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**The Service Magazine**  
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# BLUE RIDGE

The Service Magazine  
Volume 83, Number 335

Winter — 2002  
Issue 4



Official Publication of the  
80th Division Veterans Association, Inc.

## A. E. F.

Artois-Picardy  
St. Mihiel  
Meuse-Argonne

## E. T. O.

Northern France  
Ardennes  
Rhineland  
Central Europe

## God Bless America

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Deadline for the next issue is March 1, 2003

# Eightieth Division

Veterans Association  
BLUE RIDGE

The Service Magazine

The official quarterly publication by the 80th Division Veterans Association. (Incorporated as a not-for-profit organization in the State of Pennsylvania).

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Flag Sergeant .....  
Color Sergeant ..... Albert J. Cresson (C-315 FA)  
Sergeant-at-Arms ..... Don Davis (K-319)  
Public Affairs Officer ..... George V. West (C-318)

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2 Year; Robert W. Smith (K-317)  
3 Year; Felix Cistolo (G-317)

**2 Years**

George V. West (G-318)  
Andy Ferens (M-317)  
Robert J. McDonald (C-319)

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**1 Years**

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Laverne J. Schock (F-317)  
Tom Pappas (F-318)

**3 Year**

Melvin C. Beers (C-319)  
Richard Davis (905 Fa Bn)  
Albert S. Haley (H-317)

## Commander's REPORT

*Merry Christmas &  
A Happy New Year*



*By the time you read this, the holidays will have come and gone. Nevertheless, Ida and I wish you everyone a joyous, healthy and peaceful holiday season.*

*I have been in touch with and have met Archer Futch, our Senior Vice Commander and can report that he is planning an exciting, wonderful National Reunion for the year 2003. Anyone physically able should make every effort to come to Roanoke, VA for this event. I*

*promise you, you will never regret it.*

*I recently attended the fall get-together of Post #47 in Ocala, FL. Everyone noted and mourned the recent passing of Post Commander Archie Howell. Vice Commander Virgil Myers took over and did a masterful job in his usual manner.*

*May the Year 2003 bring you everything you wish for, and may God Bless the United States.*

*Eric Reilinger,  
National Commander*

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## Life Plus Club 2001-2002

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Life Members who contribute over and above the Life Membership. There is no set amount, it's free will as of 1 December 2002, and I may have omitted a name. I assure you it was not intentional. Please write me if I omitted your name, it will be corrected in the next issue of the Blue Ridge. I wish to thank each and everyone of you who contribute, by donating you are helping to promote the 80th Division and help one who may be less fortunate than you or I.

Gentlemen: While some of you have been faithful in sending in extra for the Life Plus Club, due to the shrinking membership (just follow the "Taps" column and close to 75% having taken Life Dues), I am asking those of you who haven't been a part of the Club in the past, to consider making a donation over and above your Life membership. Thank You!

Anon	I-318
Arndt, Paul J.	F-319
Barthold, Walter	80th Sig
Bucher, Peter J.	780th Ord
Dolan, John J.	C-319
Hanline Leonard	Hq-319
Inkrot, H. Clifford	D-318
Laughlin, Howard J.	L-319
McDonald, Robert J.	C-319
Phillips, Jim	313th FA Bn
Schlarger, Lester J.	B-905 FA Bn
Scott, Joseph	K-319
Smith, Robert W.	K-317
Sydney, Reber	Dv Hq Sp Troop
Schaub, Eleanor in memory of her Husband, Paul	L-317
Weaver, Robert L	80th Rcn

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## MCBRIDE SCHOLARSHIP FUND

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The report of the 80th Division Veterans Association and the Lincoln NE Foundation was read at our 83rd Annual Business Meeting and was accepted. The names of Don Davis were elected as the primary go-between with Francis Rajnicek to be the back up in case something happens to Don.

We are still going to collect any monies donated to this fund, as we need to cover the difference between what the fund will generate and the time we must come up with the difference

Pasetel, Julia Mrs. A-319  
In Memory of her husband

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## Welcome New MEMBERS

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Rodger H. Nelson  
506 Timberline Drive  
Akron, OH 44333-1556  
Son of WW I Band  
330-668-3054

Smith, Joseph  
WW I Assoc  
Stell, Cleston E.  
3408 Pioneer Street  
Fort Worth, TX 76119-5741

Treichler, Randy  
HC 73 Box 3321  
Three Springs, PA 17264  
Son of William Cn 319th  
814-448-3223



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## Secretary's REPORT

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FAX: (412) 828-7651  
E-mail: Divinf80@aol.com

*I retain the right to eliminate any news that doesn't pertain to the 80th, such as Vacations, Ocean Voyages, Etc.*

Someone sent me a card and didn't sign it, only the initials "B&M" and want to know about a 905 patch. I am sorry I have none and don't know where you may get it. I try on the net to see what I can find.

### BOOKS

I also had sent to me a very nice book called "The Battle of the Bulge 1944, Hitler's Last Hope" by Robin Cross. It is all aspects of the battle from the layout of the battleground, the factors that led Hitler to believe that such an attack could be successful, to launch "Autumn Mist" on the ill-prepared American troops. It has 176 pages/with 150 photos and maps. It is a hard back 8 1/2 X 11 1/4. It sells for \$34.95 and may be obtained from Publishers & Book Distributors, LLC 2114 Darby Road 2nd Floor, Havertown, PA 19083. The book has detailed maps explaining troop movements, which took place during the battle. It is a comprehensive account of the battle that saw German attempt to relive the successes of 1940, but one that is doomed from the beginning and the consequences of that failure for Hitler's Third Reich.

Turner Publishing Company of Paducah, KY has about 80 of the 2nd Edition of the 80th Division for \$49.95 plus S&H. 1-800-788-3350  
www.turneronline.com.

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## WEIMAR REVISITED

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The German City of Weimar, under the auspices of Bernd Schmidt, President of US Veterans Friends, Germany, has invited WWII Veterans of the 80th Infantry Division, to join Veterans of the 76th Infantry Division and the 6th Armored Division in a visit to that city on April 9th through April 14th. The purpose of the visit is to celebrate the liberation of the Weimar Area by the American 3rd Army.

As you may recall the City of Weimar has erected an impressive plaque, honoring the 80th in the Weimar City Hall in the year 2000. The plaque will be revisited and honored, during this excursion. Other celebrations will be planned with participation of the US Army, Europe, the US Embassy Leipzig, the 76th Inf. Div., the 6th Armored Div., and hopefully a representation of the 80th Div. Ida and I plan to go.

Anyone interested in this trip, please contact me for more information at:

Eric Reilinger  
3000 South A1A Highway  
Melbourne Beach, FL 32951  
Tel: 321-676-1723  
E-mail: ericida@vol.com

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## "The Stories of the Men of the 80th"

\$25 includes the postage  
Send your check payable to  
Robert T. Murrell

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## Col. John O. Woods Has 96th Birthday

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A native of Greenville, PA the Rev. John O. Woods has a past rich in military history spanning three wars and three decades.

A 1928 graduate of Theil College, Greenville, Woods earned his divinity degree from Chicago Lutheran Theological Seminary in 1931. He became an ordained minister in 1931 and, in June of that year, became a pastor of St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Cloudersport, PA. until 1935.

"When I was in Cloudersport was when I first became interested in the military," said.

In 1935, He visited the Civilian Conservation Corps camp in Cloudersport and found an affinity for the service. He joined the Corps as a reserve officer, on active duty, from 1935 until 1939 in Virginia.

In 1938, Wood joined the United States Army and was transferred to Carlisle Barracks, Carlisle, PA where he remained until 1942.

"It was family there," he said. "You lived with those men every day and you were their spiritual leader and guidance. You became part of their family."

In 1942, he joined the 80th Infantry Division and was sent to Europe for 3 1/2 years. While in Europe, he survived four battles and his Jeep was shot up, but he never was wounded, according to an article published previously.

For his service in World War II, Woods was awarded the World War II Victory, the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star Medal, the European-African-Middle Eastern-Theater Medal, American Theater Medal, the American Defense Medal, the National Defense

Medal, the Army of Occupation Medal and the U. N. Medal.

Returning from WW II in 1945, he was assigned as post chaplain at Fort Lee, VA and in 1948 as division chaplain at Camp Pickett, VA. In 1949, he crossed the continents again, when he received orders for Frankfurt Military Post, Germany, as Post Chaplain and then served six months as deputy chaplain for the 4 European Command until 1951.

From 1951 through May 1954, Woods served as the Second Army Chaplain at Fort Meade, MD. In June 1954, he was assigned to Korea, where he was the Eight U.S. Army Chaplain during the Korean War.

"I was stationed in Seoul and was senior chaplain for the American military forces in Korea, I had 20 or 30 chaplains under me, out in the field, I was responsible for their whereabouts and well-being while they were away from their camps, including leaves and transfers. I was a full bird colonel then."

For his service in Korean War, he was awarded the Korean Defense Medal, the National Defense Service Medal with oak leaf clusters and the order of the Ulchi, a Korean medal.

In November 1955, he returned stateside and was stationed as post chaplain at Fort Knox, KY.

In 1956, when his orders again were changed, he headed for Fort Bragg, NC, where he became an elite of the XVIII Airborne Corps, as chaplain, from 1956 to 1962. While at Fort Bragg, he was a paratrooper and made more than 100 jumps from military aircraft. He was awarded a Master Parachutist Badge for his service with the XVIII Airborne Corps.

"We learned to jump while at Fort Bragg, they taught us discipline of jumping."

In 1962, he was transferred to Europe where he served as senior chaplain of the U.S. Army Europe until 1966. In 1966, he returned to Valley Forge Hospital, Valley Forge, PA, where he served until his retirement from the United States Army as a chaplain.

Since his retirement in 1967, he has returned to Greenville, where he has served as a supply pastor with the Western Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America.

"Experiences in war and peace have allowed me to appreciate the freedoms we have-to appreciate the sacrifices that have been made for the basic principles of our country." In addition to his service in the military and the Civilian Conservation Corps, he is a member and past president of Greenville Kiwanis Club, the Association of the United States Army, National Sojourners and American Legion, National Chaplain 80th Division Veterans Association, past vice president of the Greenville Ministerial Association, honorary member of the Korean Bible Society, 1968-69 appointed member of the Lutheran Church of American Consulting Committee of the Military Chaplaincy and in 1968 was awarded a citation of the Anniversary of the religious Retreat Center, Eight U.S. Army, Korea, invited as the 1969 Easter Sunday service preacher at Fort Bragg, NC, has served on the Thiel College Alumni Board, Penn Lakes Girl Scout Council and for 65 years has been a member of the Northwestern Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America.

Although he recently celebrated his 95 birthday on September 20, he

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## MAIL BAG

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Emerson Lilly of 548 Woodland Road, Coal Center, PA 15423-1319 writes, I was to the Doctor Oct. 11th and was told having problem with my back and legs, that he may have to amputate my legs. I am 80 years old and live alone as my wife passed away 8 years ago, my Son a Viet Veteran passed away 14 years ago and my daughter is a diabetic, and my other son was killed by a drunk driver. Give him a card... Andy Sackela this 85 year old Sgt. Company E 319, still "only moves forward." Not many of us left but I made a great many friends. It all ended on October 10, 1944 when German tanks counter-attacked. But as you know, we won the battle and the war. Best Regards to all... Micheal Zizaro, 2805 Via Tirso, Mission Viejo, CA 92692, Hq Battery 315 writes my wife Kathrine passed away 23 September 2002... Howard Laughlin, L-319 writes he will have his 80th Birthday on 5 November... The name of Ralph B. Voncile was entered in the Roll call as being a son of a deceased A-319 Veteran. He is very much alive. He has no son. Sorry, Ralph.

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is still active in the community and the local veteran's organizations and was the American Legion Veterans Day ceremonies at the American Legion Post 140 Greenville.

He and his late wife, Lucille, are the parents of three: John Woods, a veteran who served in the Vietnam War, Harman Woods, a U.S. Army veteran who served in Operation Desert Storm, and Mrs. Thomas (Virginia) Hajewski. He and his wife, Arlene, reside at the Ridgewood, St. Paul Homes, West Salem Township.

## "TAPS"

Benton, William A. G-317  
18913 Sunrise Drive  
Benton, MO 64012-9496

Bussey, John William. Col. Hq 313th FA Bn  
5926 Archwood San Antonio, TX 78239-1501 9/18/02  
Rptd by Mrs John Bussey

Diely, James R. K-317  
109 Trolley Ct  
Pittsburgh, PA 15237 2/7/97  
Rptd by son Jay

Goins, Earl G. 317  
Asheboro, NC 7/15/2002  
Rptd by Cousin Leon

Koelewyn, Wilber B-317  
2537 Richmond Rd  
Beachwood, OH 44122 9/6/02  
Rptd by Wife Bernice

Kuhn, Raymond H. Mil. Govt 319  
1 Cross Street #Ext Gardner, MA 01440-2210 Unknown  
Postal Return

McDowell, Hugh B. G-317  
107 Cozby Street S  
Fort Worth, TX 76126 11/02  
Rptd by wife Rosa

McMillen, Thomas R. 318th CIC Det  
231 Forest Street  
Winnetka, IL 60093 9/17/02  
Rptd by his wife Nan

Miller, Charles C. B-905 FA Bn  
115 W. Vanderbilt Street  
Piedmont, AL 36272-2057 8/02  
Rptd by Lester Schlarger

Mrowka, Peter Hq 2nd Bn 318  
43 Broad Street  
Plainville, CT 06062-2234 1/7/02  
Rptd by wife Lorraine

Schmidt, Edward P.  
Hq-314th FA Bn

Payson Ar. 9/16/02  
Rptd by William D. Wilkinson

Smoker, Mark D-317  
234 Hartgler Drive  
Belleve, PA 004-8742 Date of Death  
Rptd by Marvin Ester Unknown

Swindell, James L. K-317  
310 W 700 N  
Alexandria, IN 46001-8204 5/19/02  
Rptd by wife

Williams George J. E-317  
107 Forestwood Court  
Mebane, NC 27302-2009 11/02/02  
Rptd by William Courtney

## HELP! HELP! HELP!

### *My name is Allen Conway*

13421 Crescent Springs Drive  
Apt. 4  
Charlotte, NC 28273  
E-mail: conway@bellsouth.net

My grandfather was **Al Conway**, of the 319th Infantry Company H. He passed away in April and I noticed someone had written a paragraph on the "Post News" page under the Post #33 Co. H, Inf. section. I was fortunate and got to hear many stories of him in the war, but if anyone else knew him well, let me know. Thank you! Allen T. Conway,

### *My name is Mark McLeroy*

6687 Janes Road  
Appling, GA 30802  
E-mail mcleroys5@earthlink.net  
I am attempting to locate information on the unit in which my father, **Brack McLeroy** served during WW II. His company E-317th Inf. He was drafted 1944, and arrived in ETO February/March 1945. He continued to serve after the war ended and was part of the occupation forces of the Spring/Summer 1945. If you can help me see above.

## Some thoughts,

by George V. West

### VA Care

It was either January or February 2002 that my son drove me to the VA Center in Oakland, PA. I have my picture taken along with an application. I didn't hear anything until September. I was told to go to the VA Office in Washington, PA. Here A practitioner interviewed me. A few tests were taken and the doctor made all arrangements for my medications. I was also set up for an appointment for a hearing test. I received my hearing aids in November. Bob, I can hear a p-ant climbing up the Hulton Bridge. I say all this for those who haven't taken advantage of VA benefits.

*Thanks to Mel Beers, Angelo Barone and Max Schmidt. Have a good holiday. George V. West*

### thanks for the honor...

This article starts out in Hampton, VA. Francis Rajnicek nominated me as an Honorary Commander, with a second by Angelo Barone it was

passed. I wish to thank the two of them and anyone else that had a part in it.

Then came the reunion in Melbourne, FL. The Brockmans presented me with an Honorary Commander hat. It came as a complete surprise. Thank you very much.

From Company C 318th only Myself and Helen along with Mr. and Mrs. Mike Becker and Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Roberts were present. Come on you fellows from C Company, we can do better than that.

The Ladies Luncheon served a great meal and prizes were drawn. On Saturday Night we had a big band who played great music, and a great dinner was had.

Then my name was called and to my surprise again I was presented with a beautiful plaque. The evening came to a close much to soon as we begin to say our good-byes and wishing everyone a safe trip home. Hope to see all of you in Roanoke, VA

## 80th INFANTRY DIVISION CONVENTION

Keynote Speech 17 August 2002

By Brig Gen William E. Carlson

Wars are planned by old men in the comfort of council rooms far from the field of battle.

It was the 16th of September 1944. Adolf Hitler had summoned a group of his senior officers to his study in the huge, underground bunker called the Wolf's Lair, Hitler's secret headquarters hidden deep underground in a pine forest in East Prussia. Those summoned were his closest and most trusted military advisors.

Among them there was only one who wore the red stripes of the German General Staff on his uniform. He was the head of the Operations Staff of the High Command of the Wehrmacht, General Alfred Jodl.

The officers were waiting when Hitler entered.

Looking considerably older than his fifty-four years, he was still recovering from the injuries he had received in the assassination attempt

on his life two months earlier. His shoulders were sagging, His face was drawn and drained of color and his skin had turned yellow, as if he had jaundice. He had a ruptured eardrum and was hard of hearing in one ear. And at times he had an uncontrollable twitching of his right arm.

Slowly taking his seat, Hitler instructed Jodl to sum up the situation on the Western Front.

Jodl first noted that the strength of the opposing forces heavily favored the Western Allies. Over the past three months the Germans had suffered more than a million casualties and more than half of them had been in the West.

Jodl noted that there was one area of particular concern where the Germans had almost no troops. That area was the region of Belgium and Luxembourg called the Ardennes. At the word 'Ardennes', Hitler suddenly said, "Stop the briefing!"

There was a long pause. Strained silence permeated the room. The silence was finally broken when Hitler, reminiscent of his once moving and powerful rhetoric, said, "I have made a momentous decision!"

His voice belied the weakened condition of his body, his blue eyes sparkled and were alight with a fervor that no one had seen since the attempt on his life.

He pointed to the map unrolled on the desk before him and he boldly announced "I shall go on the offensive here!" and he slapped his hand down on the map. "Here, out of the Ardennes! The objective is Antwerp!" Those assembled sat in stunned silence.

With those words Hitler set in motion preparations for a battle that was to assume epic proportions: the greatest German attack in the West since the Campaign of 1940.

While charging Jodl and his staff

with preparing a detailed plan of operations, Hitler emphasized secrecy. Everyone who knew of the plan, from Field Marshals to clerks and typists, had to sign a pledge of secrecy. The penalty for a loose tongue was death.

But Hitler himself was less than discreet. When the Japanese Ambassador, Baron Oshima, called on him at the Wolf's Lair, Hitler was very candid with him. A day later, Ambassador Oshima reported the conversation to his government in Tokyo.

Since mid-1941, the United States had been intercepting and decrypting Japanese diplomatic traffic. Oshima's report that Hitler was "planning a large scale offensive operation in the West to start sometime after the first of November" was on the desks of intelligence officers in the Pentagon almost as soon as it reached the Foreign Office in Tokyo.

Gradually, very gradually, the German Commanders who would direct the battle were told of the plan, a few at a time. The operation would be launched along a sixty-mile front from Monschau in the north to the medieval town of Echternach in the south.

On the eve of the battle, in the medieval town of Echternach, a glamorous German-born film star, Marlene Dietrich, the star in an USO troupe, was entertaining the American troops. In a deep, sultry voice she sang "Lili Marlene" to the raucous applause of hundreds of GIs.

Meanwhile, on the German side of the line, in assembly areas across the front, German Commanders read a message from Field Marshal von Rundstedt. The message began as follows: "Soldiers of the West Front! Your great hour has arrived! We attack at dawn!"

In the early morning hours of 16 December, the tramping sound of hobnailed jack boots broke the stillness of that cold, silent night as Nazi

troopers, with visions of past glory, strutted upon the field of battle as they marched to the line of departure and formed into assault formations.

Hitler was personally directing his grand offensive from the Adlerhorst, an underground bunker amid the wooded hills of Taunus. At the Adlerhorst, the door of the cuckoo clock hanging on the wall opened and the cuckoo bird came out and announced that the hour of destiny had arrived.

A split second after five-thirty a.m., an American soldier in the 28th Division... manning an observation post high on top of a water tower in the village of Hosingen frantically turned the crank on his field telephone and reported to his Company Commander that in the distance, on the German side, he could see a strange phenomenon: countless flickering pinpoints of light piercing the darkness of the early morning fog and mist. Within a few seconds both he and his Company Commander had an explanation. They were the muzzle flashes of over 2,000 German artillery pieces.

The early morning stillness of the fog-shrouded forest was suddenly shattered with the thunderclap of a massive artillery barrage landing on the Americans. The onslaught had begun. The German code name for the operation was AUTUMN MIST. The Americans called it the BATTLE OF THE BULGE.

The Battle of the Bulge lasted from the 16th of December 1944 until the 28th of January 1945. More than a million men participated in this Battle. It was to become the greatest battle ever fought by the United States Army.

The 16th of December was indelibly stamped in the memory of the Supreme Allied Commander, General Eisenhower. Early that morning

Eisenhower received notification of his promotion to the rank of five stars, General of the Army.

Later that morning he received a signal from Field Marshal Montgomery. Montgomery requested permission to return to England for the Christmas Holidays since all was quiet on the Western Front. Request approved. -

Aside from these activities, Eisenhower had something special he was looking forward to that day. His old Army buddy, General Omar Bradley, was coming back from his Army Group Headquarters to spend the night at Eisenhower's Headquarters.

Eisenhower had prepared a special treat for his old friend Brad. Taking advantage of a plane flying in from Washington, Eisenhower had ordered a bushel of oysters. Eisenhower loved oysters and he planned a special dinner for his old friend. Dinner would begin with oysters on the half-shell, then oyster stew, followed by fried oysters as the main course.

In the fading light of a wintry sunset, the two Commanders and several of their staff officers were discussing the major problem at hand, the diversion of replacements by Washington from the European Theater to the Far East, when a Colonel from the Intelligence Section tiptoed into the discussion with the first wisp of information about the Battle. He announced that the Germans had secured penetrations at five points along General Middleton's VIII Corps front.

A review of the operations map revealed that there were two U.S. Armored Divisions out of the line. After much discussion, Eisenhower, who alone of those assembled had

*continued on page 14*



August 30, 2002

A lot has transpired at the National D-Day Memorial since I first saw it in July 2000. My trip was cut short in Waverly, V A, on June 4, 2001 when Ellen Gray had a heart attack in Waverly and I was able to find a good doctor. Ellen was a cousin and traveling companion. She died on July 25, 2001. I finally was able to get to the National-D-Day Memorial in May 2002 and took these pictures.

The place has more than doubled in size since I first saw it. The different things to see have also doubled. Plus, there is a gift shop.



A beach has been constructed with a fallen soldier and another being drug to safety. Immediately back of the beach is a simulated landing craft of marble with another soldier with his M1 rifle raised, deep in the water, struggling to come ashore. Simulated bullets pocket the water's surface with a steady "thup, thup, thup".

They have a \$5,000,000 debt over their heads. It's tax deductible for gifts to the National D-Day Memorial Foundation, P.O. Box 77, Bedford, VA 24523.

This is an awe inspiring place to see. We will visit this site at the Roanoke, Virginia, reunion in September, 2003.

*by Caleb Hurst*



the benefit of the intercepts of Baron Oshima's reports to Tokyo, believed it might be more than a spoiling attack and said, "I think we had better send Middleton some help. Send the two Armored Divisions.

In the dinner that followed, it almost went unnoticed that Bradley was allergic to oysters and had to be served "powdered" eggs instead.

On 19 December, General Patton was summoned to Eisenhower's Headquarters at Verdun. In a discussion of Forces available Patton told Bradley, "My three best Divisions are the 4th Armored, the 30th Division and the 26th Division.

When Eisenhower asked, "How soon can you attack?" Patton replied, "I can attack on the 22nd with three Divisions—the 4th Armored Division, the 26th Division and the 80th Division."

Patton's statement created quite a commotion among the high-ranking generals assembled. Some were surprised, some were amused, and some sat in silent disbelief.

Patton's statement was the sublime moment of decision-making of this battle. Far from the comfort of the council rooms of the high ranking Generals and Field Marshals was the soldier on the front line.

As the last rays of daylight fell dim and purple on the snow-covered hills of the Ardennes, there were no oysters on the half-shell for Willie and Joe and their comrades on the front lines that first night.

The order of the day for them was man's First Law—Self-Preservation. They were dry-mouthed and their bowels churned with fear as masses of German troopers dressed in greatcoats emerged through the veil of the early morning fog and mist and charged towards them like men possessed.

Brave American soldiers, bap-

tized in the blood and fire of war, emerged as men of steel.

The real story of the Battle of the Bulge is the story of these soldiers and the intense combat action of the small units: the squads, the platoons and the companies, and the soldiers who filled their ranks.

For the most part they were children of the '20s. Citizen soldiers, draftees, young men hardly more than boys. Raised during the Great Depression, they did not experience the carefree days of childhood. They watched as the worry and stress of the times wrinkled their mothers' faces. They watched as the dust storms, the stock market crash and the breadlines humbled their fathers, impoverished their families and dashed their hopes and dreams of the future.

Then as the Depression receded, the world staggered into war and they received a letter from their local Draft Board "Greetings!" Orders to Report for Induction.

Summoned by the clarion call to arms they came from across the land, from the farms and the factories, from their offices and schools, from the sidewalks of New York to the shores of San Francisco—they came.

They raised their right hands and pledged their sacred honor to defend their country. In their youth their hearts were touched by the flame of patriotism.

Resourceful, tough, and tempered as hard as steel in the crucible of the Great Depression, these men were as tough as the times in which they were raised. These are the men who made up the fighting strength of the 80th Division, carried out the orders of the Generals and engaged the Germans in mortal combat.

Battalion Commanders and Company Commanders, young, lean, tough, battle-wise and toil-worn. And

second lieutenants, newly minted Officers and Gentlemen, some still sporting peach fuzz on their upper lips—too young to require a razor. And grizzly NCO's with faces chiseled and gaunt by the gnawing stress of battle and the rigors of a soldier's life in combat. And seasoned troopers; scroungy and unkempt, but battle-hardened; competent and disciplined in the automatic habits of war never learned in school.

Around their necks hung their dog tags and rosaries—on their heads were their steel pots—and in their pockets next to their hearts was a picture—the picture of their girls back home.

Surprised, stunned and not understanding what was happening to him, the American soldier found himself in a situation that was as confusing as trying to read a compass in a magnet factory. Nevertheless, he held fast until he was overwhelmed by the German onslaught, or until his commanders ordered him to attack.

The Battle was very personal for them. Concerned with the fearful and consuming task of fighting and staying alive, these men did not think of the Battle in terms of the 'Big Picture' represented on the situation maps at higher headquarters.

They knew only what they could see and hear in the chaos of the battle around them. They knew and understood the earth for which they fought, the advantage of holding the high ground, and the protection of the trench or foxhole.

They could distinguish the sounds of the German weffers and the screaming sound of incoming German 88's. And they knew the fear of having German artillery rounds falling like raindrops around them without pattern in the snow.

As the soldiers in their foxholes listened to the sounds of the sym-

phony of war around them, they were re-assured by the bass section as the low pitch of friendly cannons roared and thundered to that 1944 overture.

And they were re-assured by the sudden stabs of flame through the darkness of night as friendly artillery tubes belched tongues of fire into the air, spreading a glow of flickering light above the blackened trees of the snow-covered forest.

They knew firsthand the violent pounding of the heart, the cold sweat, the trembling of the body and the stark terror that mortal combat brings. And they knew that feeling of utter exhaustion - the inability of the soldier's flesh and blood to continue on, yet they must, or die. It was a hell that had to be endured, and they endured it.

Even Mother Nature was their enemy with bitterly cold weather. The ground was frozen solid. The skies were gray and overcast. The days were short -daylight at 8 and darkness by 4. The nights were long and frigid. Snow, knee-deep, covered the battlefield. GIs, their bodies numb, were blue-lipped, and chilled to the bone.

At night, the German ground assault was assisted by artificial moonlight created by giant German searchlights bouncing their lights off the low-hanging clouds. The night sky was aflame with shimmering lights and pulsating patterns, casting an eerie, ghostly light in the fog and mist over the snow-covered field of battle.

When the chips were down and the situation was desperate, the American soldier, molded in the adversity of the Great Depression, proved to be unusually adept at taking charge of the situation and "going into business for himself" on the battlefield. GIs on that battlefield, they

*continued on page 16*



were craftier than crows in a cornfield.

These are the soldiers who, when their officers lay dead and their sergeants turned white, held the enemy at bay in the days when the heavens were falling and the battlefield was in flames with all the fire and noise humanly possible for over a million warriors to create.

For a brief moment in history, these men held our nation's destiny in their hands. They did not fail us. They blew the trumpets that tumbled the walls. Theirs was the face of victory. Super heroes—super patriots. Their legacy victory—victory in the greatest battle ever fought by the United States Army.

But the battlefield devours its heroes, so it falls to their comrades to remember the past. And the cost of victory was high. There on that cold, brutal field of battle, 19,000 young Americans answered the Angel's trumpet call and had their rendezvous with death. Heroes sacrificed on the altar of the god of war, whose valor in many cases died unrecognized with them on the field of battle.

Tonight we look into the mirror of the past and we remember the 2000 members of the 80th Division killed in action in that battle. Men like Colonel McVickers, Regimental Commander of the 318th Infantry Regiment, killed in action near Heiderscheid, Luxembourg.

In the muffled cadence of memory only, those who made the supreme sacrifice go marching by, and we salute them. We hear the echo from those years long ago as the drum beats the long, slow roll of the soldier's last tattoo, the bugler blows the sad and bitter notes of Taps, and the band played "To the last Post with colors" as they were lowered down. Bringing tears and

sadness to homes across our land. Mothers without sons, wives without husbands, children without fathers.

Purple Hearts were awarded by the thousands. The bleeding wounds of over 4,000 80th Division soldiers stained the snow and left the 'red badge of courage' on that blood-soaked field of battle.

And amid the serene hills of the Ardennes to this very day reposes the dust of American soldiers listed as "missing and unaccounted for" from that battle. Those, known only to God, who were left behind, never to return. There on that field of battle they perished and disappeared as though they had never been born. History cannot record their deeds for it knows not even their names.

So we muster here tonight to honor and pay tribute to all those brave young warriors who served with honor and won that battle. We are reminded of what their journey through life has left behind for us. The warriors of the greatest generation, a generation that is taking their final curtain calls and soon will leave the stage of life. They have passed "Old Glory" on to the next generation unsoiled, their swords untarnished, their legacy a great nation under God, with liberty, justice and freedom for all.

Look at these old warriors gathered here tonight. Men who were there on that battlefield 58 years ago. They are yesterday's heroes; they were soldiers once and young, the vibrant youth of that time.

These men and the others like them are the soldiers who in the hours when the earth's foundation shook and the ground did tremble, stood their ground amid the whine of bullets and the roar of the cannon. Before them, the German onslaught wavered, then withered on the vine.

Some bear visible signs of their

service: a missing limb, a jagged scar, and a certain faraway look in the eye. Others may carry the evidence inside them: a steel pin holding a bone together or a piece of shrapnel still in their leg or arm. But they all bear another kind of inner steel, a spirit forged with their comrades on that field of battle. The spirit of a band of warriors called Veterans of the 80th Division. Veterans bound together with a bond as strong as right itself and as lasting as their lifetime.

With their fellow warriors on that field of battle, they followed duty's call and lived the code of the soldier: duty, honor, and country. Before them, the Nazis visions of glory drifted away like the sound and fury of battle.

When the smoke had cleared, more than 120,000 enemy soldiers lay stiff in the snow, wounded or captured, and over 800 enemy tanks were left burning and rusting in the wooded hills of the Ardennes. **THE BULGE WAS NO MORE.**

Finally, the bells of liberty did ring and peace spread her lovely mantle softly over the land. The lights came on again all over. With duty done, with their sabers in the scabbards placed and their colors furled away, their dreams turned to the journey home, the harbor lights of New York and their girls they left behind.

Their place in history secured as the greatest generation, the generation that saved the sum of all things we hold dear—and all this for love of their country—and the meager pay of a soldier.

Ask yourselves now—with heads bowed—from where, Oh God came such men as these? Our country was truly blessed.

God Bless the USA.  
Thank you.  
William E. Carlson

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## Co F 318 Post 46

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Irv and Gert Wojciechowski have made arrangements for the Company F Reunion next April 30-May 3. Hotel, tours, banquets and entertainment. So far, over two dozen have made their reservations. Indianapolis is a very central location to hold the reunion, since most can drive there in a day or two.

My wife and I were on a cruise through Holland and Belgium last month. It was exciting to see some of the places we saw 20 years ago, but it was especially gratifying to have young Dutch people actually thank us for liberating them in WWII. It's easy to be cynical about Europe's attitude toward us, but the Dutch are genuinely grateful.

I sorry to report the death last March of Burnell Broadwater. Time is thinning our ranks! I have had several requests for the E-mail addresses of the Frenchmen (Heib, Lesage, and Sinkoves)...if anyone has them, I'd be happy to publish them so we may all communicate with them.

If your E-mail address does not appear in the mailed rosters, please write me at FAS2920@WEBTV.NET I'll be happy to publish it!

In 1945 I was in a Hitler Youth Camp in Sonthofen, Germany, where I "liberated" a small Hitler Youth Shirt. About a month ago, we got it out of the attic, laundered it, and found a name tag in the collar...Behr Werner - Potsdam. I have written to a man in Potsdam and agreed, that if they can find him, I will personally return his shirt to him. I'll keep you posted on the outcome.

On behalf of myself on all the Company F, I wish each and every one a great holiday and a satisfying 2003!

Bob Fasnacht, Secretary

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## ***New York Post #43***

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### ***Best Wishes, Happy Holidays & Good Health To All***

We added one new member to the post; Frank Morinello of Derby, N.Y. F served in Co A 319th. (Wife-Betty).

The post held a very successful fall gathering in Geneva, NY, at the Lake Front Ramada Hotel. This was right at the end of Seneca Lake, one of the Large Finger Lakes. Excellent, food, facilities and fun there. Hospitality room was on the 6th floor looking right down the lake. Many award winners: CEBA plate to Harry Nutting, 80th plate to Milt McCormick, Videos to Jack Wilson, Belgian chocolate to Rose Palmietto, 50/50 to Harry Nutting, Harry Nutting's bird houses to Kay Rajnicek, three of them, and one to Milt McCormick, 80th clocks by Jack Wilson to Rose Palmietto and Joe Rogers.

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## ***Lane Hall Post #42 313 F.A. Bn***

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First I must apologize for not passing along my new phone number. It is (717) 361-5025. Our address is 3211 James Buchanan Drive, Elizabethtown, PA, 17022-3176. Thanks to Ann Hatcher for letting me know about this oversight. She called on Veterans Day just to wish me well and report that Lee was doing O.K.

Talked to Lou Shirey. Didn't know he fractured his wrist. He reports he is doing all right with the help of some pain pills. He is looking forward to the 2003 Reunion in Roanoke, VA.

Ruth and I are planning to attend the Reading Post's Christmas dinner

Officers present; PNC's, Barone, Bredbenner, Rajnicek and Smith. PNP's Palmietto and Rajnicek. Much thanks to Bert Marsh and Abe Barone for raffle help. Little cool at gathering, but we went to nearby winery for lunch and stocked-up on supplies. Wednesday went to nearby Italian restaurant for good food. Food at hotel was excellent and plentiful. Very nice Thursday noon buffet by hotel. Collected dues and had much fun on raffles and White Elephants.

Next gathering in Albany, Turf Inn, for our annual meeting and our election, May 22-26, 2003. Hope to be back in Ithaca, NY for our fall 2003 gathering. Football, wineries and fun. Session closed in good harmony as the group disbursed about the Northeast, Ohio, Pennsylvania and New York. The post appreciated the support we receive from past officers and out-of-state travelers.

Ed Bredbenner, Secretary.

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this year. It will be good to see that group again. Haven't been to Reading for quite a number of years.

Mary Brinker informed me that Bob received a large number of birthday cards. She wished to thank all who remembered him. The cards were displayed on the wall of his room. Not much improvement for Bob. He sleeps a lot. Mary now has E-mail: BrinkMar@MailStation.Com. All of you, who have E-mail, give Mary some business. I hope her code is correct.

Sophia and Joe Ellenberger are having some problems. Sophie had a double heart valve by-pass. Joe had pneumonia and is in a nursing care facility until Sophia gets well enough to take care of him. Maybe a card

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## ***Post #36 3d Bn., 317 Inf.***

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The news of Rex Kibbe's passing arrived after I had already mailed my column in for the Post Reunion News-2002 issue. I report the information now. Rex passed away in the Memorial Hospital, Scobey, Montana on August 12, 2002. He had a lifelong interest in sports beginning with High School football, loved golf, hunting and camping, fishing and lifted weights until age 76. He and his wife traveled extensively throughout much of U.S. and western Canada in their pickup and trailer. He was a member of many organizations and quite active in the local Masonic Lodge and in his Methodist Church. He was with Co. L, 317th. Both he and Cecilia last attended the 80th reunion at St. Charles, Illinois in August 1997. His wife, five children and numerous grandchildren, nieces and nephews survive him. Rex's home address is

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### ***Lane Hall Post #42, continued***

from some 80th buddies would help.

Post #42 lost another member February of this year—Robert Hameister.

Mary Burgio had some surgery recently. Paul is doing O.K. Keep up the good work taking care of Mary.

Bedford, PA. is the site for our Mini-reunion. Dates are June 18-31, 2003. Place: Best Western Motel. More information will come later. Start planning to attend.

Keep in touch. MERRY CHRISTMAS and a HAPPY NEW YEAR.

Jim Phillips Sec/Treas

P.O. Box 371, Scobey, MT 59263. A memorial gift was made by the 3rd Bn.

Bob Smith informed me a few weeks ago that he had just learned that Mid Render, wife of deceased Capt. Harold Render passed away in June of this year. Mid was interested in affairs and functions of the 80th and particularly of those in Co. L and in the 3rd Bn. in the 3rd Bn.

Bob Smith traveled to Washington on Veterans Day and attended the Veterans Day Ceremonies. Bob also attended Legion of Valor meeting this fall in Oregon and in October the N.Y. Post Meeting in Geneva, NY. Also attending the N. Y. Post Meeting were Angelo and Kay Barons. Also visited his daughter in California and attended ceremonies in which his grandson received an award. Also attending the N.Y. Meeting were Angelo and Kay Barone. All Travelers.

Hope someone contacted Charlie Kibbe (K) and secured some of the paraphernalia he has of Co. K members and officers while at Camp Forrest.

We extend our prayers to all who are sick and have physical and health problems and wish a speedy recovery.

Bob Nathason, Sect

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## ***NO REPORT:***

Cincinnati Post #34  
305th Engineers Post #40  
Greater Reading Post #32  
Brett Post 3  
L-318  
Rcn Post 37  
DV Hqs and Hqs Co

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## Co. L 319th Inf.

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Here we are in December and it seems like only yesterday we were celebrating the 2002 New Year. Time really speeds by as you get older - however it unfortunately it is only in our minds - it is our inner desire that time goes slowly so that we continue to relish the days we have left on this planet.

News is scarce for this report. I have not heard from too many members of the Company.

Frank and Helene Soloninka spent Thanksgiving in Texas with son Marc and family and then went to Laguna Hills California to spend Christmas with their daughter Patti. While in California they will visit the Flynn's in Laguna Niguel.

Betts Flynn E-mailed that they had a delightful visit with the Ethiopian boys that were adopted by Betts son, Doctor Rick Hades. Betts said the children are a delight to be with, are extremely polite and she and John bonded well with them.

Bill and Billie Krehbiel are on the move again. At last report, they were on the road for about 15 days visiting family and friends.

I received an E-mail from Jim Young, and it appears he is continuing to make progress in his recovery from by-pass surgery. I am sure that all of you along with Maria and me continue to pray for Jim's complete return to good health.

I heard from John Balas and am happy to report that he had a successful colonoscopy with no problems. Helen continues to suffer with her back problems as she has for too long a period of time. Speaking of Colonoscopy, I also had a successful follow up on one I had.

It is very difficult to write this report each quarter without input from members of Company L. I can't con-

tinue to make up stories to fill the allotted space and I need your help. Please let me know what is going on in your part of the world so that I can pass it on to our members.

If you have not registered with the VA, please do so at your earliest convenience, like when you get this report. It is imperative that your name be on file in case of any future problems you may have and which can be handled by the VA. Because of budget restraints, the VA may be forced to refuse to accept new cases and if you're not registered, that could mean you. Do it now so you won't be sorry later. Even if you have no intention of using VA or have no current problems, get your name on the VA list. It doesn't cost a dime and will take only a few minutes of your time.

Maria and I wish for each of you, a blessed Christmas and a healthy and bountiful New Year.

Will visit with you again in a few months through this venue and hopefully will see many of you in August at the Roanoke Reunion.

Hank Einolf.

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## Co. M 318th Inf. Post #44

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May I take this opportunity to wish all of you a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

I had a call from Jim Siniard on 16 of October. We had a very long and pleasant chat, discussing the days in battle. Jim who is now 82 years old wishes the other men of the company would write some news so he could get to renew old times with you.

I am feeling a lot better, walking on a cane with a bad limp, and still on the oxygen.

Haven't had word from Jack Stumke and I wonder how he is getting along.

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## Post #33 Co. H, Inf.

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'Tis time to get an article out for the Winter Edition of the Blue Ridge Magazine. Problem! I have not heard from the Golden State nor the Tall Corn State, Iowa, nor the Lone Star State or from Finksburg, Maryland. (If it is not Finksburg, it is my fault, Kris, the typist for the Major, who is in Massachusetts, and not here to edit the article.)

Now, back to the Major's hand written words. My imagination is not strong enough to fabricate articles from these areas. Oh, Yes! I do hear from Big John Beebe and Kate. John is still taking his marching orders from Kate.

Here in the Midwest it is leaf raking time, which is almost a daily chore. I hated to see the leaves fall this year. Not that the raking was constant, but I had a tree that had the most beautiful colours of red, orange, and yellows. People stopped to take pictures to capture the beauty of the tree. The tree sits in a wedge so it can be seen from two avenues of approach. I have a stature of the Blessed Virgin at the base of the tree, so I like to believe that she nurtured the tree's beauty.

I am planning a great Thanksgiving in Massachusetts, visiting Jerry and Penny and their families. Jerry has an early colonial house that every time I enter I expect to see General George Washington toasting a tankard of ale in a victory celebration after one of his Revolutionary battles. Come on! Loosen lip! Grab the pen and jot down the happenings of you and your family so it can be published in the next edition of the Blue Ridge.

God Bless America.

Ohly

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## Florida Post #47

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We had a fine time at our fall meeting in November at the Hampton Inn in Ocala, FL.

Virgil Myers, our Vice-Commander officiated at our meeting in lieu of Commander Archie Howell who passed away this passed summer. The ladies prepared a sumptuous spread for our Friday evening meal and a lovely luncheon on Saturday, both of which were greatly appreciated.

We regret to report the loss of Francis Maher and Clarence Boston also John Tarbay lost his wife Katherine. We send our heart felt sympathy to their families.

Our March meeting will be March 13 thru 16, 2003 at the Holiday Inn Beach Resort, 2605 N. AIA, Melbourne, FL 32903. Phone number is (321) 777-4100. The room rate is \$85.00 and reservations must be made by February 20, 2003. The banquet will be partially subsidized by Post #47.

Its not too early to start making your plans for the Roanoke, Virginia Reunion.

Francis Rajnicek, Sect

317<sup>th</sup> / 318<sup>th</sup> / 319<sup>th</sup>

**HISTORIES**

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— POSTAGE PAID —

Robert T. Murrell

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Oakmont, PA 15139-1574

All of the past National & Honorary Commanders are looking forward to seeing you at the 84<sup>th</sup> Annual Reunion September 9-13, 2003 in Roanoke, Virginia

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*Clarence Brockman HQ-317, Vice President*  
*Felix Cictolo G-317, Secretary*

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Latrobe, PA 15650-1012

**Melvin Beers,**  
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**3rd BN., 317th INF.  
POST #36**

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Commander

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Secretary / Treasurer

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Phil W. Piergrossi, Commander  
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Phone: 610-478-9034

*Breakfast Meetings 9 a.m.*  
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POST #42**

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Director: Charles Noxon  
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Engineer Battalion  
Post No. 40**

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