

....EDITORIALLY SPEAKING

Having patiently waited six months for submission of copy from one or two of you to use for creation of another M/C edition, your editors (Rudy and I) have given up and will try and put something together that will be meaningful for you to read as winter approaches. As uncomfortable as winter can be in states like Minnesota, I (RC) have to welcome it, mainly because I don't much like the alternative...like maybe not seeing another one! Forgive my morosity, but I get like that whenever I lose a special friend, as happened during the past summer, when on Thursday, June 18, one of our most active AT members, Bill (or "Billy" as he was also known) Black, died suddenly. It happened in W. Virginia while he was visiting there with his wife, Velma and was reported to have been due to an aneurism. He didn't make it to the Spokane Reunion where he was to have received recognition along with John Pildner as a "Man of the Year".

Bill was the one who "found" many of us over the last two decades, including me in 1982, and reintroduced us to the rest of AT Company's survivors. He was tireless in those searches, and eventually traced or accounted for every member of the 4th Platoon as well as many other Company members. Bill was a sensitive, compassionate guy, and his final duties in Europe at the close of the war were associated with a grave registration assignment out of Camp St Louis, (France). During this time, he wrote a poem he named "We Sleep". It illustrates his sensitivity and also a unique awareness of what the war was all about...qualities that continued to influence him throughout his life. I'm including it here for those of you who have never seen it, because it seems so appropriate now:

We Sleep

by Sgt. Billy B. Black, 1945

I

Oh list you dead in Flanders Field
Please hear your buddies plea.
peace.
We too are from that far off land
Three thousand miles across the sea.
Like Father, like son, we heard the call;
Our friends in need, our Allies fall.
The self same road your foot steps trod.

II

Did you hear battle's thunder and hear bombs fall?
No Father, it wasn't your echoes at all,
We have returned, they called again.

III

I join you Father in eternal sleep,
Our work is finished, again we have

We lay at rest in Henri Chapelle¹,
In St. Lorent² where first we met hell.
Your sons have joined you,
Your ranks have swelled.

IV

As we look heavenward in our sleep,
We ask our God the peace to keep
Let's make one plea Father dear
That throughout the coming years
Our sons will guard and safely keep
Our Victory.....We Sleep.

¹ Henri Chapelle in Belgium is the largest American Cemetery in the ETO.

² St Lorent is an American Cemetery located at Omaha Beach, France.

It was Billy, supported by John Pildner, who conceived the idea of creating a bronze memorial plaque sponsored by AT Company, for presentation to Florent Lambert of Melines, Belgium for permanent display in his community. Presented by Billy on May 14, 1996, it will forever honor the relationship between the Belgians and Americans, specifically those of our Company within the 75th.

Another of Billy's contributions came three years ago when he envisioned and successfully promoted against the formidable opposition by certain regrettably disinterested, controlling elements within the 75th Association, the two-day Bulge history sessions so successfully and rewardingly held at the August 1994 KC Reunion. They were unreservedly and unanimously acclaimed by those attending.

All I can add is, so long, Billy, with the sincere gratitude of those of us you touched.

MORE ABOUT OUR HISTORY:

Some of you may have followed in the BB, the attempts of Al Roxburgh (CN-289) to acquire historical narratives pertaining to us from government archives. For example, the Morning Reports submitted by our Company's headquarters personnel for the period December 1, 1944 through January 31, 1945. Morning Reports are said to be the type of documents likely to be available for some army units. Following Al's advice, I have been trying since mid-June to determine what records still exist for the AT Company and how to go about getting copies of them. Sixty days after my first inquiry, I received a form reply asking for the specific name of the unit about which I was inquiring. I had already provided this information within the letterhead I used, as I named myself AT-290th's Historian-Archivist. But I nonetheless resubmitted the request with attention carefully directed to our unit's name. A month later (September 15) I received another form reply, this time quoting a schedule of fees with a minimum of \$8.30 + \$13.25 per hour just to see if applicable M/Rs exist. And then, if they did indeed exist and say, 60 of them were found after a search of several hours duration, 60 copies would cost \$8.90 to produce and voilà, we would have spent nearly \$57 without knowing what for!

Most of my interest had been triggered by curiosity, since I didn't have the vaguest idea what Orland Parsons (or Co. clerk John Heiterer) might have found to put into the morning reports for those chaotic days. My interest had also been fed by the chance that my request might be processed at no charge under the "Freedom of Information Act" (as had been suggested by Al Roxburgh)...Thereby becoming, a no-risk deal. But the National Personnel Records Center was obviously not buying my plea for gratis processing. And I haven't decided yet whether I'm curious enough to give them a blank check, which is the requirement to which I would have to agree or else place an advance ceiling on the charges I'd tolerate.

If anyone has any ideas about what we might do with whatever information lies buried in the M/Rs, please give me (RC) some advice. If you'd like to follow up and procure Morning Reports for yourself, the address is: Veterans Administration, National Personnel Records, GSA, 9700 Page Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63132-5100. You'll be provided with a fee schedule such as I've described above.

A final word: If you've been trying to follow the government-archived historical document thing you'll know that it has been something covered tardily, even casually by BulgeBuster-published Minutes of NEC and General Assembly meetings: There has

been a move afoot since June 1993 to enable and guide the 75th Historian's purchase of about \$1700 worth of archived WW2 documents pertaining to the Division from GSA. Inaction due to a variety of causes has served to stall and now abort the program. At the Spokane General Assembly meeting, it was decided that anyone wanting to see such documents would have to procure them on their own. George Tachuk (575th Sig), the Association's Historian, withdrew from, and has now officially relieved himself of that responsibility. As priced by the GSA in June 1993, 75th ID documents pertaining to only the 290th Regiment, were identified as:

1. 290th Inf After Action Reports Dec 44 - Mar 45 [cost, about \$125];
2. 290th Inf Journal [cost, about \$625];
3. Colmar Campaign Feb-Apr 1945 [cost, about \$12.50];
4. 290th Inf Press Clippings 1945 [cost, about \$10.00];
5. 290th Inf Insignia April **1943** [cost, about \$6.25];
6. 290th Inf S-2 Periodic Report 1-13 April 1945 [cost, about \$5.00];
7. 290th Inf 2.14 Report on the (*illegible*), March 1945 [cost, about \$5.00]; or
8. 290th Inf S-3 Periodic Report [cost, about \$12.50].

They can be purchased by individuals, but the 75th Association will not be involved. You may order them by naming the specific reports and their time frames in a letter addressed to: National Archives, College Park, Textual Reference Branch, NNR 2, 8601 Adelphi Road, College Park, MD 20740-6002. You will receive a form response and can take it from there. Estimated costs involved are listed within brackets [] for each of the above documents, but please note that they were valid *when quoted in 1993*. A set of all 8 documents listed above would have totaled \$801.25 back then. To save time, it might be prudent to request an updated quotation when you initiate your inquiry.

Be aware, however, that this arrangement does not allow you to determine in advance precisely what it is you're buying, such as either print quality or usefulness of contents.

A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH: Bob and Mary Coldwell

Mary Coldwell, Bob's widow, wrote a note to us this past May 19 to give a "thumbnail" sketch of the life she shared with Bob before his death in 1986. It follows:

"I want to say thanks to you for the Newsletter sent to me, Bob Coldwell's widow (Mary Gilmer) Coldwell, from Lebanon, Missouri and after 50 or more years, Independence, Kansas. I have the greatest respect for your service record and all the members of your group -- Those living and those who [have] passed on to greater glory.

"Bob had the greatest respect for all of you fellows, with special interest in his good buddies. After leaving the ETO in February 1946, and returning to Independence (Kansas) we were married, and then after four years at Kansas University we returned to Independence and were associated with the family drugstore until his death in 1986. My family of 5 children and I had the job of closing out the store and we are now scattered to the winds in the USA.

"Bob and I had a wonderful trip 'way back in 1974 when we were able to visit many of his special buddies in their own homes and see their families, and of course, fight the war again about 8 times -- I knew it by heart by the time we returned to Independence. I was a Red Cross "doughnut and coffee girl" there in Camp St. Louis and Philadelphia after July 1945-46...the tall one in case you might have ventured into our

club -- and Bob had helped me so much as in special service then, in getting along and understanding how the Army did and what they expected of us Red Cross people.

"The men and their families we visited in the summer of 1974 were the Howard Rezachs in Manitowoc, WI; Ernest Ingles in Hillsdale, MI; George Brown in Mashpee, MA; Norman Dionne in Laconia NH; LeRoy Anderson of Ashtabula, OH but now of San Antonio, TX, Charles Blake of Yardley, PA - now his widow, Jean, of Pittsburgh PA; and the Justice Hortons of Ashland, KY. They all had a great time recalling war times and near misses of combat.

"Keep up your good work especially in reporting news of members and families of AT Co. - 290th. There is a special place in my heart for all of you. Who knows we may meet again over a cup of coffee and a handful of doughnuts. I am a life member VFW and of course, so was Bob. -----The best to all of you forever, (signed) Mary Gilmer Coldwell....."

[Thanks, Mary for the information, and for giving me the correct spelling of Howard Rezach's last name! It's been wrong for years and we should have known better.....Ed^{RC}]

Ray (RC) Smith

Rudy Gillen

