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90 General McCalliffe's Remembrance

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In the late '60's I learned that after his retirement from the army, General McCalliffe served as Vice President for Public Affairs for the American Cyanamid Corporation, Englewood, New Jersey. At that time I was with BBDO, an advertising agency, in New York. What with the short distance involved I decided to call his office for an appointment to have the general autograph my copy of the division history. When I asked his secretary what time would be convenient for the general to see me, she replied that she had standing orders that whenever any of "my boys," as he put it, showed up that he will drop whatever he may be doing to meet with them. So I was told to just come on in, and I did.

Standing there before me instead of the rawrood straight, youthful, waven-haired commander we all remember was an old man, silver haired, wrinkled and bent over with age (he was 70+) extending a shaky hand to clasp in a grip of warm, strong friendship. After identifying myself by name of former unit we sat down to talk. Out of that conversation came this admission: He never said "Kuts" to the Germans demand to surrender at Bastogne. What he did say was "Balls" and let history be corrected with that!

What was more important for all of us, however, was his question to me, "If I knew of any man who may have died needlessly because of any order that I (he) may have issued. This thought he continued, that tortured him over the years and given him little rest."

My reply was a loud, emphatic, "NO!" "General," I said, "you never could have issued such an order. It was not in you to do so as you always put yourself in the same danger as we ourselves were in." I reminded him of the time my machine gun section came up to an I.P. and found him ~~and his jeep driver~~ waiting there. His comment made us all laugh. "Hell, guys, I thought you'd never show up... I couldn't keep the Jerry's waiting for you another minute." He had been sitting there on the edge of No Man's Land waiting for the army to show up.

Another time occurred March 45 after we had crossed into Germany for the second time and occupied the town of Bobenthal for the second time. I recalled for him that during the ensuing mortar barrage to cover the German retreat, with shells exploding all around, there was the General studying maps laid out on the hood of his command vehicle, completely ~~unmindful~~ of the danger he was exposed to. (I was in someone's backyard chasing a big, fat goose preparatory to cooking the hot dinner I promised the section if they kept up and alive when we went through the Siegfried Line earlier that day. That bird cooked in a pot all that night. Each of us dipped in a hand and grabbed a piece for breakfast as we moved out at first light that next morning).

I told the General of the love, respect and admiration we all felt for him because he was always there.

with us and for us now  
where or what the danger is

danger. To demonstrate to him just another example of his love, respect and admiration for us, his men, I recalled for him how when my unit was off the line and about to get our first hot chow in weeks he drove up just then and noticed officers at the head of the line. "Oh!", he told them, you eat after all you men have been fed and only then. ~~Abou~~ objected!

"Then again, General," I said, "what about the time you came to officially introduce yourself to the 3<sup>d</sup> Battalion of the 411<sup>th</sup> when we were in regimental reserve in Ingweiler. Harassment was heavy! The officers had us getting ready for days cleaning weapons, washing web equipment, field jackets and even helmets. Spit and polish was the order of the day. We were drawn up as I remembered into a battalion front awaiting your official walk-by. Instead you mounted a platform which had been set up for you and immediately ordered us to break ranks and form a semi circle around you. No formal review. What we got was a hard-hitting, powerful pep talk about how he wanted the war to end so that he and we could all return safely home. But, he continued this was not going to happen until the enemy was annihilated. The way home was through Berlin! And he will be leading us all the way. It was a rousing speech. We all cheered and he then proceeded to lead us to victory and home.

When I left the General I had an autographed copy

of our division history  
and he had a scar on his  
his face he did not have when I first arrived.  
God Rest his Soul! He was a great combat leader,  
and no man ever died needlessly because of any  
order he issued! Believe it!

Robert S. "Bugs" Cooper  
4th Inf. Regt., 103rd Div  
Company M  
2nd Platoon, 2nd Sect  
3rd Squad  
"The Best There Was!"