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**2009
REUNION
OVERVIEW
& NEWS**

103d INF DIV WW II



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Merry Christmas & A Happy New Year

A Great and Exciting 2009 Reunion We had a very exciting and interesting reunion in Nashville, more so for the large number in attendance, the unusual array of activities, and the intensity of the attendees in their review of our WW II activities. We had several first time ever attendees, two descendants (only sons) of men killed-in-action seeking buddies of their fathers, and several descendants seeking more details of their father's experiences. Furthermore, Nashville proved to be an excellent reunion site as evidenced by the 35% greater number of attendees above the previous year with our ever declining base. This is the third year that descendants of men killed-in-action have attended our reunion to find and talk with veterans who knew their fathers. Refer to pictures herein of Michael Passaro of Short Hills, NJ, son of 2Lt Francis M. Passaro (1/410) KIA Mar 15, '45 and William Krul of Mt Clemens, MI, son of S/Sgt William J. Krul (A/409) KIA Dec 19, '44.

The Association's Board of Direction took a number of actions so as to resolve issues to move forward with our programs to preserve our legacy and insure that the Supplement is completed and made available to our members. The Supplement draft was submitted to Turner Publishing Co on July 16 in Nashville and finalized by their designer in late September based on decisions made by the B/D while in Nashville. The Supplement as originally perceived was to be 16 pages at 9x12 size; and is now 24 pages at that size with an update on the Association's history, presidents, reunions, and monument dedication; bios of 42 KIA's; pictures of 36 KIA's; bios of 42 veterans; 23 Silver Star Citations not previously reported; and a listing of 35 books of 103d veterans' experiences. The B/D approved the printing and distribution of a 12 page (9x12) color document of the History of the 103rd Monument to all WW II libraries, museums, and on request. The B/D voted to increase the Association's dues for 2010 to \$25/year. The Association voted to go to San Antonio, TX for our 2010 reunion.

Reprint of the Trail of the Cactus The reprint of the "Trail" (Second Edition of the "Trail" with the Supplement) began on Oct 2; however, it was not a high priority item for the publisher, and the economic recession has had a decided adverse impact on that business, and we did NOT receive notice of delivery date from the publisher until Nov 17. On that date, we were advised that all printed and bound copies would be received in Medway, MA by Nov 30! Note: I decided, that with Bob French and Francine Veilleux's significant assistance, I could save time and expense in mailing and get it in the mail by December 7. PLEASE NOTE: YOU MUST SEND US YOUR CHECK, \$56. FOR EACH COPY, which includes shipping and handling fee. (Send that payment to our Secretary, Gloria McLeod) Our plan is that your order will be shipped by December 7, provided you have already sent your payment or we receive it by December 1st. Also, NOTE: the SUPPLEMENT ONLY is ready and will be \$10, each + \$2 mailing cost for up to 5 copies sent to the same address and 6 or more copies sent to same address will be \$4 total mailing cost. The 103d Association is planning to provide copies of the "Trail" to various WW II Libraries (or display museums) free on the basis that the book is available for reference at nominal membership or admission fees. At present, we have six libraries on our list, and the next NFTCP (our ASSN newsletter) will provide a list w/address of these institutions. Please send us your recommendation if you have such a place to suggest. (The libraries so far are in Virginia, Florida, Indiana, Louisiana, & Oklahoma) The folks that produced the 103d Monument (The Texas WW II Historical Monument Fund Inc) have produced a 12 page 9x12 all-color history of their activities which culminated in the dedication of the 103d's Monument at the Travel Information Center on 1-35 at Gainesville, TX. The Association has printed this history in color and plans to send it to the same libraries that the "Trail" has been sent. By the way, we need the assistance of our members in identification of other libraries that focus on WW II history and artifacts (possibly, one in your geographical area). At this writing (Nov 25), I anticipate your receipt of this issue (Nov 2009) of the NFTCP #23 by Dec 15, and that we will have mailed out the reprint of the "Trail of the Cactus", which includes the Supplement, and also, we will have mailed out the Supplement (Only) to those who have ordered same.

News Continued on Page 2...

(continued from page 1)

103d Board of Direction Authorizes Attainment of All Division Morning Reports The B/D at its meeting in Nashville July 15 authorized the expenditure of funds (\$2500±) to acquire all morning reports of all division units throughout the period Jan '44 thru June '45 so that all details of personnel movements (in and out of each company size unit) may be tracked for historical identification of personnel assignments and casualty or other loss (out-movement) confirmation. In the process of researching personnel transactions, it has proved very desirable, in fact, in many cases absolutely necessary to determine dates of individual movements in and out of their unit of assignment. Since the morning report is the instrument to track these movements; it becomes necessary to acquire these documents by copy of the MR's stored at the records center in St Louis, MO. Zack Sigler, nephew and

namesake of one of our KIA Cactusmen, who has already provided tremendous support with his research, hopes to acquire all the remaining MR's during the first quarter of 2010. With the availability of this significant body of information, we will be able to track anybody and identify everyone who served in the 103d during the combat phase of WW II. (That is precisely why we have authorized the acquisition of the morning reports for the entire division for the 9 months prior and throughout the combat period.) There is no question, but, that the significant driving force for increased attendance, and intense activity at our reunions, is the keen interest in veteran's experiences and identification of individuals and dates of specific combat activity associated with the casualty peaks.

2010 Reunion The members voted to go to San Antonio, Texas in 2010, and we

were able to secure the Holiday Inn on the Riverwalk for the period July 14 thru 17, 2010. Please wait until the February issue of our NFTP (#24) reaches you with the information for making reservations. At present, we have not made any of the detail plans for our reunion, only the dates and the hotel. San Antonio is a great city to visit and it is also a great retirement place for military retirees. I am sure you will enjoy San Antonio. By the way, reunion locations are always chosen at the previous reunion by membership vote at the annual business meeting. Sooo let's hear from those that haven't attended a reunion recently; would you attend if the reunion were in a more favorable location for you? Are any interested in a reunion in 2011 in the Dallas area so as to visit the 103d Monument? I would appreciate your input via email, telephone, or mail. Also, don't be reticent, if you want to discuss any other issue!

CACTUSMEN PLACE WREATH AT TOMB OF THE UNKNOWN



Three Cactusmen (L to R) Richard T Ball (B/382 FA), Michael F Toohig (B/411), and R. Bruce Hughes (HqCo/409) at Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery Nov 12, 2009 (Can't you recognize these men?)

The 103d ID Association continued the 20+ year tradition of presenting a wreath at Arlington National Cemetery. As usual the men and their families had lunch at the Ft Meyer "O" Club following the ceremony. Also following tradition, Dick Ball placed the wreath on the following day at the grave of MG Anthony C. McAuliffe.

FLASH --- FLASH --- FLASH

**The "Trail Of The Cactus" is on the WAY!
As of Dec. 7 All books are IN THE MAIL!**

WHERE ARE WE (The 103d ASSOC) GOING NEXT ?

In order to evaluate where the Association might direct its activities in the near range future, we must first review the past accomplishments of the Association. During the first 38 years of activity (1965-2001), the veterans association of the 103d Infantry Division focused only on the reunions and bringing the veterans together. This was done in a very handsome fashion under President Harvey T. Ellsworth (HqCo3Bn409) and his wife, Betty and daughter Connie Gavitt until 1994 when Ray Menuey (HqCo3Bn409) became president, and Betty & Connie continued to manage the reunion operation and the membership roster. Incidentally, during the period 1980--95, the reunion process spawned numerous group trips back to France and Germany to visit our battle-grounds. Out of those activities, monuments were placed in three locations to commemorate the liberation of French towns and/or as memorials to those lost as a result of the combat activity. When Betty signaled her intention to resign in 2000, a more formal 103d Association was formed with by-laws and several elected officer positions, including representatives from all Division units. The 103d INF DIV WW II assumed the reins of the veterans organization in 2002, and also formed a separate organization: The Texas WW II Historical Monument Fund with only a Board of Directors with the mission to fund, plan and execute the construction of a monument to commemorate the service of those serving in the 103d Division during WW II. This latter organization was incorporated in Texas as non-profit in 2000 and both were presided over by B. Melton Wright (G/411) as president of both organizations. For the record, it should be mentioned, that Mel is one of the Division's "real" heroes in that he may be the only man in the division that received a direct promotion ("battlefield" to 2nd LT) from the rank of Pfc. (the vast majority receiving direct promotions were sergeants or above). Also, at the same time Mel received the award of the Silver Star. (refer to citation in Supplement for the TOTC [2009]).

The Association's Significant accomplishments Are As Follows:

1. The erection of three monuments in France as liberators and/or memorials to those died there.
 - a) Saulcy-sur-Meurthe in Alsace in 1989 by Co A 411th Inf Regt: Daniel T. MacMillan, Douglas H. Stellner, & John Wuensche (all A/411) (Memorial to KIA's)
 - b) Pfaffenhoffen in Alsace in 1991-Liberation of Region-Division in area 7 weeks- Harley Richardson (L/409) Chair, Joseph S. Edwards (B/928F), & Carl Reed (Red Cross Rep.)
 - c) Saint Die-des-Vosges in Alsace in 1992-Liberation of City - Richard E. Pearson (F/410) Chair, Joseph S. Edwards (B/928F), Willic J. Barrios (F/411), & Richard T. Ball (B/382F)

Note: Two additional plaques established as recorded later herein this newsletter.

2. The conversion of all 103d Infantry Division WW II Casualty reports to an electronic format and thence printed hard copy alphabetically, calendar date, or unit format for ready reference. This conversion greatly facilitates access to all casualty report information and provides instant access to casualty report details without more than one parameter of information. We know of no other unit having made this conversion. B. Melton Wright (G/411) of Houston, TX conceived the concept and managed the activities to successfully complete the conversion. Mel was assisted by Gloria McLeod (widow of Harry McLeod G/411), John Poole (C/409), Jim White (B/409), and Chan Rogers (G/409).
3. The most outstanding accomplishment of the 103d Association was the funding, construction, and dedication of the 103d Monument dedicated to the men and those killed-in-action (KIA's) during WW II. Furthermore, the placement of the monument at the Travel Info Center

on I - 35 was a significant factor in the enhancement of the visibility of the monument to the public and also adds to the effectiveness of the monument in reminding the public of the "greatest generation". For the record, Mel Wright and the Texas WW II Historical Monument Fund group implemented the creation of the monument from soliciting the funds to dedication; however, with the 103d Association's active support of the fund raising, including direct payments from the 103d Treasurer, brought in enough money to add the 5 panels with the names of the 847 KIA's to expand the memorial concept of the monument. It should be noted that this is the first war memorial to veterans privately funded by veterans in the US.

4. The 103d Association has reprinted its WW II history: "Trail of the Cactus", provided a Supplement to update its activities, and also included additional veteran biographies along with biographies of some of those Killed-in-Action.

While the above represent significant accomplishments, I now ask you, what is our next objective? Think about it. For openers, I suggest:

1. Library for storage of written materials (history, stories, documents, etc)
2. Museum-like facility for storage of artifacts
3. 103d Web Site (Note: The one that exists, is not managed by the 103d)

Our reunions will continue, so as to provide the synergism to conduct the research to address our accomplishments. More next issue.

HONOR ROLL



103d INF DIV ASSN of WW II
(Deceased reported after NFTCP issue No 22)

| | |
|-------------------------|---------------|
| Anderson, Arthur G. | 411 Co I |
| Brackett, Donald L. | 411 Co I |
| Chandler, Ed | 928 FA Hq Bty |
| Christi, Donald A. | 411 Co A |
| Clifford, Richard W. | 409 Co B |
| Cushing, John O. | 410 Co A |
| Darson, John | 410 Co H |
| Dau, William A. | 384 FA Hq Bty |
| DiSerafino, Raymond F. | 409 Hq Co 1Bn |
| Eastman, John B. | 409 Co L |
| Frierson, Roy E. | 411 Co G |
| Furbee, Raymond H. | 409 Co C |
| Gafron, Edward | 328 Med Co B |
| Hampton, Harold E. | 409 Hq Co 2Bn |
| Harbin, Albert V. | 409 Co C |
| Hartwig, Milo | 411 Co E |
| Kilgore, Earl R. | 103 Rec |
| Kirchhoff, Robert | Unknown |
| Lake Jr., George | 103 Sig Co |
| Lancaster, Richard | 411 Co A |
| Laxen, Leonard A. | 409 Co K |
| Loeschen, Clifford J. | 382 FA Bty C |
| McCoy, Allen E. | 328 Eng Co A |
| Mulvey, Sr., William H. | 411 Can Co |
| Niewoehner, Norbert | 409 Hq Co 3Bn |
| Petricko, Edward J. | 409 Hq Co 2Bn |
| Reier, John C. | 409 Co I |
| Slifka, Robert | 410 Co F |
| Smith, Gene A. | 411 Co G |
| Strimple, Steve | 409 Co H |
| Thomas, Charles E. | 410 Co D |
| Wards, Ralph A. | 409 Co B |
| White, Jr., Edward Hill | 928 FA Bty C |
| Youngblood, William S. | 409 Co B |



OUR FLAG IS AT HALF STAFF IN THEIR HONOR

*(Flag photo courtesy of our deceased comrade Pierce Evans)
His website PAPAS WEB remains as a legacy*

Report known deaths to your Secretary Treasurer
Gloria McLeod
7618 Twin Hills Dr
Houston, TX 77071
gmacl@swbell.net
for recording into our Historical Records

NOTE

Wreath Ceremonies

Wreaths were laid at both the Gainesville, TX and Arlington National Cemetery sites in November, however, at press time details were not available for Gainesville and will be included in our next issue.

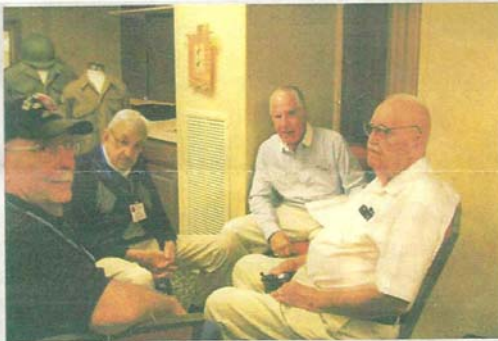
CACTUSMAN'S SON FINDS FATHER'S BUDDIES

As Dave Gilbert was searching for relatives of men of I/410 who were killed-in-action, he found Michael F. Passaro, of Short Hills, NJ, only son of Francis M. Passaro, killed in the attack on Uhrwiller, Alsace 15 Mar '45. When Michael arrived at our Nashville Reunion, he met Arnold Mazzulo, a former squad leader in Lt Passaro's platoon and Audrey R. Walters, of El Paso, TX,

former first sergeant of Company I. Both men had known the Lieutenant well in the 3 months they had served together, Lt Passaro, having been assigned as a replacement platoon leader in Dec '44. 15 Mar 45 was the first attack after a long six weeks of defensive action around Pfaffenhoffen in Alsace. In an event on the morning of the first attack, Lt Passaro and 1stSgt Walters exchanged field jackets which suited

both men. As the third platoon was moving forward thru Uhrwiller, Lt Passaro was assessing where enemy machine-gun fire was coming from, he told Arnie which way to go as they came to a large church. The choice proved fatal to Lt Passaro as a German machine-gunner was covering his movement and killed him instantly. Lt Passaro's bio is in the Supplement.

First Sgt Walters brought 2Lt Passaro's field jacket with him to Nashville and after 64 years gave the jacket to the Lt's son, Michael. It was great that the reunion afforded the forum for this event to take place. Michael was not aware that such events were taking place and that he would ever be able to meet men his father soldiered with.



(LtoR) John Vidrind, nephew and namesake of deceased I/410 veteran; Arnie Marzullo, 3d Platoon Squad Ldr; Michael Passaro, son of 3d Platoon Ldr, Lt Francis Passaro; and First Sgt Audrey Walters of I/410. Great conversation here!

William Krul of Mt Clemens, MI came to Nashville to find any members of A/409 who knew his father, S/Sgt William J. Krul of Hamtramck, MI, KIA Dec 19, '44 in the Siegfried Line near Bollenborn, Germany. Unfortunately none were there. We have sent Bill addresses of all A/409 veterans on our roster.



William and Marlene Krul



Lunch on the Centennial Jackson Showboat



103d B/D Meeting
John Peole, Jim Linger, Dick Ball, Rich French, Luan Martin, Michael Toolbig, Cameron Rogers, James White, Robert Leslie



General Meeting



Roy Schwemmler, Dan Hunt, Roger Hunt, Gervase Sellwank



Welcome Dinner Buffet

Bob French, Francine Veilleux, Simon Goughos, Mancee Uptka



Welcome Dinner

Ken Johns, Active Reservist Asst G to 103d Support Cnd, Ken Johns's son-in-law, CPT Nick Catechis, Family Liaison



Zack and Noreen Slight



103d Division Historical Display

Warren and Duff Higgins



Henry's Room

John Veltman

103d INFANTRY DIVISION WWII ASSOCIATION - 2009 REUNION - NASHVILLE



Banquet Dinner
Richard Ball, Mike and Barbara Toobig, Alan and Lavonne Martin, Carole and Larry Martin



Banquet Dinner
Gary Ahari, Steve Abbott, Mary Karkut, Ed Karkut, Jr., Pat Ziesemer, Ann Karkut, Sam Karkut



Banquet Dinner
Roger Anderson, Robert Lashie, Tom and Chip Miller



Banquet Dinner
Arthur and Marie Curran, Jeff Hunt, Shirley and Charles Forgy, Grant Neufen



Banquet Dinner
Ronald Condreva, Edward Condreva, Jessie Neill, Nick Medas, Tom Pichla, Harold Poshis



Banquet Dinner
Pat Hite, Carolyn and Fred Kent, Robert Rathgeber, Brian Carr



Banquet Dinner
Roy and Janet Morgan, Joe and Betty Bell, Patricia and Robert Williams



Banquet Dinner
Anthony and Betty Cava, Arnold Marzillo, Robert Quinn, Marie and Arthur Curran



Banquet Dinner
Vicky O'Rourke, Ray Schwanz, Michael Romano, Cathy Rhew, Teresa Musick, Dennis O'Rourke, Gerwase Schwetzl, Frank Romano, Florence and Junior Musick

103d INFANTRY DIVISION WWII ASSOCIATION - 2009 REUNION - NASHVILLE

103d Infantry Division Establishes Two Additional Memorials in Alsace

Co I 410th Infantry Regiment has placed two memorials in two towns of Alsace to commemorate their liberation in WW II, honor their fallen comrades who died during the war, and specifically names those men killed-in-action at each town. Each memorial plaque was placed on a wall at a large church edifice at each town with a group of French and American veterans in attendance in May of 1994. No previous announcement of this activity has been made or formally presented to the 103d Division Association until now, and on that basis, this announcement should have been placed in the Supplement with the reprint of the *Trail of the Cactus* (2009). In lieu of that, it is now being included as an insert in the *TOTC* as mailed, and as an item in NFTCP #23. The reader will note that the other monuments placed by the 103d Division post WW II in Alsace have been described in the *TOTC* and include: Saulcy-sur-Meurthe-'89, Pfaffenhoffen-'91, and St Die-des-Vosges-'92

Robert D. Quinn (I/410) of Westlake, OH was a BAR man in the second platoon of Company I, who survived the war intact, and has done extensive research and writing concerning the men of Company I. After his research, he single handedly made all the arrangements, including the preparation of the plaques for the memorials, although he turned the dedication over to others. The first was in the town of Hohwarth (11 km northwest of Selestat) at St Gilles Church, dedicated May 20, 1994. The second was in the town of Uhrwiller (5 km north of Pfaffenhoffen) at the Evangelical Lutheran Church, dedicated May 21, 1994. This plaque is on the churchyard wall next to the village's own plaques for its 1914-18 and 1939-45 war dead. Arnold Marzullo (I/410) of Chicago, IL and Carrol C. Cook (I/410) of Austin, TX went to France to be present at both dedication ceremonies which were well attended by the locals with a large French military presence.

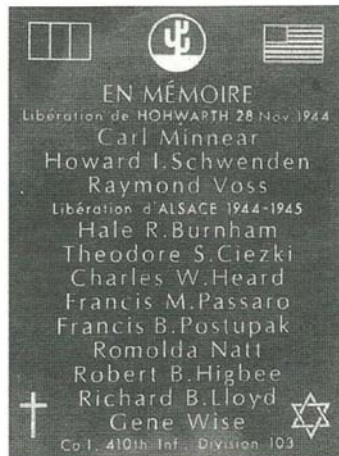
Bob Quinn had the plaques made in Akron (near-by his home), OH and he had them shipped direct to the respective towns in France courtesy of Lufthansa, the German National Airline, who, interestingly, donated that service. Reference should be made to the book Bob Quinn has written about the men of Company I 410th Infantry Regiment. (Reference last page of Supplement)

David E. Gilbert, son-in-law of I Co/410 veteran Earl G.C. Hayes, has done extensive research to obtain biographicals of all the KIA's of I Co and these are now included in the Supplement for the *TOTC*. It was in this process, that two sons of men killed-in-action (KIA) were found: 2Lt Francis M. Passaro (I/410) and S/Sgt William J. Krul (A/409), both of whom came to the recent reunion in Nashville, TN to find and talk to any veterans who knew their fathers.

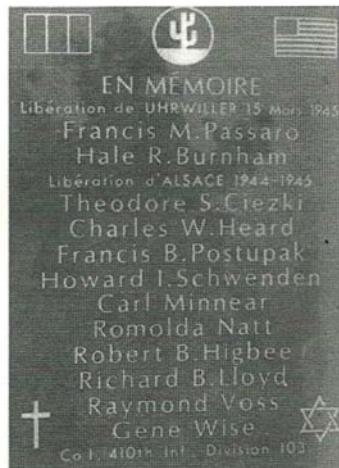
Robert D. Quinn (I/410) of Westlake, OH with plaque in 1994



PLAQUES ERECTED BY Co I 410th INF REGT IN TWO ALSACIAN TOWNS IN 1994



Plaque Placed on Wall of St Giles Church in Hohwarth May 20, 1994. Plaque Commemorates 28 Nov '44 Liberation of Hohwarth and Honors Carl Minnear, Howard I. Schwenden, and Raymond Voss, Killed-in-Action In Hohwarth.



Plaque Placed on Wall of Lutheran Church in Uhrwiller May 21, 1994. Plaque Commemorates 15 March '45 Liberation of Uhrwiller and Honors Hale R. Burnham, Francis M. Passaro, and should have listed Robert E. Savory, Killed-in-Action in Uhrwiller.

Note: Robert E. Savory was severely wounded on 15 Mar 45 and died (DOW) 17 Mar 45 and this information was not available at the time the plaques were prepared.

103d DIVISION'S LITTLE KNOWN "AIR-WAR" ...continued

The 103d Division's Artillery had ten single engine aircraft primarily for observation and fire-control of artillery fire missions, as well as liaison and intelligence missions. These two-seat 65 hp Piper Cubs, while heavily dependant on the weather, were otherwise extremely effective as presented in this narrative authored by 1Lt Larry Genebach, one of the 10 liaison pilots (two each artillery battalion), who also performed as forward observers. This is the 2nd installment of Lt Genebach's WW II experiences, the first appeared in the previous issue of the NFTP (22) and ended with January '45.

On February 1st (the day I was promoted to 1st Lt), I cracked-up my plane up while attempting to take off from a narrow strip which was under water and with a strong cross wind blowing perpendicular to the strip. My Pilot's Log entry goes like this, "Attempted take-off on narrow strip with strong cross wind. Strip under water, was blown off strip into snow to left, turned back on strip and ran into water wheeling plane around to right, hit snow bank and nosed up almost turning over, but wind pushed tail back to prevent complete upset. Result: Smashed Prop, wing tip, front of engine, sheared off both ends of prop, bent oil sump back. Injuries: Head cut, minor." On the 2d of February, while flying the other ship in the Bn, I fired the 384th FA Bn (155mm) on three enemy tanks. We scored one direct hit, ricocheted two off a second tank and had no visible effect on the third tank. On February 10th, I got the unfortunate assignment of flying Col Brown, Division Arty Ex0, to inspect Bn positions from the air. "The day was one of those we all dread. The air was filled with turmoil and just bumpy as hell. Our Air Section Major (Preston) was running around inspecting everything and just generally sweating the arrival of the Colonel. I spent my time checking the radio and the plane. Of course, I have to add that we were

again on one of those one-way strips that Major Preston always seemed to be able to find. The planes were all parked along a road, under some trees and we would take off right from our position, straight down the side of a hill and into a valley. As soon as we got in the air, we had to bank left (left hand turn) and fly out down the valley. Upon the Colonel's arrival, and after the multitude of salutes, we got him into a parachute and then into the plane. A Cub plane wasn't suited for a man of his size or height. Where he put all of those legs, I'll never know. I took off and mused into the air at the extreme end of the strip and prayed all the way around that left bank. We finally got into the air and headed out over the Bn positions. As I stated prior, the air was rough and we were really bouncing around; up and down, snap, flip, level off, etc. We bounced for the entire hour. I felt sort of sorry for the Colonel because I was supposed to be used to this activity and it was bothering me. He finally decided he'd had enough and wanted to go back, so I flew back to the strip and landed. The Major was there to meet us and the Colonel got out and uttered these words for posterity: "Major, Sir, why didn't you inform me that this wasn't 'Field Grade Officers' weather?'" With that, he left and I never saw him at the air strip again, except for inspections. On the up side, the Air Section did receive some 'good publicity' from him as to how difficult it was to fly one of those "bucking wildcats" on a windy day. My little stay at Hattmatt (Alsace-France) is one of the most pleasant memories I have of the war. We were all taken into homes by the French people and the family I stayed with was wonderful. I could go on for thousands of words about all that I did, saw and remember about those days. Suffice it to say that these days were as pleasant as the war would allow. On March 15th, 1945, the 7th Army began an attack that carried

them through to the end of the War (Operation Undertone). It was during this attack that I learned quite a few lessons, as did all Artillery Observers. At 0600, the Division Artillery started firing preparation for the attack. Shell after shell and smoke shell after smoke shell was fired. There was hardly any wind this day and the smoke hung over the area like a huge cloud. It was impossible for us in the air to see anything that was going on under this smoke concentration. All we were able to do was watch the rear of the enemy territory for any movement. Our Infantry finally moved up far enough so that German elements started appearing from under the smoke. It was only then that I could help the doughboys. Our first fire mission in the attack was called to us from the FO of the 409th Regiment. One company was being held up by two machine guns that were someplace in a small town ahead. Ground observation on the area was impossible, so I started a systematic search with shells through the town. I knew the general location of the guns so I adjusted fire on that whole sector of the city. Mission accomplished! All morning and afternoon I called - - they fired; horse-drawn artillery moving in the rear, an infantry company moving towards the front and two different artillery positions, one with 4 guns and one with 6 guns. It was here that I discovered that the Germans were transporting troops to the front under cover of the Red Cross. They were using ambulances to carry fresh troops to forward positions.

On the 16th, 17th, 18th and 19th flew for a Task Force (Cactus) that was moving out to Climbach. We dropped Blood Plasma to the Task Force Commander, relayed radio messages to Division, fired on two enemy tanks and troops and flew horsefly missions for the P-47s. On the 20th, we got a couple holes shot into the plane from machine

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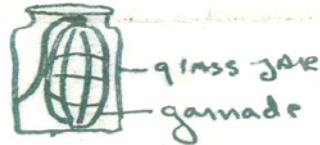
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gun fire. On the 22nd of March, we fired on eight vehicles and destroyed all eight. We also fired on four more vehicles with good effect along with troops moving through a valley. On the 23, I flew out to meet Patton's Third Army at Landau. My Log entry for those two days reads as follows: "The Germans are caught in a trap between Patton's Third Army and the 7th Army. There is a great state of confusion and Germans are all trying to escape out through one narrow valley. It was mass slaughter today as we shot up column after column on the road. Sixty to eighty vehicles were destroyed or disabled by the Air Sections. P-47s were continually bombing all day. A mass scramble is on." During this attack, our airstrip moved as much as twice a day. We followed

a general route from Kirrwiller to Gundershoffen to Woerth, to Lembach and then Wissembourg. On the 23 and 24th things got so bad that we were flying low over enemy troops firing 45 pistols and Thompson Sub's out the window of the plane. We had homemade bombs that we dropped whenever we could find a stable target. These bombs were made with hand grenades and glass jars. The jars had to have a mouth large enough to admit the grenade, but still not too large to allow the handle on the grenade to spring off after the pin was pulled. The bomb worked on the principle that the pin was pulled from the grenade and then inserted into the glass jar. The sides of the jar would keep the handle in place. This device was then dropped from the plane and when the jar hit the ground, it would

break and the handle would fly off and activate the grenade.

The war wasn't over yet, but the fight and spirit of the Germans was broken. From Wissembourg we moved to Eschbach and then to Mannheim, Germany where we crossed the Rhine River on April 7, 1945. The War ended 1 month later. VE DAY!! Note by Editor: One corps of the 7th Army was in essence "pinched out" crossing the Rhine as the French First Army had to be given a mission in "taking" Germany. Late in April the 103d was given a priority mission to ASAP attack into Austria and link-up with the 5th Army driving north from Italy.



'Author' 1Lt. Larry Genebach

'Author' with his weapon of choice

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