

BLUE RIDGE



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Medal of Honor Recipient, Paul J. Wiedorfer, Honored in Chaumont, Belgium.

By Bill Black, National Commander

On the afternoon of Sunday, December 15, 2019, the people of Chaumont, Belgium honored the service and memory of 80th Division veteran, and recipient of the Medal of Honor, Staff SGT. Paul J. Wiedorfer of the 318th Infantry Regiment, by naming a street after the hero. The street will be called, "The Paul J. Wiedorfer Trail".

Following Mr. Wiedorfer's death in 2011, The New York Times wrote this about the Blue Ridger:

"Mr. Wiedorfer, earned the Medal of Honor for charging across an icy field near Chaumont, Belgium on Christmas Day, 1944 and eliminated two German machine-gun nests that had pinned down his platoon. During the Battle of the Bulge, Mr. Wiedorfer's platoon was crossing a clearing around noon when camouflaged machine gunners supported by riflemen opened fire.

The Americans dove behind a small ridge about 40 yards from the German emplacements. SSGT Wiedorfer ran at the first machine gun, sliding on three inches of fresh snow and ice. He made it to within 10 yards of the fortification and hurled a grenade. After it exploded, he shot the remaining soldiers, then turned and attacked the second emplacement. He wounded one German, and the other six surrendered."

Nearly 20 members of Mr. Wiedorfer's extended family were in attendance at the ceremony in Chaumont, along with representatives of the 80th Division Veteran's Association, PNC and



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WOW what a change all of our lives are in right now with the impact of the Corono Virus-19. It has hit us all in some sort of way. I pray that none of you have lost a loved one or friend from the virus and I pray that all of you will stay healthy and that we will be back to our new norm soon. Please do whatever it takes to stay well. No one likes being on a stay at home order more than me. I am one that likes to jump in the car and take off whenever I feel like it. But the Virginia Governor has ordered all residents to stay at home unless you fit into a few, and I mean a very few, categories.

Regardless of all the sickness going around we can still find beauty in our surroundings. Go outside if you are able or just look out a window. Listen to the birds sing and see all the trees budding and flowers blooming. Look towards the sky and see the clouds passing by and try to identify something out of their shapes. You will be amazed at how calming this can be. Just observe Gods glory.

I hope everyone was able in some small way to enjoy Holy Week and Easter. I know it was so different that I have ever seen. However, many churches, of all faiths, had services on the TV, some posted on Face Book, and others continued to have their services in the church parking lot where everyone stayed in their cars and listened to the Pastor/Leader.

I saw my first snake while walking my dog Zoe last week. It was a black snake about three feet long out back near the

pond. I just grabbed Zoe up and moved away. It raised its head and looked at me then lowered down and moved a ways then raised up again. It did this several times but never came my way. Thank goodness cause I would have taken off running for the house. I had just cut the grass down there so I guess I disturbed wherever it was.

As you read this magazine you will see that the Reunion has been cancelled for this year but that all the celebrations that were planned will be moved to the 2021 Reunion. The Location will be the same. Hopefully you will be able to attend. I was so looking forward to seeing you.

Continue to send me your stories and stories of your service member. Regardless of when you served we want to hear about your career. By sharing we are keeping the 80th remembered throughout the world.

Stay current with your annual dues. If your mailing label shows anything other than Life or 2020 than you are behind. Call/email/text me if you have any questions. Please just stay current so you will not miss out on any news and updates. Also, if you are an annual member of Post #50 80th Blue Ridge Association please send your checks to Mr Terrence Singleton at the 80th HQ. I do not have access to their account to make any deposits. Contact me if you need additional information.

GOD bless each of you and remember the 80th *"Only Moves Forward"!!*

Paul J. Wiedorfer, Honored:

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

WWII veteran, Bob Burrows, and current Commander of the 80th Training Command, Major General Bruce Hackett and CSM Jay Thomas. MG Hackett and CSM Thomas participated in the ceremony by giving speeches about the heroics of Pvt. Wiedorfer on the cold, snowy Christmas Day in 1944.

The ceremony was led by the people of the village of Chaumont, along with leadership from the Ardennes Breakthrough Association, Mr. Ivan Steenkiste, of Belgium. A special thank you to Mr. Steenkiste for his dedication to preserving the memory of the U.S. soldiers that fought so valiantly during the Battle of the Bulge.

Following the ceremony, a reception was provided at the community building in nearby Sibret, Belgium where a meal and Christmas market were provided. Many attendees proceeded to make a short drive to Bastogne and take part in other festivities commemorating the 75th Anniversary of the Bulge.



Commander's Message



Greetings 80th Division Veteran's Association!

We are all certainly living in uncharted times these days. At the writing of this letter it's early April and we are in the thick of stay-at-home orders, social distancing and washing our hands until they bleed. So much of our lives have been turned upside down and we've all had to learn how to adapt to this new, temporary "normal". I hope you and your family are staying safe and have remained healthy during this challenging time.

Many of you may have heard that we have made the hard, but appropriate, decision to cancel this year's reunion in Richmond, Virginia. This is unprecedented for the Veteran's Association. Certainly, we don't take making a decision like this lightly. In the absence of a vaccine (at press time) and knowing we have many veterans and descendants that are not as young as we used to be, this is the absolute right decision. Let's all pray that this pandemic ends soon!

On a much more positive note, I wanted to let everyone know that the 80th Division was well represented this past December at the European commemoration for the 75th An-

niversary of the Battle of the Bulge. Tammy and I had the high honor to accompany our own, two-time PNC, Bob Burrows and his family, for much of the week-long ceremonies. Special thank you to our friends with the CEBA organization for hosting us and spending long days and hours transporting our party to all of the events. We even ran into another 80th Division veteran, Frank Dick (317th Infantry, Company I), from Adrian, Michigan, who was with a different tour group. He and Bob hit it off great. You'll be able to read more about this fantastic week in a separate story in this edition of The Blue Ridge magazine.

I would be remiss not to mention how honored we were to get to spend time with current 80th Training Commander, Major General Bruce Hackett, and CSM Jay Thomas. MG Hackett and CSM Thomas represented the legacy of the 80th Division so well. They both have such pride in this Division, and it was a privilege to sit alongside them at many of the events and ceremonies. Tammy and I felt like we made new friends as we traveled with them across Luxembourg and parts of Belgium.

Shifting gears back to the reunion, I want to thank our reunion chairman, PNC Doug Knorr, and his wife, Sally, for all the hard work they're putting into making our next reunion in 2021 the best one ever! A lot of time and energy goes into the planning and execution of these reunions and we appreciate Doug and Sally so much. They will have an extra year to make it even better!

Finally, it's been fun and an honor to serve as your National Commander this past year. As I continue my second time through, I can't help but think about the future of the Association. I know it will be bright and as "younger" veterans of the 80th TC get involved; it will be exciting to see the evolution of the 80th Division Veterans Association. For those of us who are descendants that have served as National Commander, including Doug Knorr, Paul Stutts, Brian Faulconer, Lee Anthony, and myself, we serve out of the respect for our father's who served, and for all the veterans who have proudly worn the Blue Ridge patch. I think I speak for my fellow descendants that we have served the Association to be a "bridge" between the past and future. A desire to keep the Association active until the next generation of veterans can take the reins and move it forward. Because, after all, the 80th only moves forward!

I look forward to seeing everyone in Richmond in 2021!

Sincerely,
Bill Black, National Commander



IMPORTANT NOTICE: The 80th Division Veterans Association Reunion Has Been Cancelled

AS THIS YEAR'S REUNION CHAIRMAN, it is my sad duty along with a very disappointed reunion team to notify our membership that the 101st Annual Veterans Reunion, which was planned to meet in Richmond, VA July 30-August 2 has been cancelled.

The reason for this decision is based totally on our concern for each of you. With the Coronavirus Pandemic we are concerned that there could be a spread of the virus and that cannot be an option.

This year's reunion was planned to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the End of WW II. As you may know celebrations abroad and here at home have been taking place in 2019 and continuing throughout 2020.

In keeping with this 75th Year Anniversary celebration, we had planned a "commemorative" edition of the reunion program. We wanted this commemorative reunion program to be filled with as many photos of our 80th Division WWII veterans as possible.

GOOD NEWS! We are still planning to do this very special commemorative edition of the reunion program for the 2021 Reunion. *THIS IS WHERE WE NEED YOUR HELP* with the collection of photos of our 80th division WW II veterans, so that we may honor these great men and women who have served our country, in the most difficult of times.

Please send your photos (300 DPI minimum) with name and unit affiliation, to my email at dougk@knorrmarketing.com or send a copy of the photo to my home address: 1609 Dracka Rd., Traverse City, MI. 49685. (If you need your photo returned, we will be happy to do so.)

If you are unable to attend the 2021 reunion or would like additional copies, we will be selling these commemorative programs for \$7.50 each. You can contact us at the address above or mark how many you want when you send in your 2021 registration form.

We will miss gathering together with each of you this year! However, we pray that you will be safe as we navigate through this difficult time.

If you have any questions please contact me by e-mail DougK@KnorrMarketing.com or by cell 231.218.1747.

Don't forget we want your veteran's picture to be included in the 2021 Commemorative Edition and Celebration of the Veterans of the 80th Division.

May God Bless You and May God Bless America!

*Douglas Knorr, Reunion Chairman
Chaplain and Senior Vice-Commander*



Only Moves Forward

Bruce Dodson – 1923-1993 3rd Army 80th Division

By: Ron Dodson

Like I have been told by many other Baby Boomers that I have spoken with over the years, my Dad, Bruce Dodson would not talk much about his experiences during World War II. I have always been interested in family history and when I talked to Dad about genealogy, he expressed interest also. But when it came to talk about him and the war, he would almost always change the subject.

In September 1993 Dad and Mom traveled from their home in southern Indiana to our upstate New York home for a visit with us and their Grandkids. Sadly, Dad passed away in his sleep at our home on September 30, 1993. It was a shock as he was only 68 years old. Being an only child, his passing thrust me into a role that I was not prepared for.

Over the next several years my wife and I became care givers for my Mom who became more and more feeble, and on October 27, 2009 she finally succumbed to the ravages of Alzheimer's. It was after my Mom's passing that I realized that the dwindling number of my family members meant that I no longer had many people to speak with concerning "family memories," and that if my Grandkids and future generations were interested in family history that I needed to get busy digging through what information I could find and start documenting things.

Surprisingly, in mid-1994 one of my few cousins who is the daughter of my Dad's sister Geraldine Godwin (Dodson) surprised me with a box of letters that my Dad had sent to Geraldine during his time in the Army. Unfortunately, my Aunt Geraldine had passed away just 4 months after my Dad died.

This collection of letters gave me some outstanding clues about Dad's military experiences, and they have led me to discover considerable additional information that I am now attempting to chronicle through a Blog called "Letters from a Foxhole." <https://www.lettersfromafoxhole.com>

To be honest, I am not sure how my Dad would feel about the Blog, or for that matter this article. As I have mentioned in the Blog, and I know that he would feel, that he was simply "one among thousands" of men and women who served their duties during time of war... "no big deal"... he would say.

To me however it is a big deal! As I have read Dad's letters and searched the clues for additional information and then followed those leads I came to discover when and where Dad signed his enlistment papers, did his Basic Training, departed the United States for Europe and the date that he arrived in Toul, France to begin his on the ground duties during World War II. The letters led me to read through piles of "Morning Reports" and scan information of various Blogs about WW II and reading numerous books on the subject.

Most of Dad's letters avoided any references to what was occurring on the field of battle. I assume that was a directive that all letter writers had to follow because of the potential for the letters being discovered by the enemy and then used against the American and allied troops. So, I am in the process of doc-



umenting what was happening regarding the war efforts in the locations where Dad was, during his letter writing.

He arrive in Toul, France was just prior to the start of what was later referred to as The Battle of the Bulge, and I know that he was a Field Lineman in the infantry. Specifically, the Morning Report for Hq Co., 3rd Bn, 319th Infantry Division on September 4, 1944 in Toul, France reports that Pvt. Bruce Dodson reported for duty.

I also know that Dad stayed in Europe with his Army outfit well after the Germans surrendered and that he moved long distances in Europe, well beyond the Ardennes Region, until his return to the United States in late 1945. The last letter from Dad to his sister Geraldine is post marked November 20, 1945 and it was not long after that date that he was honorably discharged from the Army, and returned to his hometown of Washington, Indiana to start his personal journey through life.

Just a couple of years later, Dad met Helen Jean Fields in Loogootee, Indiana and a few months after that, they got married, and on August 2, 1948 I was born. Dad attended a couple of years of college, studying Law and became a Police Officer in Washington, Indiana and attained the Rank of Captain. He retired from that job at a relatively early age and then became involved in transportation safety work and later worked for the Jeffersonville, Indiana Memorial Hospital. He was a "jack of all trades" and was busy working on some project or another right up until the day of his passing.

I am enjoying chronicling my Dad's experiences during WWII and I would encourage anyone who has the time to begin gathering information about their family history as soon as they can. Time passes all too quickly and so do those with people with firsthand knowledge about your heritage.

Historian's Report: First Quarter – 2020

Lee S. Anthony, PNC & Historian

Many thoughts come to mind as I begin this report. We are all now in war against a virus which has caused serious social and financial difficulties. However, we will be just as resolute as those who have gone before us; the Doughboys, G.I.s and all who have served. We are saddened by the news of the passing of our friends, but we rejoice in the memories of the great times which we have shared. I am including in this report a picture of the dedication of the memorial at Mertzig, to which many of the "Greatest Generation" attended, such as Virgil Myers.

Indeed, I would maintain that every generation has been great, in their battles to preserve this nation as a nation of God. We need to continue the battle as "God's Own".

I am including another installment of Reunion Medals and ID cards, beginning in 1942. It is unfortunate that not all reunions had medals, which meant so much in the early years. When you notice a gap in the collection, check to see if you have a memento from the missing year. If so, please send us a photo to help fill out the collection.

We are continuing to receive requests from family members for information on the military histories of their grandfathers, great-uncles, etc. In many cases, we are able to start out with minimal information, such as name, regiment and company, and then the whole story can be found in several documents.

As always, it is a pleasure to work with Andy Adkins, our WWII expert and even calling on our friends, the emeritus historians Bruce & Cecelia Smith.

We are continuing to inventory the large number of artifacts in the collection. Able assistance is being provided by Paul A.

Ritter, a great gunsmith and rigger, and by Kevin Brookman, an Air Force retiree, who is also very knowledgeable regarding firearms. At this time, Paul is in the lead regarding the inventory of tunics, and Kevin is lead man in updating and inventorying the photo collection.

We are now in the process of moving part of the collection to another storage location. Quite a task! However, we should soon have an inventory of uniforms/tunics and also an updated photo log.

Two or three planned face-to-face meeting with veterans' family members have been put on hold until the virus problem has been overcome.

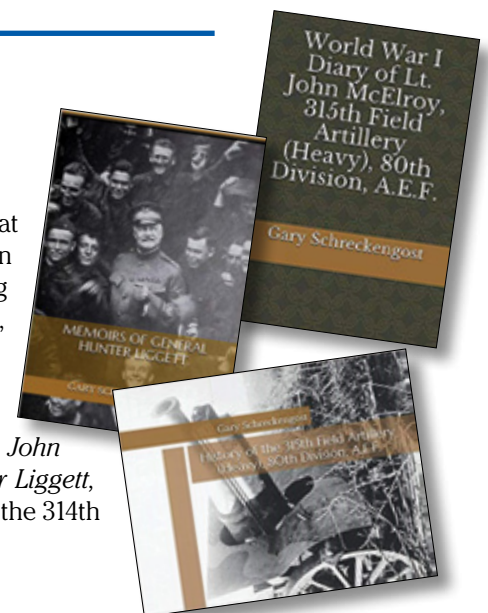
Stay safe, avoid the virus, and return this great nation to God.



History of the 80th Division Books Available

by MAJ(R) Gary Schreckengost

STILL THINKING THAT the division hasn't gotten its due for its exploits during the Great War (1917-18), I have endeavored to convert my historical fiction of the 80th Division in WWI into a scholarly three-volume non-fiction, drawing from all known sources, including the articles in The Service Magazine, the new photos provided to the Association, diaries, official records, the Stultz book, etc. These volumes, entitled *Always Move Forward! The 80th Division in WW I*, should be ready for publication next year, all proceeds, as usual, going to the Association. That said, I've converted three rare, out-of-print books that may be of interest: *The History of the 315th Artillery (Heavy)*, \$9.99; the *World War I Diary of Lt. John McElroy, 315th Artillery (Heavy), 80th Division, A.E.F.*, \$6.99; and *The Memoirs of Hunter Liggett*, \$9.99. The 313th Arty (L) has been re-published by Forgotten Books and it's fantastic and the 314th Arty has also been reprinted, although its only strength is its daily "Combat Diary."



Reunion Medals



1942



1944



1945



1946



1947



1948



1949



1950



1951



1952



1953



1954



1955

Warren G. Williams was born July 9, 1895 in North Belle Vernon, Westmoreland County, PA. His parents Joseph and Mary Harvey Williams were also born in Pennsylvania. Joseph was a laborer in the tube mill; Mary was a homemaker. Warren had three older brothers, one named Arthur (known as "Pete") who was 6 years older and closest to Warren in age. He and Warren seemed to have a close bond and Pete was an excellent role model for his younger brother.

Warren's mother, Mary passed away in 1903 when Warren was only 8. The 1910 U.S. federal census verifies that Warren was in school at age 15 and as his well-written memoir suggests he probably went on to finish high school. This census also reveals that Warren's father Joseph had remarried. Mattie McCracken and her two daughters had been added to the family and one of them was Warren's age! It must have been odd for this family of brothers to suddenly have two girls added to the mix. Joseph and Mattie also had two new sons by 1910 so they were a true "blended family" long before the term was coined!

Warren found time for fun as revealed in the 1915 picture of the Belle Vernon Sterlings club football team. He is in the back row, fourth from the left and labeled as a lineman.

On June 5, 1917 Warren registered for the draft as required by the Selective Service Act of 1917 for all men aged 21-31. Warren's Selective Service Registration card specified that he had no disabilities and was tall, stout, had blue eyes and light hair. His card verified his job as a clerk at Williams & Dreyer in North Belle Vernon, the butcher shop partly owned by his older brother Pete. At twenty-seven, Pete was required to register for the draft as well. For the question "Do you claim exemption from draft (specify grounds)?" Warren's answer was "none" and Pete's answer was "Family to support."

One can't help but want to know more about Warren. Did he have a girl friend? What chores did he do at home? Did he like having sisters? Younger brothers? How long did he play football? What activities did the family do together? Did they go to church? Visit relatives? Celebrate holidays? Go on picnics? It's probably safe to say that they did all these things but most of the time they all worked hard to keep a roof over their heads.

On January 19, 1918 Warren received his 1A rating for the draft. He knew that he would be called to serve his country very soon. Then just a month later he received the final notice that he would be joining the war effort. Very simply but emphatically the final notice said:

"You are hereby notified that, as a result of your physical examination, you have been found by the District Board qualified for military service which leaves you in Class 1 subject to call in your order of call

when the Government may have need of your services."

In his memoir, Warren describes his war-time combat experiences in France during World War I with honesty and frankness. It seems that his wry tongue-in-cheek humor carried over into the title he gave it. "Some Job" could only mean that there were dozens of other adjectives for this job: lousy, harrowing, scary, daunting, crazy, senseless, etc.

Epilogue

On November 11, 1918, fighting in World War I came to an end following the signing of an armistice between the Allies and Germany that called for a ceasefire effective at 11 a.m. It was the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month.

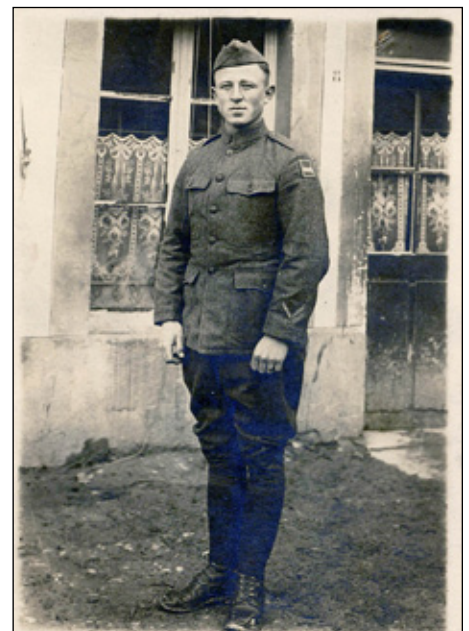
Warren's "Enlistment Record" states that he was a Private First Class who had enlisted on April 2, 1918. His physical condition on discharge was said to be "good" and his "Battles, engagements, skirmishes, and expeditions" enumerated the following: Somme Offense Artois sector, July 23-August 16, 1918; St. Mihiel (American Corp Reserve) September 15 & 16, 1918 (attached to 2nd French Colonial Sept. 12-14, 1918); Meuse-Argonne Sept. 26 - Oct 12 1918, Nov 7 1918.

Warren's Honorable Discharge from the United States Army is dated June 8, 1919. It states:

To all whom it may concern: This is to certify that Warren Williams 2663944 Pvt. 1st Cl - Company F, 320 Inf, The United States Army as a testimonial of honest and faithful service is hereby HONORABLY DISCHARGED from the military service of the UNITED STATES by reason of EFS Par 16, W.D. Cir 252, 1919.

After being discharged Warren went home to his family in North Belle Vernon, PA. Eight years later on December 7, 1927,

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My dad returned from the war in Germany in November, 1945, just before my first birthday. He quickly transitioned from combat veteran to farmer. On our half section east of Abernathy, Texas, we not only raised cotton and a few other crops; we also had livestock, including cows, chickens, and a few hogs.

My mother was a farm girl herself, having been the eighth of nine children on a farm near Quitaque. So, during the early years of their marriage, she had no problem helping with the evening chores, particularly milking the cows.

My little brother, Tommy, was born in May, 1947. In the early evening while Mom and Dad attended to their chores, we as toddlers were left mostly to our own devices. With one exception, I don't remember how we filled our time during these evening chore periods, but that one exception could have easily turned into a disaster.

It was the winter of 1949 or 1950. Mom and Dad were down at the barn and Tom and I were puttering around with something in the bathroom sink. Just to our right was a small gas stove with vents on top where the heat escaped. For some reason, I ended up with a sheet of newspaper in hand which I unthinkingly laid on top of the stove. We soon smelled something burning and turned to see the newspaper on fire, slowly turning into a shrinking sheet of black ash. After briefly flaring up, it wafted harmlessly to the linoleum floor and disintegrated. Intrigued, I grabbed another sheet, laid it on the stove and got the same result. By now we were fascinated by this phenomenon and wanting more. I dispatched Tom to scavenge through the house to find more newspaper. This went against all the knowledge my 5-year-old brain had accumulated about fires.

When we were engaged in questionable activities, and this certainly qualified, we always kept an eye out for Mom. After a few more papers, I stepped up on the edge of the bathtub and looked out the window just in time to see mom striding

up the sidewalk with a pail of milk. It was time to shut down our 'experiment.'

"Mom's coming. We need to get rid of this stuff," I said emphatically. We quickly gathered all the ashes we could, dumped them into the commode and slammed down the flush handle.

Of course, as soon as she walked in the back door, she smelled the telltale odor. Within seconds, we heard her tromping across the house toward the bathroom. We did not like tromping. Whenever Mom tromped into your room, things never ended well.

We waited at the scene of the crime, frozen in place. Mom threw open the bathroom door.

"What are you boys doing?" she asked, firmly, and with a great deal of feeling.

"Well," I said, "We were doing some stuff in the sink and a piece of newspaper somehow fell on the stove and caught on fire, but then it went out, so we tried a few more pieces and nothing really caught fire."

"Do you boys realize that you could have burned the house down and you could have gone with it? Don't you ever, ever do that again. Do you understand me?"

"Yes ma'am," I answered with all the contrition I could muster.

That was pretty much the end of it. We did not get a spanking. As toddlers, we were not yet equipped to consider all the consequences of our actions, and I am sure that was in the back of her mind.

The next evening, before chores, we were admonished, but the normal routine resumed. Fortunately, any pyromaniac tendencies in either of us calmed down as quickly the bathroom newspaper, and we have both turned out to be law abiding citizens—a few adolescent firecracker incidents notwithstanding. But, that's another story.

WILLIAMS.... CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

Warren married his sweetheart and neighbor, Clara Eleanor Mitchell. She was 21 and nearly 11 years his junior. The couple lived in the same home for nearly 40 years and raised two boys there.

Warren suffered from what would now be called post-traumatic stress disorder for the rest of his life and experienced short periods of depression and/or melancholy. There was a time when his oldest son at 15 became the main bread winner in the family when Warren could not work. With these problems and the country just coming out of the Great Depression it must have been very difficult for the Williams family but somehow they made it through and both boys managed to finish high school at a time when the dropout rate was nearly fifty percent. While it is true that Warren had issues with de-

pression resulting from his war memories he obviously had a great partner in Clara and together they instilled in their sons the values necessary to be good and proper citizens, husbands, and fathers. Both of Warren's sons had a reputation of being tough but both were overly tender hearted at the core. Years later with their wives they also raised good children and passed on the values that they had learned from Warren and Clara. The war took its toll, but it did not defeat Warren.

And so at this writing, one hundred and one years after Warren's sacrifice, his family thanks him and his fellow soldiers for their service to the United States of America and they thank God that he survived his war-time experience. The lives of Warren's two sons, twelve grandchildren, 29 great-grandchildren, and 6 great-great grandchildren all happened because Warren came home!

God Bless You, Warren and God Bless America!

75th Anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge Recognized in Europe

BY Bill Black, NC

During the days of December 14 – 17, 2019, and all throughout the countries of Luxembourg and Belgium, many commemorations took place in remembrance of the Battle of the Bulge.

The Bulge started at 0430 in the morning of December 16, 1944 and lasted over a month until it officially ended on January 25, 1945. Over 80,000 American military personnel were killed, wounded or taken prisoner during the battle. German losses exceeded 100,000. The 80th Division, known as Patton's "workhorse" division was right in the thick of it.

Tammy and I had the privilege to attend many of the commemorations and spend several days with other representatives of the Eightieth, including WWII veteran and two-time PNC Bob Burrows, members of his family and current commander of the 80th Training Command, Major General Bruce Hackett. Also accompanying MG Hackett from the 80th Training Command was CSM Jay Thomas. Serving as our host and transportation provider were members of the Luxembourg-based CEBA organization. Special thanks to Erny Kohn, Tom Scholtes, Lex Elcheroth, Dan Jordao, George Sinner, Ralph Kohn, Laurent Wies, Kevin Kohn, George Feiereisen, Mike Zeimet and Cedric Carvalho. These group of

men – and their wives – rolled out the red carpet for our party. The long days and early mornings and hospitality was so appreciated by everyone.

On Day One, December 14, we had the privilege to tour the Battle of the Bulge museum in Diekirch, Luxembourg. This museum has the most comprehensive collection of battle artifacts, weapons, reenactments and information about the Battle of the Bulge in all of Europe. It is visited by tens of thousands of tourists every year.





Following the museum tour, we were shuttled out to an open field near Osweiler, Luxembourg where dozens of reenactors were digging fox holes and planning to spend the night in the holes, holding vigil for the 75th anniversary of the Nazi surprise attack. It was very cold in Osweiler as the reenactors prepared for the night, but certainly not as cold as that winter of 1944-45 during the Bulge. PNC Burrows was a rock star among the reenactors. All of them wanted to meet him and have their picture taken with him.

The Museum and Osweiler

The second day – Sunday, December 15 – brought bright sunshine, but bitter cold as we traveled over to Chaumont, Belgium for a special ceremony to recognize 80th Division veteran, SSGT Paul J. Wiedorfer, recipient of the Medal of Honor for actions taken on Christmas Day, 1944. Read about this tribute in a separate story in this edition of The Blue Ridge magazine.

Following the ceremony in Chaumont and reception that followed, the party loaded up and traveled through Bastogne on our way to Clervaux, Luxembourg for a special night commemoration at the American G.I. statue in the city square. There were hundreds of visitors and several veterans from many different divisions that fought in the Bulge. It was a very moving and touching ceremony. All WWII veterans present were treated like royalty.



Dedication Ceremony

A reception followed in a community building adjacent to the Clervaux castle. The United States Ambassador to Luxembourg, Mr. Randy Evans, delivered a short speech, thanked the veterans for their service and welcomed everyone to the Grand Duchy. It had been a long day for the group and we were all happy to be in a warm room and have a chance to rest, especially the WWII veterans.



The Reception

After a late dinner on Sunday night, we were up and at it early Monday morning, December 16. This is the official date of the 75th anniversary, and the day was going to be very full and busy as we attended numerous official commemorations throughout Luxembourg.

Our first stop at an official ceremony at Schuman's Crossing, near Wiltz, Luxembourg. Wiltz was in the 80th's sector of fighting during the Bulge. The Grand Duke was in attendance. A very nice program was presented by the local dignitaries, including music and drama skits by local students at a nearby school. This particular area of Luxembourg is heavily wooded and witnessed some of the fiercest and bloodiest fighting of the entire war. A monument is erected to recognize the many Army divisions that fought in the area, including the 80th.



ABOVE: Bill Black, Randy Evans, US Ambassador to Luxembourg, and Tammy Black

BELOW: CSM Thomas and MG Hackett



The Official Ceremony

Next, we had to make our way back down to Luxembourg City for another official ceremony – the largest – at the American Military Ceremony in Hamm, Luxembourg. Security was going to be tight with many heads of state and special visitors in attendance, so we had to arrive at our screening and hold-

ing location three hours prior to the event. We were shuttled to the cemetery and given special seating arrangements close to the speakers and 15 WWII veterans. We ran into another 80th Division WWII veteran, Frank Dick, from the 318th Regiment, Company I. Frank was with another tour group and it was great to see him. Of the 15 WWII veterans in attendance, the 80th was well represented with Bob and Frank.



The Official Ceremony (continued)

The commemoration at the Cemetery was special and very moving. Each head of state spoke and embraced the veterans as they entered and exited the ceremony. There was an impressive flyover following the playing of our national anthem. Representing the United States at this ceremony was Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Mark Milley.

Following the event at the Cemetery, our group was transported to enjoy a reception with the Prime Minister of Luxembourg, His Excellency, Xavier Bettel, and his cabinet. Meanwhile, the WWII veterans were also attending a private reception with the Grand Duke of Luxembourg, King Phillippe of Belgium, and other heads of state. It was certainly a day and night to remember and our hosts treated us as family.





ABOVE: Helen Patton, Grand Daughter of General George Patton, talking with Bob Burrows

Cemetery Ceremony and Reception

Our final day of official commemorations was on Tuesday, December 17 in the village of Nocher, Luxembourg. Five years earlier, the people of this small village erected a monument in their town square in memory of the men that lost their lives liberating them from the Nazi's in January, 1945 during the Battle of the Bulge. While we were there on the 17th, the community unveiled a very detailed reader board next to the monument that described the actions taken by the 319th Infantry Regiment to secure their liberation. It speaks to the dozens of men who were wounded, killed or taken prisoner during that battle. Special thank you to the Mayor of the Commune of Goesdorf, along with council member and former mayor, Norbert Maes. They, along with our friends from CEBA, made this incredible day very special.





The Nocher Ceremony

Please feel free to check out more pictures from the week in Luxembourg on the 80th division website: www.80thdivision.com



My PawPaw

By Don Crews

My Grandfather, Fred L. Taylor, was a proud member of the 80th. He served in the 319th Company E and was a Sergeant. He made it all the way across France and was wounded on November 24, 1944 in Longeville, France.

As a kid I knew of his service but didn't think much of it. As I grew older though and began to study about WWII, I began to ask him about the shadow box of medals that hung prominently in the living room. At first there was reluctance, however, as I persisted, he began to reveal to me stories of the greatest generation. He told me tales of the men of his unit, the Mighty 80th Division, "Patton's Boys", and of the good times and tough times they had together. He told me of the sacrifices his wife Polly, my grandmother, made so they could be together right up until he deployed to England, and then while he was serving in France. He told me stories of honor and duty, of loss and sacrifice. It made me so proud of him. Yet he never lauded in it or brought it up without some prodding. It was never a point of contention for him, or something that he wore or flaunted. As he put it, it was simply a time in his life when he did what had to be



done, along with countless others, both at home and abroad. As proud of him as I am for his service, I am most moved by the fact that he didn't expect or want accolades or accommodations. He would simply say, "Yep, that was a tough time."

His stories will live with me forever. The time I spent listening to him share his memories are a priceless gift given to me. It reminds me that there was a time in our history when men and women sacrificed of themselves to achieve a greater cause. I am grateful to him and all the others who put the greater good first.

Paw Paw passed away December 15, 2019, at the age of 101. He will forever be a hero to me, along with all the others who served during that time.

The last date I have entered a name is April 30, 2020

LIFE MEMBERSHIP

BG(R) Mike Bozeman – 2nd Bde – Annual to Life
Gary Matthews – 317 Family – Annual to Life
MG Kenneth Moore – 2-318
SFC(R) William Moore – 2-318
Robert B. Newman – Annual to Life
LTC(R) Loren Stickley – 80th MTC/2079th School
Pete Weisenberger – 317 Family

ANNUAL MEMBERS

Colin Chisholm – Son of John Chisholm – 80th Div Signal
COL(R) Allen Cleghorn
Don Crews – Grandson of Fred Taylor – E-319
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Barone, Kay Past
President Auxillary
Pottsville, PA
DOD: Oct 18, 2019
Rptd by: Cecelia Smith

Hughes, William C-319
519 6th Ave
Belmar, NJ 07719
DOD: Apr 14, 2020
Rptd by: Patrick Dax

Lyman, CW4(R) Joe
80th Division Band
Colonial Heights, VA
DOD: Feb 14, 2020
Rptd by: Richmond Times Dispatch

McCall, CSM(R) James, 2nd Bde
Meadowview, VA
DOD: Jan 4, 2020
Rptd by: MSG(R) Janet Torbett

McElwee, MSG(R) Tom,
HQ 80th Div
N Chesterfield, VA
DOD: Dec 23, 2019
Rptd by: Richmond Times Dispatch

Reilinger, PNC Eric 3-317
307 Seagrove Ave
Cape May, NJ 08204
DOD: Dec 15, 2019
Rptd by: BJ Wagner, Daughter

Rose, COL(R) James, 80th MTC
Chesterfield, VA
DOD: Dec 26, 2019
RPTD by: COL(R) Tom Stephen

Russell, MSG(R) Paul, 80th MTC
N Chesterfield, VA
DOD: Dec 21, 2019
Rptd by: COL(R) Tom Stephen

Taylor, Fred, 317
DOD: Dec 15, 2019
Rptd by: Don Crews, Grandson

Teague, SFC(R) David, 2174th USAG
New River, VA
DOD: Nov 4, 2019
Rptd by: SSG(R) James Kincanon

Williams, Melvin 80th Spt Bn
Richmond, VA
DOD: Dec 18, 2019
Rptd by: Richmond Times Dispatch

Wilson, CSM(R) Wayne, 80th
Leadership Academy
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DOD: Dec 23, 2019
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