

87TH INFANTRY DIVISION

GOLDEN ACORN NEWS



LEGACY EDITION



THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE 87TH INFANTRY DIVISION LEGACY ASSOCIATION

VOLUME 16 ■ ISSUE 4

DECEMBER 2025



2025

ARDENNES • RHINELAND • CENTRAL EUROPE
VETERANS OF GENERAL PATTON'S 3RD ARMY & THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE



[87th IDLA Facebook Page](#)



87th Infantry Division Legacy Association

66 likes • 116 followers



Professional dashboard

Edit

Advertise



87th Infantry Division Legacy Association

October 1 · 🌐

Today I visited the grave of Pfc Albert Billodeaux (HQ1-345) at the Orange Grove Cemetery in Lake Charles, LA. Billodeaux was killed on February 8, 1945 along the Siegfried Line. During a July visit to the National Personnel Records in St. Louis, I received a file detailing the repatriation of Private Billodeaux in 1949 after his great nephew, Tim Landry inquired if his gravestone was just a memorial or if he had been returned to the his home for burial.



87th Infantry Division Legacy Association

23h · 🌐

A CHRISTMAS PRAYER

Robert Welsh (87th Recon), 2015

Like it is a dream come true,
We come once more to worship You.
The God of Peace, Father of the Dove,
This is the season for Holy Love.
With mirth and joy we do pursue,
The fellowship of Christ with You.
As we offer prayers of thanks and cheers,
For all that's given throughout the years.
We raise our cups of happiness,
As we partake this meal please bless.
We thank you for the little boy,
That brings us all this love and joy.
Bless our Christmas meal and help us give,
As He did on the cross, but live.
Bless our Nutchackers, tried an true,
Who guard this ward along with you.
Faithful to the bitter end,
On these and Him, we do depend.
Oh God we give our praise to You,
Worldwide problems you pursue,
We always pray for self and joy,
But use us for You, please do employ.

Amen



2013 Reunion - Educational Forum - The POW Experience



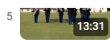
87th Infantry Division - World War II

66 subscribers



2013 Reunion

87th Infantry Division - World War II - 7 / 11



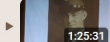
Basic Training Graduation
87th Infantry Division - World W...



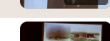
2013 Reunion - Monument
Dedication - Fort Benning...
87th Infantry Division - World W...



2013 Reunion - Educational
Forum - The POW Experience
87th Infantry Division - World W...



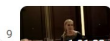
2013 Reunion - Educational
Forum - Thinking Outside the...
87th Infantry Division - World W...



2013 Reunion - Friday Night
Mixer



2013 Reunion - Friday Night
Mixer



2013 Reunion - Friday Night
Mixer

All

From 87th Infantry Division - World War II

Frank Caliendo on the Da



[87th IDLA YouTube Page](#)

Research Requests

One of the more interesting requests we have received since the last issue. If you have any knowledge or information, please let us know.

My father, PFC. George Higgins, Sr. was a driver with the 90th Division, 358th US Infantry Regiment (20th corps), 3rd Battalion, attached to a three-person reconnaissance team involved in a friendly fire incident with the 87th Division near Holzbach, Germany at about 10:30 AM local time on March 16, 1945. As cited in the 358th Infantry History of that day, "Enemy planes strafed 3rd Battalion killing two and wounding one. Planes had blue noses and red tails... Exact identity of these planes are unknown."

From available NARA documentation, the plane was later identified as American, speculating it was likely returning from a mission with the 87th Infantry Division, and mistakenly interpreted the jeep with covered trailer as captured by retreating Germans, rather than as an American reconnaissance unit gathering intelligence ahead of American troop movement.

I have been fortunate in corresponding with Lt. Jean Espinosa, the only survivor of the incident before he died. In his letter he said:

"We arrived that day, March 16, 1945, but I don't know exactly what time, in Hozenbach. The Village was completely destroyed and deserted. As it so often happens, and that is the reason for my memories, we met an escaped French prisoner in the ruins who was hiding in the hopes of seeing the allied armies. I took him inside the ruins of a house, if I dare say, with the American soldier. The driver of the Jeep, that is your father, stayed outside next to the vehicle. As we three were talking in the ruins, we heard the loud clattering of heavy shelling, and we found ourselves on the ground covered in a sea of blood. For my part, my right leg was completely dead. At the time, I didn't know it was a plane attack - I thought it was the German army attacking the village."

I am trying to nail down as many specifics as I can and understand Military communication during WWII occurred through various channels, and records would likely exist in several formats:

Signal Corps Message Logs: High-level communications between divisions were often sent via Signal Corps wire or radio and recorded in message logs. These logs (also called "message traffic") are stored as part of the unit records.

After-Action Reports (AARs) and Unit Journals: Both the 90th Division (specifically the 3rd Battalion, 358th Infantry Regiment) and the 87th Division would have generated daily unit journals and monthly AARs. The 90th ID's reports mention the incident, and the 87th ID's records (specifically those of the tactical air command element involved or the ground unit near the area) would likely contain a corresponding entry detailing their side of the event, perhaps as "unidentified vehicle engaged" or acknowledging the error.

Command Correspondence: Formal letters or memos between the commanding officers or their staffs regarding the investigation and casualty notification would also exist in the unit's general correspondence files.

Any guidance you may have is greatly appreciated,
George Higgins, Jr.

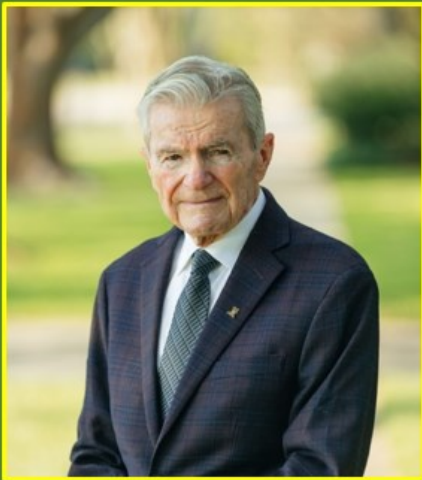


Necrology

*In Memory of
The 87th Veterans
Who lived their lives
In devotion to their families,
In service to their communities, and with true patriotism for
The United States of America*

No veterans have passed away to our knowledge since the last issue of the Golden Acorn News.

We recognize two of our Veterans and an Acornette who left us in 2025



Bob Welsh



Grace Sherk
Wife of Ervin Sherk



Arthur Kunin



Stalwart and Strong

We Remember. . .

Those Who Made The Ultimate Sacrifice

Killed in Action: **1154**

Died of Wounds: **141**



Luxembourg American Cemetery, Luxembourg

(Photo credit: ©ABMC)

We will continue to publish in chronological order information on those who were Killed in Action/Died of Wounds/Missing in Action with the 87th Infantry Division. Information was obtained from the records of Paul Nessman (F&M-347), www.findagrave.com, www.newspapers.com, www.ancestry.com, and 87th General Orders and History.

Compiled by Barbara Strang (daughter of Ted Anderson, B-912FA)

In the edition of the GAN, we take a detour from our day-by-day accounting of the fallen with a tribute to those who fell in the fighting in the Saar Valley between the 15th and 17th of December 1944.

We start with an account from the Regimental History of the 347th focused on the fighting around Hill 360 and the capture of Obergailbach.

The Second and Third Battalions attacked from Hills 356 and 360 respectively and jumped off at 0700. The First Battalion formed a Regimental reserve. The Anti-Tank Company moved into position to give Anti-Tank protection to the city of Woelfling. The Cannon Company gave direct support to the attacking battalions. The 912th Field Artillery Battalion was in direct support of the Regiment and the Tank Battalion assisted in the advance of the Regiment. C Company, 312th Engineer Battalion, continued to clear the road of mines and prepared to construct necessary bridges in the sector. The 549th Anti-Aircraft Battalion continued to protect bridges in the zone and provide Anti-Aircraft protection. C Company, 312th Medical Battalion, had set up and was operating a normal clearing station. The 346th Infantry on the right and the 320th Infantry of the 35th Division on the left made co-ordinate attacks at the same time. Thus it was that the first attack of the 347th Infantry in the Battle of Germany jumped off. During the day the men continued to make slow advances until 1600 when the advancing elements were pinned down. They succeeded in determining however that four companies of a German Grenadier Regiment were dug in along a line generally conforming to the German Border. The Regiment renewed the attack at 0700 on the morning of the 15th. The Second Battalion attacking to the northeast took LeSitters Hill, and was pinned down by enemy fire from tanks in the Le Mertzenwald Woods. The Third Battalion continued to attack in the same direction and was pinned down by small arms and artillery fire. The First Battalion moved forward to the high ground to the southwest of Obergailbach to fire in support of the advance of the Second and Third Battalions. During the night of 14th-15th of December the 761st Tank Battalion was released from attachment to the Regiment. It was here that Pfc. Harry Ellis, Company G, was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for extraordinary heroism in destroying two machine guns which were impeding the Company's advance. This action made it possible for the entire Battalion to move ahead. The Regiment had fought forward and was established on the high ground southwest of Obergailbach and was driving to take that city. However the 110 Panzer Grenadiers holding the high ground northeast of Obergailbach had the advantage of better observation and concealment and were able to stop the Regiment's advance in the afternoon. Again pushing off at 0700 on the 16th, the Second Battalion was successful in taking the Le Mertzenwald Woods and the Third Battalion captured the town of Obergailbach¹. The First Battalion moved forward and dug in on the high ground northwest of Obergailbach and secured this strategic position. For the first time the troops of the 347th received direct support from the American Air Force when a squadron of P-47's assisted their attack by strafing the enemy. Early in the morning of the 17th a report reached Regimental Headquarters that a German Patrol had infiltrated into the positions of Band C Companies and had virtually wiped them out. This report was immediately investigated and the First Battalion executive officer, Maj. A. W. Withers reported that the Patrol had penetrated and heavy losses had been suffered, but that the Companies were far from wiped out. During the ensuing day's attack all three Battalions moved forward. At 0930 the First Battalion reported that they had contacted units of the 320th Infantry in Gersheim. At 1230, Lieutenant Colonel Bodner commanding the Second Battalion, reported that his troops had cleared the woods due south of Walsheim and were continuing to move forward. At the same time Lieutenant Colonel Sutton, Commanding Officer of the Third Battalion reported that Land K Companies had taken the town of Walsheim. This was the first town in Germany to be captured by elements of the 87th Division. By 1600 the Second Battalion reported that their troops had passed through Walsheim and taken their objective at the edge of Buchwald Woods, and were establishing perimeter defense. By this time information gathered by the cre and IPW teams from prisoners and civilians indicated that although the opposing forces were well equipped, their morale was at a low ebb. Other intelligence reports showed the enemy to be using special troops such as engineers, Luftwaffe, and others as infantry. The Germans were also having to resort to harsh measures to prevent their own troops from deserting. All elements of the 347th were organized in position and prepared to continue their advance into Germany on the morning of the 18th when word was received from the Commanding General to sit tight until further orders. The message directed the front line units to consolidate their present positions, readjust so as to improve defenses, and to make available a reserve for counterattack. Units were ordered to hold all advance positions then occupied. A rotation of Battalions was effected here, and the Regiment continued to hold these positions through the 22nd. During this period the 347th Infantry, receiving their baptism of fire, had continually advanced against the enemy through some of the heaviest resistance of the entire war, and had held all positions taken. They were the first to force an entry across the German border and the first to capture a town in this sector.

December 15, 1944

345th Infantry Regiment

Pfc. Crawford E. Handley — K-345
T/Sgt. James J. Hunt — K-345
Pfc. Frederick W. Lampe — K-345
Sgt. Paul A. deKowzan — L-345
S/Sgt. Howard E. Woodworth — L-345

346th Infantry Regiment

Pvt. John J. Waninger — A-346
Pvt. Harry L. Baer — B-346
Pfc. Leland C. Mitchell — B-346
Pfc. Robert R. Cook — C-346
Pvt. Frank J. Krug — G-346
Pfc. Clyde V. Owens — G-346
Pfc. Albert J. Falk — L-346
2nd Lt. Robert E. Condon — HQ1-346

347th Infantry Regiment

Pvt. William C. Campbell — C-347
T/4 Ralph R. Newkirk — MED-347
Pfc. Richard J. Bell — F-347
1st Lt. Edward J. Degan — F-347
S/Sgt. Ralph W. McArter — F-347
Pvt. Wilfred A. Paul — F-347
Pvt. Anthony Prinzivalli — F-347
Pvt. Steve Sekerak — F-347
Sgt. Norbert J. Spencer — F-347
Sgt. Ervin C. Weinberger — F-347
Pvt. Jesse A. White — F-347
Pfc. Marion A. Bryan — G-347
Pvt. Earl W. Pulley — G-347
Sgt. Earling C. Olson — K-347
Pfc. William G. Heyse — H-347
Pvt. Harold M. Jones, M-347

334th Field Artillery

Cpl. William C. Edwards, HQ-334FA
Pvt. Frank L. Hallenbeck, HQ-334FA
Pvt. Carl D. Harris, HQ-334FA
T/5 John R. Koniewicz, HQ-334FA
T/4 Thomas W. McCarthy, HQ-334FA

87th Reconnaissance

Cpt. John J. Cleary, Jr., 87REC

December 16, 1944

345th Infantry Regiment

Pfc. Albert Averkamp — A-345
S/Sgt. Francis B. Ferstl — A-345
Pvt. Harry Lubinger — A-345
Pfc. Brodie H. Ashby, Jr. — C-345
Pfc. Antillio Boff — C-345
Pvt. Richard L. Bolewski — C-345
Pfc. Donald J. Campbell — C-345
Pfc. Lawrence E. Goode — C-345
Pfc. Bobbie D. Gritz — C-345
Sgt. Henry W. Harrington — C-345
Pfc. Donald V. Malarcher — C-345
T/Sgt. Ralph R. Newman — C-345
Pfc. Willie G. Blankenship — D-345
Pfc. Raymond J. Comer, Jr. — G-345
Pvt. Lindsey A. Johnson — K-345
Sgt. Leonard M. Miller — L-345
Pfc. Louis F. Stein — L-345
1st Lt. Robert B. Campbell — M-345

346th Infantry Regiment

Sgt. Walter R. DeLong — A-346
S/Sgt. Marvin Kugler — A-346
Pfc. Thomas E. Brady — C-346
Pfc. Theodore B. Loesch — C-346

Pvt. Mack Hnatiuk — C-346

Pfc. Melvin E. Kalmeyer — C-346
Pfc. Hal J. Pearce — D-346
Sgt. Gilbert W. Parker — G-346
Pfc. John S. Potter — G-346
Pvt. Laurie M. Beck — K-346
Pvt. Hammie B. Clark — K-346
Pfc. Stewart F. Dickes — K-346
Pfc. Robert R. Dolan — K-346
Pfc. Everett C. Doran — K-346
S/Sgt. George M. Gosnell — K-346
Pvt. James Horton — K-346
Pfc. John H. Eck — L-346
Pvt. James E. Parker — L-346

347th Infantry Regiment

Pfc. Waldemar Dopierala — B-347
Earl D. House — B-347
Pfc. Eugene R. Bialk — C-347
Pvt. Otto Hackworth — C-347
Pvt. Charles Hengeveld — C-347
Sgt. Lyle H. Tilford — C-347
Pvt. Ernest G. Bjorg — E-347
Pvt. Joseph V. Capuana — E-347
S/Sgt. John H. Olstad — E-347
Pvt. Junior E. Austin — I-347
Pvt. Franklyn E. Canopy — K-347
S/Sgt. Thomas H. Langston — K-347
Pvt. Lester E. Noble — K-347
Pfc. David L. Leach — L-347
Pvt. Morris A. Loupe — L-347
Pvt. Ernest B. Sterka — L-347

Field Artillery
Pfc. Raymond J. Johnson — B-912FA
Cpl. David F. Neff, HQ-334FA

December 17, 1944

345th Infantry Regiment

Pfc. Patrick P. DiBari — C-345
 Pfc. Daniel Arbetman — E-345
 Pfc. Joseph M. Bouzas — F-345
 Captain Cecil D. Butler — F-345
 Pfc. Raymond L. Denton — F-345
 Sgt. John J. Graves — F-345
 Sgt. Edward H. Heitman — F-345
 Pvt. Alfred J. Iezzi — F-345
 S/Sgt. Robert G. Marshall — F-345
 Pvt. Julius H. Meyer — F-345
 S/Sgt. Kenneth B. Stack — F-345
 Pfc. Richard L. Vermilyea — F-345
 Pvt. Matthew A. Flisak — Med-345
 Pfc. Latt H. Shearin — H-345
 Pfc. William E. Richards — M-345

346th Infantry Regiment

Pfc. Morton Wolson — Med-346
 Pvt. George Antich — B-346
 Pvt. Arlie W. Davis — B-346
 Pvt. Melvin A. LeBlanc — B-346
 Pvt. Neil McFadyen — B-346
 Pvt. James H. Selesky — B-346
 Pvt. Aubra Shrode — B-346
 Pfc. William C. Hollenbeck — C-346
 Pfc. Martin N. Sweeney — F-346
 1st Lt. Eugene K. Watkins — F-346
 Pfc. Francis V. Dupre — G-346
 Pvt. William D. Lawrence — G-346
 Pvt. LaMar J. Smith — G-346
 T/5 Edward Sala — G-346
 Sgt. Feggen P. Whitten — G-346
 Pvt. Krist S. Marinoff — H-346
 Pvt. Morris D. Chrans — K-346

347th Infantry Regiment

Pfc. George T. Eastman — CN-347
 Pfc. Mayer Loewy — Med-347
 T/4 Roy G. Carlson — A-347
 Pvt. Harley Allen Daniels — A-347
 Pfc. Leslie B. Roberts — A-347
 Pfc. Roy A. Dumas — E-347
 Sgt. Roland E. Moss — E-347
 Pfc. George E. Aaron — F-347
 Pvt. Edmund S. Musial — F-347
 Pvt. Raymond H. Dow — G-347
 Pfc. Norman M. Drosdovich — G-347
 S/Sgt. James G. Moore — G-347
 Pfc. Seymour Schwartz — G-347
 Pfc. Stanley M. Zeboski — G-347
 Cpl. Robert J. Deutsch — H-347
 Pvt. Preston M. Comer — I-347
 Pfc. James R. Penney — I-347
 Pfc. Marc Ross — I-347
 Sgt. Floyd Guajardo — L-347



T/4 Ralph R. Newkirk (MED-347) was the son of World War I veteran De Forest Newkirk of Illinois and Gladys M. Burch of Nebraska. The family moved from Kansas to Arkansas when Ralph was 5 years old. He attended Morrilton High School, where he was a star athlete. After graduation, he attended the University of Arkansas and was a member of the Kappa Sigma Fraternity. The 1940 US Census shows Ralph living with his parents and younger sister Pearl in Morrilton. His father was a manager of a J.C. Penney's store at the time. Ralph enlisted in the U.S. Army on 2/7/1943 and received his basic training at camp McCain, Mississippi, and Fort Jackson, South Carolina. He then went to O'Reilly General Hospital in Springfield, Missouri to receive training as a medical technician. Ralph married Roberta LaFaye "Bobbie" Scarlett on 7/6/1943 in Morrilton, Conway County, Arkansas. Ralph's wife remarried a man named Belcher. She passed away in Russellville, Arkansas in July 2009.

Award of Silver Star Medal (Posthumously) Ralph R. Newkirk, 38450021, Technician Fourth Grade, Medical Detachment, 347th Infantry Regiment, for gallantry in action against an armed enemy of the United States near Obergailbach, France, on 15 December 1944. With utter disregard for personal safety, Technician fourth Grade Newkirk went from one wounded man to another, rendering first aid in the face of heavy enemy fire from tanks and machine guns less than 40 yards away. While thus engaged at the side of a wounded soldier, Technician Fourth Grade Newkirk was mortally wounded. His outstanding courage and devotion to wounded comrades exemplify the highest traditions of the armed forces of the United States.

The 87th POW Experience: Lieutenant Woodrow W. Lennon



It is fitting that we highlight the prisoner of war journey of Lt. Woodrow Lennon in this edition of the GAN. Lt. Lennon was captured on Hill 360 outside Obergailbach in December 1944 and began a far different trek to the war's end than his fellow soliders in the 87th Division.

He had enlisted in the Army in 1933 and served a two-year tour in the Phillipines and left the Army after five years of service. Ironically his first civilian job was as a prison guard, but he soon found a career as a meteorologist with the US Weather Bureau. Lennon was recalled to service in February 1941, well before the US would enter WW2. He would graduate from OCS, and serve in various positions until he joined the 87th ID in the summer of 1944.

Only a few months later, he finds himself a prisoner at the age of 30. Just days before Lennon had been moved as company commander from Company A to Company B after some officers were relieved of duty. It appears some Company B officers had spent the first night in a cellar drinking wine after the day's combat.

At this point, the rest of the Division will make the famed move to relieve Bastonge during the German offensive "Operation Watch on Rhine" better known as the Battle of the Bulge, while Lt. Lennon would make a trek across Germany via Stalag XIIA in Limburg, Germany by truck and then train into Poland to Oflag 64 prison camp. Two days before the Russians "liberated" Oflag 64, the Germans abandoned the camp and began



etc	Dist.	Location	Quarters	Rations	Observations
31 Jan	20 Km.	EXIN + 5 Km.	Barn - 01 Thatched Dots	None Water impure	Evacuees - Shold IMPASSIVE, Dispossessed, Horses Falling
			Babies Crying, All sick Left behind, Another Crew, Toilet, 14" snow, Very Cold.		
22	26	Eche field (near Wirsitz)	Quadrangle (Barn)	1/2 Oleo. Not Evacuated from Poles	Guards Approaching, Read Priority, Evacuees, Poles very friendly. Crossed Bromberg Canal Ready for Demolition, Heard Artillery near it. Air of Expectancy.
23	7	Charlottenburg	Barn - 10	Br. Pot Soup Tin meat " Not water. 9000 Horses. WIA. Col. Out. Guards Returned in mid afternoon. Poles Killed 2 pigs. Did not get it.	Given Potatoes Apples by Poles. Awake to find all guards To contact Russ. In mid afternoon

a 1500-prisoner, 45 day, 350 mile forced march out of Poland and across Germany. Lennon survived on soup and potatoes and on occasion some bread and margarine served to them in barns or cellars to shelter them from the snow and bitter cold of the German winter. Ultimately, Lennon would end up at Stalag VIIA near Mooseburg, Germany, where he was ultimately freed on April 29th by the 14th Armored and 99th Infantry Divisions and then back in the US by early June.

Above—POW Dog Tags issued to Woodrow Lennon

Left—Woodrow Lennon's journal kept during the forced march away from the Russians.

1st Lt. Woodrow W. Lennon's POW Experience

By his son, Dennis Lennon

The last time we looked at the World War II experiences of 1st Lt. Woodrow Lennon he had become an unwilling guest of the Third Reich. It was probably in the early morning hours of December 17, 1944, that Companies B and C of the 347th had been counterattacked by a German patrol, which subsequently led to many deaths and a significant number of POWs. I remember very clearly asking my father once in the naiveté of my youth how he and his men could have let themselves be captured when they had weapons to defend themselves. He just looked at me and very calmly said, "Son, there is not a lot you can do when you are looking down the barrel of a German Mauser and you are out of ammo." He told me that his unit had actually taken some high ground overlooking a German village and dug in for the night, but had sent back urgently for resupply because in taking this hill, they had exhausted the ammunition that they started out with.

It was before nightfall and they could see German troops and vehicles clearly moving about the village before darkness set in. Unfortunately, the needed ammunition never came and the next evening he was in the same village as a Prisoner of War, sitting in the cellar of one of the houses as the American artillery shelled the town. It was probably the bitterest that there was a lot of confusion in his company, because the CO and many of the men had found a goodly amount of wine in the cellar of one of the farmhouses nearby and were drunk before and during the battle. At any rate he ended up in captivity and was quickly taken away from the fighting and back into Germany. At first he went to Stalag XII A near Limburg, Germany, where he was interrogated and issued his POW Tag # 12749 which he carried until his

liberation and thru many other POW Camps. He once said he knew it was Limburg because of the awful smell of the Limburger cheese.

I don't know the exact route but somehow he was taken by train up through Germany and into Poland where he was placed in Oflag 64, Schubin, Poland. This was an officer POW Camp that had been used for other nationalities, but was changed to an all officer camp after the Germans began to take allied officers prisoner in 1943 during the Africa Campaign. At any time there were probably between 1500 -1700 officers in this camp. It was a pretty decent POW camp as a whole, but he probably did not arrive there until midJanuary 1945, and the camp was evacuated by the Germans on January 21, 1945, because the Russians were within two or three days of overrunning the area. The German guards and the Commandant did not want to become Russian POWs!

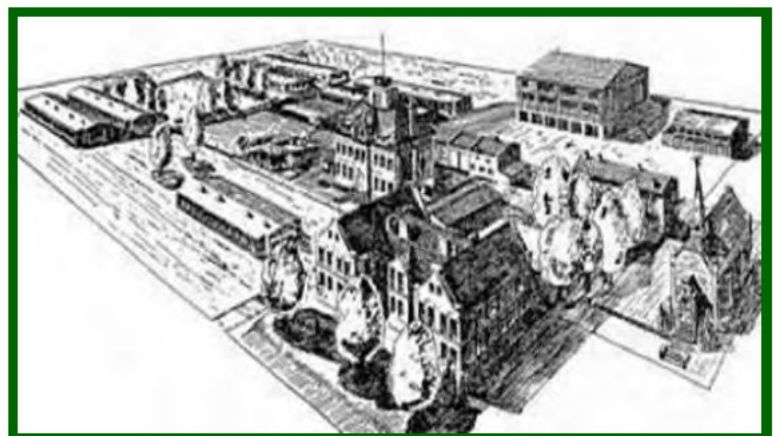


Main Gate of Stalag XIIA

History of Oflag 64

Oflag 64 was a World War II German prisoner-of-war camp for American officers located at Schubin, Poland, which at that time was occupied by Nazi Germany. It was probably the only German POW camp set up exclusively for U.S. Army officers, although other camps holding several nationalities were usually divided into separate national compounds. The camp was built around a Polish boys' school by adding barracks. Initially it was Stalag XXI -B for Polish soldiers until December 1940. Then it became Oflag XXI -B for French and British officers, subsequently for Soviet officers until June 1943. At that time they were all moved out to other camps, the Commonwealth flying personnel to Stalag Luft 3 Sagan, others to Oflag XXI -C Ostrzeszów.

On 6 June 1943 the camp was re-designated Oflag 64. It became



Drawing of Oflag 64 by POW



Color Print of Oflag 64

an American officers camp with the arrival of about 150 officers captured in the North Africa Campaign in Tunisia. In addition to the ground force officers, there were also a few aviators and enlisted men held at the camp.

Over the next year and a half the camp grew in size until on 21 January 1945, the roll call established a total of 1,471 men. Because of German concerns over approaching Soviet troops, all the men capable of walking were marched out toward Germany. The senior U.S. officer was Lt. Col. Paul Goode.

Two days later, on 23 January 1945, the camp was liberated by the Soviet 61st Army. Still at the camp at that time were approximately 150 Americans, medical personnel and patients, and a few men who had hidden in an abandoned escape tunnel. An additional 200 men had

escaped from the marching column and had returned to the camp.

The group that marched out of Schubin reached Oflag XIII -B at Hammelburg on 10 March. They marched through snow and bitter cold for almost 2 months, covering nearly 400 miles. About 400 escaped on the way or dropped out, too weak to march. A number were shot. Part of the group, including Lt. Col. Goode, were again marched out from Oflag XII I-B to Stalag VII-A, Moosburg, where they were finally liberated by units of the U.S. 14th Armored Division on 29 April (three weeks after Hammelburg had been liberated by the same unit).

Those who had stayed at Oflag 64 experienced considerable difficulties. The Soviets who had “liberated” them wanted to hold them hostage until all Soviet POWs in camps behind Allied lines were repatriated. Under the command of Col. Frederick Drury the group finally reached Odessa, Ukraine and were evacuated on a New Zealand ship, HMNZS Monowai

The rest of this narrative is the story of my father’s experience as told to a newspaper reported for the Wilmington, NC Evening Post in June of 1945, after he was back in the US. This was a three part article published on multiple days, so it has been combined it into a single narrative.

“Prison Life in Germany told by Wilmington boy, back in city”

This is the story of first Lieutenant Woodrow W. Lennon who had many harrowing experiences as a German prisoner of war. His day by day account of the 353 mile forced march, with little or nothing to eat, is a firsthand account of this war and a true picture of how the Nazis treated their “luckier” prisoners.

Lieutenant Lennon is a native of Columbus county and has had previous army experience with the Field Artillery at Fort Bragg between 1933 and 1938. During this period he served a “hitch” in the Philippines and was actually stationed on Corregidor for a while, so he is one who knew from experience what our boys were defending in the Pacific.

He returned to the states in 1938 and left the Army, taking a position in the Weather Bureau here in 1939. Naturally enough in February of 1941 he was recalled to the Army and went to OCS at Camp Davis in 1942, from whence he went to Camp Tyson, Tennessee as an instructor in meteorology. In 1944 he was sent to Infantry School at Fort Benning, GA, and went overseas with the 87th Infantry Division to France and Germany.

He was captured by the Germans on December 17th 1944, and until his recent release was a guest of the Third Reich. Not long after his capture, he was given a loaf of black bread, a pound of margarine and a small length of liverwurst to last for three days, one of the days being Christmas! On the night of December 25th, he was put in solitary confinement preceding interrogation and kept there for four days



and fed only on “grass soup” once a day during this time. His military watch and fountain pen were confiscated by the Germans immediately and he was glad he had no other personal possessions with him for they would have been taken too.

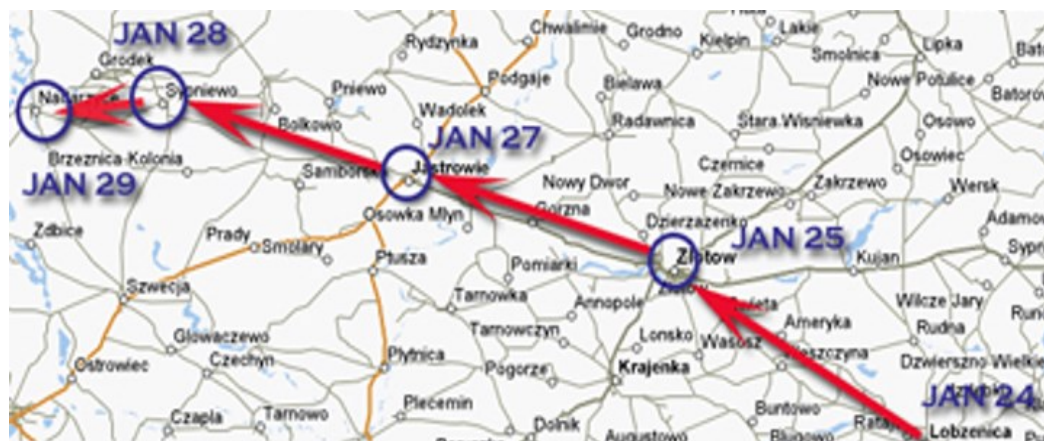
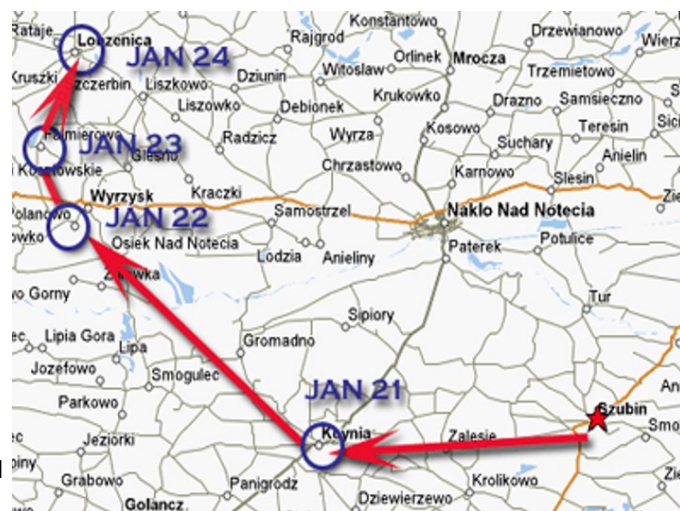
Once he got to the camp in Poland, the Russians began to push pretty close to where they were held and the Germans decided to move them all. What transportation there was, naturally did not fall to the lot of the prisoners and they set out on foot from Schubin, Poland on what proved to be a 45 day 353 mile march to Hammelburg, Germany. How Lieutenant Lennon managed to keep a daily diary of events is probably a military secret, but the fact that he did so provides us with a very illuminating description of what our prisoners of war in Germany undergo—with the understanding that his was comparatively “good” though probably representative of what the average American soldier underwent.

On January 21 with the temperature at 20 degrees below zero, the column of prisoners walked 22 kilometers through the town of Exin to a barn where they spent the night sleeping on threshed oats. This day they received no rations whatsoever and the available water was impure. The roads were blocked by thousands of evacuees as the Russians were coming on fast, but the prisoners had the right of way and civilians drew to the sides to let them through. Horses were dying and babies were crying among the conglomerate masses standing in the 14 inch deep snow by the roadsides.

January 22 they progressed on for 26 kilometers to the town of Echeffeld near Wirsitz where they again slept in a barn. Rations for that day consisted of a ¼ pound of margarine, with no bread at all, but some friendly Poles gave them hot “ersatz” which is the name they called a synthetic coffee. The guards were very apprehensive that day and hurried them along away from the oncoming Russians. Crossing the Bromberg canal they noticed that the bridge was ready for demolition at any time. They heard Russian artillery fire and there was quite an air of expectancy among the prisoners hoping to be released by the Russians. They did all they could to slow up the column in hopes the Russians would catch up.

On the 23rd they went only 7 kilometers to Charlottenburg, where they found the usual barn awaiting them. The men had two blankets apiece which they had to carry all day long in order to have any warmth at all for the night. The rations for that day were thin peas soup and a sort of meal soup and hot water, but the Poles gave them some potatoes and apples which helped. On the morning of the 23rd they awoke to find all the guards gone, and the American Colonel had gone out in hopes of contacting the Russians but to no avail. In the afternoon the guards returned just in time to take away two pigs the Poles had killed, and which Lennon helped them to dress. So they were not able to get any meat after all.

January 24th, after marching 9 kilometers, they arrived at the small farm village of Lobsens with their “barn-hotel” in such poor condition that the snow came through the roof on them as they slept. The Poles gave them a little bread and cheese that day but Lennon saw a German officer beating a little Polish boy with one of the Potato masher hand grenades for feeding the prisoners. They were told that in the future they would get SS troops to guard them, for too many were escaping.



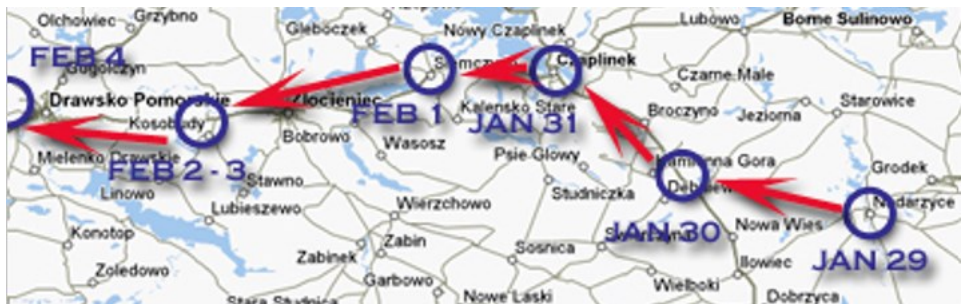
On January 25th they reached the town of Flatow, 20 kilometers further on their way, and stayed in a hayloft for the night. They were given ¾ loaf of bread and 1/10 pound of margarine for rations. They had crossed the border of Germany now and found the people very glum and naturally unfriendly. The SS troops guarding them had a very typical way of clearing out the barns in the morning by spraying them with machine gun bullets. This might cause us to think twice before grumbling at the

alarm clock in the morning. That day they heard intense artillery fire behind them and they traveled down back roads in order to keep the main roads clear.

On the 26th they stayed in Flatow, even though they had been told that they would move at 2 o'clock in the afternoon. Instead they got a welcome day of "rest". In view of this their rations consisted of one cup of weak soup and some water. Colonel Snyder, the German officer in charge, made a formal announcement of the recall of the Russian Ambassadors from London and Washington and tried to give the impression that the United States was now an ally with Germany in fighting the Russians. He did not fool the Americans, however, and when they brought in a captured Russian almost starved to death, the American medical officers worked to save him although they were not able to do so, as he was too far gone already. When he died, the Germans left him lying in the snow outside for two days.

On January 27th, they took up the march again and walked 18 kilometers to Jastrow where they slept in a stable. They were fed oatmeal, a thin almost soupy concoction, ¼ loaf of bread and a little barley soup after this exhausting day. Here two boxcars were loaded with some of the prisoners who were too sick to walk further.

The next day, January 28th, the column moved on another 18 kilometers to Zippnow and spent the night in a church. They had rations consisting of boiled potatoes and hot water for that day and had plowed through deep drifts of snow in the bitter cold. Col. Snyder, the German officer in charge was forced to abandon his vehicle due to the depth of the snow. They found the town entirely evacuated.



On the 29th they reached Stalag II D near Rederickdat which had been evacuated two days before. They had soup for breakfast and sauerkraut for supper that day.

On the 30th they progressed 14 kilometers to Machlin and slept in a horse shed, drinking "ersatz" and grass soup for their meals. Many of the men were completely exhausted and the bitter cold increased their misery. It was very late before they stopped to rest. Dad's note: "Quartered very late – very miserable."

On January 31st they struggled on for 14 kilometers more, reaching Templeburg and a barn for the night. They did receive a loaf of bread on this day and they met many columns of POWs being transferred in all directions.

A short trip of 6 kilometers on February 1st brought them to Herickdorf where they received barley soup for breakfast and potato soup for supper and slept in a barn. The towns along the way were only partially evacuated. Dad's note: "Toes very numb all the time"

They stopped between the towns of Falkenburg and Dramburg the next night after marching 17 kilometers and slept in a very crowded barn. Their rations were a little better here being pea soup, a loaf of bread, and 1/10 pound of margarine. There was much German military traffic along the roads that day and always one vehicle would be pulling three or four others.

On February 3rd they did not travel and received only one meal of potato soup. They heard the rumor that day that the Russians were only 26 miles from Stettin.

A 17 kilometer hike took them to Bromburg on the 4th of February and the walk was much better as the snow was disappearing and the roads were almost dry. They slept on a barn again and had "ersatz" and potato soup to eat. It was Sunday so the Americans held a church service.



February 5th they walked 19 kilometers to Zeitlitz and were fed on boiled potatoes and cabbage soup. Here 80 of the sick were put on boxcars. Their route previously had been toward Stargard, but here they changed direction.

On February 6th they reached Regenwald. The name of the town means “raining forest” and it certainly did rain. Lennon testifies. Those 22 kilometers was a very wet walk. They were based at a submarine school and were fed ersatz and the soupy oatmeal. They noticed a group of women POWs marching by them during the day.

February 7th, after another 19 kilometers they reached Lebbin and another barn where they received ersatz and cabbage. The towns looked rather normal though there were very few men to be seen.

February 8th they walked another 20 kilometers to Stuchow all feeling terribly weak from the poor diet. They slept in a barn and had ersatz and boiled potatoes for breakfast, and soup and potatoes for supper. They observed an awfully long column of British POWs that day.

On February 9th they reached Stresow and slept in a hayloft after a 17 kilometer journey. They were given ersatz and potatoes, but Lennon was one of the few lucky ones who “found” some milk and had three cups.

February 10th took them another 14 kilometers and they spent the night at the Luftwaffe Air Base on the island of Wollin. This was a real Saturday night celebration, with ersatz tea and potatoes and later potatoes and gravy. They were also given a loaf of bread which they were told would have to last 9 days as they would get no more – and they didn’t get any more either! This German Air Force school was full of eager young boys with high morale and a firm belief in the motto prominently displayed, “Who would live must fight!”

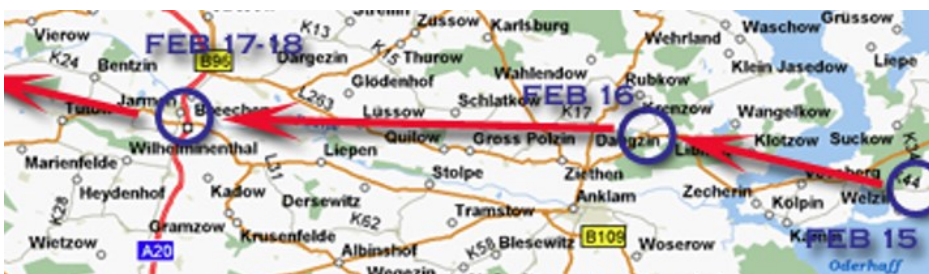
On February 11th, after a 14 kilometer march they reached Neuendorf and the barn where they stayed was extremely crowded that night. They received only ersatz and barley soup for food.

The next day, February 12th, they reached Swinemunde, 25 kilometers away. This time they were quartered at a German Naval Base and received gruel and ersatz as rations. Lennon was one of the few that got a hot shower here, but it weakened him so that he could hardly stand up afterward. This day marked the passing of the 200 mile mark in their long march.

By February 13th they reached Gartz, 8 kilometers further, and after eating potatoes and gravy took a railroad ferry to the island of Usdom.

The next day, they walked 15 kilometers to Stolpe and slept in a barn, receiving potatoes, ersatz, and 1/10 pound of margarine as rations. Colonel Snyder made an announcement of a day of rest for the next day and to their surprise they actually got it. Their food for this day consisted of boiled potatoes, and 100 more sick prisoners were put on box cars.

On February 16th they marched for 23 kilometers, finally arriving at Anklam and a barn. For rations they had ersatz, potatoes, cabbage and a package of “Knockbrot”, a sort of concentrated cracker field ration, for the way they crossed the bridge to the mainland.



February 17th was really a big day as far as the marching went. In their weakened condition they marched 26 kilometers to Gutzkow. They did get 1/6 loaf of the brown sawdust bread with tea, potatoes and barley soup that day. But Colonel Snyder made the best announcement of his career in their opinion when he told them there were some Red Cross food parcels for them. They were staying in a barn

on the estate of a Duchess, who had a son in America as a prisoner of war. She called Berlin long distance and arranged for them a day of rest.

The day of rest, February 18th, was also marked by the actual receipt of the Red Cross parcels. The prisoners felt this was due to the fact that their American Colonel was to meet the Swiss delegation shortly and was going to give a full account of the treatment they had received. The Germans immediately got a truck and arranged for him to pick up one Red Cross parcel per man from a nearby prison camp.

On February 19th they walked on 12 kilometers to a barn in Jarmin. They received tea and potatoes that day as rations but all of them felt 100 per cent stronger after receiving the Red Cross parcels, so it was not so tough.

On the 20th they went 21 kilometers to Demmin and got 1/6 loaf of bread, some tea and soup. Here they met a British Sergeant who said there were Red Cross parcels in the town and the Colonel immediately doubled the column back to locate them. The men were milling around in a confused state at this maneuver, but they finally did get half a parcel per man. These were half Canadian and half American parcels. The German Colonel told them to save their food as they would need it when they were put on railroad cars, but they were so hungry they ate almost all of it anyway. February 21st proved to be another day of rest and they got 1/6 loaf of bread and soup.

The next day, February 22nd, they went 17 kilometers on more of the same rations and reached Neukalin.



that day they received only potatoes and slept in barns.

February 26th was a day of rest and rumors were flying everywhere that there were no railcars available. This proved to be so, and meant that on February 27th they marched on another 17 kilometers to Lubz, with only turnip soup and potatoes for sustenance. On this day some German General also inspected the column.

On February 28th they reached the farm village of Siggelkow after a 12 kilometer march where they received potato soup, ½ loaf of bread and ½ Red Cross parcel. Here they stayed until March 5th awaiting rail transportation.

On March 6th they marched 10 kilometers to Parchim, where they found the box cars, but Colonel Goode, the American POW in charge would not permit them to enter until "US POW" was painted on the top of each car. They packed into the cars 42 men in each and traveled this way through the 7th, 8th and 9th of March, sleeping in shifts with 2/3 of the men lying on the floor at a time. They passed through Maglaburg and Halleweiner enroute to their destination at Hammelburg. Though they were issued a three day ration of meat it was made into soup and they never actually saw the meat itself. On March 10th they were settled into Oflag XIIIB at Hammelburg and nothing eventful happened for about two weeks.





Main Gate, Hammelburg Stalag XIIIB and C

On April 20th they arrived at Stalag VIIA in Moosburg after walking day and night in the rain, however once they had crossed the Danube they merely “fooled along”. After remaining in prison camp here for a week, finally on Sunday, April 29th, at 7:30 am the 14th Armored Division and the 99th Infantry attacked the town and by about 9 am the American flag was flying over the city and the prisoners were free at last.

Lt. Lennon was transferred by truck on May 9 th to an airfield and by C-47 to Rheims, France. Here he took a hospital train to Camp Lucky strike near Le Harve and on May 27th boarded a Liberty Ship for New York where he docked on June 9th .

This account of Lt. Lennon's though it is not the most gruesome to come from this war, and though he left many of the discomforts to the imagination, is still a picture of what thousands of American boys have gone through and which we should try to appreciate when we think in terms of the post war world.



Main Gate Stalag VIIA



29	8	Neer- Rederick C'd	Sto/og 2-D	B. Soup S. Sour vent.	Had store in Room shut on Bed Stoby Evacuated a day.
30	14	Macclin	Horse Shed Quartered	B. Eggz 2 S. Grass Soup very late	Expucted. Many Drip. S. No Cold very Missable
31	14	Temple- Burg	Barn	1 loaf Breed	Many P.W. going directions.
FEB. 1	6	Nedrick- Duff.	Barn	B. Bailey Sw. S. Potato Soup Ties Very Mumb 21	Towns New Partly Insisted. Both Land The time -
2	17	Between Fitzburg Barnburg	Barn - very Crowded	S. Pea Soup 1 loaf Breed 1/2 o/c	Saw much Mil. Traffic. One Car always Pulls out
3	0	"	"	D. Potato Soup	Rested. Russ - 26 Mil. From STETIN
4	17	Thou Barnburg	Barn	B. Eggz 2 S. Potato Soup	Barnburg almost Normal. Lards Boyac in Barn. Roads Almost Dry.
#3					

Nov. 7-8- 9-10	Thru Magdeburg Halle Weimar To Hammelburg	↓	↓	stayed in shifts 2/3 on floor + 1/3 net time.
11.	0 off day <u>XIII</u> B			

Started From Schubin, Poland
Walked 565 Kilometers or 353 miles

87th Infantry Division Monuments

Location/Description	GPS Coordinates	Address	Notes
Atlantic City, NJ	39.351667, -74.425639	3504 Atlantic Ave, Longport, NJ 08401	Monument in front of Headquarters Building
Camp McCain, MS	33.698058, -89.712572	3152 James H. Biddy Rd, Grenada, MS 38901	Monument in front of Headquarters Building
Carlisle, PA	40.127213, -77.347398	803 Centerville Rd, Newville, PA 17241	Monument
Charlotte, NC	35.222917, -80.845639	501 S College St., Charlotte, NC 28202	Monument at the Charlotte Convention Center with other units
Ft Belvoir, VA	32.7249, -77.17036	1775 Liberty Dr, Fort Belvoir, VA 22060	National Museum of the US Army, stone at the Warrior's Plaza
Ft Benning, GA	32.385315, -84.954157	Fort Benning Road, Columbus, GA 31905	Monument
Ft Jackson, SC	34.025850, -80.937700	13000 Jackson Blvd, Columbia, SC 29206	Sign
Rochester, NY	42.919922, -77.694475	I-390, Avon, NY	87th Memorial Highway
Bastogne, Belgium	50.009657, 5.739167	Rue de Clervaux, 6600 Bastogne, Belgium	Mardasson Memorial
Bonnerue, Belgium	50.004664, 5.486372	La Tourette, 6680 Sainte-Ode, Belgium	Piempre Crossroads
Boppard, Germany	50.231467, 7.602306	Rheinallee 8, 56154 Boppard, Germany	Rhein Crossing Plaque
Hamm, Luxembourg	49.611356, 6.18565	Val du Scheid, Luxembourg	General Patton's & 87th ID Soldiers Graves
Huldrange, Luxembourg	50.161503, 6.024044	1-23 Op d'Burriplatz 9964 Troisvierges, Luxembourg	
Moircy, Belgium	49.994236, 5.474636	Rue de Jenneville 2, 6800 Libramont-Chevigny, Belgium	Plaque at the Moircy Church
Obergailbach, France	49.06359, 7.12432		
Rhens, Germany	50.283619, 7.618331	Am Rhein 7. 56321 Rhens, Germany	Rhein Crossing Plaque
St Hubert, Belgium	50.027222, 5.373611	Rue de Jenneville 2, 6870 Saint-Hubert, Belgium	St Hubert Town Hall
St Hubert, Belgium			Contact Olivier Gillard: olivier041@hotmail.com to visit
Tennevillesaufei, Belgium	50.107734, 5.484762	Rue Grande Champion 98, 6971 Tenneville, Belgium	Sign with photo of 87th link up with the British Army
Tillet, Belgium	50.010797, 5.530639	Tillet 18, 6680 Sainte-Ode, Belgium	Shoup Plaque, Tillet Church
Vesqueville, Belgium	49.998787, 5.381058	Rue des Rouge Fosses 6, 6870 Saint-Hubert, Belgium	Private Monument restored in 2004
Vesqueville, Belgium	49.993008, 5.406087	Rue de Freux 32, 6870 Saint-Hubert, Belgium	Private Monument not yet restored
Wasserbillig, Luxembourg	49.712725, 6.496453	18 Route de Luxembourg, 6633 Mertert, Luxembourg	Plaque in Memorial Garden
Wasserbillig, Luxembourg	49.710894, 6.491208	Rue de la 87e Division, 6620 Mertert, Luxembourg	Rue De 87th Street Sign



Billy Stiegemeier and Pascal Hainaut in St Hubert



87th Link up with British Army—Tenneville, BE



Group at the 87th Division Monument south of Vesqueville



Bob Welsh at the 87th ID Plaque in Charlotte, NC

Although this edition of the GAN-LE is produced under copyright, you are expressly permitted to print copies of this publication or portions thereof solely for your use or use of your friends and family. You may not reproduce any of the material herein for republication or commercial uses without express permission.



GOLDEN ACORN NEWS

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE 87TH
INFANTRY DIVISION LEGACY ASSOCIATION

87THINFANTRYDIVISION.COM