jan. 21
We got there about 9 a.m. and I was frozen solid from riding on those trucks. We got off the trucks and went into some buildings. It really felt good, warming up by a nice hot stove. You wouldn’t have recognized me. I hadn’t shaved in 12 days and my hands and face were black with dirt. The first thing I did was wash and shave and I felt like a new man. Being in that house was like heaven after being out in the cold for twelve days. I really slept warm that night.

Jan. 22
About 4 p.m. we got another order to move. This time we moved by trucks to Kohlutte Forest. When we got there we had to march up another mountain. Despite the snow and cold, we were all sweating from digging new foxholes in the new positions. We had left one mountain and now we were going into another just like it. Our morale was really low, but that’s the Army for you. When we got to our destination we found we were relieving the 103rd Division and they had nice defensive positions already dug in.

We were all thankful that we didn’t have to dig our own holes. They brought up our blankets and we slept pretty comfortable that night.

Jan. 22-23
We exchanged artillery and small arms fire with the Krauts.

Jan. 24
That night the 35th Infantry relieved us. We rode by trucks part way and marched the rest of the way to a rear assembly area. It was very cold that night and we were told that we wouldn’t have to dig in that night because we would leave the following morning. The snow was about a foot deep on the ground. We cleared away a little snow and laid down our blankets and went to sleep, freezing on that cold ground.

Jan. 25-27
We had a daylight march from the rear assembly area to Lichtenberg, where we relieved an Engineers unit on the line. The Company was dug in on a hillside and the CP was in a building. I was a Co.-to-Bn. messenger. I stayed at Battalion till there was a message. There I was in the most comfortable hole I ever had. I lined it with big paper sacks on the walls and floor.

There was only one road we could take that wasn’t under enemy observation when we had to deliver a message to Company. It was a very rough trail through the woods over hill and dale. Many times it was snowing and we couldn’t see the trail and we didn’t know where we were going. One day we rode over that trail to the Company CP. We saw places where artillery shells had hit. Thank God that we weren’t there then.

Jan. 28
We moved back to a rear assembly area where we were before. It was as cold as the first time and snow was still on the ground. We put our blankets on the snow and went to sleep.

Jan. 29
Made another daylight march to the town of Petersbach. It sure felt good being in a town again. We were all cold, hungry and tired. The CP was in a French civilian’s house. As soon as the French family saw how cold we were they made us some hot coffee and fresh milk. After, we all wanted to go to sleep. Just then we heard an accordion. We all walked in the room; there was a kid about 15 years old playing American songs. It had been so long since we heard music that we forgot about being tired. He played “Beer Barrel Polka”, “Bless Them All”, “Woodpecker Serenade” and others. One of our boys picked up a violin and another one started playing a harmonica.

We were all so glad to hear that music that we all had tears in our eyes. I can’t explain it, but that music was worth a million dollars to us. The people of the house said we were crazy, we were so tired but instead of going to sleep we listened to the...
music. We told them that listening to the music will do us more good than sleeping. To our disappointment we got an order to move in three hours. I sure hated to leave that wonderful music. We moved at night by trucks to the town of St. Louis.

Jan. 30 to Feb. 9

We got to St. Louis about 1 a.m. and went to sleep in nice warm buildings. We were in reserve for the 100th Division and it was really a nice set up. We stayed in this town and didn’t have to do anything except a little guard duty. After living outdoors so long this was heaven. Every night all the boys would get together and sing songs. In fact we made up a song about one of our lieutenants and when he heard that song he really got angry. Since we knew he didn’t like the song we sang it whenever we got a chance. We had this wonderful set up for 10 days just sitting back and taking life easy. I made Pfc while in this town. The Red Cross girls came down one day and gave us some coffee and doughnuts. I ate about 10 or 12 of them.

Warm room — sweet music

"New" 70th Division veteran named "Trailblazer" editor

One 70th tradition was changed at Minneapolis but another continued.

Edward J. Lane was appointed editor of the "Trailblazer". This is the first time a paid editor — and one who didn’t serve in World War II — has been put in charge of the magazine.

But the new editor did wear the axe-head patch on active duty. His military career spans 28 years. 20 of them on active duty in many slots: drill sergeant, MPs, chaplain’s assistant, legal clerk and recruiter. But, he says, "I am most proud of the title ‘Infantryman’ (with the “new” 70th)."

From his early years, Ed was fascinated by military history and always wanted a military career in the service. “I talked with every veteran I could and read every military history book I could find.” He specializes in World War II and is very well versed in Trailblazer history.

Lane was born and raised in Michigan. He started a broadcasting career in 1967 and worked his way through college on the air.

He enlisted in the Regular Army in 1970 and served in a variety of assignments during the Vietnam era. He was released to the Army Reserve — and the 70th Training Division — as a sergeant in 1973. During the following few years he started his family and supported them as a police officer. While serving as Acting First Sergeant in a training company, he heard about the Association in 1979. He attended his first Reunion at Lexington, Kentucky, and did the same at Philadelphia, Portland, Louisville, St. Louis and Orlando.

He re-entered active duty with the Army as a Reserve recruiter and served at various locations until his retirement this summer.

He developed his writing skills as many a soldier has done — writing letters home to combat loneliness and boredom. He has had many articles published in various publication.

He is currently employed as news director of Radio WULF-FM in Radcliff, Kentucky, near Fort Knox. He is finishing his Bachelor’s work at Western Illinois University. With his second wife, Shirley, he has six kids and seven grandchildren.

Ed’s address is:
218 Wilma Ave.
Radcliff, KY 40160

and he welcomes your contributions, especially those war stories. His first edition as editor will be the Winter, 1999, coming out in January.

A 'Blazer always helps a 'Blazer

Once a Trailblazer, always a Trailblazer! It’s been proven again.

Cathy Smith Simms of Springfield, Kentucky contacted the Association website. She had a problem. She wanted to make a presentation to her father, Louis Smith, G/274, of his WW2 medals. The catch: Louis is not a joiner; that includes the 70th Association. Could she ask for help for a non-member?

Yes, she could. “Once a Trailblazer……” Jim Hanson, veep/South, obtained Louis’s medals and told Cathy and her husband Todd where to obtain a display case. The happy package was presented at a surprise party. An added fillip: Fred “Casey” Cassidy, CO of George Company, sent a fine letter which the “kids” had framed for presentation. Lou’s wife was not forgotten either. In a handsome frame was a drawing of the Good Conduct Medal, by an art student of Cathy’s. Across it is inscribed: “Behind every great man stands a great woman.”

Incidentally, Lou is now a member of the Association.
The war goes on . . . and on . . . and on . . . and on . . .

Panter’s Army mileage may be record

Most Trailblazers racked up a lot of frequent-traveler miles by courtesy of the United States Army. How many do yours count up to?

Clayton Panter, E and F/274, has been comparing his mileage with that of Don Donofrio, E/274, and Bob Mingle, same outfit. Then comes along Doug Jeffrey, F/275, who suggests we run a contest to find the most-traveled.

Just send in your name, the places you were stationed at and the estimated miles. The prize will be the awe and esteem of your fellow-Blazers.

Clay started his odyssey at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas where he was assigned when he volunteered for the Army in 1943. On to Camp Callan, California. Next was Amarillo (Texas) Air Force Base where he began basic training to become a pilot. Aged 19 and full of pep and vinegar, he worried that the war would be over before he got a chance to see action. Hah!

On to Missoula, Montana to the University as an air cadet. A short lap this time: to Camp Adair where he took his third basic training course, Fort Leonard Wood. Camp Miles Standish. Marseilles and the jumping-around in Lorraine and Alsace.

“I picked up a little shrapnel behind my knee at Wingen,” he recalls. “But seeing all the real wounds around me, I was ashamed to report it. So my little first-aid kit at my belt took care of that.”

On SPICHEREN HEIGHTS, Clay was the small target of a big 88 shell. It landed so close that its shrapnel went right over him. Without a scratch on his body, he was still a WIA; the concussion was so great that blood was running out of his ears. But reality caught up with him at Kreutzberg Ridge and he caught three slugs — one just a half inch from the spine.

After two months in the hospital, he was on limited duty and sent up to Belgium as a unit officer at a rattle-depple. While there the war ended.

“Clay traveled by convoy down to the Marseilles area for just one week of pretty darn good service at a prisoner-of-war camp. He was shoulder-tapped for Pacific duty. And not via the good old U.S. and A. Nope, right through the Panama Canal to New Guinea. After a brief stop, on to the Philippines. By that time Japan had surrendered.

So Clay became company commander of port companies that manned the busy Allied ports. He did get to Japan, to Kure, just outside Hiroshima to set up facilities to receive cargo vessels. Of course, he had to scoot over to see what the A-bomb had done to Hiro. He didn’t give any thought to the dangers of radiation; but he didn’t get any pictures as souvenirs . . . his film there turned up pure white while those taken at other sites were just OK.

He moved up to Kobe, Japan and his branch of service was changed to the Adjutant Generals Department.

Meantime he met a nurse from the 28th General Hospital in Osaka and they were married in Koshein. That delayed their trip home and their first child was born in Japan.

“Your wives may get a kick out of this,” says Clay, “but we had to have an investigating officer to certify that there was no pregnancy involved at the time of our marriage. How times have changed!

“Lynda, our daughter, had to be six months old before she could travel to the States. So that was another delay. Eventually I finally made Captain there. Eventually we got home March 16, 1948. Before that, I had requested transfer back to the Infantry. When I came home I didn’t want the shield of the AG on my lapel. I wanted those rifles I was so proud of. Another decision I would regret.”

He spent a couple months at Fort Knox, Kentucky with the 3rd Armored Division. So now he’s with the Tank Corps. Then on to the 101st Airborne at Camp Breckenridge, Kentucky as an administrative officer.

“It seems that each one of these organizations was disbanding, so as soon as my work was done I was moved on. Where in hell are my discharge papers? Off I go again to Fort Riley, Kansas to be with the Judge Advocate on post with the 10th Mountain Infantry as a claims officer like I’d been in Japan. Enough! I want out!

“Finally, October, 1949 and I’m out of the service. (I thought!)”

With a family to support, he had to go to school at night. This he did at St. Louis University studying accounting and economics.

“One year later. My wife Jean is painting the windows of our new home. The mailman brings me a little greeting. She spills a whole gallon of paint. It seems the Army needs some good Infantrymen for the Korean War. Oh, why did I ever change my branch from the Adjutant General?

“They gave me plenty of time — 24 hours. Then I reported to — where else? — Fort Leonard Wood. And the same buildings that housed the 274th all those years earlier.

“Now my old injuries came creeping up on me. Not those three bullets in the back but the loss of hearing and the dinky knee injury at Wingen. So they assigned me to the Courts and Boards Section with the 6th Armored Division. That lasted about a month and I thought they would send me home. Wrong!

“On to Michigan where I finished out the Korean affair as the state induction officer at Fort Wayne, in downtown Detroit. I finally made Captain there.

“If I haven’t left anything out, I figure I served at 20 places.” He doesn’t estimate any mileage but he sure gives all the rest of us a real challenge.

History Honor Roll

Charles Johnson, HQ/882
Harry Colborn, HQ 1st Bn/275
William Darin, G/275
Clarence Fosbenber, F/276
Bill Harbold, B/274

Many Trailblazers have sent in personal histories to the Military History Institute. It is helping preserve the record of the 70th for future generations.

This History Honor Roll pays appropriate respect to members who have performed this service for the Division. A questionnaire and return postage will be sent on request from Angela Lehr, Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, Carlisle, PA 17103-5008. Do it right now; that is an order.
The clouds were dark — but —

5. The 70th Regional Reserve color guard was grounded in Seattle.
6. Word from Arlington Heights, Illinois saddened many with the news that former president Alex Johnson was on death's door there.
7. Several packages of favors for the women's Saturday luncheon that Barbara Marshall had sent to the hotel were misplaced until minutes before the affair.
8. Confusion in the hospitality room caused coffee to run out by 9 o'clock of the first morning, long before the first lunch break.
9. Inevitable health problems and even deaths whittled away at the registration lists.

BUT THE CLOUDS blew away and the '98 Reunion was unusually successful! Let the 'Blazers' diary recall five days to cherish.

Minutes of the Minneapolis Meeting

The TROOPS have already begun assembling. Several members checked in to the spectacular Hyatt Regency in the center of its unique downtown as early as Sunday.

(Although Trailblazers did not really need it in unseasonably 80+ weather, they were fascinated by a 10-mile, intricate system of winter-proof skyways that link all the downtown buildings.)

For many, simply getting to the Reunion was a par with getting to Philadelphia half a century ago. Northwest Airlines — which controls 78% of all traffic to that city — had shut down. Alternatives — where available — extended travel time painfully.

Dick and Barbara Haycock, HQ 3rd Bn/274, had a stash of more than 1,700 tickets for the Reunion meals that had to be distributed according to seating preferences the members had expressed. They had booked a Sunday flight to be sure to get from their Sacramento, California home to the Reunion with a comfortable margin of time. When the first rumors of the strike began circulating weeks ago, Dick considered re-booking on some other airline. But the extra $300 fare dissuaded him. They did eventually make it on a competitor's line.

Many 'Blazers found that they couldn't change flights: The Labor Day passenger loads had already over-booked many flights.

Paul Durbin, HQ 3rd Bn/274, had no problems flying from his home in Honolulu, to Seattle. But then he had to loop all the way to Atlanta and then fly up to Minnesota.

Ed and Pat Clooman, D/275, also had to fly to Atlanta from Boston — just about the same distance as Boston to the Twin Cities. And then from Atlanta to the Reunion site, thereby doubling their air miles.

But maybe it was Secretary Lou Hoger who did it the hardest way. His car loaded with all the stuff required for the hotel registration center, he set out from Mission, Kansas, a near suburb of Kansas City. Sixty-six miles from home, he suddenly found himself in the middle of a grove of trees rather than in the fast lane of I-29. Apparently he had dozed off — no surprise as he had been working far into the previous night on the multitudinous secretarial chores that preceded every Reunion. A son-in-law came to give him a lift to the Des Moines area where his son tutored him the rest of the way to M'polis.

Stan Mays also had a car breakdown. Bill Diener, F/276, also had an unspecified motor calamity.

Wednesday,
Sept. 2, 1998
Thursday, Sept. 3, 1998

Seventy early risers teed off at 8:30 for a contest of "scramble", a form of best ball golf. The winning team consisted of Don Docken, C/275; Samuel Brown, D/275; Bill Schaefer I/275 and Steve Schaefer, Bill's son.

Runners-up were Dean Morgan, B/276; Raymond Malchow, B/276; William Bergren, B/276, and Steve Sanders, son of Maurice, HQ/70. Prizes were awarded at a golf party that afternoon.

The European dinner attracted 185 diners for a full evening of oomp-pa-pa music and German songs. The name of this event has been changed. Originally it was the "Back-to-Europe Dinner" and it was for people who had made a 70th excursion back to ETO battlefields. But non-travelers asked to be included and they are now warmly invited with the dinner an optional extra. More emphasis will be given to promoting this affair at future Reunions.

This was the first time in a decade that we had no foreign visitors at the Reunion.

Registration was going full blast all day. The hotel — with one of the friendliest and most efficient staffs the 70th has met — offered fine facilities for the meetings of old friends. The palatial lobby had many groups of conversational furniture. The official Hospitality Room was spacious and the unseasonably hot weather outdoors was modulated perfectly indoors.

The youngest Trailblazer scion on hand was Drew Malin, great-great grandson of Herbert Heitschmidt, B/276. Drew is 11 weeks old — and already a candidate for defensive tackle on the Kansas City Chiefs. Herb had several family members on hand and he reminded that another infant-great-grandson had been at the Orlando Reunion.

A continuous showing of a video of European monument dedications and that at Fort Benning always had an audience. Brian Ellis, son of Frank Ellis, Medic/274 did a job worthy of CNN's best cinematographer. There were other displays equally fascinating.

The late Archie Smith, E/274, who with his wife Evelyn had run the PX for several past Reunions, had done much of the work of procuring merchandise before his untimely death. Then Henry and Madeline Clarke, AT/275, took over and finished a fine job. And sales were excellent. (Full reports will be made later.)

Again, the program offered a silent auction. Items were fewer this year than in the past — partly because of the lower number in attendance. But silent bidding was spirited and total receipts were $1,050.

The first official gathering was the traditional wine-and-cheese reception that evening. The site was spacious and comfortable. And — this is the absolute notarized truth! — The cheese did not run out! Apparently the ranks of the 70th has changed palates, white wine, which has always run 50-50 with red, was now demanded by three quarters of the guests.

It was dinner-on-your own and guests had many choices. It was demonstrated again that those Scandinavians up there know how to produce a bounteous table.

The hospitality room was well filled and the hotel was very lenient keeping the doors open. Late one night a uniformed man entered unobtrusively. The revelers thought it was a hotel security guard coming to pull the switch. It wasn’t.

It was Brigadier General James Collins of the "new" 70th. (The party continued.)
Friday — a 25-hour day

This was a day as full as those during basics training at Camp Adair.

The First-Timers breakfast drew 98 at the ungodly hour of 7:30 a.m. There were 32 men who had never before attended a national Reunion. (Several had been at one or more regional mini's.)

A record of some sort was established by Ken Rains, C/275, one of the few aviators who made up the tiny "air corps" of Divarty. He has been a member of the Association for 25 years but this was the first Reunion he had attended.

Many First Timers were on a list that Lee Miller, D/275, maintains of "Blazers that he has tracked down by arduous Sherlock Holmesian efforts. He has found 117, several, unfortunately, had died before the location.

Past President Dale Bowlin mc'ed the event and called on each of the new members to give a little more than name-rank-and-serial-number. There were many anecdotes that the audience loved.

One of them was about Bert Cowen, A/275. Bert is not as tall as the shortest NBA point guard. But he isn't shy to say that he could be called a short man. He pointed out that shrapnel from a German 88 had penetrated his helmet but left him with an unsecured head. "If I had been a six-footed like you, I would have got it right in the jugular," he pointed out.

Dale pointed out that there seems to be a lot of misunderstanding about the First Timers breakfast. It is optional but all members are invited. The actual first-time-around guys are guests of the Association. Other may purchase tickets at the registration desk.

One question asked of each man was "How did you learn about the Association?" Notices in the Legion and VFW magazines led the lists but several said it was by spotting a 70th decal or bumper sticker. (Is there a lesson here for all of us, Decorate the family bus with an axe-head?)

Al Riston, in three days served in three Divisions. But his deepest loyalty is to the 70th!

He reported: "I couldn't make corporal in the Army. So I became a second lieu-

FRIDAY NIGHT was — for the second consecutive Reunion — a Fun Night. All the talent for the evening’s entertainment was 70th people. And fun it was. Stan Lambert, 1/276, was master of ceremonies and his monologues were better than Leno's or Letterman's — and without ever resorting to the off-color and scatological.

Betty Fridley, wife of Edwin, 1/275, did a fine job as pianist. She accompanied the "Trailblazer Troubadours", a two-generation group of 70th Division men and women who did two turns of old favorites and invited the audience to join in on several which they did with enthusiasm.

Les Edwards, B/274, got a chance to complete his fine a cappella act that was cut short at the Orlando Reunion. There Les had just embarked on an audience favorite, “My Way”, when a spectator in the front row fell off his chair. It seemed like an ordinary mishap to Les who kept on. “Stop singing! Stop singing!” several women screamed at him. Having been well trained in domesticity by his wife Virginia, Les dutifully stopped his act. For the Minneapolis encore he was in an even better voice.

A newcomer — not to Reunions but to their musical fare — was Jack Horan, D/275. He had a show-stopping set of ballads from our 1940s years. He and Betty Friddle worked as if they had been teamed since VE-Day. And the audience loved 'em.

Concentrating on country music was another group, smaller than the Troubadours but in the same decibel range. Jack McCormick, B/884, plays a mean down-home fiddle and his wife, Alice, who plays the gittar, belts out blues like Dolly Parton.

Jack Nickerson, F/276, gave another crowd-pleasing monologue.

FIDDLE AND GITTAR....
Jack and Alice McCormick are a mean country and blues duo that brought down the house at Fun Night.
One for the Guinness Book of Records is a “speechless ventriloquist”. Ray Bennett, M/275, was teamed with a puppet that reminded this reporter of his first company commander. The dummy never spoke but he had a repertoire of gestures that answered Ray with eloquence.

Another third-generation ’Blazer was Harrison Henry Schaefer, age 2-1/2, great-grandson of William C. Schomer, II 275. He gave this reporter a high-five each time he saw him — even in a crowded restaurant.

The party went on well into the night.

Saturday, Sept. 5, 1998

Attendance down because of air strike but energy, fun and business are up

This was a day without a siesta.

The most important function of any Reunion is the biennial business meeting. Originally scheduled to start at 8, it was mercifully moved to 9 by the presiding officer, Dale Bowlin, who sat in for Andy McMahon who was supposed to stand in for George Marshall. Oh, yeah... but there were no breaks. And, so smoothly did it run, that the session adjourned some 20 minutes ahead of schedule.

In one of those snafus that soldiers have long grown accustomed to, the colors had not been emplaced on the podium. So, as the Pledge of Allegiance was recited, Floyd Freeman held a 4x6-inch flag for the audience to address.

Robert Soden, HQ 2nd Bn/276, was appointed secretary pro tem.

Reports of officers opened the session. George Marshall’s presidential message cited the dedication of the Fort Benning monument as the highlight of the biennium.

John Nothnagle, VP/Central, reported for his fellow-veeps. He cited the growing popularity of regional mini-reunions, especially the Western one. Some 422 attended the ’98 version in Tucson.

The ’99 Western mini will be in Denver, May 6–9, ’99. Fred Ellis, Medic/274, who will host the affair, emphasized that all Trailblazers are welcome with no regard to geographical locations.

FALL 1998
zine, which has grown from eight pages published irregularly to 24 pages — sometimes more — all on a regular quarterly schedule, is due to the material sent in by members. He chided them for not sending in their Axe-head Archives form that ran in the Spring, '98 issue.

"You owe it to yourself, to your children and grandchildren, and to the nation that your 'piece of history' is not lost," he said. He was given a standing ovation, an unusual occurrence at a business meeting.

Time and Place Committee chairman, Floyd Freeman, announced that the 2000 reunion would be held

October 19-22, 2000
at
Drawbridge Inn
near Cincinnati

Actually, the Reunion will be in the land of mint juleps and Kentucky Derbies.

The Cincinnati airport is across the Ohio River, about a dozen miles from downtown. The Inn is seven miles farther south. Ladies are assured that there will be continuous shuttle-bus service to take them downtown or to a nearly outlet mall.

The committee was able to obtain excellent room rates of $75. A rate of $65 is available for rooms in an adjacent building that will require a three-minute outdoor walk to get to the meeting rooms.

Two things contributed to the efficiency of the assembly. One was Dale's adroit presiding. The other was the great amount of preliminary work that Karl Landstrom's Resolutions Committee had done beforehand.

Members who wanted to offer proposals at the meeting were invited and urged to send in their resolutions well beforehand. The committee checked for ambiguities, conflicts with the constitution and the necessary legal terminology. (There were seven constitutional amendments offered and five resolutions. They were printed in the Summer, 1998 issue.)

70th Charter changes voted

Several proposed constitutional amendments were acted on with minimal or no discussion.

The constitution was amended as follows:

1. The new name of our brotherhood is "The 70th Infantry Division Association." This was a proposal by George Marshall and he espoused it dearly. It certainly aids his recuperation that it was the first question brought to vote and was adopted unanimously.

2. A proposal that would divide the continent for purposes of scheduling Reunions was amended before passage. Until now, the Mississippi River was the dividing line and Reunions were held alternately east and west of Ol' Man River. The proposed amendment would have changed this line to one 200 miles west of the river. The intent of the proposal was to make travel distances more equitable for members in the Western Region. Minneapolis, for instance, sits on the west bank of the Mis-sip as does St. Louis. That is a long haul from the Pacific.

Jack Nothnagle, a map maker, pointed out that the great river often changes its banks. So he proposed that the dividing line be the western boundaries of Louisiana, Arkansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Iowa and Minnesota. These lines will not be changed by floods or river diversion.

3. Since its inception, the "Trailblazer" magazine has been edited by an Association member as a volunteer duty. The retirement of Edmund Arnold, HQ 70, brought a problem. An extensive search of the membership found many members with appropriate journalistic backgrounds. But no one wanted to assume the arduous duties.

4. This amendment required a corollary.

The editor has been a full constitutional member of the Executive Board. And another amendment makes any non-member editor a non-voting member of the Board.

5. For several past Reunions, members have been wrestling with a question they would have preferred to ignore: "What shall become of the Association when the inevitable 'Taps' comes to the last surviving members?"

This time the question could not be avoided because the newly-friendly IRS requires that non-profit organizations have a definite procedure for the dissolution. A special long-range study committee was authorized and will be appointed by the president. This group will study the situation and make a report that will be published in the Winter, 2000 issue of the "Trailblazer". That will give members the opportunity to study recommendations before the Y2K Reunion.
Membership extension is turned down

Because only about a quarter of the membership attends a Reunion — and that number will decline as age limits mobility — the vote on any dissolution process will be conducted by mail so every member can express his desire. The voting will be closely monitored. It will not be a tear-out ballot in the “Trailblazer”.

The most controversial proposed amendment concerned the expansion of membership. In essence, the amendment would have given eligibility for Active Membership and full voting rights to all men who served with the 70th during its first existence from June 15, 1943 to Nov. 11, 1945 (as is now the case) plus any man who served in a unit attached to the 70th, as listed in “The 70th Division Order of Battle”. It was pointed out that such units were attached for only a short period. One was with the Division only two days and so there was literally no bonding with Trailblazers.

Furthermore, the proposed amendment would open our ranks to “any direct descendant of veterans who served in any of these units.”

It was pointed out that the granddaughter of a gunner in the 648th Tank Destroyer Battalion would be eligible to become a voting member. Yet it would be problematic whether wives of the original Trailblazers would have that privilege.

The proposed amendment was voted down almost unanimously. But the basic purpose of the proposal is sound: Preserving the memory of the 70th by including younger people in that mission. So there has already been discussion of tightening the language and proposed it again in 2000.

Another rejected amendment would have called for the Reunion to be held after Sept. 15 of even-numbered years. It was voted down because it restricted the Time and Place Committee from obtaining the best hotel accommodations at the best rates.

Another rejected proposal was one that would have eliminated most planned functions of a Reunion and left open all the time for an individual member to enjoy informal visiting. The decisive argument was that planned events relieve members from tending to arduous scheduling details.

A proposal to abolish Life Memberships was tabled on the ground that this was a specified duty and authority of the Executive Board. Also tabled was a proposal about the maintenance of 70th monuments and plaques.

The Fort Benning monument was financed by individual contributions. These left $3,200 after all expenses had been met. It was proposed that this money be used to prepare a booklet that describes and illustrates all Trailblazer memorials in this country and in Europe. It was voted to draw upon Association treasury funds to augment financing up to $5,000. This means as much as $1,800 would be available. Also voted was that each Active Member would receive a free copy.

The meeting was orderly and polite. There was no acrimony in the debate. Nor was there the total confusion that occurred in Orlando. There a motion to abolish mail balloting was amended and re-amended so many times that when the final vote was taken the mail-in vote was continued. This despite the fact that it seemed the consensus of the meeting was just the opposite.

**"THE OUTSTANDING"**

ALLEY-UP!... Happily displaying their just-presented certificates as "outstanding Trailblazers" are (from left): Jack Apostoli, Jack Barton, Jim Hanson, Frank Ellis and Henry Clarke.
McMahon takes presidency

Election of officers produced the following new Executive Board:
President: Andrew McMahon,
President-elect: John Nothnagle,
Past president: George Marshall,
Vice-president-East: Paul Summer,
Vice-president/South: James Hanson,
Vice-president/Central: Stan Lambert,
Vice-president/West: Frank Ellis,
Secretary: Lou Hoger, and
Treasurer: Don Lindgren.

A non-voting member is Ed Lane, once with the Trailblazers, now with the Winter, 1999 issue.
The traditional men’s luncheon and the women’s luncheon were simultaneous. The ladies enjoyed a modern version of the Andrews Sisters whose music from our war years brought many memories, sweet and sad, to the audience.
The forced revisions of Reunion schedules continued with the speaker at the men’s luncheon. Gen. Craig Bambrough, commander of the 70th Regional Service Command, out of Seattle, had been scheduled to speak. By a quirk of fate — happy one this time! — he was promoted to the second highest command in the U.S. Army Reserves and was — almost at the same time — being sworn in to his new duties in Atlanta.

His replacement — both as 70th CG and as luncheon speaker, was Brigadier General James Collins. No second-stringer, this guy! His talk was rated A+.

Calling himself “the trail boss for the new Trailblazers”, he stressed that the leaders of troops need to know of the past of the nation and of the value of our forebears. He cited the high moral drive of World War II troops who knew who their evil enemy was and he cited the extermination camp at Dachau as an example. (Many 70th men were involved in the liberation of that camp and the rehabilitation of its survivors.)

Gen. Collins spoke of the 90th anniversary of the Army Reserves and pointed out that Reserves are the support troops for the Regular Army units whose only duties are actual combat.

“One team, one fight, one future” is the motto of every element in the Army today. There are more Reserve troops deployed right now than at any time during the Cold War. He reported that the Trailblazer patch was worn in Bosnia. A 70th Public Affair unit was — even as he spoke — returning from eight months in Bosnia.
The general closed with a plea to the ‘Blazers: Tell your elected officials about the important role of the armed forces, both active-duty personnel and veterans like us. And, he asked, pray for the leadership who may have to take our grandchildren into harm’s way.

Another “re-adjustment” that the airline strike imposed: The “new 70th” was supposed to send its crack color guard to Minneapolis but Northwest pilots vetoed that. So the “original Trailblazers” color guard did the honors. And they did them well. Presenting the colors were Henry Clarke, A/274; Frank Lowry, A/276; A.R. “Preacher” Horton, C/274, and Bob Crothers, B/275. They did a remarkable job considering that they had last heard the bark of a drill sergeant half a century ago.

Meetings of each of the Regiments and of Special Troops were held right after the luncheon. Members of Wyoming, the 274th, were told that their successors were now in the 84th Railsplitter Division, an Active Reserve unit. It is a pleasant coincidence that the 84th’s shoulder patch also has an axe-head — splitting a hickory rail.
The 276th gang welcomed Kit Bonn, author of the Regiment’s history book, “Fire and Zeal” which was just off the press and was on sale in the hospitality room.

Also on sale there was “America’s Forgotten Army: The Story of the U.S. Seventh”. It was written by Charles Whiting, a prolific writer on WW2 subjects and an honorary member of the Association. Copies may be ordered from Dorothy Inzer, 1690 Dogwood Drive, Vidor, TX 77662, or by an afternoon call to (409) 769-7368. The price is $24.95 and for members of the Association shipping is free.

Gala!

Hometown talent stages
Emmy-worthy variety show

T

HE GALA-EST of the galas is all ways the Saturday evening dress-up banquet. This was no exception.

Some 625 people gathered in the spacious ballroom. Table service was excellent and so was the food. Indeed, every meal was outstanding as a cross-section poll later confirmed.

Gov. R.H. Carlson of the State of Minnesota, wrote a warm letter of welcome to the state and the city. As always, it was a dress-up affair and the ladies took the opportunity to wear their most attractive gowns. Two males took the occasion to use a new directive from the Department of Defense. It is now correct to wear your medals — regular or miniatures — on civilian clothing. Frank Lowry and John Haller, A/276, proudly wore theirs and hoped that at the next soiree they will be joined by many of their comrades.

There was no speaker’s table, an innovation of ’96 that will probably continue at least in 2000. People sentenced to sit on the podium table do not like their position; it cuts down conversation and conviviality. The platform was not empty however; it was filled with the equipment of the 40s-style band. That was approximately the same amount of gear that the 70th quartermasters corps CARRIED IN in Alsace. The birthday of Elsie Beckey (the exact number is a state secret) was hailed with the traditional harmonic rendition. Her husband is George of AT/275.

Johann Ziegler of the 6th SS Mountain Division and Herbert Tief of Strasbourg had created a colorful mosaic of the edelweiss insignium of their division. Their message was “We are all veterans of a horrible war and fate keeps us together.” It was to be presented to President Marshall. Instead it was displayed at the banquet and later delivered to George at home. He also received a statue of an Infantry platoon sergeant, a striking piece of sculpture, as a thank-you for his years of service as president.

Presentation of the outstanding Trailblazer Awards was the highlight. Citations were read by Edmund Arnold, certificates were presented by Dale Bowlin and the first official act of President Andrew McMahon

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70th Division Assn. TRAILBLAZER
Outstanding Trailblazers honored

was to congratulate the five honored men:
Jack Apostol, F/274;
Jack Barton, HQ/274;
Henry Clarke, AT/274;
Frank Ellis, Medic/274, and
James Hanson, I/274.

Another popular presentation was awarding an Honorary Membership to Viola Arnold, wife of Ed, HQ/70. For 16 years she has played a major role in making the “Trailblazer” one of the best veterans magazines in the country. Her acceptance was brief and warmly received. She said, “Ed has a million of these but this is the first one I have ever received. And I shall put it on my own wall.”

Similarly honored was Steve Dixon, web-master of the popular 70th website on the Internet. He cited the growing popularity of the site and told how it has been instrumental in finding dozens of “lost” veterans. Steve was a late — very late — arrival, courtesy of the airline industry. That cut short his demonstration of the 70th website in the hospitality room, but did not dampen the enthusiasm of him and the audience, so crowded around to see the handsome site and to learn how to access it easily.

The appointment of Ed Lane, who wore the axe-head patch while serving with the 70th Training Division, as editor of the “Trailblazer” magazine was announced.

In another recent tradition, Orville Ellis — who led the Association in its years of greatest growth — administered the oath of office to the new Executive Board members.

Three charter members of the Association were on hand and were warmly acknowledged: Eugene Petersen, Sv/275, Bob Carle, E/275, and Ed Fischer, K/275. Gus Comuntzis, Sv/275, also a charter member, had to cancel out at the last minute because of family complications.

Past presidents Ellis and Bowlin were recognized and the sad news was told that Past President Alex Johnson was on death’s door in Arlington Heights, Illinois.

Then the band took over. It specialized in the music of “our era” and the dance floor stayed crowded all evening. The energy and agility of the dancers brought astonishment — and envy — from the more sedentary part of the crowd.

A time for tears
Moving service remembers brothers-in-arms

Sunday,
Sept. 6, 1998

A bitter-sweet ending finale to any Reunion is always a memorable event. So with the 1998 Memorial Service Sunday morning.

The auditorium was filling up, long before the 9 o’clock scheduled start and the room was soon filled. The color guard had a new man, Emilio Rojas, K/275, who took the place of Preach Horton who had to leave early for his home in Comanche, Texas.

Chaplain Don Docken opened the meeting at the stroke of the hour. The colors were posted, always a moving ceremony, and Les Edwards led in the “Star Spangled Banner”. Orville Ellis brought in the Book of Honor which was placed immediately below the speaker’s lectern.

The homily was given — as it has been at the last five Reunions — by Edmund Arnold. These tributes to fallen comrades have been so well received that several other Division associations have used them at their memorial services.

In another strike-imposed change, Gregory and June Hosford, HQ 2nd Bn/276, were supposed to present the wreath of remembrance. Victims of the air strike, they had to stay home in Salt Lake City. So Gwen and Byron McNearley, I/274, placed the wreath. (Byron was the “Trailblazer” cameraman for the Reunion.)

Les Andrews led the group in singing all four verses of “America the Beautiful”. Then the honored speaker, Gen. David Palmer wove his well-received talk around those verses.

The general briefly recalled his own four-decade Army career. A highlight was the friendship that developed between the young line officer and the venerable four star Gen. Jacob Devers, commander of the 6th Army. Devers — an outspoken and often tactless man, who had a running feud with Eisenhower — was asked by his young friend what experiences had prepared him to make literally life-and-death decisions. “Nothing prepared me,” said the general, “and nothing can prepare you for this tremendous experience.”

(Many, many heads of the assembled veterans nodded in agreement.)

Then Gen. Palmer, whose career included the superintendent of West Point, cited the verses of his favorite American patriotic song.

The first verse — “Oh beautiful for spacious skies . . .” pays proper tribute to this great and glorious country that the Maker has bestowed on us. And our responsibilities to protect it against foes ranging from Communist Russia to the Mediterranean fruit fly.

The second verse — “Oh beautiful for pilgrim feet . . .” properly reminds us of the creators of this historic Republic, he said.

The fourth — “Oh beautiful for patriot dream . . .” pays tribute to those young men who dreamed dreams and put them aside to fight a great war.

“And finally, ‘Oh beautiful for heroes proved in liberating strife,’ pays well deserved tribute to you veterans gathered here this morning,” said Palmer. He asked us to continue our quest that America’s “goodness be crowned with brotherhood, from sea to shining sea.”

It was a message to live in many hearts and minds. It was simple, it avoided clichés but it unabashedly drew upon virtues and values that too much of the world scorns today.

And then — the inevitable and heart-wrenching ritual. Docken, Durkee and McMahon alternated in reading the 189
And then ——
poignant good-byes

names of Trailblazers who died — or whose
death was learned — in the past two years. An extra dozen were named from the floor. “Taps” was played by trumpeter Don Goodwin. Acoustics were perfect; he played in the far lobby and the slight echo just added to the poignancy of that moving melody.

Associate Chaplain Harry Durkee gave the closing benediction. President McMahon ordered the retiring of the colors and Chaplain Docken closed the ceremonies.

Then came searing moments. Too many good-byes were said with the sad knowledge that this might well be the last hand-

shake or embrace with a brother-in-arms of more than half a century.

While many ’Blazers were on their way home by noon of Sunday, almost as many left much later that day and many stayed over until Monday, Labor Day. Animated groups swapped war stories in conversational coves in the vast and handsome lobby. But no matter where and when and how the good-byes were said, voices choked and eyelids squeezed back tears. But the eternal hope that kept imperiled youths alive during the Vosges and the Saarland now helped graying men affirm: “See you in Cincinnati. Take care; God bless.”

**Editor**

(Continued)

An invitation to attend a special D-Day meeting of the World War II History Round Table is extended to Trailblazers in the Minneapolis area. The special topic will be “Omaha Beach — A Hard Won Victory” on Thursday, May 6. It will be part of the 55th anniversary celebration of the Normandy landings. The group meets monthly at the Induction Center of Fort Snelling. For more information phone Dr. Don Patton at (612) 392-3611.

* Ray Bennett’s correct outfit was M/275*, says Fred Barnes of the same company.

When the 70th pulled up stakes in Europe, did D/274 go to the 91st Fir Tree Division? (That was the organization that sent the cadre for the 70th). That’s been bugging T. J. Saxberg for a long time and he wishes that anyone from that outfit would contact him. His address is PO Box 1466, Overboard, AZ 65933. Phone (520) 535-3699.

* Most retiring Trailblazers trek off long distances to enjoy Sunbelt sunshine. Not James Preston, C/370 Medics, though. He moved just give houses up the same street to settle in at 507 Boone Trail, Danville, Kentucky 40422.

**THE BLUE PENCIL . . . .**

The traditional tool of the editor is given to Ed Lane (left), new editor the “Trailblazer” by his predecessor, Ed Arnold.

**ONE OF A KIND . . . .**

is the companion of Ray Bennett. Unlike most ventriloquist’s dummies, this — um, person — “spoke” only in gestures at the Fun Night Show.
Once upon a time . . .
There was a village. It was a peaceful place where surrounding fields were fruitful and mountains stood benign guard over them. Streams flowed unperturbed, their water crystal and pure.

The village was named Wingen or Philippensburg or Baerenthal or Grossbliederstroff. For there were legions of villages, all more alike than different, yet each with its own unique persona.

Once upon a time . . .
There was a young man. He was alive in that first exhilaration of new adulthood. His mind was filled with dreams and aspirations; his body thrived in work, sports and the sweetness of young love.

His names were many: Armstrong and Schultz, Swensson and Petrocelli, Rodriguez and Chin. For there were legions of him, each more alike than different, yet each with a unique persona all his own.

The sun was occasionally blot­
ed by clouds. Villages lost vital crops to implacable drought and flood. Youth lost dreams to a merciless Great Depression. Yet life was good, for villages whose past was centuries old and for youths whose future seemed infinite. Life was good if only because they were alive.

Then came the greatest war in history.
Young men became warriors. Now they did not dream of a decade to come; they hoped to endure for ten days or ten hours or even ten minutes. Their protecting homes left behind, they lived in meager pup tents, slit trenches or fox holes.

Then, finally, a planet-wide war ended.
Slowly the villages found age­
old rhythms of life again. Crops were tended and harvests reaped. Mountains smiled again and streams ran clear. But they remembered that war and later they raised monuments to the soldiers who liberated them.

Then, finally, finally a planet-wide war ended.
Boys who had turned to men within minutes of their first battle, returned home to pick up and mend the torn threads of life. They embraced parents, they married waiting sweethearts, they raised families. And they implanted stones in memory of all those young men who did not come home.

Today the village remember and so do we.
We have held our last salutes to them. We have inscribed their names in Books of Honor. We have breathed prayers in the litanies of many faiths and creeds. We have consecrated monuments in their native land and on foreign hills where they died a death that they had never contemplated.

What more now can we do?

We can remember . . . while the world forgets.

When we remember how they fell on their shields while we, standing shoulder to shoulder, were spared . . . we remember why they — and we — were on that battleground. We remember that we fought for, and won, freedom for millions of shackled peoples. We remember that we fought to ensure those God-bestowed freedoms which exemplify America.

We remember how swiftly the evil kingdoms of Nazis, Fascists, samurai and Communists devoured three continents. And as we remember the past, we see a future. A future of hope. Past and future we bequeath to our children. Both past and future we owe to those men who no longer stand in our ranks.

Brothers in arms, we remember you; we thank you; we wish you a deep sleep in a peace you were deprived of when you were young.

You are remembered.

LOST BUDDIES
Did you serve with Warren Meryl Smith in HQ Co. 2nd Bn/274? His daughter would appreciate any information you could give. Her address is: Melinda M. Widgren, 4501 Packard Dr. # P-2, Nashville, TN 37211.

FALL 1998

1st Reich Retreat
The first known Retreat formation by Trailblazers in Germany was staged by Fox Company of the 275th. It was at 1700 of March 22, 1945. (Who knows where this happened?)
Mail Call

Let WW2 monument honor service people — not civilians

The Vietnam Memorial honors those who died; the Korean War Memorial honors combat men. Why should the World War II Memorial honor both military personnel and civilians?

If Congress wants to honor those on the home front, OK. But give them a separate memorial. This would not take anything away from those who really did their part in the home war effort. I came from Schenectady, New York, where, I know, many draft-dodgers worked in the huge G.E. plant that employed 36,000 and the American Locomotive plant where 10,000 made Sherman tanks. There were many men between 16 and 36 who should have been drafted. To have their names on the WW2 monument disgraces those who gave their lives in vain.

I strongly believe that the monument should honor only those who served in the military.

Jim Quinlan
L/276

(Ed. note: The major reason why civilians are included in the monument project is to entice greater donations from them. A real disgrace is that Congress won’t appropriate the necessary funds and that $100 million must be raised from the public at large. A real disgrace is that a noble effort like this should be fouled by the stench of Washington politics. Perhaps criticisms like Jim’s should be addressed to each veteran’s Congress people.)

Rorabaugh remembers first 70th reunion

The “Trailblazer” article about the first reunion of 70th men 50 years ago in Pittsburgh brought back memories. I attended that event along with Jim Moretti and Rich Habich. Jim came from Philadelphia and Rich from Chicago. They came to my home and informed me about the reunion — of which I had heard nothing. My mother was thrilled by their visit; she said Jim reminded her of Cary Grant, the movie actor.

At that time Pittsburgh still had streetcars (now replaced by buses.) We rode them to the Roosevelt Hotel where the reunion took place. (The hotel has been converted to apartments for senior citizens.) At the meeting plans were discussed for future reunions but nothing materialized. Today we have a great 70th Division Association but, sadly, Jim and Rich are gone.

Bill Rorabaugh
C/275

“Pineapple Man” needs data for Purple Heart

I am seeking information on my uncle, Edwin Drue Posey, Jr., who served with Company C, 274. He is trying to find men who served with him in an attempt to claim a Purple Heart for wounds received from shrapnel in March, ‘45 near Forbach.

He was nicknamed “Pineapple Man” by his captain. His records appear to have been destroyed by fire. Your time and kindness in this matter will be highly appreciated.

Michael Archer-Pauchet
% Steve Dixon
1000 Stevens Entry #113
Peachtree City, GA 30269

Memories serve well even when “adjusted”

Since I suffered a major coronary several years ago and (as you must have guessed by this communication) survived, I’ve found myself more and more concerned with day-to-day living and whatever the future holds, than I have with 50 years ago. The past, it seems, is static and set; a great reference point when needed but nothing to carry as a burden into the present.

I’ve become rather selective in my memories; that’s why I hasten to add that I always enjoy my copy of the “Trailblazer”. Not only the factual side but the remembering, which occasionally does have its own flights of fancy. This is what makes it so “human”; for I am sure my own recall over the years has become “colorized” as Ted Turner has done to all those wonderful “old” black-and-white movies. A bit of exaggeration makes for a great ego-trip, especially when it might have happened, could have happened or actually did happen, even if others see it in a different way. As MacArthur might have said it, “Old soldiers never die; they just reminisce.”

William Hayden
HQ 3rd Bn/276

Blind buddy enjoyed having “Blazer” read

I didn’t know whom to send this notice to and I’m sorry I am late. My husband, Russell Newton, Med/275, died Aug. 6, 1997. I always would read the “Trailblazer”...
Register with VA, Fellman urges

Just want to re-enforce message contained in the article in reference to VA benefits that appeared in the Spring '98 issue (pg. 26), just received. Urge our members to register with the VA. Funding for the VA is based on numbers of veterans registered. Even if not service connected and over the earnings level for no cost care it pays to do so. It's a backup for whatever care plan you may have and for emergency care anywhere in the country. The fee for service for those required to pay is far below costs on the retail market and prescriptions are $2.00 per. It's worth the paperwork involved.

A whole host of ailments are now acceptable as service connected that weren't a few years ago, such as, cold weather injuries are now considered responsible for peripheral neuropathy, squamous cell carcinoma of the skin, arthritis, or bone changes such as lesions. Lord knows we served in the coldest conditions in memory. There are a number of others — The guys should follow the advice given and contact a service officer of any of the veterans groups, many of which have offices at the VA Hospitals and if they don't have a claim in, do it now. There is no cost, the VA will conduct all necessary medical exams to establish the claim without cost to the veteran.

Norm Fellman — B Co. 275th B/275

WHY?

Hit-'n'-miss pattern still puzzles one who was missed

On a frigid January morning as we lay in our foxholes, the order came down to attack in the mountains near Niederbronn. The snow was about a foot deep. The position of the 3rd Platoon was on the left flank of Company I, 274th, in the attack. The 1st Platoon was on the right.

Third platoon lead scout, Pfc. Ferner, was the first man in the company to meet resistance. When he encountered the fast firing burst from a German machine gun, he hurried back to Lt. Wilson who coolly remembering his lessons at OCS had S/Sgt. Ludwick's squad deploy as a base fire while S/Sgt. Tinney was to take a group around the enemy right flank position. The base of fire was deployed at the bottom of the hill but could not fire any closer than ten feet over their heads so they moved forward to a better point where they could place effective fire on the positions regardless of the fact that they thus became vulnerable. We crawled to within thirty yards of the positions to a slight rise in the land that protected anyone who would stay below it. It also kept us from gaining the initiative of fire. Pfc. Powell, a BAR man bodily crawled over the knoll and opened up his weapon. He vied for the initiative of fire but lost as a Heinie machine gun put almost ten slugs into his head.

I was on Powell's right and to my right was Jack Walsh. The instant Powell was shot Jack told me to look at Powell. Just as I turned my head it sounded like someone had put my head inside a bell and hit the clapper. The bullet just parted my hair and grazed my scalp leaving a line like you would if you skinned your knee. It also caught the hood of my field jacket.

In the base of fire, Pfc. Tyler Runkle was the first man hit. Shrapnel got him in the lip and the leg. Pfc. Landrey was killed by a concussion grenade. Shrapnel got Pfc. Kenneth Tromley in the lip and Pfc. Garrett in the leg. We were suffering from these casualties inflicted by mortars and 88's. Some of us feared that we might even be forced to withdraw and face bitter defeat on our first attempt. In this part of the assault, the situation was grim. We realized then that any victory must be victory drenched in blood.

Following the mop-up, I was leading 19 prisoners back up the hill when German 88's opened on us. I was hit in the hand by shrapnel as well as two other guards taking back the captured prisoners.

Three out of four of us were hit and only one of the 19 Germans was hit in the ankle. How do you explain that?

Happy 75th, Gene!

Dorothy Inzer, wife of Gene, B/274, has come up with a super present for his 75th birthday. She will pay to have 2,000 copies printed in the United States of Charles Whiting's book, "the Forgotten Army: The U.S. Seventh Army". She, Gene and Tom Dickinson are honchoing the project and will be taking orders at the Reunion. Whiting, an Honorary Member, will donate his royalties. (He has given royalties of his book "Skorzeny" to aid British veterans blinded in Bosnia.) If there are any profits, Dorothy is considering contributing them to some veterans' cause.
I was one of the first 16 enlisted men of the 274th to get a battlefield commission. I was a Staff Sergeant acting as Platoon Leader in Co. L 274 in the Vosges Mountains, and my runner at Company Headquarters came to me and said, "You are to report to Battalion Headquarters in 15 minutes to get a battlefield commission." I didn’t believe him, and I didn’t pack to go. Then, Sgt. Paul Thrion came to me and said, "We are both to go to the Battalion Headquarters to get battlefield commissions." By then, I believe it was true.
So at Morhange, France, on Jan. 20, 1945, I got discharged as an enlisted man, and commissioned Second Lieutenant. I was then sent to Epinal, France, for a 10-day orientation on the duties of officers after which I was assigned to Co. B/275, and was with them until February 17, 1945, when I was wounded outside of Lixing, France.
After getting out of 2nd General Hospital in Nancy, France, I was assigned to Co. D/275 until I was sent back to the States and relieved from active duty.
Leonard Berry
L/274 and D/275

English as is spoke
The 70th ran continuous “shake-down tours” in their territory of Occupation. They looked for war criminals and former Nazi officials.
One of the ‘Blazers, Cpl. Chuck Thompson, M/275, ran into an older German who said he could speak English. Chuck’s report on the conversation:
“Last night the other day while I was awake in mein sleep mit something wrong mit meinen barn. I must jump from the bed OUT and run from the house out. I find meinen horse tied loose from the staek and runs from the stable out.”
Thompson’s reply was simply: “Mmmmmmm.”

Blazers come home
What goes ‘round, comes ‘round.
Men who came to Europe with Task Force Herren were pulled out to become fillers for other units who had been there earlier and had sustained high casualties during the Bulge.
Came the end of the war. The 10th Combat Engineers C Battalion which was assigned to the 70th during Occupation had many original ‘Blazers in their ranks.
7/5 Edward Hicken of the Engineers wrote to the “Trailblazer” asking that copies of the souvenir issue (the first one that soldiers could send back home) be made available for these Trailblazers once removed.

It never rains when it pours . . .
First liquor for EMs
The oh-so-good people of Washington who were determined to carry out their solemn obligation to keep our boys-in-service pure and wholesome, finally decided that men old enough to win a war might possibly be capable of taking a drink of hard liquor without falling into perdition.
So in August of 1945, the first legal ration of liquor for enlisted men came to the ETO. Even then, privates and Pfc’s were still excluded.
The irrepressible “Wyoming Home News and Kitchen Police Gazette”, the daily newspaper of the 274th, proclaimed that the rations were so small that “medicines droppers would come in especially handy throughout the regiment.”
The ranks of the 70th were swollen with eligible non-coms. (That was because so many transferred in from other outfits to come home with the Division.) But rations were determined by the regular T/O and so it wound up that distribution was almost by the thimbleful.

Lt. Charles Thomas, Division PX Officer, announced that the total ration for officers and men consisted of 1,100 fifths of Scotch and 550 fifths of French gin. The shipment came from Brussels. Pvt. Charles Webber of the 70th Special Services helped break down the batch.
The last previous shipment of liquor — officers only — had three cases filled with just plain bricks.
Stateside, such liquor was selling for $1.82 a fifth.

(Editors’ note: At the time of that shipment, rumors were rampant that the “Home News” staff was disciplined for criticizing the liquor distribution. If any former Advance-garde man has information about this, he is invited to share his recollections with the rest of us.)

Attached Ack-acks lowered its guns in 274th support
An important teammate in the Saarbrucken crossing was the veteran, battle-tested 443rd Anti-Aircraft Battalion. Yet few Trailblazers are aware of that.
The battalion had fired support in many different situations in Africa, Sicily, Casino and Anzio beachheads. It had taken part in the D-Day assault in Southern France. But at the Saar was the first time it had lowered its guns for direct, close-up fire.
They fired 50 caliber “quads”, four guns mounted together on a turret on a tracked vehicle. That could lay an almost solid blanket of lead. About 200 yards from the river, the quads and also 40 mm guns “buttoned up” enemy pillboxes across the stream. They were so effective that elements of the 274th crossed without small-arms fire to impede it. Under protection of a rolling barrage, the entire 3rd Battalion crossed without a single casualty. The AA battalion’s S-3 and the CO of their B Battery were both wounded while scouting for positions under intense small-arms fire.

Straighten the record
Francis Beaton, I/274 (Summer, 1998, page 6) was national commander of the Disabled American Veterans at the time he was retroactively commissioned and promoted to First Lieutenant.
Waste not a sec —
Make each count

T/5 Herman Brandest and Pfc. Tony Pusateri of the 275th’s Wire Section were caught in an artillery barrage. They dived into the ditch. There they noticed a severed cable. Rather than hunker down and wait out the firing, they repaired the cable. That job was finished just as the barrage was.

Fount of knowledge dispenses beer

Colleges and beer have a strong affinity. But the 370th Medics I&E School in Oberbrechen, Germany had an unusually strong bond.

Two former bierstube there were part of the school’s “campus”. One — its taps long dry — housed the library. Here were not only the textbooks for the subjects taught at the school but a full supply of recreational reading.

In the other barroom the taps still flowed with good Franconian beer. And here was a mess hall with white tablecloths and genuine chinaware. In the evening it became a music hall and was the entertainment center for the unit.

Straighten record

Dr. Edward Schiller, 570 Signal, sets the record straight in this letter: “My first wife of 47 years, Roselle, died in 1991. I found a childhood friend, Evvie and we were married about five years ago. We have a child of 4 and live at 8144 Nice Way, Sarasota, Florida 34238. (941) 924-984.

More enemy behind than in front of us

By CHRIS LINK, JR.
B/275

I was captured on the road to Saarbrucken when we were cut off by the 6th Mountain Division of the German Army. We had more Germans in back of us than we had in front of us. We lasted three days in the mountains with very little ammunition and no food. We had many taken as prisoners and had quite a few casualties. Our first stop was Saarbrucken where we had our first encounter with bugs. I was a BAR-man.

Bottom of Barrel . . . sightless in site

The desperation of the falling Nazi regime was illustrated by a German prisoner captured by Company C of the 274th. They overran fortifications after crossing the Saar. One of the machine gunners there was so nearly blind that he couldn’t see far beyond the end of his gun. He simply pointed the weapon in the general direction of the Americans and pressed the trigger every time he heard “Fire!”

(Editor’s note: This was not a member of the 6th SS Mountain Division which the Trailblazers fought in the Vosges and in the Saarland. That was a crack unit of top-notch soldiers. It was “back in Germany” where Hitler was conscripting boys, old men and physically disabled.)

Ice — ugh!
Ice cream — umm!

Even in the darkest times of Army life, there is always a lighter side. One is described by Pfc Portner:

We also learned how to make ice cream. Here is the menu: Take a canteen cup full of clean snow, add plenty of sugar, then add some synthetic lemon or orange juice powder that comes in K-rations, mix all that with a can of evaporated milk, stir well and put in the snow to cool off. You would be surprised how good it tastes when you feel like eating ice cream.

52 years later

It was on the cruel ridge of Falkenberg that Sam Higgins, B/275, got a quick glimpse of his buddy, Dick Murphy. After hours of torment of horrid weather, no food and a dwindling supply of ammo, the company was now surrounded by Germans. Its last resistance had been broken and its men marched off as prisoners-of-war.

Although both lived in Florida, the two men hadn’t seen each other since. Then 52 years after, the two met at the dedication of the Fort Benning monument. Can you imagine the emotion of that moment? I can’t. But I know it was a highlight of life that both Trailblazers will always cherish.

ECA

Wasn’t easy . . . but he made POW

It wasn’t easy to become a prisoner-of-war during the Saarbrucken breakthrough. At least for one German soldier. But with Teutonic doggedness he finally made it.

It was in a little unnamed hamlet, north of Saarbrucken that suddenly seemed to have become the crossroads of military might. A single bedraggled German soldier, left behind by the retreating main body, wanted to surrender.

For three days GI convoys hustled through the village. On the curb he waved his arms frantically to surrender. But he was totally ignored.

Finally the 1st Bn/274 set up its CP there. (Who knows the name of the place?) To make sure he wasn’t overlooked this time, the soldier got the town mayor to walk with him into the command post and finally made it. He became a happy camper in a POW camp.

Filling Station

It was truly a “filling station”, the mess hall of L/274, in a German village. The building they chose for their kitchen turned out to be a German automotive depot. So the cooks not only filled hungry GI stomachs, they filled orders for tires, patches, pumps and assorted spare parts.

Have a smoke . . .

It seemed like every man in the 274th’s Company K was smoking a nice fat seagar. New baby for one of the guys? No. One of the men had discovered a cache of cigars left behind by fleeing German officers. The loot was quickly divvied up — and lighted up.
Out of the wilderness
Divarty joins smaller zone

Artillery units of the 70th rejoined the outfit in mid-August, 1945, as they and other Trailblazer units took new or smaller Occupation areas. It was part of the general reduction of the Division’s territory.

Divarty Battalions had been in remote areas north and east of Frankfurt since the end of hostilities. Now Divarty headquarters moved to Idstein and the other units went into the area south of Limburg.

Elsewhere the 274th relinquished the Wiesbaden “kreis” where now much higher units were headquartering. The “lost territory” included the plush and popular EM’s club at Biebrich where GIs had been getting free haircuts, tailoring and manicures and bought War Bonds by the gross.

They didn’t do too bad in the move, though. Regimental headquarters were in Bad Schawbach in the picturesque Taunus Mountains.

The 276th continued its headquarters in Wetzlar and the 275th in Camberg after moving out of the Usingen district.

The 70th and its attached units now occupied only five kreises compared with the 13 it had previously occupied.

* 

The band played on
... till critics check in

The drummer in the re-cycled “orchestra” of Headquarters Company, 3rd Bn/274 (page 15, Winter ‘98 issue) Kenneth Griffin adds a footnote.

“It was an exceptionally quiet dark night in that village of Schnecken, Germany when we started to play and the music got louder and louder. All of a sudden, around 11 p.m., German heavy artillery came over and five or six rounds bounced off the houses across the street. We all hit the floor. It seems the Germans didn’t like our music.”

Ken would like to hear from any ‘Blazers who remembered the impromptu concert. His address is 1909 Jefferson St., Portage, IN 46368.

* 

Fate gives finger twice to ‘Blazer

By EM RAL KEMPF
L/274

When the Division was de-activated in Europe, I was on my way home, going to Antwerp, Belgium for a shipment home. A troop build-up occurred there and there was no place to put new ones.

So we were put into “packets” of 500 officers and men and sent back to the continent, regardless of points, etc. I was one of those unfortunate ones and sent to Vienna, Austria and assigned to the 42nd Division.

I was also called back in the Korean conflict as a Captain and served 21 months from December, 1950 to August, 1952.
LIGHT-HEARTED LIBERATOR...
The happy smile on the face of Harley Rush, 570 Signal, probably reflects a successful foray when they “liberated” needed replacement parts from an abandoned radio electronics store.

Harley was jeep driver for Lt. Alex Stahl, who took this picture in February, 1945, near Grossbliedesterstroff. Harley recalls “The lieutenant and I thought the area had been cleared of enemy. But as we moved along, the GIs were yelling at us, ‘Get down, this place is under enemy fire!’” Ducking and dodging, Rush and Stahl completed their mission safely and fruitfully.

Harley uncovered this photo when he was going through his WW2 “stuff” recently.

Mess hall becomes 4-star restaurant

“Best in the ETO.”

That was the official rating of the enlisted men’s mess of the HQ Co/276. It was made in 1945 by an inspecting officer of the 3rd Rock of the Man Division.

The mess hall resembled a high-class European tea room. Tables for four or six were covered with dazzling white linen tablecloths. Unlike the typical combat mess tables were covered with dazzling white linen pitchers, sugar came in real sugarbowls, bread on authentic bread plates. All of cream-colored ceramic. Large Chinese lanterns cast a ritzy glow over the scene.

Pretty maids dressed in colorful Franconian costumes brought in the first course which had been prepared by Sgt. Ralph Taylor, the mess sergeant, and his capable — very capable staff. Another maid fills your coffee cup — and keeps it filled to the brim. After the entree, yet another takes your dishes off for washing. Which you do not do yourself as in the good old days.

The project came from a Taylor dream. But there was a lot of input from Cpl. Nathan Cooper, who spoke fluent German. It was he who conjured up all the linen, china, silver and accouterments from the Wetzlar countryside. He also beguiled all the waitresses and an orchestra to furnish dinner music.

All expenses were paid from the proceeds of “Foam, Sweet Foam”, the HQ Company’s bierstube.

The first GIs to walk in were absolutely awed, reported Tony Yarbrough. Some were so taken that they couldn’t eat. Unbeknownst to the mess sergeant, an incognito S-4 inspector for the Third Army enjoyed a day’s three meals there. He checked a 2-page legal-sized checklist that covered everything from cleanliness of the kitchen to the ambiance of the dining room to the quality and tastiness of the food. Then the guest handed a carbon copy to the surprised Taylor. The last section was “Remarks”. Said remarks were simply, “Best in the ETO.”

Bread and butter... and bullets

As Joseph Kielar, G/274, sits down at the dinner table he has visions — not of drumsticks or T-bones but of bullets.

He tells us: “During basic training at Fort Warren, Wyoming, we were fed family style, of course. We had to stand at the table until the mess sergeant gave the signal to sit.”

“One day I was awfully hungry after a 20-mile hike. At the sergeant’s signal, I sat down, grabbed the meat platter and took a generous portion. Too generous, I guess. The mess sergeant yelled at me to pass my plate around the table instead of the platter. I felt very low and ashamed. For punishment I had to clip bullets in the supply room for two weeks after regular duty hours. I dream of bullets to this day, every time I sit down for a meal.

“I still love that mess sergeant. God says, ‘Love your enemies’”

No room in the inn for ravenous Germans

“The Wayside Inn”, complete with a gramaphone that continuously played waltzes and polkas, was the mess hall run by Sgt. Ralph Taylor of 276th HQ Company.

As the line was forming for supper one evening, three Germans — two officers and an EM — came out of the woods to surrender. They couldn’t resist the odors of a sweet-smelling menu. They may have hoped to enjoy the fried steak of the day. It was no-thanks, though. They were hustled off to a prison encampment before the steaks were done.

BABIES

of the Battalions

1925

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<tr>
<td>Jock Apostoli</td>
<td>F/274</td>
<td>June 26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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IN THE ARMY PHOTO ALBUM...

The 70th Infantry Division is given a prominent spot on a center spread of "Soldiers" magazine that marked the 223rd birthday of the United States Army. One of the eight pictures shows a Trailblazer breaking into a house in search of German troops who had been sniping on the advancing 70th men. The picture is a Signal Corps photo and, unfortunately, is not in the "Trailblazer" files.

The layout has a photo from the Civil War, World Wars I and II and Vietnam.