



I  
AT  290  
MESSAGE CENTER



SPRING EDITION

MARCH 2001

### A followup: Chronicle of La Roumiere:

Following our publication of the September 2000 issue, Al Roxburgh encouraged me to suggest to all of you who have copies of his PKG, that the historical accuracy of our story on La Roumiere qualifies it as a supplement to the PKG and might well be kept with it. Though none of us fell in the battle, we participated, and therefore, can claim a small share of the honor earned by our comrades-in-arms. To help complete your record of that event, we herewith provide you with the bibliography used to authenticate the Chronicle.

Bibliography for "Chronicle: The Battle for Hill La Roumiere", AT-290 Message Center, September 2000  
"....A Furlough in Paris?" , privately published monograph by  
Sydney O. Johnson – Company A, 83<sup>rd</sup> Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, 3<sup>rd</sup> Armored Division

"Chronicle – 517 Parachute Regimental Combat Team" page 16 (paras. 8 & 9), covering activities 25 December 1944 from a report prepared by Col. Rupert D. Graves: "Operations of the First Battalion – 517 Parachute Combat Team – Battle of the Bulge"

Radio Log of 36<sup>th</sup> AIR, 3<sup>rd</sup> AD (CCR) Significant Entries for 22, 23, 24, 25, & 26 December 44 provided by Sgt (ret) Clark Archer 525 N. Halifax, No. 6, Daytona Beach FL 32118 and/or Major (ret) Donald W. Frazer 11148 S. Lawler, Alsip IL 60803.

Memoire of 25 December 1944 by William Brannan (former scout of Co. A 517 PCT) - P.O. Box 507 - Little River CA 95456

A Time for Trumpets, Charles B. McDonald, William Morrow & Co., NY, 1985, pp. 539-540, 554-555.

< <http://user.skynet.be/bulgecriba/hogan.html>>"The Story of the Task Force Hogan", as published in the Third Armored Division Association Newsletter for August 1987.

The Articles of War Annotated by Lee S. Tillotson, Col.,J.A.G.D., U.S. Army, Retired, The Military Service Publishing Company, Harrisburg, PA, p. 261.

Pass in Review, Vol. 1, Nos. 13 & 14 Published by the men of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bn. 290<sup>th</sup>; 21, 29 May 1945.

Spearhead In The West, The Third Armored Division...1941-45, pp. 111-112, 225-227

"Remembrances" of 290<sup>th</sup> RCT members, originally privately published in "The PKG" by Alfred S. Roxburgh (CN-289):

S/Sgt McConley Byrd, 4<sup>th</sup> Platoon, F Co., 2<sup>nd</sup> Bn., 290<sup>th</sup> RCT  
Lt. Elmer C. Denis, HQ Co., 3<sup>rd</sup> Bn. 290<sup>th</sup> RCT  
Lt. Paul B. Ellis, Leader 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon, K Co., 3<sup>rd</sup> Bn., 290<sup>th</sup> RCT  
J. George Gregory, 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon, L Co., 290<sup>th</sup> RCT (verbal account)  
Lt. Roy Hammarlund, 4<sup>th</sup> Platoon, K Co., 3<sup>rd</sup> Bn., 290<sup>th</sup> RCT  
Sgt. Joseph T. Harlukowicz, K Co., 3<sup>rd</sup> Bn., 290<sup>th</sup> RCT  
John Hoy, 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon, K Co., 3<sup>rd</sup> Bn., 290<sup>th</sup> RCT  
Robert L. Marks, I Co., 3<sup>rd</sup> Bn. 290<sup>th</sup> RCT

Lt. Robert F. McElroy, 2<sup>nd</sup> Plt., AT Co., 290<sup>th</sup> RCT  
S/Sgt Ross K. Rasmussen, 4<sup>th</sup> Plt., K Co., 3<sup>rd</sup> Bn., 290<sup>th</sup> RCT  
Capt. Andrew Robble, K Co., 3<sup>rd</sup> Bn., 290<sup>th</sup> RCT  
Leonard P. Schur, K Co., 3<sup>rd</sup> Bn., 290<sup>th</sup> RCT  
PFC William J. Sheridan, 1<sup>st</sup> Plt., AT Co., 290<sup>th</sup> RCT  
Cpl. Robert M. Smith, 1<sup>st</sup> Plt., AT Co., 290<sup>th</sup> RCT  
C.E. Woodruff, 4<sup>th</sup> Platoon, K Co., 3<sup>rd</sup> Bn., 290<sup>th</sup> RCT  
Thomas W. Young, K Co., 3<sup>rd</sup> Bn., 290<sup>th</sup> RCT

### Rudy, we hardly knew ya':

As most, but perhaps not all of you know by now, Rudy Gillen died of heart failure last year on Friday September 22, just after we published our Fall Edition of the M/C. He had been at the Perry Point Maryland VA Hospital since the 18<sup>th</sup> for observation following complications arising from an accident in the Spring, when he fell and re-injured his back. The fall was the result of a mild heart attack he had just suffered, and as a result of which he was walking to his daughter's home to seek help but slipped and fell in her driveway. We are indebted to Bill Kirk (HQ 2<sup>nd</sup> Bn – 290<sup>th</sup>) who has lived close to Rudy in Cambridge and who has kept us informed as to the progress (or lack of it) of Rudy's brave efforts to

recover. On July 20, Rudy composed the note forwarded to us by Bill Kirk - - the one included in the September M/C under the heading "**Rudy Replies**". It says "it all" about what he was trying to do when he compiled the very first edition of the AT Company Message Center back in May 1988. I think he knew that we'd keep it going as long as we could ...and we will. Rudy had a Military Burial, dressed in the full uniform of a Major, his last rank. Three members of a military Honor Guard witnessed the ceremony, sounded "Taps", and presented Connie (one of Rudy's two daughters) with a folded American flag. The religious ceremony consisted of the Catholic Mass of Christian Burial.

**"Camp Hohenlimburg" in Late April 1945: contributed by Bill Sheridan:**

*This is an account finished and contributed last August by Bill Sheridan for inclusion in the "next available M/C", which has turned out to be this one. Bill took Rudy's and my call for contributions to heart, and this one is the second of his two:*

This is essentially a story of a community of people, who at war's end found themselves in a displaced persons camp located on the outskirts of Hohenlimburg Germany. And for a short time, I and some of my buddies from the Anti Tank Company also became members of that community.

As I struggle to write this account and look back over fifty years, I regret that I was not more curious about the people who inhabited the camp. How did they come to be there? What was their role in the German war effort? Were they coerced or were they volunteers? These questions remain largely unanswered but, still, there remains much to tell.

Early April 1945 found the 290th Anti Tank Company engaged in the army's great double envelopment of the Ruhr, the industrial heartland of Germany. Witten and Dortmund are two of the cities where we supported the line companies and it seemed we were continually on the move.

As the Anti Tank Company followed the Army's swift advance through the Ruhr, I became increasingly aware of the movements of civilians ahead of us, crossing the road, scurrying out of the woods and seemingly leading us onward. We soon learned that their presence insured that the German troops were not to our immediate front.

The scene reminded me of the sweeps we had recently conducted near Venlo, Holland to corral Wehrmacht stragglers. As our skirmish line advanced across the broad fields of that region, we began to flush large long-eared hares and, before long, dozens of these animals were galloping ahead of us. The hares were all we swept up that day.

We came to understand that these people were, in the army's parlance, displaced persons or "DPs". As the German army and civil order unraveled, they found themselves displaced from their previous role in the German scheme of things, and the search for food became their first priority. It seemed that their presence close to the fighting was prompted by their knowledge that many horses and cattle would fall victims to artillery and small arms fire. All seemed to carry knives, ranging from butcher knives to pen knives. Within an hour, dead animals would be reduced to a head, bone fragments, and hide. At a farm where our squad had stopped, a pig pen was discovered and the butchering commenced before the pigs were quite dead. Try to imagine the sounds of that operation.

As the resistance of the German army collapsed, so did any semblance of civil order in the towns and cities we entered. Bands of displaced persons roamed in search of food, shelter, and loot and terrorized the local population. It quickly became one of our priorities to bring some order to this deteriorating situation and to restore electric power, water, and food supplies.

One aspect of this effort was to round up the DPs and house them in labor camps, many of which were scattered about the cities and towns of the Ruhr. One of these communities was the town of Hohenlimburg that had become the responsibility of the Anti Tank Company. Thus, we became a part of the Army of Occupation.

Hohenlimburg was located on the Ruhr River in the province of Westphalia. We found it to be a rather provincial place, although it was industrialized to the extent that several manufacturing plants had been located there. There was little evidence of Allied bombing, despite the presence of industry and the town's location in the Ruhr valley. Several of our buddies from the AT company re-visited it in 1994 and enjoyed refreshments served in the restaurant/bar of the Hotel Bentheimer Hof, the hotel that had housed our company headquarters and was located on a bank of the Ruhr river, adjacent to a bridge partially destroyed by the retreating German army.

The DP camp was on a terraced hillside on the outskirts of town. Single story, wooden barracks buildings were located on each terrace with a kitchen and dining hall on one of the terraces. The camp gate was on the lowest level and was reached via a 100 foot driveway running from a town road. Most of the camp, was surrounded by a less-than-formidable wire fence that proved to be easily surmountable.

There were perhaps 200 residents, mostly young adult men and women, few of the elderly, and no children. They seemed to be grouped by nationality and included Russians, Poles, Italians, French, and various people from the Balkans. Many of the Russian men appeared to have been POWs at one time or another. Most seemed to enjoy good health, were vigorous, and did not appear to have suffered any great deprivation in the recent past. As to the roles these people played in the German war effort and how they came to be there, we had not a clue.

The AT Company had been assigned to administer the camp, care for residents and prevent them from roaming the countryside. My sole assignment during this time was as a guard at the camp. "Guard" was hardly the correct title, as two of us were posted at the main gate to confine some 200 residents who could easily cross the back fence and regularly did. However regular meals were an inducement for them to return, and it seemed to work.

T/4 Joseph Yursek of the third platoon served as de facto camp commander and had quarters in the camp. Stern in visage, forceful in personality and fluent in Slavic languages, he ruled the camp with absolute authority, or so it seemed. Certainly, the residents jumped at his command.

Life was far from grim at the camp and there was a polka dance almost every night down at the mess hall. The laughter and stomping of feet went on well into the wee hours. With few daytime duties, there was much pent up energy in the camp and no shortage of instruments or musicians. There was one very catchy march tune which was played with great gusto several times each night. I later learned that this march was entitled "Old Comrades" and was the favorite marching song of the German army. I understand that it still is.

Since we were posted at the gate we visited the dance hall on only one occasion and that was to quell a fight that was reaching riot status. Actually, the many ethnic groups appeared to get along quite well most of the time.

Every day residents would come to the gate to chat with us. I became friendly with an impressive and very dignified Polish man. He was about fifty years of age who appeared to be a leader among the Poles in the camp. We were able to converse in German, which I had come to understand quite well. One morning I arrived for duty at the gate and heard, that in my absence the MPs had come, arrested my friend and confined him in the local POW compound. I learned that an informer had identified him as a member of the Wehrmacht. That was the last I ever heard of him. As I pondered this turn of events, I recalled that he did wear a pair of green German army pants, which given the post war shortages, did not strike me as unusual. Whether the accusations were based on those trousers or something more substantive, I never learned.

Then there was Luigi. He was a slight, wiry Italian, a pantomimist and a born actor. Luigi had been a soldier in the Italian army and had, so he said, participated in the campaign against Tito's partisans in Yugoslavia. That campaign had been a disaster for the Italian army.

Without much urging Luigi would present the entire campaign. Donning a GI helmet (without the liner) he would act out the final days of the campaign, complete with the sound effects of machine gun fire and exploding mortar shells. With much rolling of eyes and waving arms he depicted his own reactions to the chaos of this debacle. It was a hilarious performance, even more so, in that it was delivered in German with a rich overlay of Italian. Luigi was quite willing to treat camp visitors to repeat performances.

Luigi was also an entrepreneur. I had found a Mauser rifle which I planned to send to Freddy Marsh, who had become hospitalized in the US for injuries received in our squad's encounter with a land mine on April 1. Luigi volunteered to crate the rifle for shipment to Freddy. When this box reached the AT Company mail room, Luigi found himself deluged with similar work orders from all ranks within the Company and diligently labored to fulfill them. Where he procured the necessary wood, tools, and nails, he never said. Luigi was one of a kind.

When off duty from the camp I enjoyed exploring the industrial plants on the edge of town. Apparently, these facilities were running at full production even as we were overrunning the Ruhr valley. One shop was producing shell fuses. Crates of finished and half-finished fuses were stacked everywhere. Next door was a sheet steel fabricating plant producing some kind of war material.

Parked on a siding between the plants was a spanking new battery of 128mm anti aircraft guns mounted on railroad flat cars. The battery was complete with kitchen cars, sleeping cars and a defense system that included clusters of 20mm machine guns. Painted rings on the barrel of the big guns claimed six Allied planes.

Most interesting to me was the adjacent textile mill, which despite six years of war was still producing material for ladies' dresses in bright floral designs. Bolts of this material were stored at the plant until they were discovered by the ladies from our camp. They carried the material to the camp where they set about converting it to dresses, curtains, and sun suits. After that the camp lost some of its grim appearance.

As time passed some of the residents became more assertive and bolder in their actions. This led to some tense situations. We were aware that, encouraged by the porosity of our fencing, some residents were making forays into the local countryside, either for diversion or for loot. This led to one of the most potentially explosive situations we had to face.

One afternoon, a small four-door sedan drove right past the open gate and pulled up just inside the compound. Out stepped four slightly tipsy, grinning Russians. Joe Yursek had witnessed this and seemed to be infuriated by the sheer bravado of their actions. He confronted them in a most forceful way, dressing them down (in Russian of course). They, in turn, tried to calm Joe, respectfully explaining that they had just been out for a spin in their newly "liberated" car. Their explanation further infuriated Joe and he ordered Mike (Malinak) and me to push the car over the edge of the terrace. The car rolled down the steep hill and crashed at the bottom.

We had suspected that some of the men in the camp were armed, for we had found ammunition but no guns. At this point, however, both Mike and I had our hands on our .45's, as the situation seemed to be reaching a climax. However, the loud crash of the car seemed to catch everyone's attention, thereby actually defusing the situation and bringing the confrontation to an end.

It was toward the end of the AT Company's tour of duty in Hohenlimburg that a truly astounding change occurred at the camp. One morning in [early] June, just as Mike and I arrived for our duty at the gate we beheld solid ranks of Russians in close formation marching toward us down the main street of the camp. On they came, in perfect step, arms swinging in their traditional, across the body style, and singing a familiar Russian marching tune. Ahead of them were two large red banners and a pair of keen looking young men, obviously Russian officers despite their civilian dress.

Seemingly over night, our rag tag guests had been whipped into shape and forcefully reminded that they were still members of the Red Army. We had no recollection

of ever having seen these officers in the camp. I must confess that this event left me somewhat uneasy as it seemed to bear a message, "you're not the only army here in Germany and you'd better get used to that fact".

With that first whiff of the Cold War to come, we embarked in trucks [on 3 June and arrived two days later] at Camp Saint Louis to join the Assembly Area Command 20 miles southwest of Reims, France.

### **Ground Breaking for the World War II Memorial – contributed by Lynetta Pildner et al**

The groundbreaking ceremony for the WW2 Memorial was held on Veterans Day, November 11, 2000 at the National Mall where the monument is to be erected and completed by Memorial Day 2003.

The ceremony opened with the massing of the colors of the 50 states at the groundbreaking site. After an invocation by Archbishop Philip Hannan, a former WW2 Chaplain, there were remarks by numerous dignitaries including General Fred Woerner, Chairman of the Monuments Commission; Congresswoman Nancy Kaptur of Ohio who was responsible for sponsoring the bill authorizing the Memorial; Captain Luther Smith, USAF (ret) of the Tuskegee Airmen; and Senator Robert Dole, a former member of AT-290's 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon. Tom Hanks, one of the principal fund raisers for the Memorial gave a moving reading written by Ernie Pyle during WW2.

After a musical interlude, the principal address was made by President Bill Clinton. The actual groundbreaking followed, when perhaps a dozen dignitaries turned over the earth with golden shovels. After the playing of Taps, an American Eagle was released to fly the length of the Mall and with that, the impressive ceremony concluded.

Present from the AT Company were Lynetta and John Pildner, Tommie and Bob McElroy, and Caroline and Rob Smith. Others of the 75<sup>th</sup> present included Barbara and Charles Bare (575<sup>th</sup> Signal and as hosts for others from the 75<sup>th</sup>), Elinore and Charles Woodman (B-291), Geoffry Parker (75<sup>th</sup> Recon), and John Podriznik (75<sup>th</sup> Recon).

On Thursday, earlier in the week, a visit had been made by the Pildners, McElroys, and (Rob) Smiths to the site of Dal Raze's grave in Arlington Cemetery.

### **Dissolution of the 75<sup>th</sup> Division Veterans Association:**

While on the distressing subject of aging, death, and other, perhaps unpleasant matters, it seems appropriate to bring to your attention a matter that will be of concern only to members of the 75<sup>th</sup> Association itself. It has to do with the question of what the Association should do with its assets when reunion attendance shrinks to an impractical size. Scheduled for consideration at the Denver Reunion this year is the constitutional amendment quoted on the next page. Note that it is a *revision* of what was proposed at Houston and subsequently published in the October 1999 BB. Members of the Association who wish to take exception to this altered amendment can do so through either John Pildner (recently appointed) or Ray Fary, both of whom are members of the Association's National Executive Committee.

### **A Special note about Paul Graves:**

Bob McElroy has learned through Paul's wife, Betty, that he has recently become seriously ill. I know that he would benefit greatly from a word of moral support from you, whether you knew him well or not. Don't delay. If he gets well as soon as we hope he will, a delayed effort on your part won't be anywhere near as effective as something right now to show him that you care. I hope you'll do the same for each and every one of us when we're in trouble and you know about it. Paul lives in Kentucky...His address is on the list, page 8. If you don't have a card handy, write him a personal note on an unsent Christmas card from last month...we all have 'em.

Until the Fall, then, we are:

*"RC" (Ray) Smith, your Editor*

*"RM" (Rob) Smith, your Publisher*

C O P Y

AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION  
DISSOLUTION OF THE 75TH DIVISION ASSOCIATION.

Be it resolved that the orderly dissolution of this Association is to be accomplished by the following stipulations: All provisions of the Association's Constitution and By-Laws regarding dissolution, 10th Amendment, is hereby repealed by this resolution.

- A. These provisions for dissolution shall in no way precipitate or delay dissolution.
- B. At the time of any annual reunion and the attendance by members of the Association is thirty-five (35) or less, a motion to dissolve will be presented to those present by the president or any other presiding member of the Association. A simple majority vote concurring, the Association shall be dissolved at the reunion. A quorum shall be a majority of the elective officers and National Executive Committee members present.
- C. Should it be voted that action to not dissolve in accordance with B above, the Association shall continue,
- D. When the attendance at an annual membership reunion is fifteen (15) or less members, it is mandatory that the Association be dissolved at that meeting. Such dissolution applies to the legally chartered organization. The then remaining members are encouraged to continue group meetings as they may elect, preferably at the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge annual Reunions.
- E. When *the herein prescribed action* to dissolve the Association occurs, the President, Treasurer and the Secretary shall:
  - 1. Contract for an audit to be completed within 60 days.
  - 2. Contact the District Internal Revenue Service office for instruction to implement the dissolution of the Association.
  - 3. Contact the State Tax Agency of the state where the Association funds are deposited for instructions on the dissolution of the Association and implementation of dissolution.
  - 4. Pay outstanding bills.
  - 5. Final funds of the Association are to be donated to the following as judged appropriate by vote of members present at the time this dissolution motion is approved:
    - a. The 75th Infantry Division Gazebo at the Freedom Foundation.
    - b. The 75th Infantry Division Association's Museum *Archive repository of its records and artifacts.*
    - c. A veteran's hospital in Missouri, the birth place of the Division.
    - d. An organization whose principal purpose is to perpetuate the history of the 75th Infantry Division.
  - 6. Identify and ship prepaid all property (including records) and effects of the Association to the 75th Infantry Division Association's Museum/Archive for preservation, storage, research and display.
- F. After completing the arrangements to comply with the foregoing, the chaplain or a member acting as the Association chaplain shall lead a prayer to God in behalf of the men of the 75th and ask that this final action be of value to their widows, Sons and daughters and their sons and daughters.
- G. The President and Secretary shall send a record of the above final Association action in a final edition of the Bulgebusters to each member.
- H. *This Amendment is approved by the members present at the Annual Reunion, Denver, Colorado, September 2001.*

*Certified by:*

*President* \_\_\_\_\_

*Secretary* \_\_\_\_\_

AT-290 KIA/WIA AND TAPSKIA

Francis T. DeVault	4th Plt 2nd Sqd	Near Burtonville, Belgium
William P. Hulsey	3rd Plt 2nd Sqd	Near Soy, Belgium aft 25 Dec '44
W.A. Isaacs	1st Plt Sergeant	In Korea
Carl Sieg	1st Plt 1st Sqd	Friendly fire Xmas Ny, Belgium
Lino Silvani	2nd Plt	M Co, 39th Inf Aug '44 Ste Lo, France

WIA (probably did not return to AT-290 before war's end)

Russell Hedberg	Hdq Plt	Recon Sgt	Details unknown
(?) Holtzhauser	unk Plt unk Sqd	Shrapnel,	thigh or arm (at Rhine?)
Fred Marsh	1st Plt 1st Sqd	Easter 1945 -	Land mine
Alexander Moir	1st Plt 1st Sqd	Shrapnel,	left arm - evacuated
Bud(?) Scheidt	3rd Plt jeep drvr	Shrapnel in arm -	Colmar campaign
Niklos Uremovich	1st Plt 1st Sqd	Friendly fire,	Xmas '44
Donald Yack	4th Plt 2nd Sqd	Colmar -	Feb. '45

Post-War Deceased

Lennie Dale Bell	Hdq Plt Mail clrk	2 Nov 1994 -	Lebanon, KS
Bill(y) B. Black	4th Plt 2nd Sqd	18 Jun 1998 in	WV, of an aneurysm
Charles Blake	3rd Plt Ldr	1995 (reported	BB Jan 96)
Robert C. Coldwell	3rd Plt	1986	
Paul W. Costinett	AT CO, pre-Europe	1987 Los Angeles,	CA
Woodrow W. Fisher	AT Exec Officer	1960	
Lawrence R. Gillen	AT CO, USA+Europe	22 Sep 2000 -	heart failure - Maryland
Lawrence H. Groover	1st Plt 3rd Sqd	Oct 1984 -	Smyrna, GA
William F. Groves	Hdq Plt Supply	1999 -	Muncie, IN
Charles Grose	AT Recon Officer		
Russell Hedberg	Hdq Plt Recon Sgt		
John Heiterer	AT Company Clerk	12 Jul 1994	
Justice Horton	3rd Plt driver	1995	
Frank T. Kysar	4th Plt	1992	
John D. Lauland, Jr.	3rd Plt 3rd Sqd	abt 1996 in	Louisiana(?)
Joe Lassiter	unknown	1977	
Michael Malinak	1st Plt 1st Sqd		
Fred Marsh	1st Plt 1st Sqd	1967	
Alexander Moir	1st Plt 1st Sqd	1 Oct 1984-	Cleveland, OH
Edward K. Norfleet	1st Plt 3rd Sqd	13 Aug 1989-	Venita, OK
Orland H. Parsons	Hdq Plt 1st Sgt	12 Oct 1997-	Cincinnati, OH
Lee A. Premazzi	Hdq Plt driver	6 Jan 1997-	Portland, OR
Ben G. Premo	4th Plt 1st Sqd		
Dalton D. Raze	1st Plt Ldr	28 Dec 1997-	Springfield, VA
William J. Rogers	1st Plt driver	3 June 1999-	Springfield, IL - heart
Carol C. Smith	S/Sgt to 2nd Lt	1960	
Edward S. Stewart	Hdq Plt Comm Sgt	1991	
Willard S. Strawn	4th Plt 2nd Sqd	circa 1988	
James B. Vosters	4th Plt Ldr	3 Feb 1997-	Miami FL
John P. Webster	Hq Plt Sgt to 2Lt	1970	