

# News From The Cactus Patch

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## 103d INF DIV WW II



QUARTERLY

NOVEMBER 2002

ISSUE NO 3

### PRESIDENTS REPORT

**OFFICERS FOR 2003:** In accordance with the original search committee approved structure and the recommendations of your board of directors the following changes were approved by the membership at the 2002 reunion to be effective 01 January 2003: Officers, excluding the positions of the executive secretary and editor of The Cactus Patch, will graduate upward. ie: Earl Clemmons will become President and Doug Stellner will become Vice President and G.M. etc Dick Ball, (from the Board of Directors), was recommended and approved to be the new Asst. Sec & Treasurer, and J. D. Shuttleworth was recommended and approved to fill Dick Balls position on the Board of Directors. We welcome both of these dedicated members to their new assignments.



Dick Ball



J. D. Shuttleworth

**REUNION FOR 2003:** The Board of Directors recommended four locations for the next years meeting and the membership voted that it be held in Las Vegas. The hotel has yet to be selected. Because of the better rates we will probably schedule it between Monday and Friday sometime in September. This is subject to negotiation.

**UNIT REUNIONS:** The following units reserved their own hospitality rooms and held their special mini reunions. We encourage unit reunions and hope and pray that each unit will try to schedule their meetings to be with all their comrades at and in support of their Division Association. Regardless of when they are held please give our editor some details so that it may be included in this publication. 409 Co B, 409 Co C, 410 Co C, 410 Co M, 411 Co A, 411 Co E, 410 Co F and 411 Co G.

**MY SINCERE THANKS** are extended to all those fine people and organizations that made this special event possible. The cities of Addison and Gainesville, VFW Post 1922 at Gainesville, NTS at Denton, The Marriott Quorum Hotel Staff, and those great Tap Dancers The Class Act.

**THE CITY OF ADDISON** contributed approximately \$5,000.00 to our Monument Fund. We salute them for their support.

WITH HONOR AND RESPECT

*B. Melton Wright*

## HONOR ROLL

(Deceased reported after Dallas 2002 Reunion)

Pitts, Russell A.	409 Co G
Bedwell, James D.	410 Hq Co
Hansen, Robert D.	409 Co G
Otte, Edgar J.	Unknown
Risovi, Victor	Unknown
Cook, Franklin	410 Co G
Heckel, B. H.	409 Co K
Beyer, George L.	103 Rec
Cerretani, James A.	409 Hq Co 3 <sup>rd</sup> Bn
Howell, Eugene	409 Hq Co 3 <sup>rd</sup> Bn
Wellman, James	409 Co B

### WHY DO I CRY NOW

(by Jeanne, Daughter of Gordon Smith)

Why do I cry now?  
It was so long ago!  
I write of a war

About which I don't know  
Boys become men  
As they head into battle  
What is the sound  
Of them testing their mettle?

Mortar fire exploding,  
A buddy goes down  
Soldier hearts are pounding  
As men hit the ground  
What to do now?  
They can't lie there all night  
Dig in, dig in!  
They're shouting in fright

The firing ends  
The silence surrounds  
They lift their heads up  
To see all around  
Later they go  
To collect those who are hurt  
What they find, too,  
Are their friends, dead in the dirt

Some made it home  
While others stayed and were buried  
"How did they die,"  
Their families queried  
They died the death of heroes  
Fighting a world war  
Those brave young men  
Who gave all, and much more

Why do I cry now?  
It was so long ago  
I sit here today  
And feel their glow  
These men I don't know  
Why do I bother?  
Because of those who came home  
One was my father

## BIBLE SAVED TOM STAGG



(LtoR) Jackson B. Davis, Judge Tom Stagg and Marty Stroud



Toms Bible

Our member Judge Tom Stagg of 411 Co E and 411 Co G and former Senator Jackson B. Davis were honored at the 25 November 2001 Shreveport Bar Associations Veterans Recognition Program. Mike Stroud is chairman of the SBA Military Affairs Committee.

The pocket size New Testament carried near his heart stopped a bullet and saved Toms life. Stagg said that it was the last time he got mad. "What should I be mad about? I should be in the cemetery, but I got 35 more years."

He brought the New Testament and wore his original U. S. Army uniform with decorations including a Purple Heart with oak leaf cluster. He also wore his dogtags and an Army issued Bolivia watch. He carried his draft card encased in plastic and a fold-up can opener that was used to open K Rations claiming that without it you didn't eat

Marty Stroud said that especially in World War II battles were fought and won by citizen soldiers. "They didn't want to be there, but they went; fought in mud, rain, heat and cold." "Many died at a young age and those who survived remember the horrors; We owe them a debt of gratitude."

## POW ROSTER

Some History records show that we had only 35 men captured. We know this to be far from correct. Our research to date list the following. If you know of others please notify your President Mel Wright so that we may establish a more accurate historical record. We thank you for your support.

Alvarado, Joe	TX	409 Co B	Kazmierski, Edward	409 Co B
Anderson, Clyde K.	NC	409 Co B	Koller, Carl J.	IL 409 Co B
Aronowitz, Bernard	NV	409 Co B	Labombarde, Phillip	NH 409 Co B
Bancroft, John	CA	411 Co L	Laughlin, Robert M.	NY 409 Co B
Bardagjy, Andrew	TX	411 Co L	McGhee, Ed	TX 409 Co B
Bealor, Paul J.	PA	411 Co L	Meinze, Albert K.	KY 409 Co B
Benioff, Harold L.	NY	411 Co G	Milosek, Ray	MI 409 Co B
Boesch, Harry	NE	409 Co B	Moore, William	TX 409 Co B
Bohnbeck, Robert		409 Co B	Morgan, Marion B.	SC 409 Co B
Bookout, Billy	MO	409 CO C	Murphy, Robert	409 Co B
Bowe, Edwin E.	CA	409 Co B	Murray, Charles R.	SC 410 Hq 2nd Bn
Boyak		411 Co L	Napoli, Frank	CO 411 Co L
Bragagnini, Bruno	MI	409 Co B	Neff, Robert R.	FL 409 Co B
Bridges, William C.	TX	411 Co L	Neumeister, Carlton F.	MN 409 Co B
Brooks, Ellsworth B.	MI	409 Co C	Newcomb	411 Co L
Buckhana, Lawrence	IL	411 Co L	Nixon, Harry W.	TX 409 Co B
Capone		411 Co L	Painter, Hollis	409 Co B
Carter, Don E.	MO	409 Co B	Park, Ralph	409 Co B
Chmielewski, Stanley	IL	411 Co L	Poticha, Carl	IL 409 Co B
Coleman, Jack C.		409 Co B	Pugh, Robert L.	IN 409 Co B
Coles, Fr. Edward P.	LA	411 Co L	Randolph Jr., George A.	TX 411 Co G
Cox, James	NY	409 Co B	Reece, Hayward J.	GA 409 Co C
Davis George J.	NY	409 Co C	Riser, Dana F.	CA 409 Co B
Dempsey, Michael A.	SC	409 Co B	Roberts, William	409 Co B
Dillard, Leslie	MI	409 Co B	Rodenberg, Francis E.	IA 409 Co C
Dow, Robert E.		409 Co B	Rubin, Leroy	CT 409 Co C
Drakhucz, John	FL	409 Co B	Ruhmann, Clarence M.	MI 409 Co C
Dusek, Charles J.	WA	409 Co B	Schneider, John W.	TX 409 Co B
Ecenrode, Bob	PA	409 Co B	Schreckengost, Harold E.	IA 409 Co B
Enzor, James A.	IN	409 Co B	Smith, Bob	411 Co L
Erickson, Carl F.	MN	409 Co B	Steinmann, Ralph H.	TX 409 Co B
Feldman		411 Co L	Stephenson, Louis	TX 409 Co B
Gaines	AR	409 Co B	Stiles, Loren H.	TX 409 Co B
Garner, Lewis	FL	411 Co L	Swope, Clarence	409 Co B
Gervais, James B.	AR	409 Co C	Trantow, Merlin W.	WI 409 Co C
Glanz, Ron	FL	409 Co B	True, George E.	CT 409 Co B
Guilkey, Roland	AZ	409 Co B	Varn	411 Co L
Guntzviller, Robert	MI	411 Co L	Wellman, James G.	LA 409 Co C
Gustafson, Donald B.	CA	409 Co B	Whitehead, James F.	409 Co B
Harriman		411 Co L	Winter, William E.	409 Co B
Hray, John	IL	411 Co L	Woolen, William	CA 409 Co B
Jackson, Orville	IA	409 Co B	Youngblood, William S.	NC 409 Co B
Johnston, Richard F.	MI	409 Co B		

# WANTED

We need correct address data on the following members. Two NEWS FROM THE CACTUS PATCH mailings were made to the listed addresses and both have been returned. If you have or can locate accurate data on them please notify your president Mel Wright. Include phone and e-mail data if available. Your response to our previous lost member list provided us corrected data for some 33 members. We appreciate your support.

	Last name	First Nm & MI	Address	City	ST	Zip	Unit	Phone
1	Addington	George	9938 210th Ave.	Reed City	MI	49677	411 Co G Med	616 832 5483
2	Bailey	Robert D.	1426 Cedar River Dr. Box 201	Waverly	IA	50677	411 Co L	319 352 4690
3	Ballanger	Joe	1286 Discover St.	San Marcus	CA	92064	411 Co B	
4	Beltramo	C. N.	10938 Heino Rd.	Angora	MN	55703	409 Co G	218 254 2577
5	Boisineau	John V.	744 N. McMahr Rd.	San Marcos	CA	92069	411	760 744 5446
6	Brackett	Donald	12889 W. 3 Mile Rd.	Hersey	MI	49639	411 Co I	231 832 2270
7	Buch	Guerdon	245 W. Madison St.	Platteville	WI	53818	410 AT	608 348 8822
8	Burkart	Eugene	7710 W. Foster	Chicago	IL	60656	410 Co K	
9	Burney	H. S.	304 Wallace Circle	Midland	TX	79707	Unknown	915 689 2036
10	Carson	Eugene J.	2111 Jefferson Davis Hwy.	Arlington	VA	22202	411 Co B	
11	Christopher	K.	1379 Andrew Dr.	St. Louis	MO	65775	409 AT	314-822-7259
12	Crowder	Loren E.	Cloud Nine Ranch P.O. Box 110	Caulfield	MO	65626	411 Co E	
13	Dalton	Lyman	1 Yown Rd.	Tanglewood	SC	29611	411 Co G	864 269 1434
14	Dansker	Sam	2103, 21st Ln.	Green Acres	FL	33483	411 Co D	
15	Dedolph	Jack	38 N. Main St.	Clintonville	WI	54929	384 FA Hq Bty	715-823-6612
16	Dempsey	Michael A.	2502 Shadowcreek Ct.	N. Charleston	SC	29406	409 Co B	843 569 1763
17	Echternach Jr.	Chester	716 24th St.	W. Des Moines	IA	50265	411 Co A	515 225 7005
18	Egan	Michael	1331 So. 120	West Allis	WI	53214	410 Co E	
19	Ellison	Russell	12431 S. Melvina Ave.	Palos Heights	IL	60463	409 Co L	
20	Finnagen	Pat	2 Elm Creek Dr. Apt. 315	Elmhurst	IL	60126	328 Med	309 662 749
21	Gallison	Charles	P.O. Box 692	Elk Rapids	MI	49629	411 Can Co	
22	Gill	Adrian	115 N. Main	Milton Freewater	OR	97862	410 Co A	
23	Gunsolley	Norman W.	2828 West Lincoln # 105	Anaheim	CA	92801	103 MP	714 220 9732
24	Hagmann	Rev. Leo C.	820 S. 4th Ave.	Albert Lea	MN	56007	384 FA	507-373-2157
25	Harts	William F.	Rt. 2 Box 180 (3616 N. Hwy. 133)	Rocky Point	NC	28457	103 QM	910-675-3340
26	Herrmann	Ben F.	Box 243	Naper	NE	68755	Unknown	402-832-5616
27	Hinsa	Paul H.	P. O. Box 344	Gwinn	MI	49841	410	906-346-3555
28	Johnston	Ronald E.	Rte. 1 Box 14	West Concord	MN	55985	Unknown	
29	Kaczmarek	Richard L.	1240. Cheney Hwy.	Titusville	FL	32780	Unknown	407 268 1744
30	Labadie	Emmett	205 Miller Dt. E.	Paw Paw	MI	49079	410 Hq Co 2nd Bn	616-657-4183
31	Lawrence	Franklin B.	204 Casitas Blvd.	Los Gatos	CA	95032	928 FA Bty B	
32	Little	George H.	218 N. 22nd St.	Fort Dodge	IA	50501	Unknown	515-576-3415
33	Loomis	Joseph L.	2-236 Brook Meadow LA-H3	Grandville	MI	49418	103 MP	
34	Lovell	William	Rt. 3 (1722 Cedar St.)	Tipton	IA	52772	Unknown	319-946-2641
35	Lupco	Ladd	3011 Hoffman Cir. N.E.	Warren	OH	44483	410 Co C	
36	Maddux	William V.	18697 Bernardo Trail Dr.	San Diego	CA	92198	410 Co L	
37	Magness	Stanley A.	R322 Box 175-2	Tyler	TX	75704	410 Co E	903 597 2679
38	Martinez	Thomas A.	166 High Clear Dr.	Stamford	CT	06905	Co G	203 322 9821
39	Mathison	Amiod	507, 11th St. S. Apt. 112	Fargo	ND	58103	410 AT	
40	McCabe	Edward J.	335 Pleasant St.	Rumford	RI	02916	410 Can Co	
41	Morris	David	6734 W. Fayetteville Rd.	Riverdale	GA	30296	410 Co C	
42	Mortensen	Howard A.	7151 Yark Ave. So.	Minneapolis	MI	55420	XXX 411	952-832-0927
43	Piotnick	Erwin P.	3231 Burn Brae Dr.	Dressher	PA	19025	411 Co A	
44	Priess	Harry C.	Box 1269	Brady	TX	76825	411 Reg Hq	915 597 7441
45	Regenbrecht	Douglas E.	870 Gilpin	Boulder	CO	80303	382 FA Bty B	
46	Rucker	Clyde	161 Gumtree Dr.	Rancho Cordova	CA	95670	Unknown	916-635-5575
47	Rucolo	Donn	5632 Pine Cone Rd.	La Crescenta	CA	91214	928 FA Bty B	
48	Sands	Raymond A.	867 E. 179th St.	Bronx	NY	10463	409 Co K	867-733-4732
49	Steinberg	Sam	11904 Anchorage Way	Boca Raton	FL	33428	410 Co C	561 482 6758
50	Sturgeon	Robert	1405 Stone Henge Way	Palm Harbor	FL	33563	411 Co E	
51	Thorpe	Leighton R.	Rd Chase La Box 412	Jamestown	NY	14702	411 Co G	716 484 0412
52	Thorsen	Howard L.	18913 N. 69th Ave.	Glendale	AZ	85308	103 QM	623-561-1485
53	Tuttle	Wilbert	Rte. 1 Box 103	Dorchester	SC	29437	411 Co G	
54	Wellington	Delore W.	776 Cannel Dr.	Turluck	CA	95380	411 Co A	
55	Zamen	Dave	1493 Kathleen Pl.	Englewood	FL	33533	Unknown	941-474-2858

## Reunion 2002

## Dallas, Texas

It was a great event. Cactus men with their ladies, their children and grandchildren, gathered to enjoy the annual fellowship meeting. The Marriott Quorum hotel in Addison (Dallas) was the assembly point, a spacious and well equipped hotel. Plenty of room for everyone, and free hospitality rooms. The hotel staff was super. Plus, the many extras (spa, dining room with excellent food at modest prices, and two swimming pools. WEDNESDAY. Registration kicked off with at 9:00 a.m. Then folding, swimming, exercising in a fully equipped recreation room (lots of machinery), and walking paths. Two buses, loaded with some 95 division people took off on sight-seeing tours around the city of Dallas.

During the early afternoon, the large central hospitality room was abuzz with "learning opportunities.: Army tales, you know. Harold and Elise Branton were active at the "Bulletin Board" along with Luke Martin. Luke with his book of memories scrap book (a beauty) and the Brantons, assisted by Bob and Betty Leslie and Louise Bush, were busy selling and displaying books, hats, decals, and generally having a ball.

At 3:00 p.m. the awaited WELCOME TO TEXAS PARTY got underway in the grand ballroom. Two hours of country western song and dance. Plus: a group of senior girls (over 50) put on a fancy tap-dancing routine that "took two shows", so to speak. So there the Cactus folks had it - plenty of refreshments, good company, and a good show. "AND THE BAND PLAYED ON!@", ringing out the old time favorites of the west.



### THE RANCH HANDS

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Vocal and Piano  
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www.angelfire.com/tx5/rwchitty

### THE DANCING GIRLS Class Act

At 103d INF DIV Reunion  
Addison, TX 2002

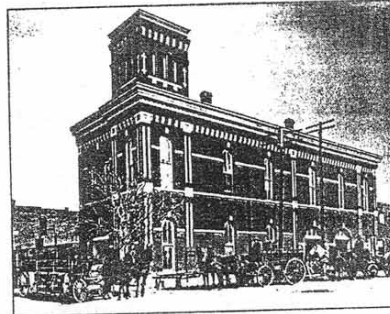


THURSDAY, was the day for golfing and for enjoyment of hotel fare. Bus tours were in favor. Primary attractions on the tours included: Kennedy Assassination Site; 6th floor Museum at the Texas School Book Depository; and the Dallas World Aquarium. On Thursday evening, several units took advantage of special dinner arrangements. Impromptu parties of friends were noted.

FRIDAY. Here was a big day. The trip to Gainesville on the 5 buses got on their way at approximately 9:00 a.m. Bob and Betty was one couple of 220 tourists to go visit the old 103d Division training site. 'Everything there looked about the same, kinda,' he said. "Except he added, "there were no tarpaper shacks around. In fact, the only things that everybody recognized were the main gate and the old water tower." Well, one has to recognize, is that all those things that we knew was a long time ago, as much as 58 years!

The big bonus to the Gainesville trip was the fine barbecue treat that the Cactus men and their ladies and guests enjoyed. The local VFW of Gainesville hosted the cook-out in the city park. It was great.

Still another point of high interest was the Morton Museum of Cooke County, there in Gainesville. Some military artifacts were there, and some 103d Division setups were noted. It was learned that the museum was being expanded soon through acquisition of new space at the present location and also, the availability of the old train station as a storage facility. That museum has potential for real growth.



**MORTON MUSEUM**

SATURDAY: Business Meetings, Unit Luncheons and finally the Saturday Night Banquet.

The Business Meeting opened with the Posting of the Colors. A beautiful prayer was given by Comrade Tom Stagg, of Shreveport, Louisiana. President Mel Wright gave a resume of events that had taken place since the 2001 Reunion in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Dick Pearson and Dick Ball spoke on Veterans Day Memorials and the laying of the 103D INF DIV ASSN wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns. That event is scheduled for 11:35 a.m. on 7 November 2002.

Perhaps the most exciting issue taken up in the business meeting was the selection of the 2003 Reunion City. When the vote was counted, Las Vegas, Nevada got the nod over other nominations.

Unit Luncheons. Several luncheon meetings were held immediately following the business meetings. 2nd Bn, 409th held its meeting and program in a separate dining room from the main flow, 53 folks attending. Bob Leslie, of New Castle, Pennsylvania was declared "CHOW HOUND of the YEAR" and was presented a real, engraved, U.S. Army Mess Kit, M1 for having served the battalion 25 years as the "Luncheon Manager". Bob's hilarious commentary about Army Mess Kits in general was soundly applauded. During the memorial service four of the ladies present were tendered a CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION each in honor of their late husbands, members of the battalion.



Luncheon Roger and Jean Craddock enjoying fellowship at the 2nd Bn, 409th Luncheon



Faye Hefner (left) and Elsa Cunningham receiving the Certificate of Appreciation each, in honor of their late husbands.

**2002 Reunion, continued:**

The grand finale was the Saturday night banquet. A beautiful dinner, indeed, with fine food, good friends, and a great band for dancing, or just to listen to. As a part of the program, Dick Ball presented, on behalf of the general membership, a Gorgeously engraved gavel, a Presidential Gavel, to President Mel Wright. Mel's response was warm and gracious.

A round of "good-byes until nest year in Las Vegas" concluded the wonderful reunion in Dallas, Texas.



"FIRST things FIRST" PRES. MEL WRIGHT tells his wife Thelma that he loves her and thanks her for her help during this past year. Grandson Mark looks on approving.



Some buddies posed for the camera. Left to right, Bob and Betty Leslie, Ray Salo, Dick Ball, and Harold and Elise Branton.



President Mel Wright is presented the President's Gavel by Dick Ball.



When with good friends you can be yourself. That's where the fun has to be.

**UNTIL WE MEET IN LAS VEGAS**

**Auf WIEDERSEHEN**

# BOOKS

## OF Historical Interest

A partial list of books recommended for our 103<sup>rd</sup> Members and their Descendants

- 103d INFANTRY DIVISION: The Trail of the Cactus** Author Harold M. Branton 409 Co G  
Turner Publishing Company, P.O. Box 3101, Paducah, KY 42002-3101, Tel: 302 443 0121. Revised Edition 1998-1999. Contains virtual day-to-day chronicle of the division and each of the regiments. \$50.00.
- BATTLE DEATHS of THE 103d INFANTRY DIVISION** Author B. Melton Wright  
B. Melton Wright, 9737 Warwana Rd., Houston, TX 77080. Mel is President of the TEXAS WW II HISTORICAL MONUMENT FUND that is planning to erect a monument at Gainesville TX honoring men of the 103d and their support units. The book lists 843 names, rank, ASN, unit, state, date of death and detailed data where buried in our foreign ABMC cemeteries. It includes data on each cemetery and other vital statistical information. \$25.00 plus \$2.00 S&H.
- AMERICA'S FORGOTTEN ARMY** Author Charles Whiting  
Martin's Paperbacks, St. Martin's Press, 175 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10010. The true story of the U.S. Seventh Army in WW II - An unknown battle that changed history. 103d Inf Div cited; 411<sup>th</sup> Reg featured. Revisits the battles of Strasbourg, Sessenheim and Operation Nordwind. \$10.00
- CACTUS CARAVAN**  
103d Infantry Division, Camp Howze, Texas. 1942-1944. Softback, 65 pages of narrative and photos portraying the 103d Inf Div in training at Camp Howze.
- CRUSADE IN EUROPE** Author Dwight D. Eisenhower  
Doubleday, 1948, Garden City, NY. A general overview of WW II operations, Africa, Middle East, Europe. Out of Print. Check your Library.
- EISENHOWER AT WAR 1943-1945** Author David Eisenhower (grandson of Dwight D. Eisenhower)  
Random House 1986. General review of WW II operations in the ETO under the leadership of General Dwight Eisenhower, Supreme Allied Commander 1943-1945. Out of print. Check your Library.
- FROM BRUYERES TO BRENNER -The Combat Story of the Fighting 411<sup>th</sup>.** By Col. Donovan P. Yuell  
Col. Yuell was Regimental Commander. Printed in Innsbruck, Austria 1945. Colonel Yuell gives his sentiments of the actions of the 411<sup>th</sup> with obvious pride and modesty. He dedicates his commentary to the 135 Officers and 3221 Enlisted Men of the 411<sup>th</sup>, Heroes all. Available from the Editor Harold Branton, P.O. Box 77, Shongaloo, LA 71072: Price \$10.00.
- HISTORY OF THE 409<sup>th</sup> INFANTRY REGIMENT** Authors William East, William E. Gleason and Julius Urban  
(409 Co B) (409 Co K) (Reg S3)  
Headquarters, 409<sup>th</sup> Inf Reg, Innsbruck, Austria. Reprinted by Battery Press, P.O. Box 198885, Uptown Station, Nashville, TN, 37219. Phone 615 298 1401. A detailed presentation of the 409<sup>th</sup> from inception to war ending. \$35.00.
- INFANTRY: AN ORAL HISTORY OF A WW II AMERICAN INFANTRY BATTALION** Author Richard M. Stannard 410 Co G  
Twayne Publishing Company, 1993. Wartime experiences from members of 410 2<sup>nd</sup> Btn. Out of print. Check your Library.
- MY WW II AS I RECALL** Author Dr. Carl Reed  
Berkley Books, Circa 1999. Personal recollections of Dr. Reed's experiences as a volunteer Combat Red Cross representative with the 103d Inf. Div. in WW II. The book provides a view apart from the routine, illustrating the role of the Red Cross. Available from Dr. Carl Reed P.O. Box 47, North Hoosick, NY 12133, Telephone 518 686 5443.
- ORDER OF BATTLE, U.S. ARMY, WW II** Author Shelby Stanton  
Presidio Press, 31 Pamaron Way, Vovato, CA 94947, 1984. The indispensable resource book for chronicling the United States Armies participating in WW II. Essential for historians, general readers and students for understanding military organizations large and small. Currently out of print. Write to publisher or call 415 899 1081. Try Books-A-Million. Estimated Cost \$100.00.



## BOOKS

- REPORT AFTER ACTION, Story of the 103d Inf. Div.** Authors Ralph Mueller and Jerry Turk  
Innsbruck, Austria, Wagner's Universitatsbuchdruckeri (Wagner University Press) 1945. Reprinted and available from Battery Press, P.O. Box 198885, Uptown Station, Nashville, TN 37219. Phone 615 298 1401. An exciting story of the 103d Inf. Div. from its beginning to its end. Every Cactus man should have this book. Price \$40.00.
- RIVIERA TO THE RHINE** Authors Jeffrey J. Clarke and Robert Ross Smith  
Center of Military History, United States Army, Washington DC, 1993. Addresses the European Theater of Operations of WW II. A master work, worthy of any military library. A clear reporting of the 6<sup>th</sup> Army Group from Marseilles to the wars end (July 1944-May 1945). Covers operations of the 7<sup>th</sup> US and 1<sup>st</sup> French Armies in action, with the 103d Division and all Support Units.
- THE LAST OFFENSIVE WW II** Author Charles MacDonald  
Center of Military History, United States Army, Washington DC, 1973. An overview of the last major military operations, WW II, March to May 1945. Out of print. May be available through inter-library loan.
- THE OTHER BATTLE OF THE BULGE: OPERATION NORTHWIND** Author Charles Whiting  
Scarborough House Publishers, Chelsea, MI 48118-1990. This was the real battle that changed the direction of the NAZI'S last fight. The 103d Inf. Div. was right in the middle of this really last hard fight prior to the Spring Offensive in March 1945. Men of the 103<sup>rd</sup> will find this book very informative. Estimated Cost \$30.00.
- THE SEVENTH UNITED STATES ARMY IN FRANCE AND GERMANY (2 Vol)**  
A great resource book report of Operations in France and Germany 1944-1945. Written by the U.S. Army. Reprinted by and available from Battery Press Inc., P.O. Box 198885, Uptown Station, Nashville, TN 37219, 1988. Follow Lt. Gen. Alexander M. Patch as he leads the famous 7<sup>th</sup> U.S. Army through WW II. Cost \$100.00.
- WHEN THE ODDS WERE EVEN** Vosges Mountains Campaign 1944-1945. Author Keith E. Bonn  
Presidio Press, 505 B San Marin Dr. Ste 300, Novato, CA 94945-1340. A likely comparison of the operating forces campaigning through the Vosges Mountains of Alsace and Lorraine, France, WW II. As the Cactus man reads, he reviews his own footsteps and is analyzed by the author for his training, stamina, proficiency and will to win. Estimated Cost \$20.00.
- WINTER STORM** War in Northern Alsace Nov. 1944-Mar 1945. Author Lise m. Pommois  
Turner Publishing Co., P.O. Box 3101, Paducah, KY 42002-3101. 1991. A French lady, English teacher in Alsace researches and writes intensely about war in her homeland, The Cactus man visits again the Moder River battle area in which he fought and survived.

**NOTE: If you can purchase from the Editor of NEWS FROM THE CACTUS PATCH profits earned (through discounts) will be donated to the TEXAS HISTORICAL MONUMENT FUND that is planning to erect a monument honoring men of the 103d INF DIV and their SUPPORT UNITS.**

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**My Father**  
John J. Ryan, PFC

My father was wounded overseas in November of 1944 while serving in Company E of the Cactus Divisions 409 Regiment. The permanent effects were obvious to both family members and strangers: a limp which was anything but slight, a left leg far shorter from the right due to shattered bones in his pelvis and hip. A three-inch lift in the heel of one shoe produced some degree of compensation for the difference.

As young boys, my brothers and I would inadvertently stare at the huge, crater-like divots that began just below his waist and continued down to mid-thigh. Many men in our neighborhood carried wartime scars, both detectable and hidden, because ours was a community of children whose fathers and mothers had served this country in World War II. Yet for the all the physical evidence that daily served to remind my siblings of our dad's wartime past, that precise past was a subject never touched upon by any of us.

We were told no stories, no details. Whatever my father had experienced that November night in France was kept preserved in a very private room for which he alone possessed a key. So unquestioned was our innate respect that we never intruded into the place so well guarded within his own soldier's heart.

The one exception to this came in late November of 1964, and only by his invitation. I remember hearing his approach outside the bedroom where my brothers and I were supposed to be sleeping. My dad opened the door slightly and took one step into our room. He was a big man, and from my top bunk I could see his face and shoulders half shadowed by the hall light. We rightfully expected to be scolded for not being asleep, but instead he just looked at each of us quietly without saying a word. He waited a moment, and than spoke very softly.

"Say a prayer tonight for all the fellows that didn't come home like I did. Twenty years ago tonight I got hurt."

He had a habit of lowering his chin to his chest before speaking about an issue whose importance was high. His chin dropped, and he continues. "Just say a Hail Mary for all those fellows who didn't get my chance." He left, the hall light went out, and I listened to his footsteps descending the stairs. That was the one time that he ever referenced his wounds or his war.

A door to his past was opened a crack on that twentieth night of remembrance, and just as it had so quietly been opened, it likewise swung closed. He died in 1986, and I still taste his loss as if the news were given to me only moments ago.

At the age of fifty-one, I Cannot think of him without an instant tightness in my throat and a concurring mist filtering my vision. By some combined act of divine and cosmic grace, he did survive that November night outside St. Die, and through that extension of his own fife thus provided me with life as well.

All of us whose parents endured that time and its incalculable tolls owe daily thanks to them and those comrades left forever in French and German earth. I urge all sons and daughters of the veterans who served in the regiments and attached units of the 103d Division to support this honorable body by becoming members of its Association. I would also encourage any of those same daughters and sons to attend the Annual Reunion that will be held in Las Vegas this coming year in September 2003. By doing so you would achieve two things: the personal display of a rightful act of respect to the surviving members of the 103d whom you would meet, and a chance to open an old door just enough to glimpse a patch forest in Germany or France and stand beside the men who were our fathers.

Respectfully  
Dennis Ryan



John J. Ryan Co E, 409th INF  
with sons Dennis and Jack - 1967



FROM THE; EDITOR: The Odyssey of a Reinforcement Nee Replacement.

General Marshall's planners foresaw the need for personnel replacements long before the shooting commenced in WW II. General Eisenhower placed requisitions for replacements well in advance of D-Day (6 June 1914).

Accordingly, while established divisions were training (such as the 103d) from 1941 onward, many IRTCs (Infantry Replacement Training Centers) were built in preparation of the draft. Thousands of young men were called to duty and sent to those IRTCs for basic training, usually for 13 weeks.

Following completion of basic, the new soldiers were given a furlough home. Afterwards, they were assigned as fillers to standing divisions, or placed as casuals in a moving "replacement pipeline". Hundreds of officers were likewise assigned, or moved.

Casuals (meaning unassigned to any existing unit) were shipped in packets of 200 or less from a point of embarkation in the United States. Camp Kilmer, New Jersey and Camp Shanks come to mind. The overseas destination in Europe was usually Great Britain. There they were received in what came to be called "Replacement Companies". Replacements were then fed to the mainland Europe, for example France, to another Replacement Company, then to another and another - by way of trucks, buses, and trains. As needed, they were finally packaged to the needy fighting division who were happy indeed to see "reinforcements" coming.

The anxiety of virtually constant uncomfortable travel, poor messing schedules, limited medical care, and wondering the while as to what unit or division they would be eventually assigned, was in all an exhausting experience. At last, however, the long traveled reinforcement (the new name for replacement; sounds more positive) arrived "at home" to his permanent unit. At least there was some peace of mind, and the old timers were happy, too.

Old Timers, thank heaven for new reinforcements.

FINALLY: The GI Mail System in the ETO

Did you ever wonder, really, just how those letters from Mama and Dad in Peoria got to your grubby hands in that fox hole in France, Germany or Austria? Ok, OK from your wife or sweetheart if you insist. When I ask, I always get a gather foggy answer. SO - do we have a Mail Clerk out there who would share with us the details of that Wonderful, Wonderful operation? If so, please come forth with a story for us. Write: Harold Branton, P.O. Box 77, Shongaloo, LA 71072.  
Tel: 318-846-2687; email: HMBRANTON@Centurytel.net      Ye Ed

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